The London School of Economics and Political Science

Dissident Narratives of Violence in Colombia: From Armed Conflict to Queer Everyday *Multiconflicto*

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the intersections of everyday violence and conflict-related violence in the life course of people with non-normative gender and sexuality in Colombia from a queer feminist perspective. The research is based on 12 life story interviews with LGBTIQ+ people born and raised in conflict-affected contexts across the country. Arguing that recent historical memory reports have included the testimonies of "LGBTI victims of armed conflict" as evidence of violent occurrences and not as epistemic standpoints, I use a feminist narrative analysis to recover the political power of these voices by listening to the interviewees' life stories as meaningful narratives about how violence works in specific contexts. Taking these *dissident narratives* as a point of departure, this thesis argues that the official internal armed conflict narrative and the transitional justice framework do not capture the complexity and variety of the violences that shape the everyday of LGBTIQ+ people in Colombia. These life story narratives demonstrate that the spectacular conflict-related violence is only one event in a broader violent process of subject formation that LGBTIQ+ people experience across their life trajectories. In this analysis, I focus on three narrative plots that emerged from these life stories, *silence, displacement*, and *peace,* to explore how LGBTIQ+ people's desires, practices, and embodiments have been discursively and spatially shaped as a threat to society in the Colombian context and how interviewees negotiate and challenge this subject position on an everyday basis. This analysis builds on queer phenomenological approaches to study violence as a relational phenomenon that affects how subjectivities are embodied and bodies oriented in spatiotemporal terms. Finally, thinking of violence outside the frames of internal armed conflict and drawing on interviewees' life story narratives, the thesis proposes the concept of *intimate peace* to shed light on embodied practices of peacebuilding that emerge from queer disruptions of everyday violence. Thus, this thesis unveils *other* possible narratives of violence, justice, and peace in Colombia.

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CHAPTER 1. THOSE WHO WILL NOT MARCH

INTRODUCTION

Figure 1

Those who will not march

I took this photograph on the 2nd of July 2017 at the LGBTI Pride March in Bogotá, Colombia. Some days before, my friend Laura, an upper-middle-class lesbian feminist activist, invited me, an upper-middle-class straight feminist, to join her and her lesbian activist group to plan a performance for the Pride March. Even though cultural and marketing trends around "sexual

diversity" have co-opted this date, several LGBTI and sexual dissidence activist groups keep occupying public space during this event to advocate for the human rights of LGBTIQ+[1] people in Colombia.

After a couple of meetings, Laura and her friends decided they wanted to dedicate the performance to *those* who could not march because of violence. Those included persons that were still hiding their non-normative genders or sexualities to avoid violence and discrimination but also those persons that were not able to march physically; those who were already gone because of violence. The collective performance was named *Acción colectiva en memoria por los que no marcharán* [Collective action in memory of those who will not march]. To bring these absent bodies back into presence, they decided to do a crowdfunding campaign to buy one hundred helium balloons. They wanted to dedicate each balloon to a victim of violence, so we needed to find one hundred names of LGBTIQ+ victims. As Laura had worked in governmental programs dedicated to the attention and protection of the LGBTI communities, finding those names seemed like easy work.

On the day of the event, we met early in the morning in a park in the south of the city to build a large banner that read: *AMOR Y RESISTENCIA, ORGULLO Y MEMORIA* [LOVE AND RESISTANCE, PRIDE AND MEMORY]. When the one hundred balloons arrived in the park, we started writing the names we had collected. However, we only gave a name to a few balloons. Finding official records was almost impossible, so we only included persons we had personally met or famous cases nationally covered. We walked for two hours, singing and dancing. When we finally arrived in the central square in Bogota's downtown *La Plaza de Bolívar*, the point of meeting for the different parades of the city, we let the balloons rise into the sky. We stood still and in total silence. Everyone was looking up into the sky, wondering what these balloons represented. Why do these have names written on them? Why were these up in the sky?

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[1]I use the LGBTIQ+ acronym to refer to people with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities (i.e., non-normative sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, sex characteristics, and sexual behaviours). It includes people self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, or any other identity, expression, or behaviour of sexual or gender dissidence in this context. I use the LGBTIQ+ acronym when referring to the work of my research, the LGBT acronym when referring to the work of state-sponsored historical memory research (which does not include intersex people), and LGBTI acronym when referring to the social mobilisation of gender and sexual diversity in Colombia.

I only wrote one name on one balloon: Said. Said was a gay man who was the assistant of the hairdresser I used to visit once a year. Said who was murdered in 2015 and was found dead the next day by his neighbour. Said, whom his co-workers and boss buried and had to pay for his burial as nobody could find a member of his family to collect his body in the morgue. Said, who is gone and his killer is in total impunity, as we never knew who killed him because there is no judicial process investigating his case. Said, who was the kind of person that makes the best out of his job and always had a big smile and kind words for everyone, was gone.

Much has happened since I took this photograph in 2017. Much has happened, and yet not much has changed, unfortunately. In 2021, the NGO *Colombia Diversa* registered 405 aggressions against LGBTI people in the country: 205 homicides, 97 threats, and 103 victims of police violence[2]. Between 2021 and 2022, different LGBTI NGOs and trans organisations reported the feminicide of around 57 trans women (numbers slightly differ across organisations), which places Colombia as the country in Latin America with the second largest number of trans deaths[3]. In both scenarios, the numbers reported represent an underestimate of the true number of cases due to problems with documentation. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified the problems of insecurity that LGBTI people confront every day. While the number of homicides and violence decreased significantly in the country in 2020, the amount of violence against LGBTI people significantly increased, turning 2020 into the most violent year for LGBTI people on record. *Colombia Diversa* registered 738 victims in 2020 (337 threats, 226 homicides, and 175 cases of police violence)[4].

While Colombia has experienced significant milestones in terms of political representation and legal protection for LGBTI people, the ongoing violence against people with non-normative sexualities, especially against trans people, keeps growing. At the same time, Colombia is the first country to legally and politically recognise LGBTI people in a peace process and include their experiences of violence in transitional justice mechanisms. However, violence against LGBTIQ+ people living in rural and urban areas keeps growing, and the impact

[2] See: https://colombiadiversa.org/cifras/
[3] See: https://www.infobae.com/lgbt/2022/11/20/colombia-segundo-pais-de-latinoamerica-con-mas-casos-de-homicidios-contra-la-poblacion-trans/
[4] See: https://colombiadiversa.org/c-diversa/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Nada-que-celebrar_Colombia-Diversa_-cifras-de-asesinatos-a-personas-LGBT.pdf

of this legal inclusion remains unknown. This situation reflects a longstanding paradox in Colombia: on paper, the country has one of the strongest legal frameworks in Latin America; however, in practice, these laws are rarely enforced. As feminist law scholar Julieta Lemaitre (2009) recognises, the legal achievements in LGBTI rights and the social norms these create have clear limitations.

My thesis dwells on this paradox; it emphasises the gap between legal recognition and cultural change. With this purpose, the thesis aims to expand the empirical evidence and theoretical understanding of how violence against people with non-normative genders and sexualities operates in the everyday in conflict-affected contexts in Colombia. The thesis argues that while significant legal advances have been achieved to ensure the protection of the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people, there is still a need to enlarge the documentation and comprehension of how violence against LGBTIQ+ people operates at the social and cultural levels. It focuses on the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people living in conflict-affected contexts not to make an analysis of armed conflict but to explore how conflict-related violence magnified historic and quotidian violences. Seeking to broaden the important documentation carried out by state-sponsored historical memory research, the thesis listens to the life story of LGBTIQ+ people living in conflict-affected contexts. However, instead of listening to these life stories through the frames of transitional justice official narratives and categories of analysis (i.e., victim, violent act, perpetrator, internal armed conflict, among others), the thesis seeks to show that these life stories contain crucial and unique knowledge about *how violence works* and *what violence does* in relation to non-normative ways of embodying and living gender and sexuality in the Colombian context.

This photograph (Figure 1) – my visual and affective archive of the performance, *Collective action in memory of those who will not march* – represents some of the main contributions and interventions this thesis seeks to make. My thesis focuses on *those who will not march*. By this, I mean that my thesis sheds light on the political commitment of those present in Pride marches denouncing the ongoing violence against less visible others. The expression *those who will not march* renders present the absence of those who suffer violence in silence, those who died but whose names were not written on balloons, and those who continue facing violence daily despite advancements in LGBTI legal protection and political representation. It stresses

differences between urban and rural life experiences, not only in terms of gender identities/expressions and sexual orientations but also in unequal and hierarchical racial and class social orders. The expression *those who will not march* represents my research's political and academic aims. To listen to the names and see the faces of the "numbers" of violence against LGBTIQ+ people, to render visible the social worlds that are done and undone by the relationality of violence, and to envision the possibility of less oppressive and less violent futures.

1. CASE OF STUDY

In recent years, Colombia has been internationally praised for becoming the first country in the world to legally and politically recognise violence against persons with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities in the context of armed conflict (Forbear, 2014). Through different legal struggles, LGBTI activists and advocates achieved the inclusion of a "differential approach" that recognises sexual orientation and gender identity in laws and institutions created for the assistance and reparation of victims of armed conflict. Additionally, the experiences of violence of persons with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities have been documented by the *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica* [National Centre of Historical Memory] (CNMH from now on) and included in peace negotiations and transitional justice mechanisms, including the Truth Commission's mandate[5]. This broad inclusion is the result of decades of LGBTI grassroots activism. It represents a political and legal gain for the citizenship rights of Colombian LGBTI people and sets a crucial precedent globally.

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[5] The Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence (Truth Commission) is one of the three institutions that make up the Colombian Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition created under the 2016 Peace Agreement. The objectives of the Commission are as follows: To clarify the patterns of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law violations; the causes and factors of persistence, impacts and forms of resistance; as well as the relationship between drug trafficking, paramilitarism and land dispossession in relation to the internal armed conflict. To promote the recognition of the victims as important subjects for the transformation of the country; the voluntary acknowledgement of responsibilities by the perpetrators (direct and indirect); and the recognition by society that these violations must not be repeated. To contribute to coexistence in the territories, providing an opportunity to regain trust, to learn to engage in dialogue with opponents and to relate to each other peacefully.

My thesis focuses on the Colombian case, acknowledging these vast and essential advances and seeking to expand the empirical and theoretical implications of these *inclusions*. In the following sub-sections, I briefly describe the research context, my research questions, and the thesis' empirical and conceptual interventions.

Context

Over the last six decades, Colombia has endured one of the most prolonged armed conflicts in contemporary history. Historically rooted in outbreaks of political violence since the early 1950s, the so-called Colombian internal armed conflict began in 1964 with the emergence of two major guerrilla groups: the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and the ELN (National Liberation Army). These communist and left-wing armed groups, formed mainly by peasants, claimed to represent rural disadvantaged populations in a struggle against Colombia's political and wealthiest elite, denouncing the high levels of inequality in the country and the lack of political power and participation of these rural communities. This political and ideological agenda lost its focus over the years due to the entanglements between guerrillas' armed violence and the emergence of drug trafficking cartels across the country. These alliances evolved into multiple forms of criminality in rural and urban areas and the emergence of an illegal national economy. Since the beginning of these guerrilla mobilisations, the Colombian government deployed a military response to confront this social and political conflict. It permitted and, in some instances, encouraged the proliferation of right-wing paramilitaries as a strategy to combat guerrillas in territories where the government was largely absent. By the 1980s, drug traffickers, ranchers, and large landowners, among other groups, took over these paramilitary groups, becoming an illegal army serving private interests. This variety of armed actors and the influence of powerful drug cartels turned this conflict into a low-intensity war in which the civil population suffered the most (CNMH, 2013).

In 2016, the Colombian government signed a Peace Agreement with FARC guerrillas after four years of negotiations in La Habana, Cuba. Despite the multiple armed actors participating in the Colombian armed conflict, the Peace Agreement with the FARC guerrilla was celebrated as the "end of the conflict", as this guerrilla group was the largest and oldest in the conflict. The final Agreement was signed in September 2016 and submitted for public

approval via a referendum in October 2016. Unexpectedly, the referendum voted against the Agreement by a narrow margin, leading to a revision of some of the terms of the Peace Agreement (see Chapter 3 for further discussion on this matter). The final Agreement contains six main points: agrarian reform, political participation, illicit drugs, victims, ending the conflict, and implementation of the Peace Agreement. The point on victims includes transitional justice[6] mechanisms meant to provide accountability for serious crimes and fulfil the victims' rights to truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-recurrence. Since 2017, three related institutions have started operating in the country: the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP, in Spanish), the Truth Commission, and the Special Unit for the Search of Missing Persons.

According to the final report of the Truth Commission presented in June 2022[7], between 1985 and 2019, the internal armed conflict caused: 7,752,964 forced internal displacements, 450,664 homicides (due to underreporting, the number could grow to 800,000), 121,768 forced disappearances, 50,770 cases of kidnapping (due to underreporting, the number could grow to 80,000), 16,238 cases of forced recruitment of minors, 32,446 victims of sexual and reproductive violence, 8,208 extrajudicial executions, and 4,237 massacres with 24,600 fatalities. The report concluded that around 80% of mortal victims of this conflict had been civilians and 20% combatants. These statistics reflect how this conflict affected (and continues affecting) the civil population, not as collateral damage of war but as one of the principal strategies employed by different armed actors (legal and illegal) to gain control and power over territories. Nonetheless, it is essential to emphasise that not all civil population has been affected equally.

As located in rural areas of the country, this conflict has predominantly affected communities of peasants, Afro-Colombians, and indigenous people, already impoverished and marginalised due to the historical absence of the national government in these territories (while prolonging historical processes of racialisation). This absence materialised over the years in precarious living conditions for these communities, emerging from the lack of access to education and healthcare systems, low-income jobs, and inadequate infrastructure (i.e., poor access to safe drinking water, electric networks, and intercity roads). Consequently, the internal

[6] Transitional justice mechanisms seek to redress abuses and dispense justice, facilitate truth and reconciliation, and restore the rule of law and democracy for countries that have suffered massive human rights violations under armed conflict and authoritarian regimes.
[7] See: https://www.comisiondelaverdad.co/

armed conflict and its dynamics have menaced the safety and lives of millions of Colombians and increased historical and social inequalities around the country (CNMH, 2013).

Feminist analyses have demonstrated that gender played a crucial role in how armed actors planned and exerted conflict-related violence and how armed conflict impacted men and women differently[8]. These contributions opened political spaces to discuss and implement a gender perspective in the analysis of armed conflict, demonstrating the social, political, and legal implications of conflict-related violence in women's lives (Granados, 2012; Miller, 2005; Montealegre, 2008; Ruta Pacifica de las Mujeres, 2013). While most of these analyses focused on the experiences of (cisgender, heterosexual) women only, this gender perspective has been extended over the years to include the experiences of people with non-normative genders and sexualities affected by armed conflict.

The documentation of conflict-related violence against LGBTI people began in the 2000s, led by LGBTI grassroots organisations that worked independently and without governmental support (Payne, 2007). Following these early initiatives, some academic contributions emerged, most from a legal perspective and demanding justice within the international human rights framework. After the LGBTI population was included and recognised by the Victims' Law 1448 (2011)[9], this documentation process received governmental support. LGBTI victims were included in the *Registro Único de Víctimas* [Single Register of Victims] (RUV from now on), and the CNMH dedicated specific research to document the experiences of LGBTI people affected by armed conflict. While there is still much work to do, and official

[8] Feminist analyses in Colombia have shown how illegal armed groups have reproduced gender and sexual roles in the organisation of their internal military structure, and through the reinforcement of social orders in the daily lives of communities that they have violently occupied (Granados, 2012). Research has revealed that violence against women's bodies (i.e., sexual violence, sexual harassment, prostitution, human trafficking, forced abortion, teenage pregnancy, sexual slavery, female kidnapping, and gender violence) has been used to send war messages to enemy groups or communities, as a form of material and metaphorical evidence of control and occupation of territories (Amnesty-International, 2011). Furthermore, empirical evidence has revealed that forced displacement can be categorised as a gendered type of conflict-related violence, as it holds particularly challenging consequences for women (Andrade, 2010; Chacón, 2016; Ibañez & Moya, 2010; Meertens, 2004; Riaño, 2008).

[9] The Victims and Land Restitution Law (1448) was signed in 2011 as part of a transitional policy to facilitate the steps towards the post-conflict scenario in Colombia. This Law grants the legal status of "victim" to individuals affected by armed conflict. It offers an integral system of protection, assistance, and reparation, with an intersectional perspective that seeks to recognise different needs in various populations according to their gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnic backgrounds (CNMH, 2012).

numbers are not entirely reliable due to underreporting; there is growing documentation confirming that legal and illegal armed actors in the conflict targeted LGBTI people with specific forms of violence (Serrano-Amaya, 2015, 2018; Thylin, 2018, 2019).

By August 2022, the RUV reported 4,492 registered victims self-identified as "LGBTI". In 2021, the RUV confirmed that from the 11,608,952 victimising acts registered, 7,955 targeted LGBTI people, from forced displacement (3,879 cases), sexual violence (521 cases), threats (1,326 cases), forced disappearance, or forced enrolment by both illegal and legal armed groups (some people experienced various of these forms of violence). The ground-breaking historical memory report *Aniquilar la Diferencia. Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales y Transgeneristas en el Marco del Conflicto Armado Colombiano* (CNMH, 2015) confirmed that LGBT people suffered specific forms of violence during conflict, resulting in differential consequences for this population. The report revealed that legal and illegal armed actors exerted specific forms of sexual violence and torture against LGBT people as corrective rapes, forced pregnancy (in the case of lesbians or transgender men), genital mutilations, sexual slavery, and sexual torture. These occurrences display a violent corporeal fixation of armed groups trying to "fix" gender and sexual "deviations" from the sex binary and heterosexual norm.

Furthermore, the exposure of mutilated bodies in public spaces, or even the public assassination of LGBT persons, has been used as a sign of military and territorial power of armed groups and as a threat to other bodies that do not align with normative gender expressions and sexual behaviours (CNMH, 2015). Likewise, armed groups have used graffiti and leaflets to send messages to communities about their presence in the territory and communicate coexistence rules (i.e., dress codes, circulation and sleeping schedules, among others), but also to threaten specific groups of "unwanted citizens" like homeless people, drug users, sex workers, rapists, criminals, and LGBT persons (CNMH, 2015). As a result, thousands of LGBT persons have left their hometowns, running away from violent threats or after being assaulted by armed groups.

Besides suffering the consequences experienced by the general population of displaced persons, like economic (i.e., unemployment, food and housing shortages), social (i.e., lack of social networks and social alienation), cultural (i.e., racism and change of habits and traditions), and psychological (i.e., grief, trauma, and psychopathology) vulnerabilities, displaced LGBT

people encounter further challenges due to homophobic violence and discrimination (CNMH, 2015, 2018, 2019; Colombia Diversa, 2020; Payne, 2016). In particular, the lack of social networks and job opportunities upon relocation into bigger cities, especially for transgender women, exacerbates the negative consequences of internal displacement (Ritterbusch, 2016). This social and economic disenfranchisement commonly leads to their involvement in unregulated sex work, which increases the risk of suffering physical and emotional violence and experiencing mental health problems (i.e., drug or alcohol abuse, depression, HIV or STDs transmission, among others) (Bianchi et al., 2014; Zea et al., 2013).

Although all armed groups have exerted violence against LGBT people, the paramilitaries have executed the majority of these crimes. In particular, between 1997 and 2005, various paramilitary groups established despotic control over the country's north, using multiple forms of gender-based violence that affected the lives of millions of women and persecuted LGBT communities in particular (Serrano, 2018). Additionally, there have been explicit alliances between legal and illegal armed forces (i.e., guerrillas, paramilitary, drug cartels, military forces, and police) to exert violence against LGBT people, which have operated under the logic of "social cleansing". This practice, rooted in colonial dynamics, is still present in some Latin American countries and refers to the maintenance of a specific social, moral order that justifies extrajudicial killings of "unwanted" citizens such as drug users, the homeless, prostitutes and LGBT persons (Serrano, 2018). This rationale has been used in the context of the Colombian armed conflict to justify and facilitate the persecution of persons displaying non-normative sexualities, commonly portrayed as immoral, abnormal, and dangerous subjects (Ordoñez, 1996; Perea, 2016).

Additionally, using this "moral discourse" allowed armed groups to gain support from families, communities, and religious institutions to persecute LGBT people and exert this violence. Some of the testimonies of LGBT people documented in the historical memory report *Aniquilar la Diferencia* (CNMH, 2015) revealed cases in which: fathers allowed corrective rapes of their children by armed actors to "fix" their sexual orientation; families threatened their LGBT children to tell armed actors about their non-normative sexualities if they continued expressing their gender identity or sexual orientation publicly; families supported the forced enrolment of

LGBTs in guerrillas to "fix" their sexual orientation or as a reprimand because of their non-normative sexuality; and families supported the forced displacement of LGBTs to avoid social and religious shaming (CNMH, 2015). These findings suggested that the violence LGBTs suffered in their everyday lives was magnified and instrumentalised by armed actors to facilitate the escalation of armed conflict.

Intervention and research questions

My research proposal emerged in 2016 as a response to the historical memory report *Aniquilar la Diferencia* (CNMH, 2015), seeking to contribute to the study and analysis of how violence and sexuality intersect in conflict-affected contexts in Colombia. Knowing about the complex network of complicities between the civil population and armed actors to exert or allow violence against LGBT impacted me personally while feeling armed conflict "closer to home" (meaning the family, the everyday, the ordinary, the city). It also sparked my curiosity as a researcher, as these LGBT victims seemed to destabilise mainstream hegemonic narratives of armed conflict in Colombia. The testimonies of these victims challenge traditional analyses of political violence and Conflict Studies that make precise cuts between victims and perpetrators, public and private, political and intimate, and war and peace categories of analysis. By showing one of the ways in which the civil population also participated (violently) in this conflict, the testimonies of LGBT victims of armed conflict display some of the complexities of war dynamics, and violence in general, when analysed as a reflection of how societies are built and maintained, and not as an extraordinary phenomenon. LGBTs' testimonies show how the Colombian armed conflict has been not only an armed confrontation motivated by political and economic demands of specific populations but also a process that has materialised (and instrumentalised) historical social and cultural disputes in the country – in which human sexuality appears as one of the contested terrains of meaning and relationality.

While the historical memory work developed by the CNMH has been ground-breaking globally and essential for political and legal fights for defending LGBTI human rights in Colombia, I argue that some of its analytical categories and conclusions have produced a narrow reading of LGBTIQ+ people's voices and their experiences of violence. Acknowledging that the CNMH has specific political and social goals that impact how victims' testimonies are

interpreted as part of the *social temporality* (Da Silva Catela, 2004) in which this institution operates – the post-conflict period – my thesis seeks to expand its work through a critical academic lens by shedding light on other narratives that complement, contradict, or exceed the official narratives of the "LGBTI victim of armed conflict" in Colombia.

With this general objective, my thesis asks the following research questions:

- How does conflict-related and everyday violence intersect in the life course of people with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities?
- How do sexuality and violence intersect in conflict-affected contexts in Colombia?
- How do people with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities endure, resist, and transform violent contexts?

In the following section, I explain some of the analytical and methodological shifts the thesis proposes to answer my research questions.

2. DISSIDENT NARRATIVES

The production of the *LGBTI victim of armed conflict* has been shaped by the judicial framework and discourse that deals with conflict-related violence through transitional justice mechanisms. This judicial documentation is crucial and has contributed to open national debates around the life experiences of a group of historically marginalised Colombians. However, reading people's experiences through this framework's rigid categories has created a unique subject position for many life experiences and produced a narrow reading and interpretation of violence against LGBTIQ+ people in conflict-affected contexts. The following subsections present some of these analytical limitations and how my thesis addresses the proposed research questions.

Violence beyond the internal armed conflict narrative

Following official narratives of violence in Colombia, supported and enlarged by transitional justice mechanisms in recent years, Colombia's state-sponsored historical memory work has listened to narratives of violence against LGBTI+ people through a specific analytical

framework. This analytical framework is determined by the official *internal armed conflict* narrative, including its temporal delimitation, actors, and dynamics. My thesis argues that the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people affected by armed conflict have been interpreted through a narrow approach to violence while documented through this official narrative.

According to violence studies, Colombians have witnessed and experienced three significant periods of violence in recent history. The first one is *La Violencia* [The Violence, with capital letters], an armed civil confrontation between members of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party between 1946 and 1965[10]. The second period is known as *las violencias* [violence in plural] and refers to various types, logics, and strategies of direct aggression used by organised crime groups (including drug trafficking cartels) to manipulate, menace, and eliminate individuals and social groups around the second half of the 1980s[11] (Jaramillo, 2015). The third period is considered an interlude between the former two and represents what experts have recently denominated the *conflicto armado interno* [internal armed conflict]. The notion of internal armed conflict brings together the effects of the emergence of the guerrilla insurgent fight in the mid-1970s and the legal and illegal responses of the Colombian government and paramilitary groups to this phenomenon[12].

Even though these three periods of violence condense clear landmarks in national history, how these periods have been named and explained is the result of establishing official narratives and devices. According to Jefferson Jaramillo (2015), the so-called C*omisiones de Estudio Sobre la Violencia* [Violence Studies Commissions] are "institutional vehicles" (2015, p. 249) that have established official narratives of violence in Colombia. Matching the periods of violence described above, in chronological order, these commissions are *la Comisión Nacional*

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[10] This armed confrontation, now called civil war, caused the death of around 200,000 victims, mainly peasants living in rural areas, and is frequently considered the origin of political violence in Colombia.
[11] This phenomenon was located in urban areas and characterised by the emergence of drug cartels and criminal organised violence that affected the most vulnerable sectors of the urban civil population and corrupted various levels of national democratic institutions. According to official records, during this period the homicide rate grew from 40 for every 100,000 habitants in 1983 to 70 in 1989 (the highest rate of homicide in America and the rest of the world in the 1980s) (Camacho & Guzmán, 1990).
[12] While there are several disputes over the meaning of the term "conflict" and it is difficult to pin down rigid analytical or temporal terms for this concept, the internal armed conflict expression generally seeks to represent a process of historical dispute extended across time with institutional and illegal armed actors that hold diverse organisational logics, action interests, demands of confrontation against the National State and differential conditions of power and victimisation across the national territory (Jaramillo, 2015, p. 249).

Investigadora de las Causas y Situaciones Presentes de la Violencia en el Territorio Nacional (1958) [National Research Commission of the Causes and Situations of Violence in National Territory, 1958], *la Comisión de Estudios sobre la Violencia* (1987) [Violence Studies Commission, 1987], and *el Grupo de Memoria Histórica* (2007-2011) [Historical Memory Group, 2007-2011]. These research commissions emerged from governmental initiatives and functioned as an expert and authorised voice that produced specific narratives and representational frameworks to determine the causes and meanings of these peaks of violence, the main actors in these confrontations, and the "adequate" ways to nationally process and overcome their consequences.

A critical analysis of the development of these research commissions shows that the study of violence in Colombia is a complex disputed terrain among various powers with different political, social, and economic interests. Through their documentation work, these commissions have functioned as institutional devices that have shaped national narratives that favoured the inclusion of certain voices and have legitimised the exclusion of others (Jaramillo, 2011, 2015; Villaveces, 2006). In particular, the relationship between political and academic powers has influenced the research design and conclusions of these commissions, determining, at the same time, what is an expert voice (and what is not) while giving more relevance to some individuals and specific disciplines.

The government of Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) inaugurated a pivotal national narrative shift by acknowledging the existence of an *internal armed conflict* between multiple illegal armed groups and the Colombian National state. By affirming the existence of a historical internal armed conflict, Santos officially recognised the FARC guerrillas as a political actor and politically accepted that the national state had actively and, many times, wrongfully participated in this conflict. Following this historic announcement, supported by international law mandates and numerous national and international human rights organisations, the Santos government signed the Victims' Law 1448 (2011). The Victims' Law provided a renewed and larger time framework for the work of the research commission *Grupo de Memoria Histórica* (2007-2011) that moved from studying contemporary events of violence to becoming part of the *Centro*

Nacional de Memoria Histórica (CNMH) [National Centre for Historical Memory][13]. The CNMH's attempt to establish a national politics of memory coming *from* and *for* victims of the internal armed conflict opened a space to introduce the voices of the victims of armed conflict into the discussion and shaping of the official narrative of violence in Colombia for the first time. The internal armed conflict narrative began a new phase of expansion and consolidation through the work of the transitional justice processes and mechanisms that started operating in 2018. The voices of victims of armed conflict have been introduced in this official narrative through the notions of the *victim of armed conflict* and *testimony of violence.*

The recognition and legalisation of the notion of victim allowed for the inclusion of voices silenced and marginalised for decades in historical memory processes. However, this inclusion has been influenced by the complex tensions between expert knowledge and political interests and shaped by an already established framework that limits how these victims' voices are heard and included in official national narratives. Some academic critiques and civil society leaders and organisations have addressed these limitations. One example is how different social organisations, many constituted by victims of conflict, have problematised the temporal framing of the so-called internal armed conflict, arguing that the origin and duration of this conflict exceed this period (1964-2005). Additionally, these organisations have demanded the inclusion of other types of victims, like the structural victims of State crimes, which are not residual victims but historically victimised subjects, in the thematic and emblematic cases of research (Jaramillo, 2015). Some of these demands were addressed in the peace process between the Santos government and the FARC (2012-2016) and included in the CNMH's research agenda, which was expanded during the peace negotiations to include other categories of victims and specific types of conflict-related violence. However, the temporal framing of the internal armed conflict remains the same.

[13] The CNMH was created to recover, gather, and analyse all the documentation, oral testimonies, or any kind of evidence about the violences that occurred during the Colombian internal armed conflict (starting from 1964). Its mandate is to promote research initiatives and museum and pedagogical activities that could help clarify and establish the causes of these violences, disclose the truth, and avoid repeating these events in the future (Jaramillo, 2015). Following a historical memory approach, all the material gathered by the Centre aims to answer to the right to truth, symbolic reparation, and the satisfaction of the victims of this conflict.

While the LGBT social sector has not officially addressed these limitations, the testimonies of LGBT victims of armed conflict collected in the *Aniquilar la Diferencia (*CNMH, 2015) historical memory report exposed some of the official internal armed conflict narrative limitations. Even though the interviews carried out by the CNMH's research group were dedicated to collecting memories of the violence that armed actors have exerted against LGBTs in conflict-affected contexts, the CNMH reported that interviewees' narratives kept returning to the telling of their experiences of everyday violence. "[…] their voices insisted, many times, on talking about *the other violences*, those they have experienced in their families, schools, neighbourhoods, media, health system, Church, and other spaces not considered usually as war scenarios." (*emphasis added*, CNMH, 2015, p. 27). The CNMH argued that the "marked insistence" of LGBTs wanting to talk about these other violences represented two specific messages they wanted to incorporate into Colombia's historical memory. Firstly, as one of the social sectors that have endured the effects of structural violence for centuries, the LGBT population urge us to recognise that *the current armed conflict is only a fragment of a much longer history of violences*. Secondly, LGBT people insisted on stressing that the negative beliefs and representations that all armed actors (legal and illegal) have against non-normative genders and sexualities emerged from the same communities affected by armed conflict. In this sense, according to the CNMH, LGBTs argue that *Colombian society, in general, is also responsible for the actions of armed actors and the violence and marginalisation LGBTs have suffered across history.*

My thesis focuses on *other* possible narratives of armed conflict and violence in Colombia, taking these *dissident* messages as a point of departure. Through their insistence on changing the course of the internal armed conflict narrative, these LGBT voices point to the necessity of expanding the delimitation of the internal armed conflict (its temporality, actors, and dynamics) and how violence against LGBTIQ+ people is studied and conceptualised in Colombia. Building on this insistence, my research seeks to expand the CNMH's initial analyses, asking my first research question: *how do conflict-related and everyday violence intersect in the life course of people with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities*? However, instead of using "the armed conflict" analytical framework (its narrative, actors, and categories of analysis), my research design makes an analytical shift to explore how conflict-related violence

is part of a much larger phenomenon, which is the structural and historical violence that LGBTIQ+ people experience on an everyday basis. By introducing an *everyday approach* to the study of violence in the life course of LGBTIQ+ people, my thesis seeks to expand the existing empirical research on this topic and challenge some of the analytical conclusions presented by the historical memory report *Aniquilar la Diferencia* (CNMH, 2015) about how LGBTs perceive, name, and experience armed conflict, and violence in general.

The analysis presented in *Aniquilar la Diferencia* (CNMH, 2015) use the concept of "naturalisation" to explain how interviewed LGBTs, and their communities in general, perceive or understand violence against non-normative gender and sexualities. While there is no explicit definition of this concept in the document, it is used across the analysis in various ways. For example, the *Aniquilar la Diferencia* report concluded that as some research participants did not self-identify as "victims of armed conflict" or did not "recognise the human rights violations they have suffered in armed conflict as violence" (CNMH, 2015, p. 18), they had naturalised violence. According to this analysis, LGBTs "have gotten used to experiencing violence and have naturalised it to the point of not recognising it." (CNMH, 2015, p. 18). Additionally, the "naturalisation" concept is also used in the report's conclusions to explain why some LGBTs do not differentiate conflict-related violence events from the violence they experience in their everyday lives (CNMH, 2015, p. 120-121).

I find these conclusions problematic at various levels of analysis. Firstly, by arguing that LGBTs have "naturalised" violence because they did not name or define specific experiences using the terms of academic, legal, or political knowledge (i.e., "the victim of armed conflict", "human rights violation", "armed conflict", among others), these conclusions suggest that expert knowledge and its terminology is the only narrative capable of explaining victims' experiences and interpretations of violence – *violence is only visible through these categories*. In this way, these conclusions might overlook (and conceal) other understandings or ways to define violence that could be relevant to interviewees' contexts or to describe the specific life experiences of those who experience non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities. Secondly, the fact that LGBTs do not differentiate or separate the violent experiences they have suffered inside and outside war dynamics is immediately assumed as an apolitical standpoint, in which interviewees cannot recognise violence in their lives. I consider the "difficulty" of not differentiating conflict-

related violence from everyday violence an aspect worthy of further consideration as it might offer an alternative and critical standpoint from where to study violence in Colombia.

Sexuality and violence beyond the LGBTI acronym

The legal inclusion of people with non-normative genders and sexualities affected by armed conflict in Colombia's peace process and the implementation "post-conflict" phase has employed the "LGBTI" acronym to "categorise" the identity of these persons and recognise them as subjects of rights. Likewise, the historical memory work led by the CNMH has used the "LGBT" acronym to document the experiences of people with non-normative genders and sexualities targeted with specific forms of conflict-related violence. In both cases, these acronyms have created a monolithic subject position for a great variety of life experiences, subjectivities, and embodiments, reducing non-normative sexuality to "diverse sexual orientations". My thesis argues that using the LGBTI acronym to document the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people affected by armed conflict has produced descriptive and analytical silences while working through a narrow understanding of sexuality.

On the one hand, the LGBTI acronym is used as a single category for the registration of victims in national statistics. So, it is impossible to know precisely how many of these victims are lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (or how many identify with other categories of sexual dissidence). This misrepresentation is also present in the qualitative data gathered by historical memory reports, which aim to investigate the LGBTI population but focus primarily on the experiences of gay men and transgender women. Information about the experiences of lesbian and bisexual women, transgender men, and intersex people living in conflict-affected contexts is still scarce. On the other hand, the sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (on fewer occasions) of victims are placed as the leading cause of the violence these people suffer, giving less relevance to other categories of social difference as gender, class, and race.

Some of these problems of misrepresentation are an extension of past conflicts that emerged in the creation of the "LGBT social sector" during the failed peace negotiations between the Colombian government and FARC guerrillas in the early 2000s. The non-governmental

organisation *Planeta Paz* [Peace Planet] emerged during these negotiations, seeking to develop a popular agenda for peace. Various "popular social sectors"[14] were invited to participate in this national conversation, including unions, peasants, Indigenous people, Afro-descendants, women, youth, and the LGBTI sector. Following this call, a group of 63 activists from 11 cities, mostly comprised of gay men, with a few lesbians and bisexual people, and one transgender person, reunited as a population sector for the first time in 2001[15] (Serrano, 2013). The LGBT acronym was adopted in this meeting for the first time to represent the alliance that emerged from this space.

While the LGBT acronym worked effectively as a strategy of articulation among various local and regional efforts, its limitations in representing the diversity of identities, behaviours, and conditions of life of those comprising the LGBT social sector were openly discussed from the beginning. In 2002, *Planeta Paz* published a series of documents characterising each one of the popular social sectors participating in this initiative, including the LGBT sector. In the LGBT sector document, the authors argued that using the LGBT acronym symbolised an attempt to create a collective and the possibility of establishing connexions with national and international human rights fights and vindications. However, they also argued that using the LGBT acronym could invisibilise cultural, class, and religious differences, the mobility people experience during their lives, and alternative ways to name and understand one's gender and sexuality, among other factors (Planeta Paz, 2002). Therefore, the document affirmed that the term LGBT social sector was not a description of homosexual and transgender people in Colombia but a *political act* from various individual and group efforts to impact their social and cultural context from a particular condition (Planeta Paz, 2002, p. 12).

Despite these reflections, the LGBT sector dealt with internal problems of representation and uneven power dynamics. The first consolidation of the LGBT sector reflected the hierarchies of society, with a concentration of male, light-skinned, urban, middle to upper-class, and abled

[14] The concept “popular social sector” was used to denominate groups of new social actors historically subordinated and excluded as interlocutors from peace negotiations. The term “sector” sought to acknowledge the existence of collective subjects that organise to influence peace-making processes (Serrano, 2013).

[15] This was a highly emotional experience for many people as it was the first time they met with other gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans social leaders to share their life stories, discrimination, and leadership experiences (Serrano, 2013).

bodies (Bueno-Hansen, 2020)[16]. Differences also appeared in terms of interests and geographies. Since the beginning, regional differences arose, and the centralism of the sector, which functioned mainly in Bogotá, was problematised. One of these regional differences was the experience of armed conflict which impacted the rural areas, while the LGBT movement was more focused on urban centres. For this reason, the concern with "the armed conflict was marginal for much of the movement, according to LGBTI activists in rural areas" (Bueno-Hansen, 2020, p. 12). These regional differences were also present in the cultural capital and theoretical baggage different social leaders had. While the rural social leaders had more experience in grassroots local activism, urban social leaders had knowledge and experience in human rights and international activism. As the LGBT acronym was adopted as a political strategy to become part of the international lobby for human rights concerning sexual orientation and gender identity, the urban-based LGBT sector took the lead. It focused on crucial wins, such as marriage equality and the right of same-sex couples to adopt. Therefore, these legal struggles overshadowed many regional interests and needs that were ignored or postponed over the years.

These problems of representation permeated the subsequent inclusion of the LGBTI population in transitional justice mechanisms, reproducing some of the silences and omissions created by the use of the LGBT acronym. In response to this scenario, my thesis explores my second research question: *how sexuality and violence intersect in conflict-affected contexts.* However, instead of reducing sexuality to identity categories or the LGBTI acronym, my analysis takes a *queer feminist approach* to sexuality. Through this approach my thesis seeks to explore how the (re)production of sex and gender involves exclusionary norms, tensions, and negotiations, and differential exposure to violence. Aiming to develop a localised analysis, this approach introduces a Latin American perspective to consider how sex, gender, and sexuality are always (re)produced in relation to, or as constitutive of, race and class in the Colombian context. This broader approach to sexuality seeks to address how the (re)production of normativity (and the maintenance of the homosexual/heterosexual dichotomy) is intimately attached to various forms of violence and how the analysis of sexuality should always be located.

[16] From the early workshops organised by *Planeta Paz,* lesbian, bisexual, and trans women denounced the presence of patriarchal relations and gender subordination inside the movement. Additionally, the sector's composition reflected a gap between transgender people and gay men and lesbian women, which is still present and has to do with class status. After experiencing misogynous and transphobic events, lesbian, bisexual, and trans women separated from the sector to form a new network called *Nosotras LBT* (Bueno-Hansen, 2020).

Experience of violence beyond notions of victim and testimony

While the CNMH memory work has no judicial implications, its reports and analyses have somehow replicated the judicial imprints of the victim and testimony categories. In this way, the testimonies of LGBTs affected by armed conflict tend to be reduced to descriptions of violent acts (judicial evidence). The analyses of these testimonies tend to centre on identifying perpetrators of violence and conflict dynamics. Although much of this information has been collected using qualitative research methods (i.e., interviews, focal groups, and life stories), the voices of LGBT people appear most of the time in these research reports to confirm the repertoire of types of violence used by armed actors and the devastating consequences of this violence, but rarely to describe the interviewees' perceptions, interpretations, or emotions about these violent experiences. In this sense, the subjectivity of research participants is somehow overshadowed by the "internal armed conflict" and "LGBTI victim of armed conflict" narratives, which have structured not only how these testimonies are produced and collected but also how they have been shaped later by the researcher's interpretation.

My thesis argues that the subject position of the LGBTI victim of armed conflict helps endorse the official armed conflict narrative (and the envisioned peaceful resolution of conflict) and strengthens the legal struggles for recognising LGBT rights. However, this unique subject position also risks concealing or ignoring *other* possible narratives of violence, justice, and peace in Colombia. Seeking to recover the political power of testimonies of violence, my thesis listens to the *subjectivity* (Jelin, 2022) of those who have suffered violence because of their non-normative genders or sexualities. With this purpose, my research design includes the life story method to allow space for LGBTIQ+ people to develop a non-directed account of their life experiences and listen to their voices as *meaningful narratives*, not just as testimonies of fragmented violent events.

My thesis develops a queer feminist narrative analysis of interviewees' life stories to explore my third research question: *how people with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities endure, resist, and transform violent contexts*. Listening to research participants' voices as a narrative account seeks to acknowledge people's processes of meaning-making and interpretation of their life experiences and the social world in which they live. Thus, this

listening aims to focus not only on *what* happened but on the *how* and *why* it happened that emerge from people's understandings and interpretations as experts of their lives and as (active) social actors in specific contexts (see Chapter 3.). Aiming at contributing to the destabilisation of dominant narratives of violence, internal armed conflict, and sexuality in Colombia, my thesis thinks *with* and *from* life story interviews to recuperate memories and knowledges historically silenced or ignored. By locating research participants' voices and experiences at the centre of analysis, this research method intends to contribute to building history "from below" and co-producing bottom-up understandings of how violence operates in the everyday and life course of LGBTIQ+ people in Colombia.

By listening to life story narratives as situated and embodied knowledge, this thesis also seeks to contribute to the creation and promotion of *epistemological justice* (Colective Virus Epistemológico, 2020) for those individuals and communities violated and marginalised because of their non-normative genders and sexualities. This listening builds on the *Colective Virus Epistemológico*[17] [Epistemologic Virus Collective] critique of the "epistemological injustices" that emerge from the new and growing interest in including transgender voices in transitional justice processes. Joining together life experience, activism, and academic knowledge, the *Colective* proposes strategies through which epistemological justice can contribute to the collective reparation of transgender persons and communities. One of these strategies is widening the language and understanding of conflict and violence. Emerging from the life experiences and understandings of transgender people, the *Colective* suggests using the *multiconflicto* [multi-conflict] to shed light on how the experience of violence of persons with non-conforming genders or non-normative sexualities includes but transcends internal armed conflict. Explaining the emergence of this concept, the *Colective* argues: "when they ask us what do we think about the Colombian conflict? We answer that it can't be reduced to armed conflict. For trans people, everything is a conflict. We inhabit a *multiconflicto* in which all trans

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[17] Members: Laura Frida Weinstein, executive director of *Fundación Grupo de Acción y Apoyo a Personas Trans* (GAAT); Nikita Dupuis-Vargas, activist and MSc candidate in *Investigación en Problemas Sociales Contemporáneos*, Universidad Central; Ximena Chanaga Jerez, master candidate in *Estudios Culturales*, Universidad de los Andes; José Fernando Serrano Amaya, activist and Assistant Professor, *Departamento de Lenguas y Cultura*, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá (Colombia).

experiences are traversed by a conflict: going to the doctor, going out in the streets, enjoying public spaces, going to the supermarket" (2020, p. 81). While this thesis does not focus only on transgender life experiences, my analysis of interviewees' life story narratives seeks to explore, explain, and expose the *multiconflicto* LGBTIQ+ people inhabit, experience, and endure in the everyday.

I name these voices and narratives as *dissident* to address how they challenge official narratives of violence and (normative) sexuality in Colombia. In the Latin American context, *sexual dissidence* has been used to name those expressions and practices of sexuality that question or challenge the heteronormative regime and heterosexual matrix that structure modern societies (Butler, 2004). Thus, sexual dissidence also questions normative manifestations of non-heterosexual sexualities, meaning homonormativity (Duggan, 2003). Therefore, sexual dissidence differs from the expression "sexual diversity", which refers to the sum of various sexual identities (normative and non-normative). Unlike diversity, dissidence is relational and is in constant tension with a sexual norm that is unstable and entangled in changing relations of power. Dissidence emphasises that sexuality is not private or stable but entangled in complex systems of power (Rubino, 2019). Thus, sexual dissidence considers how certain practices, bodies, and identities become resistances inside power relations. Or, to put it differently, how they resist the reproduction of power and violence on an everyday basis.

Building on this perspective, I interpret the narratives collected and analysed in this thesis as dissident because, on the one hand, these expose specific forms of violence that exceed the official internal armed conflict narrative. On the other hand, these narratives exceed the sexual and gender identities considered in the LGBTI victim of armed conflict subject position and narrative, showing fluid and unstable non-normative sexualities. Additionally, I call these narratives dissident to emphasise how they expose multiple forms of everyday resistance against the (re)production of power structures, hierarchical social orders, and violent relations. Yet, it is important to emphasise that my use of the expression sexual dissidence is an analytical decision and not an explicit positioning of interviewees in this research. Also, sexual dissidence does not refer to a specific sexual identity (sexual dissident). It focuses on how non-normative sexual identities and non-normative sexuality, in general, can be used as political strategies to create

new forms of micro-political revolution, new affective and sexual politics, and new forms of pleasure and lifestyles (Rubino, 2019).

3. THESIS OUTLINE

The thesis is structured as follows. **Chapter 2** introduces the conceptual framework that guides my analysis of the interviewees' life story narratives in the subsequent analytical chapters. I start this chapter by introducing an *everyday perspective* to study violence against LGBTIQ+ people beyond the internal armed conflict official narrative. Drawing on feminist contributions to the study of war and conflict, my conceptual framework destabilises the dichotomies used in traditional conceptualisations of violence in times of conflict, such as *ordinary/extraordinary*, *private/public*, *conflict/post-conflict*, and *war/peace*. By introducing an *everyday perspective,* this conceptual framework proposes a twofold approach. First, my approach to violence identifies invisible, silent, routinised and normalised forms of *everyday violence*. Second, this approach sheds light on how everyday life is transformed in the engagement with violence and considers how subjects are shaped through and resist violent forms of socialisation. Additionally, this approach introduces a phenomenological perspective to conceptualise violence not as a one-time event but as an everyday process of social relationality that, no matter its nature (physical or symbolic), has an impact on how subjects perceive and make sense of the world, others, and themselves.

The chapter then moves on to introduce a *queer feminist approach to sexuality*. This approach seeks to broaden the understanding of how sexuality and violence intersect in conflict-affected contexts in Colombia. Building on queer feminist theorisations, this approach suggests that sex, gender, and sexuality are constructs that are produced and maintained through the work of power in societies. From this perspective, the (re)production of sex and gender involves exclusionary norms, tensions and negotiations, and differential exposure to violence. Aiming to develop a localised analysis, this framework draws on theorisations of sexual dissidence in the Latin American context. This conceptual framework locates the roots of violence against non-normative genders and sexualities in the colonisation process that began in the fifteen century and continues active (through reiterations and transformations) nowadays. Thus, crucial for this approach is to consider how sex, gender, and sexuality are always (re)produced in relation to, or

as constitutive of, race and class. Moreover, this approach considers how gender and sexual dissidence (practices, subjectivities, embodiments) resist, transgress, and transform violent social orders and structures in the everyday.

Chapter 3 details the methodology of the thesis. Addressing the power dynamics operating in the building and consolidating of official narratives of violence in the Colombian context, my methodology pursues a queer feminist approach that seeks to open space for co-producing alternative narratives and understandings of violence in Colombia. Through the various sections of this chapter, I provide an overview of my fieldwork activities, the complex political scenario in which I conducted the life story interviews, and the ethical considerations of my feminist research practice. I introduce the queer feminist narrative approach that guides my analysis of interviewees' life story narratives. Finally, I reflect on my location and positionality as the researcher that co-produces narratives, addressing issues of power and representation in the research process.

The following three chapters present this research's empirical findings and analytical contributions. Each analytical chapter emerged from various *narrative plots* I identified in the interviewees' life story narratives: *silence* (Chapter 4), *displacement* (Chapter 5), and *peace* (Chapter 6). In **Chapter 4**, I explore articulations between sexuality, violence, and silence. Through analysing the life story of three research participants (Miguel, Maira, and Claudia), this chapter explores how violence against LGBTIQ+ people in Colombia operates through official and everyday narratives that determine what is recognisable as violence and who is considered a victim or perpetrator of violence. In particular, my analysis in this chapter shows how the work of silence is crucial in the consolidation of these narratives, the reproduction of everyday violence, and the intensification of armed conflict. In this analysis, I explore various doings of silence. First, I explore the role of silence in the consolidation of hidden links between everyday violence and conflict-related violence in the life course of interviewees. Second, I explore silence as an everyday resistance practised by LGBTIQ+ people living in highly violent contexts. In this analysis, I trace daily negotiations between silence and speech and various strategic uses of silence to avoid and challenge violent official narratives. By listening to *queer acoustics* of everyday violence, this chapter shows how violence against LGBTIQ+ people works through

silence and speech and how they resist, challenge, and transform the violence embedded in historical silences and official narratives of violence in Colombia.

Chapter 5 focuses on *alternative narratives of displacement* in Colombia. In this chapter, I analyse narratives of displacement and (im)mobility experienced by LGBTIQ+ people, disclosing crucial connections between violence, sexuality, and movement inside and outside conflict-affected contexts in Colombia. Through the analysis of the life story narratives of three research participants (Elizabeth, Candelaria, and Nacho), Chapter 5 explores the phenomenon of displacement, not as a one-time conflict-related event but as a process of constant movement that shapes and *orients* the lives of LGBTIQ+ people in particular ways. My analysis in this chapter sheds light on alternative narratives of displacement that happen on the everyday and at smaller scales of analysis, such as the home, town/city, regions, and institutions. This chapter shows how sexuality is (re)configured through processes of displacement between different spaces, shedding light on how spaces are sexualised but also how sexuality is spatialised. By analysing interviewees' *processes of displacement*, my analysis in this chapter reveals how everyday violence and conflict-related violence work through the displacement of LGBTIQ+ people and how they resist, challenge and negotiate these violent conditions of life on a daily basis.

My analysis in **Chapter 6** focuses on how peace appeared in some interviewees' life story narratives, seeking to expand the empirical and theoretical comprehension of how LGBTIQ+ people participate and contribute to peacebuilding in Colombia. The chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, I explore interviewees' experiences and perspectives on the government-led implementation of peace and peacebuilding strategies that started operating under Victims' Law 1448 (2011) and continue working as part of the implementation of the Peace Agreement signed in 2016. Through the analysis of interviewees' narratives, I explore how the inclusion of LGBTI victims of armed conflict in peacebuilding initiatives and victims' reparation mechanisms operates on the everyday. In this analysis, I explore some of the gains and limitations of this inclusion, highlighting the everyday difficulties and blind spots of the "differential approach" through which LGBTI and other "vulnerable groups" are included in the implementation of peace and peacebuilding in Colombia. In the second section, my analysis detours from the government-led implementation of peace and peacebuilding and focuses on events, gestures, and manifestations of what I conceptualise as

intimate peace practice. Through the analysis of *queer disruptions of everyday violence*, this section explores *why* and *how* the lives and experiences of LGBTIQ+ people may bring an alternative epistemological perspective to the conceptualisation and study of peace and peacebuilding processes in this context. Drawing on the theoretical framework introduced in Chapter 2, this chapter explores peace as an embodied practice that occurs in the everyday, amid ongoing violence, and beyond or parallel to the implementation of peacebuilding led by the nation-state, its institutions, and transitional justice frameworks.

Finally, in the **Conclusion** (Chapter 7), I tie together the key findings and theoretical and methodological contributions of the thesis, and avenues for future inquiry. This chapter explains how silence, displacement, and peace helped me address my research questions in an integrative manner. I describe how the theoretical and methodological shifts that my thesis proposes (conceptualising violence beyond the armed conflict narrative, exploring sexuality beyond the LGBTI acronym, and listening to LGBTIQ+ people's subjectivity) opened new analytical paths to explore and explain how violence against LGBTIQ+ people operates and is resisted in the everyday, while moving between different spaces and temporalities. Additionally, I reflect on the specific contributions of studying and analysing violence from a queer feminist narrative perspective. Finally, I address future avenues of research, highlighting the need to promote and produce collaborative processes of research practice to work with LGBTIQ+ people and collectives, recognising them as epistemic agents and essential actors of social change in Colombia.

CHAPTER 2. ADDRESSING THE QUEER EVERYDAY *MULTICONFLICTO*

INTRODUCTION

The theoretical framework presented in this chapter emerges from the need to comprehend and analyse the multiple and varied ways in which *violence* appeared in the life stories of LGBTIQ+ people[18] collected in this thesis. These narratives confirm the need to expand violence's theorisation beyond the "internal armed conflict" and "LGBT victim of armed conflict" narratives to encompass the complexity of violence against LGBTIQ+ persons as a social phenomenon. Interviewees' life story narratives demonstrate that violence against gender and sexual dissidence takes different forms, works through different articulations, and connects micro and macro levels of society. Moreover, these narratives show that violence is interpreted differently by each interviewee, accounting for different processes of meaning-making, which are located in specific contexts and embodied by different subjectivities.

In this chapter, I pull together a series of feminist, queer, and critical theorisations to build an interdisciplinary conceptual framework to address this complexity. Firstly, this chapter introduces a conceptual framework to study violence in the everyday. This approach builds on feminist and critical theorisations (in Conflict & Peace Studies, Security Studies, International Relations Studies, and Anthropology) that challenge and destabilise the dichotomies used in traditional conceptualisations of violence in times of conflict, such as ordinary/extraordinary, private/public, conflict/post-conflict, war/peace.

[18] I use the LGBTIQ+ acronym to refer to people with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities (i.e., non-normative sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, sex characteristics, and sexual behaviours). It includes people self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, or any other identity, expression, or behaviour of sexual dissidence in this context. I use the LGBTIQ+ acronym when referring to the work of my research, the LGBT acronym when referring to the work of state-sponsored historical memory research, and LGBTI acronym when referring to the social mobilisation of gender and sexual diversity in Colombia.

By introducing an *everyday perspective,* this conceptual framework proposes a twofold approach. On the one hand, this approach explores how certain forms of invisible, silent, routinised, and normalised violence become part of societies and communities everyday. On the other hand, considering violence as a form of social relationality, this approach explores how everyday life is transformed in the engagement with violence and considers the multiple ways in which subjects are shaped through and resist violent forms of socialisation. Taking a phenomenological approach to violence, this conceptual framework considers how violence impacts how subjects perceive and make sense of the world, others, and themselves. Violence, from this perspective, is not reduced to a one-time violent event but is considered an embodied experience that shapes people's subjectivities in spatiotemporal terms.

Secondly, this chapter introduces a conceptual framework to theorise the articulations between violence, gender, and sexuality. Building on queer feminist theorisations, this approach suggests that sex, gender, and sexuality are constructs that are produced and maintained through the work of power in societies. From this perspective, the (re)production of sex and gender involves exclusionary norms, tensions and negotiations, and differential exposure to violence. Aiming to develop a localised analysis, this conceptual framework introduces a Latin American perspective to consider how sex, gender, and sexuality operate in the Colombian context. Building on theorisations of sexual dissidence in the Latin American context, this conceptual framework locates the roots of violence against non-normative genders and sexualities in the colonisation process that took place in the fifteen century and keeps happening (through reiterations and transformations) nowadays. Thus, crucial for this approach is to consider how sex, gender, and sexuality are always (re)produced in relation to, or as constitutive of, race and class. This theoretical framework proposes a queer feminist approach to study violence against gender and sexual dissidence in the Colombian context to expose specific forms and articulations of violence in the (re)production of (gendered, sexualised, racialised, and classed) social difference. Moreover, this approach considers how gender and sexual dissidence (practices, subjectivities, embodiments) resist, transgress, and transform violent social orders and structures in *the everyday*.

1. VIOLENCE *THROUGH* THE EVERYDAY

Everyday violence: from fragmented spectacularism to long *durée* ordinariness

Feminist scholars studying conflict, war, and security have incorporated the notion of the *everyday* to expand the conceptualisation of violence in conflict-affected and post-conflict settings[19]. These feminist theorisations destabilise various dichotomies used by traditional studies to study the phenomenon of violence. Deconstructing the dichotomy of *ordinary/extraordinary*, this critical approach suggests that violence is not only an exceptional event but also something that can be habitual and reoccurring (Innes & Steele, 2018). This approach argues that in parallel to the extraordinary, unique, condemnable, and punishable violence used in war and conflict, other forms of violence operate in societies everyday. Medical anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes proposes the concept of *everyday violence* to name the implicit, legitimate, routinised, and invisible forms of violence inherent in particular social, economic, and political formations (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004). According to Scheper-Hughes, various forms of everyday violence "are not invisible because they are secreted away and hidden from view, but quite the reverse" (1996, p. 889). On the contrary, these happen in broad daylight, in normative, ordinary social spaces, and are commonly legitimised by scientific knowledge, public discourses, and institutional power.

My thesis builds on Scheper-Hughes' concept of everyday violence to decentre the official internal armed conflict narrative in analysing violence against LGBTIQ+ people in Colombia. By focusing on everyday violence, my analysis sheds light on how parallel to the "spectacular" violence of armed conflict, the structures and social orders that create the everyday of LGBTIQ+ people operate through various violent mechanisms. This theoretical shift acknowledges the *slipperiness* of violence as a concept. So, instead of providing a closed definition of violence, I think of violence as a human condition (like madness, sickness, suffering, or death itself) present (as a capability) in each of us, as is its opposite – the rejection of violence (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004). However, this perspective rejects "the

[19] Cynthia Enloe, Carolyn Nordstrom, Donna Pankhurst, Nancy Chodorow, Cynthia Cockburn, Liz Kelly, Paul Kirby, Dubravka Zarkov.

common-sense view of violence as an essential, universal, sociobiological or psychobiological entity, a residue of our primate and prehistoric evolutionary origins as a species of hunter-killers" (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004, p. 3). Instead, it argues that culture, social structures, ideas, and ideologies shape all dimensions of violence (its expressions and repressions). Thus, in this thesis, I analyse violence not as an exception but as an everyday practice of everyday life (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004).

Following this feminist perspective, my analysis of violence against LGBTIQ+ people living in conflict-affected contexts challenges the dichotomy of war/peace. In this analysis, I consider that conflict-related crimes committed against LGBTIQ+ people are merely ordinary, "everyday crimes of public consent applied systematically and dramatically in the extreme context of war" (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004, p. 20). Thus, in the following analytical chapters, I shed light on *peacetime crimes*[20] (Scheper-Hughes, 1996) executed by social structures, public institutions, and regular people in the everyday. Following this feminist perspective, my analysis of violence against LGBTIQ+ people living in conflict-affected contexts does not think of conflict-related violence as an extraordinary event but as a magnification of other (invisible, silent, legitimate, ordinary) violent processes shaping the everyday of particular contexts in Colombia.

To explore how everyday violence and conflict-related violence intersect in the life course of LGBTIQ+ people, my approach expands the spatiotemporal delimitations of the official internal armed conflict narrative. I analyse how various forms of violence against LGBTIQ+ persons operate through a *continuum of violence*[21], that is, the constitutive relationship between different types of violence, from small acts of personal violence to large-scale institutional violence (Yadav & Horn, 2021). This feminist analysis deconstructs the dichotomy of *private/public* to shed light on gendered forms of violence that take place at

[20] Radical Italian psychiatrist Franco Basaglia proposed the concept of *crimini di pace* [peacetime crimes] to address the life conditions of state mental patients in Italy after the Second World War in terms of genocide (Scheper-Hughes & Lovell, 1987). Reflecting on the precarious and inhumane conditions in which patients lived in mental asylums, Basaglia wrote a series of anti-institutional essays entitled *Crimini di Pace* [Peacetime Crimes]. Basaglia saw in the therapeutic approach to these inmates a regime of violence, torture and terror, which contributed to their premature death, and described the hospital regime as a culture of institutional efficiency and indifference.
[21] The term "continuum of violence" was coined by Liz Kelly in 1988 to describe the normalisation of daily violence leading to sexual violence.

smaller scales of analysis (i.e., in the family home) or work in parallel to physical and armed violence. Feminist scholars in Conflict and Peace Studies argue that analysing gender and its power dynamics in relation to violence reveals how the lived experiences of people are, at once, personal and political (Cockburn, 2004, 2009). Hence, the gendered violence in the public and political realm and forms of private and personal violence are not separate categories of violence but a reflection of gendered social processes that form *chains of violence* (Lawrence & Karim, 2007). Building on this feminist perspective, I analyse how everyday violence and conflict-related violence intersect as part of a continuum of violence that shapes the life course of LGBTIQ+ people. In this analysis, I focus on micro and macro scales of analysis to show how violence against people living and embodying dissent genders and sexualities is always personal and political, extending across different spaces.

My analysis also builds on feminist theorisations that using the concept of the continuum of violence destabilise the dichotomy of *conflict/post-conflict* temporalities. From this perspective, conflict-related violence is conceptualised as an extension of the violence that operates in the everyday before, during, and after war and conflict. Some of these contributions highlight, in particular, the continuity of gender-based violence in war and peace (Boesten, 2014; Cockburn, 2004; Kelly, 1988; Swaine, 2018). My analysis of interviewees' life story narratives explores how violence against LGBTIQ+ people while operating through notions of gender and (normative) sexuality, blur the distinction between conflict/post-conflict or war/peace temporalities. I argue that no matter if violence occurs in times of conflict or so-called peace, various forms of gendered violence are simultaneously causes and consequences of discrimination, inequality, and oppression (Manjoo, 2012). However, in this analysis, I explore how resistance to and compliance with violence varies and carries various meanings in different contexts (Boesten, 2014). Hence, I analyse how violence against LGBTIQ+ people works through a continuum of violence that exceeds the conflict/post-conflict dichotomy and how it acquires different functions and meanings before, during, and after armed conflict contexts and temporalities.

Violence in the everyday: subjectivity and resistance

In addition to highlighting how multiple forms of (legitimate, normative, routinised) everyday violence operate in parallel to conflict-related violence in the life course of interviewees, my analysis in the following analytical chapters also considers how the *experience of violence* shapes interviewees' everyday life. Focusing on how violence operates in the everyday means shifting away from macro understandings of violence to focus on the micro-politics of the everyday. This perspective centres on the individual and the experiential, not only on structures and institutions of power. However, instead of assuming an isolated individual as is foregrounded by some approaches to violence, conflict, and security, a focus on the everyday "embeds an individual in their experiences, therefore rendering an individual who has familial and community relationships, a complex identity, and a fluid way of being in the world" (Innes & Steele, 2018, p. 152). According to this perspective, violence is not limited to physical or bodily harm, violence can be structural, and violence can be done to the person's way of being in the world and the body (Innes & Steele, 2018).

Feminist theorisations show how everyday life is transformed in the engagement with violence and explain how subjects are shaped through and resist violent forms of socialisation (Das et al., 2000). According to Veena Das (2007, 2008), when operating through the shaping of individuals' subjectivity, violence has the potential to make and unmake social worlds. Das stresses the need to consider how subjectivity – "the felt interior experience of the person that includes his or her positions in a field of relational power" (Das & Kleiman, 2000, p. 1) – is produced through the experience of violence. Das analyses the phenomena of violence thinking through the intersubjective character of experience. She argues that in violent contexts, subjectivity becomes the site of connection between the (presumed) separate, independent private and public spheres of social life (Das, 2008). Building on this feminist perspective, my research design included the life story research method (see Chapter 3) to listen to interviewees' *subjectivity* to explore how LGBTIQ+ people understand violence and how they endure, resist, and transform violent contexts.

In the following analytical chapters, I listen to interviewees' subjectivity to explore how they perceive and understand the phenomenon of violence. I elaborate a bottom-up analysis of

interviewees' experiences of violence building on the work of Colombian anthropologist Myriam Jimeno, whose critical work has challenged and enlarged the official narratives of violence in Colombia.

In her extensive research, Jimeno offers key theoretical contributions to the study of violence in Colombia. Firstly, Jimeno argues against thinking of violence outside its cultural and social context, considering it a generic characteristic of Colombians or an epiphenomenon of the social structure. Instead, Jimeno's theoretical approach defines violence as *social actions* and argues that to understand violence as a social phenomenon, it is necessary to analyse the specific context of relationships in which it happens and the motivations and valuations that drive subjects to use it (Jimeno, 2019). Secondly, Jimeno situates violence in the subjective consciousness of humans, defining subjectivity not as something merely personal or internal but following a Foucauldian perspective as a construction immersed in and in tension with sociocultural networks, institutions, historical forces, and social practices. Hence, Jimeno argues for understanding violence as a process and not solely a product. Thirdly, Jimeno suggests eliminating the dividing line between structural violence and subjective violence, as she considers these as interrelated. Jimeno's research shows how different levels and aspects of the social structure underlie individual violent practices but also how the violent actions of individuals impact, perpetuate or modify structural aspects (Jimeno, 2019).

Following Jimeno's theorisations (2019), I analyse violence as a *social action* and focus on interviewees' *common-sense* expressions around violence as the framework of meaning that explains and sustains violent action. Thus, instead of beginning the analysis from Colombia's political history and its inequalities, my analysis focuses on how interviewees (as culturally and socially situated subjects) narrated their everyday experiences to explore *how* and *where* these experiences of violence connect to social history (Jimeno, 2007). Thus, building on Jimeno's work, I recovered the interviewees' common sense as a cultural system and a source of knowledge. In the following analytical chapters, I seek to explain how LGBTIQ+ people experience, represent, and perceive violence in their everyday lives, but without removing from this micro-analysis of personal and familial experiences the wider picture of how this violence relates to larger processes of socialisation. In this analysis, I divide the violent action into three major components: the event, the network of relationships in which it occurs and the thoughts

and feelings involved in it, and how these are embedded in larger sociocultural circuits, making the social structure (fabric) something *vivo y en marcha* [alive and on the move] (Jimeno, 2019, p. 15).

I also listen to interviewees' subjectivities to explore how LGBTIQ+ people endure, resist, and transform violent contexts on a daily basis. Besides studying how violence operates and extends through the everyday and subjectivity, feminist critique has proposed the everyday as a site of resistance and transformation of violence. While some analyses argue that in highly violent contexts, the experience of violence may become *life as usual* (Green, 1999) (a tendency easy to find in analyses of the Colombian context), I build on Rebecca Walker's (2010) reflections to argue that everyday violence does not necessarily become normalised by those who suffer it. According to Walker, even though violence might become part of the everyday, people living in highly violent contexts constantly judge violence and conflict "against the way things could or ought to be" (2010, p. 12). Walker's perspective sheds light on forms of everyday life in violent contexts which cannot be understood through the juxtaposed categories of the ordinary and extraordinary. Violence is not judged as *extraordinary*; it becomes part of the everyday but is not necessarily perceived as *ordinary* or *normal* by those experiencing it.

This theoretical distinction allows exploring various ways violence and resistance coexist in the everyday. I build on Walker's perspective to highlight everyday activities, coping and resistance strategies, acts of creativity, hopes and desires that exist and work parallel to the oppressive everyday life of violence. I analyse interviewees' life story narratives shedding light on the fluidity of boundaries between the dichotomies of *suffering/agency* and *victim/perpetrator* (Walker, 2010). By breaking these dichotomies, Walker argues, it is possible to explore "what exists in that slippage between suffering and agency where people suffer, survive, resist, and also simply live: the *endurance* of the everyday" (2010, p 14). My analysis of interviewees' life story narratives identifies the myriad of acts, relationships, practices, and routines that happen parallel to violence; how LGBTIQ+ people *endure* the violent everyday. I explore how interviewees engage in the tasks of daily living, "reinhabiting the world in the full recognition that perpetrators, victims and witnesses come from the same social space" (Das et al. 2000, p. 2). Thus, in the following analytical chapters, I do not think of violence and resistance, suffering and

agency, or victim and perpetrator as separate categories of analysis but as in constant relation with each other and exploring what may exist in between these.

In order to listen to and analyse everyday resistance in interviewees' life story narratives, I follow psychotherapist Allan Wade's (1997) approach to violence and resistance. Wade suggests that dominant notions of resistance, associated with physical (male-to-male) resistance or pathologised by psychoanalytical perspectives, ignore and conceal other forms of everyday resistance to violence and oppression (Wade, 1997). Building on feminist and critical theories, Wade argues that people possess the pre-existing ability to resist violence and other forms of oppression, and such resistance is ever-present. Wade suggests that:

> […] any mental or behavioural act through which a person attempts to expose, withstand, repel, stop, prevent, abstain from, strive against, impede, refuse to comply with, or oppose any form of violence or oppression (including any type of disrespect), or the conditions that make such acts possible, may be understood as a form of resistance (1997, p. 25).

Wade recovers the phrase *small acts of living* (Goffman, 1961) to describe subtle and rapid, micro-level communicative behaviours that, under intense violence, become important devices for expressing resistance (Wade, 1997). However, the notion of *small acts of living* highlights that in the context of extreme violence in which any act of self-assertion may be met with brutal reprisals, "there is no such thing as a "small" act of living". Wade argues that "any act of resistance in such circumstances is inherently and profoundly significant, regardless of what it may appear to have accomplished" (1997, p. 32). Building on Wade's perspective, I argue in this thesis that "alongside each history of violence and oppression, there runs a parallel history of prudent, creative, and determined resistance" (Wade, 1997, p. 23). My analysis of interviewees' narratives sheds light on these small acts of living through which LGBTIQ+ people resist and challenge violence in the everyday. However, as argued by Wade, recognition of these forms of resistance "in no way precludes understanding and acknowledgement of the harm caused by violence and oppression" (Wade, 1997, p. 31). Therefore, my analysis avoids romanticising such forms of resistance as these do not stop violence necessarily and are not a substitute for a life of equality, respect, or in the absence of violence.

Experience of violence and the everyday: embodiment and relationality

My approach to violence conceptualises subjectivity as always embodied to explore how violence operates in the everyday, both as a productive and destructive force. According to Lauren Wilcox (2014), an analysis of the relationship between subjects, bodies, and violence brings light to "how violence can be understood as a creative force for shaping the limits of how we understand ourselves as political subjects, as well as forming the boundaries of our bodies and political communities" (p. 3-4). Thus, my conceptual framework places the lived body at the centre of analysis to explain crucial connections between the experience of violence, subject formation, and embodiment in the life course of LGBTIQ+ people.

To explain how the experience of violence works through the shaping of embodied subjectivities, my analysis in this thesis thinks through phenomenological understandings of the body. Building on the phenomenological work of Edmund Hursell and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, feminist theorists argue that bodies are not simply given (as "nature"), that bodies are differentiated, and that subjectivity and identity cannot be separated from specific forms of embodiment (Ahmed, 2000; Ahmed & Stacey, 2001; Braidotti, 2006; Butler, 1993; Grosz, 1994; Probyn, 2005; Weiss, 1999). The phenomenological notion of the body reveals that one is not "a subject separate from the world or from others or a mind cut off from matter and space". Instead, one is "a subject as a "being-to-the-world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. viii), a subject of perception and behaviour as well as cognition and reflection" (Grosz, 1994, p. 82). As one's being-to-the-world, the body is the instrument through which all information and knowledge are received, and meaning is generated (Grosz, 1994). This renewed understanding of the body has provoked the deconstruction of the relationship between self and other (Butler, 1993), depth and surface (Grosz, 1994), and between inside and outside (Braidotti, 2006), revealing that boundaries or contours of the body should not be taken for granted.

Building on this perspective, I conceptualise experience as located midway between mind and body; experience is always necessarily embodied, corporeally constituted, and located in and as the subject's incarnation (Grosz, 1994). My analysis of interviewees' life experiences suggests that the boundaries and surfaces of the body are not pre-given, and it recognises the social and cultural production of the body. Following this perspective, my analysis in the following

analytical chapters explores how the experience of violence impacts and shapes interviewees' embodied subjectivities and how the bodies of LGBTIQ+ people are socially and culturally produced as non-normative (as I explain further in the next section of this chapter).

To conceptualise violence from a phenomenological perspective, my conceptual framework introduces Michael Staudigl's (2011, 2013) theorisations of the *relational phenomenology of violence*. Based on the phenomenological conceptualisations of Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Staudigl's (2013) approach to violence examines *different faces of violence* in their intrinsic *relationality*. For Staudigl, discussing violence as a relational phenomenon requires two matters. First, to "consider those dimensions of our inter-corporeal existence in which the lived sense of violence develops in manifold ways without our active participation" (Staudigl, 2013, p. 45). Second, recognising that violence is not an *exception* to our intrinsic sociality but an "exemplary phenomenon of "negative sociality" (Hetzel et al., 2011) that is not only (though always) destructive in character but also and always the performer of poietic or socio-technological functions, whose subjective powers of sense-bestowal and, more importantly, powers of social formation cannot be ignored" (Staudigl, 2013, p. 45). From this perspective, "the social orders in which we move, perceive, and act are themselves *violent*" (p. 45). The violence of social orders is in no sense a sign of their dysfunctionality but essentially constitutive of them since orders function selectively and exclusively (Staudigl, 2013).

Staudigl's approach to violence is not focused on (intended) *injuries* but on "the ways we deal with manifold instances of *vulnerability*" (2013, p. 50). For Staudigl, the phenomenal core of the different faces of violence is its relation to the fact of humans' generic vulnerability; being vulnerable (suffering), being able to exploit the other's vulnerability (exerting), and having a basic sensibility for the vulnerability of others (witnessing) violence. Therefore, Staudigl suggests that "violence must be thought fundamentally in relation to our lived embodiment and affectivity" because "no matter how violence affects our self-relational integrity and/or the claims rooted therein, our embodied existence functions as the ultimate point of reference for all violence" (2013, p. 51). Drawing on this approach, I analyse how violence is a form of social relationality that works through the lived body.

Understanding violence through this perspective "means that violations and the experience of violence are mediated by the body and its symbolic-semantic shaping regardless of their origin, physical or not" (Staudigl 2013, p. 51). Embodiment, self and sense-constitution are intrinsically interrelated, understanding that "constitution" implies a relational event and the "appropriation of the world as a context of sense in perception, thought, action, interaction and, correlatively, in the constitution of our own selves" (Staudigl 2013, p. 52). Thus, Staudigl argues that when one of these levels is violently attacked, they are always all affected. He explains:

> *physical violence* […] not only affects the objective body, but also the lifeworldly idealisations of our "I can" and, therefore, our habitual openness to the world […] *psychological* (e.g., verbal) violence always has an effect on pour bodily movement in our surrounding social world and on our "orientation" in it (see Ahmed, 2007). *Structural violence* […] interferes in the habit formation of the subject, thereby creating "docile bodies" that silently accept the discriminating social (e.g., legal) structures that shape them and their possibilities of (self-)perception, interpretation and action (see Bourdieu, 2002) […] *cultural violence*, it attacks the "collective bodily existence" (Husserl, 2008) of the subject, i.e., the silently shared patterns of its inter-corporeal existence alongside which the individual "I can" primordially develops and realises itself in a pre-given cultural nexus. Thus […] different forms of violence attack the different ways in which we realise and understand ourselves as irreducibly embodied beings (Staudigl 2013, p. 52).

Drawing on Staudigl's theorisation, my approach considers that violence is a *constitutively twofold facticity, that is, both affective/bodily and symbolic/meaningful* (2013, p. 52). In this sense, "there is neither a pure physical violence – since it is always already symbolically over-determined – nor is there a purely symbolic violence, i.e., one that would not softly and silently be engrafted onto our bodies in the 'back of one's consciousness'" (Staudigl, 2013, p. 52-53). I draw on Staudigl's theorisation to argue that violence is not only directed against the body's physical integrity but also attacks its pervasive role in the generation of sense. Through this perspective, it can be argued that "violence destroys the ways we make sense of the world, others, and ourselves" (Staudigl, 2011, p. 202). Violence "not only violates our bodily integrity and destroys the generatively incorporated ways we inhabit our world; it also changes,

undermines and potentially destroys the ways we make sense of ourselves" (Staudigl, 2011, p. 202).

My analysis of interviewees' life story narratives introduces Staudigl's theorisation to explore how violence as an embodied experience has many faces that alter how people generate a sense of the world, others, and themselves. By incorporating this perspective, my analysis seeks to trace how violence transcends spatiotemporal delimitations of the act of violence (or conflict-related violence in the case of the armed conflict narrative). Vittorio Bufacchi & Jools Gilson (2016) argue that when analysed as a phenomenological experience, violence is characterised by a "temporal indeterminacy", which they call the *ripples of violence*, "what starts as an act of violence, with a precise starting point and an endpoint, evolves into an experience, with much broader and unclear boundaries" (2016, p. 32). Drawing on this perspective, in my analysis in the following chapters, I consider violence as a process of social relationality that involves violent events but evolves across time and space into embodied experiences, shaping people's experience of the everyday and their sense of self.

2. QUEERING VIOLENCE

In order to explore how everyday violence intersects with sexuality, my analysis of interviewees' life story narratives takes a queer feminist approach. Instead of adding sexual diversity (interpreted most of the time as non-normative sexual orientation or gender identity) as another "variable" in the analysis of violence and armed conflict in Colombia, my approach argues that *queering violence* in this context entails a broader scope of analysis. As explained in the Introduction of the thesis (Chapter 1), historical memory reports document the experiences of people with non-normative sexualities affected by armed conflict in Colombia, assuming fixed sexual and gender identities (delimited by the LGBT acronym). This documentation has disclosed how conflict-related violence targeted LGBT people because of their non-normative sexuality and how armed groups instrumentalised this violence to exert control over populations. However, by centring sexual orientation and, in some cases, gender identity/expression in the analysis, these reports provide a narrow understanding of sexuality and the nature and implications of violence against LGBTIQ+ people. In this section, I introduce a queer feminist

approach to broaden the analysis of *how sexuality and violence intersect* in conflict-affected contexts in Colombia.

Gender, sex, and sexuality: normative violence and precarity

By documenting experiences of LGBT people affected by armed conflict in Colombia using the LGBT acronym, historical memory reports assume that sexual and gender identities are fixed, stable, and essential. Additionally, the sexual diversity framework behind the LGBT acronym reaffirms the homosexual/heterosexual dichotomy without questioning the artificial creation and maintenance of sex, gender, sexuality, and heterosexuality as organising principles in the construction of hierarchies of normal sexuality and intimacy. Likewise, the analysis of the CNMH[22] tends to separate "women's issues" from "sexual diversity issues" – even creating separate research groups denominated "gender group" and the "LGBTI issues group". Through this separation, these analyses delink sex from sexual orientation (assuming all "women" are cisgender and heterosexual) and sexuality from gender (centring sexual orientation in the analysis of sexuality). In response to these limitations and seeking to explore the intersections between sexuality and violence in conflict-affected contexts, my analysis in this thesis builds on queer and feminist theorisations of sexuality.

My approach to sexuality argues that gender and sex difference are not natural but social constructs produced and maintained through the work of power in societies. In *Undoing Gender* (2004), Judith Butler problematises the assumption that gender reflects natural sex differences and proposes that sex difference is the result of constructed gender differences. This approach does not deny physical difference but suggests that the interpretation of physical difference, and the social and political consequences of that interpretation, frame the lives that we can live. According to this approach, sex, gender and sexuality are performed repetitively and become naturalised.

Building on Foucault's notion of power, Butler argues that historical and cultural processes expressed in institutions, discourse and practice have a naturalising effect on our understanding of the order of things, including understandings of male and female and

[22] *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica* [National Centre of Historical Memory].

heteronormativity. Building on Foucault's theorisations of biopolitical power, Butler analyses how rules, regulations, and norms establish physical and social life possibilities. When working through institutions, discourses and practices, these norms enable life and, at the same time, restrict the possibilities of how life can be lived. When norms become part of the everyday, these produce a process of *normalisation,* which is the process whereby the norm "is acted out in social practice and re-idealised and reinstituted in and through the daily social rituals of bodily life" (Butler, 2004, p. 48). From this perspective, norms are not necessarily applied by the state or bureaucratic power but are also reproduced and maintained by society. Butler argues that regulative discourses and the power of repetitive performance reproduce norms.

Based on this perspective, Butler (2004) proposes the concept of *normative violence* or the violence inflicted by normalised frameworks that organise social worlds. For Butler, norms are violent as these impose restrictions on what we can and cannot do at the most personal and intimate level of life. On another level, Butler argues that norms produce violence upon those bodies, subjects, and communities that break the norm. As those who *become* beyond or outside existing normative frameworks of truth become unintelligible and non-existent, these bodies need to be corrected or eliminated by society. One example of such violence is the surgical adaptation of intersex bodies to become intelligible in terms of sex and to conform to prevailing understandings of gender.

Normative violence is not physical per se, but resistance to normative violence may result in actual physical violence. According to Butler, normative violence makes physical violence possible and, often, invisible. Normalised violence becomes invisible because it is perpetrated in response to social transgression. This way, normalisation justifies such violence and turns the blame upon its victim. Operating through this logic, violence against those with non-conforming genders or non-normative sexualities is exerted and justified. Hence, normative violence sets the conditions for ordinary, invisible, everyday violence perpetrated against bodies perceived as breaking the norms.

My analysis takes Butler's theorisation of sex, gender, sexuality, and normative violence as a point of departure to explore how sexual and gender difference is socially constructed and violently imposed in conflict-affected contexts. My analysis seeks *to queer* the study of violence

against LGBTIQ+ people by challenging the notion of heterosexuality as "normal" sexual behaviour. With this purpose, my analysis focuses on how heteronormativity structures social and political realities in conflict-affected contexts. The deconstruction of the binary heterosexual/homosexual has revealed that modern knowledge articulates heterosexuality as the norm of human sexuality, constructed as a default position in society (Berlant & Warner, 1998; Chambers, 2009; Sedgwick, 1990; Warner, 1993), in which to be human is to be heterosexual, and the heterosexual experience is synonymous with human experience (Lloyd, 2013). Through a normalisation process, heterosexuality becomes the norm in opposition to homosexuality, which is depicted as the other. The concept of *heteronormativity* emerges from these critiques to refer to "the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent – that is, organised as a sexuality– but also privileged" (Warner, 2002, p. 309). As such, the analysis of heteronormativity reveals multiple ways in which "heterosexual privilege is woven into the fabric of social life, pervasively and insidiously ordering everyday existence" (Jackson, 2006, p. 108). Thinking through the concept of heteronormativity, my analysis explores the role of violence against LGBTIQ+ people in maintaining power relations and social realities that are dependent on normative notions of sexuality.

To analyse the social and embodied consequences of normative violence in the life course of LGBTIQ+ people, my approach introduces Butler's theorisations of *precarity* (Butler, 2009) and its relationship with sex and gender difference. In Butler's perspective, precarity "designates that politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death" (2009, p. 2). Butler argues that such populations are at heightened risk of disease, poverty, starvation, displacement, and exposure to violence without protection. Precarity for Butler also "characterises that politically induced condition of maximised vulnerability and exposure for populations exposed to arbitrary state violence and to other forms of aggression that are not enacted by states and against which states do not offer adequate protection" (2009, p. 2). Butler links the concept of precarity to gender norms, arguing that those who do not live their genders in intelligible ways are at heightened risk for harassment and violence. Butler argues:

> Gender norms have everything to do with how and in what way we can appear in public space, how and in what way the public and private are distinguished, and how that distinction is instrumentalised in the service of sexual politics; who will be criminalised on the basis of public appearance; who will fail to be protected by the law or, more specifically, the police, on the street, on or the job, or in the home (Butler, 2009, p. 2).

My analysis in the following chapters explores how LGBTIQ+ people are exposed to various forms of everyday violence because of their non-normative way of embodying and living their gender and sexuality. In this analysis, I highlight how LGBTIQ+ people living in conflict-affected contexts are exposed to conflict-related violence in differential ways (in comparison to other victims of armed conflict) due to the lack of state protection and social and economic networks.

Extending the notion of *embodied subjectivity* introduced in the previous section of this chapter, my analysis of sexuality explores how normative violence produces non-normative bodies that are exposed to violence in specific ways. In Butler's perspective, the body's materiality has a history and a politics; it is "a process of materialisation that stabilises over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter" (Butler, 1993, p. 9). The idea of a biological, natural body is itself founded on a set of violent exclusions and the erasure of the process of materialisation that determines the intelligibility of bodies. Thus, Butler's concept of normative violence names a form of violence that pre-exists the subject because bodily norms produce certain bodies that fall outside the norm. To be a subject at all requires first complying with certain norms that govern recognition – that make a person recognisable. And so, "non-compliance calls into question the viability of one's life, the ontological conditions of one's persistence" (Butler, 2009, p. 4). Normative violence establishes which lives will be livable, making certain bodies subject to violence. In this way, the performativity of gender is thus bound up with the differential ways in which subjects become eligible for recognition. There are sexual and gender norms that condition what and who will be *legible* and what and who will not. In this way, the reproduction of gender norms within ordinary life is always a negotiation with forms of power that condition whose lives will be more liveable and whose lives will not. Thus, precarious life characterises such lives that are not recognisable, readable, or

grievable. Precarity is a rubric that brings together women, queers, transgender people, the poor, and the stateless (Butler, 2009).

Taking this approach as a point of departure, my analysis does not think of non-normative sexuality in terms of fixed sexual and gender identities (LGBTI). Instead, my analysis of interviewees' life story narratives explores how the LGBTIQ+ body is produced as outside normativity, becoming an illegible and less liveable body. However, this analysis also considers how LGBTIQ+ people resist these impositions. Butler suggests that the ongoing practices through which the body is produced as natural and biological also hold the potential for alteration and resistance. From this perspective, gender is performative, a certain kind of enactment. According to Butler, gender is prompted by obligatory norms to be one gender or the other, the reproduction of gender is always a negotiation with power, and there "is no gender without this reproduction of norms that risks undoing or redoing the norm in unexpected ways, thus opening up the possibility of a remaking of gendered reality along new lines" (Butler, 2009, p. 1). However, this possibility of resistance or subversion only happens within the frames of the norms we perform on an everyday basis. Butler argues against the idea of a sovereign subject that acts by decision. Instead, she suggests that resistance or subversion might happen because a certain historical convergence of norms at the site of embodied personhood opens up possibilities for action (Butler, 2009).

A queer approach to coloniality

Theoretical and political proposals *from*[23] Latin America challenge current narratives that suggest that globalisation has allowed groups and people with non-normative genders and sexualities to live better lives worldwide (Falconí, 2021). These proposals acknowledge the significant increase in recognition of certain LGBTI rights (i.e., sexual and reproductive, family, and personal integrity, among others) and positive political and media representation of non-heterosexual subjects and practices. Nonetheless, this critique suggests that this "progress" narrative is based on a "moral advancement provided by the European culture" and so needs to

[23] From includes Latin American activists, artists, and scholars living abroad and some of them working in North American and European universities.

be challenged to avoid the reproduction of universal narratives that are not critical of inequalities based on race, class, and nationality (Falconí, 2021, p. 300). Thus, it is essential to consider how sex, gender, and sexuality have particular histories in specific contexts in order to address historical processes of domination and oppression.

Building on these critiques, my approach to violence against LGBTIQ+ people in Colombia argues that gender, sex, and sexuality operate through relations of power that are rooted in the violent colonisation process that began in the fifteenth century. The arrival of the Spanish invasion in *Abya Yala*, known today as America, caused millions of Indigenous deaths, the kidnapping of millions of Africans who were enslaved and assassinated, and the birth of millions of "mixed" bodies in these territories. This violent colonisation process involved the imposition of corporeal practices and subject formations. Research has shown that in this period, non-normative sexual practices, gender expressions, and non-binary subjectivities found in Indigenous communities were punished and prohibited by the European colonisation (Esguerra, 2006; Horswell, 2013), causing a "gender genocide" and a process of cultural imposition (Falconí, 2021, p. 301). While the acceptance of these non-normative and non-binary sexual expressions was not homogeneous across Indigenous communities,[24] the colonisation process imported the notion of sodomy to classify all sexual practices and gender expressions "outside" the binary, heterosexual (and racial) *sex/gender system* (Lugones, 2007) imposed in these communities as sinful behaviour, which later evolved as a criminal act.

Taking a queer perspective, my analysis grounds violence against Colombian LGBTIQ+ people regionally and historically and exposes the colonial ontological underpinnings of violence and erasure that endure to the present (Quijano, 2000). In this way, my analysis deepens the continuum of violence argument showing that violence against LGBTIQ+ people not only exceeds the spatiotemporal delimitations of armed conflict but also is foundational to patterns of social relationality violently imposed in colonial times. By analysing the interviewee's life story narratives through this approach, my thesis seeks to trace how as a legacy of colonial violence, violence against LGBTIQ+ people is justified through knowledge systems, social formations, and institutional apparatus that uphold its impunity in the present.

[24] See Esguerra (2006) for differences across Indigenous communities located in what is known today as Latin American territories and in Colombia specifically.

According to Pascha Bueno-Hansen (2017), transitional justice scholarship fails to address historical patterns of violence. It supports narratives of exceptionalism, given its focus on legal and institutional solutions to political problems in the short term. Bueno-Hansen suggests incorporating an intersectional, queer and decolonial approach in transitional justice to address violence against LGBTIQ+ people in Latin America. Through this approach, Bueno-Hansen argues, it is possible to bring light to how the enduring male/female (and consequently the homosexual/heterosexual) binary imposed by Spanish and Portuguese colonialism justifies violence inflicted upon those that do not comply. This is reflected in the "unbroken trajectory of colonial ontological references and preserved knowledge regarding gender and sexuality in the Américas" (Bueno-Hansen, 2017, p. 141), which is maintained and justified through religious and moral discourses. Likewise, this violence "continues through the current limited access to citizenship and justice for LGBTI populations" (2017, p. 141). Therefore, according to Bueno-Hansen, a queer decolonial approach "provides the opportunity to radically shift ontological reference points, acknowledge the unconditional humanity of LGBTI people and uphold full LGBTI citizenship" (2017, 141).

Considering this historical context is crucial to understand that sex, gender, and sexuality are social constructs constitutively attached to other categories of social difference, such as race, class, and nationality in the Latin American context. An analysis of violence against non-normative genders and sexualities that only considers "sexual orientation' or "gender expression" as categories of analysis remains insufficient as it risks obscuring other axes of power at play. My analysis in the following chapters considers how sexuality intersects with categories of race and class, determining how some LGBTIQ+ people are more exposed to violence than others.

Sexual dissidence in Latin America

As mentioned in Chapter 1, my thesis dwells on the limitations of legal achievements in LGBT rights and the inclusion of the LGBTI victim of armed conflict in the transitional justice mechanism, shedding light on the persistent gap between legal recognition and cultural change. Besides exposing how the notion of normative sexuality structures social orders and institutions, as argued at the beginning of this section, my analysis in the thesis highlights that racial and class hierarchies determine which LGBTIQ+ people may benefit (or not) from legal recognition and

protection achieved by the LGBTI human rights discourse. My analysis builds on the work of sexual dissidence Latin American authors who, since the 1970s, have questioned the *inclusion* of gender and sexual dissidence through (modern-colonial) capitalist projects of democratisation and citizenship.

Works such as *El beso de la mujer araña* by Manuel Puig (Argentina), *Lugar sin límites* by José Donoso (Chile), *Tengo miedo torero* by Pedro Lemebel (Chile), and *El vampiro de la colonia Roma* by Luis Zapata (México) show the marginal life conditions in which racialised and impoverished gender and sexual dissidents live in these contexts, in contrast with high-class masculine homosexualities. The work of Néstor Perlongher, poet and founder of the *Frente de Liberación Homosexual* [Homosexual Liberation Front] in Argentina, questions the double standard of societies that accept different forms of sexual and gender dissidence without abandoning various forms of violence, harassment and public scorn. The work of these authors focuses on the marginality that emerges from not following normative notions of sex, gender, and sexuality in contexts affected by political violence and dictatorships. However, this work emphasises how race and class status determine the types of violence suffered by sexual and gender dissidents. These authors use literary accounts to describe how the lack of access to education or health systems, job instability, and extreme poverty exposes racialised and impoverished gender and sexual dissidents to extreme violence.

These authors identify other forms of sexual dissidence traversed by processes of social marginalisation in addition to gender and sexuality. For example, the work of Perlongher and Lemebel reflects on the figure of *la loca de barrio*, a figure of *travestismo popular* [popular transvestism], as a form of sexual dissidence that is negated by homosexual masculine elitists groups that seek approval and incorporation into normative orders. For these authors, *la loca de barrio* exposes the social exclusion based on race and class that some gender and sexual dissidents suffer every day. *La loca de barrio,* along with other sexual dissidents like homosexual and transgender sex workers, represents *other* political struggles and the denunciation of pervasive violence and precarious living conditions. This sexual dissidence is not interested in pursuing political fights to recognise LGBT rights like same-sex marriage or adoption. Thus, this notion of sexual dissidence emerges in tension with the standards of gender and sexuality in the modern liberal capitalist order of society.

Building on these critiques, my analysis in this thesis explores how class and racial differences among LGBTIQ+ people determine different life trajectories and experiences of violence. I argue that this approach is essential for explaining *how* and *why* armed conflict and everyday violence have a differential impact on LGBTIQ+ people living in rural areas or marginal locations within urban centres. As explained in the Introduction (Chapter 1), the armed conflict has particularly affected racialised and impoverished populations living in the country's rural areas, accentuating historical violences and inequalities. Informed by this approach, my analysis of interviewees' life story narratives explores how racialised and impoverished LGBTIQ+ people are exposed to particular forms of violence (in comparison to privilege populations living in urban centres) and how differences of class and race among LGBTIQ+ rural populations determine how everyday violence and conflict-related violence intersect in the life course of interviewees.

This analytical perspective seeks to bring back the work of León Zuleta, academic, activist, and founder of the *Frente de Liberación Homosexual* [Homosexual Liberation Front] in Colombia. While Zuleta was a leader of the homosexual cause in Colombia, his idea of liberation was not limited to sexual orientation. In his work, Zuleta argues that liberation was the revolution of all structures and institutions that caused social oppression in the country. In his magazine *El Otro* (1977-1979), Zuleta elaborated a critique of the institutions that pathologised homosexuality, wrote about the relationship between homosexuals and other oppressed subjects (including men, women, children, heterosexuals, homosexuals, bisexuals), and interpellated dominant masculinity and mandatory heterosexuality in modern societies. According to Jose Fernando Serrano Amaya, Zuleta's work did not represent a collective subject that wanted to "get out" of repression (i.e., the depathologisation or decriminalisation of homosexuality) but one that was looking for liberation (Serrano, 2012). By exposing how sexuality is constitutive of racial and class systems of oppression and marginalisation, my thesis seeks to open questions about the possibilities and limitations of discourses and social mobilisations that argue for the inclusion of sexual diversity (articulated as LGBTI population) in official narratives of violence in the Colombian context through narrow understandings of sexuality.

Similarly, my approach argues that instead of using globalising identities (such as those grouped under the LGBTI acronym or the "gay identity"), it seems crucial to explore political

and theoretical proposals developed locally to name and understand specific knowledges and subjectivities that emerge in this context. Making this analytical move is essential to consider how sexual, and gender identities (LGBTI) might create violent exclusions based on race, class, and nationality and to recognise *loca-lized* (Ochoa, 2008) subjectivities, practices, and ethics that question and subvert normative (violent) notions of sex, gender and sexuality. Although violence and discrimination against gender and sexual dissidents is a global phenomenon, the representational and resistance strategies are culturally located (Sierra, 2008).

Arguing that identities and subject positions are constantly developing and redefining through language, space, time, and social interactions, my analysis explores interviewees' sexuality outside the frames of LGBTI fixed identities. I retain the use of the LGBTIQ+ acronym to refer to gender and sexual dissidence, as some interviewees in this thesis self-identified using some of these identity categories (i.e., lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex). However, my analysis in the following chapters explores how these gender and sexual categories are modified, subverted, transformed, resisted, and challenged by interviewees across their life trajectories. It also explores local meanings, practices, and embodiments outside normativity or the LGBTI sexual and gender identities. In this analysis, I build on Latin American authors that explore local practices and subjectivities that may emerge outside the LGBT global identities and dichotomies, such as homosexual/heterosexual, female/woman, and male/man (Campuzano, 2006, 2009; Falconí, 2021). Through this analysis, I shed light on how interviewees *queer* or destabilise gender and sexual identities and how this *queering* not only exposes the violence of normativity but may also transform violent contexts.

Latin American scholars have questioned if queer theory and decolonial thinking might find a common path to work together, despite the modern, North-centred origins of the former Problematising the relationship between sexual citizenship and liberal democracy, Leticia Sabsay (2013) argues that considering a queer perspective in the Latin American context and elsewhere might imply not only the destabilisation of the sexual identity categories (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and even queer) but also the deconstruction of the domain categories that contain the semantic fields in which sexual identities are signified; sexuality, citizenship, and politics. According to Sabsay, it is in the implied universality of these domain categories – the conditions of intelligibility – that a queer decolonial perspective should intervene. Building on

Sabsay's perspective, my analysis in this thesis does not use the term queer to refer to a specific identity category or subject position. Instead, I use the term *queer* or *queering* to designate practices, movements, dislocations, and resignifications that challenge, transgress, and transform normative social and cultural structures and hierarchical social orders. Hence, following a queer feminist approach in this context, my analysis focuses on how interviewees live and embody queer sexualities or gender and sexual dissidence, transgressing the parameters of normative sexuality and considers how these embodied subjectivities challenge and transform modern state formations. Thus, this analysis considers how interviewees' embodied subjectivities are shaped by the experience of violence but also by changes and readjustments they perform in response to narratives offered by their social and cultural location.

CONCLUSION

This chapter introduces an interdisciplinary queer feminist conceptual framework to analyse how violence operates in the everyday of people with non-normative genders and sexualities in the Colombian context. This theoretical framework emerges from the life story narratives collected in this thesis and seeks to encompass the multiple and varied understandings and interpretations of violence included in these narratives. By joining together feminist contributions to Conflict & Peace Studies, Security Studies, International Relations, and Transitional Justice Studies, queer theorisations of sexuality, and Latin American perspectives of sexual dissidence, this conceptual framework seeks to provide an integral and interdisciplinary approach to the study of the life trajectories of LGBTIQ+ people living in conflict-affected contexts.

My analysis of the interviewees' life stories in this thesis builds on feminist theorisations of war and conflict to show how the life trajectories of LGBTIQ+ people blur the dichotomies of *ordinary/extraordinary* and *conflict/post-conflict* violence and *war/peace*. Thinking through the concepts of *everyday violence*, *violence continuum*, and *peacetime crimes*, the analysis presented in the following chapters argues that conflict-related violence against LGBTIQ+ people in Colombia could be understood as a magnification of different forms of violence that have historically shaped the life trajectories of those located outside the confines of normative

sexuality. However, my analysis sheds light on the different meanings these violences acquire according to specific contexts or temporalities (before, during, and after armed conflict).

Following an everyday perspective, in this thesis, I think of violence as *social actions* located in social and cultural contexts and particular social relations; as a social process and not an isolated or extraordinary event; and as a process that operates through bidirectional interactions between the macro-level of social structures and the micro level of human subjectivity. However, acknowledging the differences between the categories of *ordinary* and *normal*, my analysis also explores the everyday as a site of resistance and transformation of violence. In the following chapters, this thesis shows how LGBTIQ+ people *endure* violent everyday life conditions and sheds light on the s*mall acts of living* through which these persons have resisted violence and perpetuated their lives.

Introducing a phenomenological approach to violence, my analysis of the life story narratives of interviewees thinks of violence not as a mere one-time event but as an everyday process of social relationality that, no matter its nature (physical or symbolic), has an impact on how subjects perceive and make sense of the world, others, and themselves. In the following analytical chapters, I explore how violence as a phenomenon extends and (re)produces across different temporalities (as an embodied experience lingering in conscious and unconscious bodily/affective memory) and spaces (affecting how bodies inhabit, move, or stay put in physical and symbolic spaces) through subjects' embodied subjectivity.

By introducing a queer approach to sexuality, my analysis of interviewees' life story narratives explores how *normative violence* operates in the everyday of those with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities. In this analysis, I think of sex, gender, and sexuality as constructs produced and maintained through the work of power to consider how violence is crucial for the (re)production of normativity in conflict-affected contexts. Following this approach, I consider how the *performativity* of gender is directly linked with (induced) *precarity* and processes of social marginalisation that expose LGBTIQ+ people to specific forms of violence. Finally, I consider how LGBTIQ+ people resist and subvert everyday violence through everyday *queerings* of the social world.

Introducing a queer perspective to the study of precarity and violence against LGBTIQ+ people in the Latin American context, my analysis in the following chapters highlights the crucial legacies of coloniality and subsequent intersections between sex, gender, sexuality and social categories of race and class in the Colombian context. I argue this approach is essential for explaining how and why the armed conflict has a differential impact on the lives of gender and sexual dissidents according to their racial and class status. In addition, building on the work of sexual dissidence Latin American authors, my analysis explores how racialised and impoverished LGBTIQ+ people are exposed to particular forms of violence (in comparison to privilege populations living in urban centres) and how differences of class and race among LGBTIQ+ rural populations determine how everyday violence and conflict-related violence intersect in the life course of interviewees. Finally, my analysis in the following chapters explores local practices and subjectivities that may emerge outside the LGBT global identities and modern dichotomies, such as homosexual/heterosexual, female/woman, and male/man. In this analysis, I explore how gender and sexual categories are modified, subverted, transformed, resisted, and challenged by interviewees across their life trajectories. I analyse how interviewees *queer* gender and sexual identities, emphasising how this *queering* exposes the violence of normativity and may also transform violent contexts.

CHAPTER 3. DISSIDENT NARRATIVES

INTRODUCTION

> It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories.
>
> Donna Haraway (2016, p. 12)

Building on the work of feminist and critical scholars that have contributed to decentre and challenge official and hegemonic narratives of violence in Colombia (Vera, 2015), my thesis proposes a feminist methodology that seeks to co-produce alternative and situated narratives of violence against LGBTIQ+[25] people in this context. Using the life story interview as a research method and developing a feminist narrative analysis, this methodology decentres the voices of the "experts" of violence studies to engage with the voices and experiences of LGBTIQ+ people as sources of knowledge production. I build on feminist and decolonial perspectives that propose an epistemic shift in research processes, insisting on the importance of investigating and theorising the social world from subaltern perspectives (Anzaldua, 1987; Curiel, 2014; Haraway, 2004; Harding, 2004; Hartsock, 1983; Hill-Collins, 2000; Medina, 2019; Sandoval, 2004). This methodology engages with research participants not as objects of study but as active subjects in the research process, recognising their historical agency and the political weight of their practices and discourses. Thus, this thesis seeks to investigate *with* and not about (Gimeno, 2012) people with non-normative genders and sexualities to produce alternative narratives of everyday

[25] I use the LGBTIQ+ acronym to refer to people with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities (i.e., non-normative sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, sex characteristics, and sexual behaviours). It includes people self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, or any other identity, expression, or behaviour of sexual or gender dissidence in this context. I use the LGBTIQ+ acronym when referring to the work of my research, the LGBT acronym when referring to the work of state-sponsored historical memory research (which does not include intersex people), and LGBTI acronym when referring to the social mobilisation of gender and sexual diversity in Colombia.

violence and conflict-related violence, taking their perceptions, interpretations, and significations of their life experiences as points of departure for theorisation.

This methodology builds on feminist standpoint theorists that suggest that knowledge is always socially situated and, thus, always partial and subjective (Hill-Collins, 2000; Harding, 2004; Hartsock, 1983; Haraway, 2004). Hence, I think through interviewees' life story narratives as socially situated knowledge that offers an alternative standpoint from which to read the phenomenon of violence in Colombia while being subjectively experienced. However, my methodology does not consider this knowledge as objective or carrying a particular "truth" but as a location that forces and enables specific modes of reading and knowing the dominant (Mohanty, 1988). Building on Claudia Hill Collins's (2000) standpoint theorisations, I argue that as subaltern and historically marginalised groups, LGBTIQ+ persons have cultivated a *double consciousness* from which they can read social reality from the dominant worldview of society *and* their own minority perspective. Thus, this methodology argues that this double consciousness offers a more holistic view of how violence operates in this context and represents a mode of seeing that could enhance social transformation (Code, 2014).

My methodology places the experiences of research participants at the centre of analysis. However, instead of treating experiences as facts that explain people's oppression, my understanding of experience follows Joan Scott's (1991) critique, arguing that researchers should not take experience as foundational, "not the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced" (1991, p. 780). Therefore, my analysis does not think of research participants as individuals who have experiences but as subjects constituted through experience. It explores the historical, social, and cultural processes that produce their subject position in terms of gender, race, class, and sexuality.

Moreover, pursuing a feminist narrative approach, my methodology interrogates the categories and indicators by which social scientists make sense of the phenomenon of violence (Curiel, 2014). Instead of assigning research participants with categories and identities, I asked them what these represented or meant to them (e.g., victim, LGBTI victim of armed conflict, violent person, violence, sexuality, armed conflict), opening a space to co-produce knowledges,

while trying to minimise the power relations in the research process (Espinosa et al., 2013). Similarly, my analysis is sceptical of binary framings of violence (e.g., victim/perpetrator, violence/peace, agency/passivity) and chooses to highlight, instead, the fluidity of identities and statuses, acknowledging the possibility of the co-presence of multiple identities in violent contexts (Krystalli, 2019). By deconstructing these categories and identities, my analysis seeks to displace official narratives and narrative tropes commonly attached to particular subjects in conflict-affected contexts (Enloe, 2004), which delimit what stories victims are allowed to tell (Theidon, 2007).

1. LANDING IN THE FIELD: CLOSING THE TEMPORAL GAP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Two years passed between when I first wrote my research proposal and when I arrived in the field to conduct my research. Between 2016 and 2018, I applied for an LSE PhD scholarship, got accepted, moved to London, and spent one year and a half reworking my research proposal and design. During this time, Colombia faced various political transformations that dramatically changed the affective landscape from which my research proposal emerged in the first place. The hopeful political scenario, in which the government of Juan Manuel Santos signed the Peace Agreement with FARC leaders in early 2016, was negatively impacted by the results of the Peace Referendum voted in October 2016. On that day, the (naively) expected Yes did not arrive. Instead, former president Santos and 6 million Yes voters were reminded of the rooted polarisation that constitutes the Colombian nation. The No vote won 50.22% against 49.78%, revealing that half of the voters did not support the peaceful resolution of the 60-year-long armed conflict between the FARC and the Colombian government[26]. While only 24% of the population voted, these results further polarised the country around notions of peace, justice, and security. The national exposure of the rejection of the Peace Agreement changed dramatically the political and affective landscape promoted (and advertised) by the re-election of the Santos' government in 2014 – the promise of a peaceful and reconciled nation.

[26] The opponents of the Agreement – most of them representing the *Centro Democrático* party led by former president Alvaro Uribe Vélez – argued that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) represented a system of impunity and benefits for the FARC members and were against the political participation of FARC demobilised members.

While my motivation for conducting this research did not emerge from the idea that the Peace Agreement was going to represent a radical change in LGBTIQ+ persons' everyday life, it did arise from the symbolic and material space that the peace negotiations opened to discuss the differentiated ways in which conflict-related violence impacted their lives. The recognition and inclusion of people with non-normative genders and sexualities in the Peace Agreement represented a historical victory for LGBTI and sexual dissidence social organisations that worked untiringly across many years to draw attention to gender-based, sexual, and homophobic violence against LGBTIQ+ inside and outside conflict-affected scenarios (see Chapter 1). Nonetheless, this "hopeful" scenario that was feeding narratives of progress and victory at that time was also transformed by the negative Peace Referendum results, but principally by the instrumentalisation of the *gender ideology* discourse in the campaigns promoted by the political opposition to the Agreement some weeks before the voting. Confirming that sexuality holds a critical place in times of great social distress (Rubin, 2011), the political representatives of the opposition added to their criticisms a preoccupation regarding the transversal *gender perspective*[27] proposed by the Peace Agreement.

The *No* campaigns led by the opposition articulated a discourse against the Peace Agreement's gender perspective, arguing that it represented a threat to the institution of the family and values of Colombian society. This critique explicitly focused on the inclusion of "LGBT issues" in the Agreement. The opposition expressed support for acknowledging the specific needs of (assumed cis/hetero) women affected by conflict. Equating the term "gender perspective" with "gender ideology", the No campaigns spread rumours about the planned "homosexualisation of society" through the implementation of the Agreement and disseminated hate speech messages against the LGBTI community through social media and public

[27] Following the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace, and Security, the Colombian Peace Agreement acknowledged the disproportionate and differentiated impact of conflict-related violence on women and girls and called for the implementation of a gender perspective to consider the particular needs of women and girls during the conflict, repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration, and post-conflict reconstruction. By following this Resolution, the Colombian Peace Process was pioneering in including women's experiences of conflict-related violence and the voices of female leaders during the peace negotiations in La Habana – including female representatives of FARC. This participation materialised in the inclusion of points and objectives of the Agreement dedicated to demanding the legal and social acknowledgement of women's particular needs and post-conflict material restitutions. Additionally, the peace process and final Agreement document employed this gender perspective as an umbrella framework to include and report the experiences of violence targeted against gender and sexual minorities living in conflict-affected contexts, and other forms of discrimination.

demonstrations (Esguerra, 2017). At the legal level, the opposition demanded clarification of the term "gender" in the Agreement to "anticipate any future legal misinterpretations of the concept of the family according to the Colombian Constitution"[28]. Advocates of the "LGBTI sector" interpreted this argument as a threat to same-sex marriage rights, conceded in the same year some months before (April 2016), while also menacing the legal and political fights over other controversial issues around sexuality as the legislation of abortion, same-sex adoption rights, among others.

While the causes for the victory of the No are manifold (i.e., lack of peace pedagogy, lack of unity among the yes promoters, lack of trust in the Agreement in particular communities), the instrumentalisation of the so-called gender ideology discourse (Correa et al., 2018; Corredor, 2019) played a crucial role in this political debate (Serrano, 2017). Building on the moral panic provoked months before by the supposed incorporation of sexual education brochures promoting "homosexual behaviours" in public schools[29] by the Minister of Education Gina Parody, an openly lesbian politician, these campaigns evoked the gender ideology ghost and its affective workings (Hemmings, 2020). This time, the fictional narrative established links between the Peace Agreement, the armed, violent communist agenda of FARC, and the suspected homosexualisation of society (Esguerra, 2017). All the negative affect associated with the violent history of the (once communist-oriented) FARC was displaced towards the concept of gender perspective, saturating it with the fear and anger that armed conflict has produced in Colombians' affective memory.

This controversial debate provoked wording edits in the final Agreement document. The LGBT acronym was deleted or replaced by the word "gender", and other expressions (e.g., "gender equity", "sexual diversity and gender identity", "gender perspective") were replaced with more neutral ones (e.g., "equal opportunities", "groups in vulnerable conditions", "sex", "differentiated and specific measures")[30]. Besides the symbolic and political violence caused by these changes in the Agreement, the hateful demonstration against the recognition of the

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[28] See: https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/acuerdo-de-paz-con-las-farc-enfoque-de-genero/504340/

[29] This sexual education document was created to promote a non-discriminatory education in schools in response to a Constitutional Court sentence in favour of the nationally known case of Sergio Urrego, a sixteen-year-old boy that committed suicide in response to the homophobic violence and harassment he experienced in his school.

[30] See: https://www.opendemocracy.net/es/debates-transformaciones-y-potencialidades-del-enfoqu/

violations and rights of LGBTI people caused a negative affective impact in these communities. Thus, the reception of this nationally disseminated homophobic message, the persistent and growing levels of violence against LGBTI persons, and the presidential election of Ivan Duque, representative of the *Centro Democrático*, in August 2018, summed up creating a tense political and affective scenario that framed my fieldwork activities between 2018 and 2019. While this context added to the relevance and urgency of my research, at the same time, it generated multiple challenges in my immersion in the field. Working as a reminder of the timing gaps between academic research and the social world, the transformation of this political landscape pushed me to reflect on different methodological and ethical aspects of my research design.

Paradoxically, while this intense political debate was taking place and hegemonic powers were trying to silence and obscure the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people living in conflict-affected regions, the publication of the research report *Aniquilar la Diferencia* (NCMH, 2015) produced a research outburst. While I was reworking my research proposal in London, various LGBTI social organisations developed research processes to continue the documentation of this violence in different regions of the country supported by international cooperation funding. In early 2019, a few months after I arrived in Bogotá, multiple research events took place to launch these research reports. Moreover, my fieldwork coincided with the Truth Commission's documentation activities. At that moment, the Commission called academic institutions, social organisations, civil society, and victims of armed conflict to share any research or evidence material, including testimonies of both victims and perpetrators of violence, to compile all the available information and produce the final research report. Therefore, I found a saturated field in which numerous research and legal initiatives were collecting testimonies of "LGBTI victims of armed conflict".

This complex affective political scenario framed my immersion in the field, in which I found political resistance and distrust in some activists and social organisations, in particular transgender, when I approached them to explore possible research alliances. This resistance came primarily from two political positionings. In the first place, these persons expressed a critique of academic research processes in which LGBTIQ+ people are commonly "used and *manoseados* (groped)" as objects/topics of research and not recognised as subjects of knowledge. They argued that scholars tend to use the experiences of LGBTIQ+ persons to produce academic knowledge

to advance in their careers and gain access to research grants without having ethical or political commitments to these marginal communities and their day-to-day struggles. Similarly, they argued that undergrad students tend to approach LGBTIQ+ people as objects of research to conduct their thesis or academic assignments without adequate training on non-conforming genders or non-normative sexualities or in handling sensitive research topics such as violence and trauma. This situation causes many times the re-victimisation of these communities. Consequently, some trans collectives have designed specific protocols to negotiate research alliances with academic institutions, scholars, and university students.

In the second place, I heard from various persons, including some of the research participants in this thesis, that the testimonial approach used by governmental and historical memory projects had caused re-victimisation in these communities. Emerging from a legal approach, as discussed in Chapter 1, the collection of testimonies of violence is a process centred on the description of violent events, usually conducted by individuals with a legal background without the skills or training to provide psychological or psychosocial support to interviewees. Therefore, there is a growing resistance towards participating in research processes, academic or governmental, as this participation is starting to be experienced and politicised as a site of symbolic and epistemic violence in LGBTIQ+ communities.

While all these critiques aligned with my feminist research design, these conditions had already created exhaustion and distrust in some individuals and collectives, becoming a challenge in my search for research participants. This encounter with critique, lack of trust, and rejection pushed me to reflect further on my delimitation of the "victim" category. Firstly, I noticed that by wanting to talk to "victims of armed conflict" (only), I was not considering the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people that have lived or currently live-in conflict-affected contexts but have not experienced conflict-related violence because of their non-normative sexuality. By centring the category of the victim of armed conflict as a filter to select research participants, I was centring the armed conflict narrative again, despite my epistemological and methodological critiques. Realising this slippage made me think of the (still understudied) grey areas of analysis that could reveal how certain life conditions (e.g., having a supportive family, material means, high or middle education level, employment, social networks) determine how LGBTIQ+ are affected (or not) by conflict-related violence. Secondly, while encountering the rejection of these

individuals and collectives, I realised that I was asking them to put me in contact with potential research participants, ignoring the fact that many of them were victims of conflict-related violence themselves. I was drawing a dividing line between the categories of the "victim of armed conflict" and "the activist". Thus, I noticed that I was locating the victim of armed conflict *elsewhere* but not in these activist spaces I was exploring.

These two reflections pushed me to replace the "victim of armed conflict" category with the condition of *having lived or still living in conflict-affected contexts* to select research participants and to integrate into my analysis the emergence of activism in the life trajectories of some LGBTIQ+ people. These changes reminded me of the unfinished work that every feminist researcher holds in acknowledging and unveiling epistemological biases and methodological assumptions. By incorporating these changes, my search for research participants took me to other spaces, allowing me to collect a wide variety of experiences that brought different nuances to my analysis to consider alternative stories of *how* and *why* conflict-relations violence intersects with everyday violence. Interviewing subjects with diverse privileges and social positions helped me direct my analysis more clearly towards highlighting the role of *what surrounds* the LGBTI victim of armed conflict. As my analysis shows in the subsequent chapters, the social and material conditions that shape the life course of each research participant determine how conflict-related violence and everyday violence intersect, exposing some subjects to violence more than others.

2. FIELDWORK PRACTICALITIES AND FEMINIST RESEARCH ETHICS

My immersion in the field was a slow and time-consuming process that demanded the implementation of numerous research strategies (Table 1) while working as an independent researcher without strategic alliances with any academic institution, research centre, or social organisation working on my topic in Bogotá. I spent much of my fieldwork time mapping and understanding the intersections between LGBTI and sexual dissidence activism, LGBTI and "sexual diversity" public policy in Bogotá, and peace and (post)conflict debates concerning LGBTIQ+ people. In this process, I met a variety of experts (e.g., scholars, activists, researchers), civil servants working in different governmental institutions (e.g., Sexual Diversity Director in the District Planning Secretariat, Truth Commission and JEP's Gender and LGBTI

divisions, LGBTI Communitarian Centre in Bogotá), and members and researchers of LGBTI social organisations (e.g., *Colombia Diversa*, *Caribe Afirmativo*, and *Fundación Grupo de Acción & Apoyo a Personas Trans* (GAAT)). I conducted informal interviews with some of these experts to get a sense of the multiple debates around my research topic and explore the possibility of accessing contacts that could lead me to potential research participants. During this time, I also participated in numerous LGBTI events, most of them organised to launch research reports on violence against LGBTIQ+, some of them focused on conflict-affected contexts. I also had the opportunity to participate as a "gender expert" in workshop sessions run by the Truth Commission's gender division. In these sessions, the division explained the transversal gender perspective planned for the Commission's research process. It opened the floor to receive feedback on their approach and identify potential blind spots in the research process. Finally, I attended art exhibitions, social events, protests organised by LGBTI social organisations, sexual dissidence activism, and transgender collectives.

Table 1

Fieldwork activities

Fieldwork stages	Outcome
1. Experts	
Researchers/Activists Civil servants at the local level Civil servants at the Truth Commission and the JEP	Three interviews Two interviews Two interviews
2. LGBTI Civil Society Organisations	
Colombia Diversa *GAAT* *Caribe Afirmativo* *LGBTI por la Paz*	I explored potential research alliances and conducted interviews with researchers in each social organisation
3. Participant Observation	
Truth Commission Gender Division Workshops Research events on LGBTI issues	Fieldwork notes
4. Life story interviews	
	12 interviews

My participation in these varied contexts helped me to map existing tensions: (a) between feminist and LGBTI organisations, scholars, and activists (mirroring the separation between "women issues" and "gender" and the invisibilisation of lesbians, bisexual, and trans women from these spaces and perspectives, as discussed in Chapter 1) (b) within the so-called "LGBTI sector" (gaps between urban (mainly Bogotá) and regional political agendas, showing an overrepresentation of a gay-only perspective, as discussed further in Chapter 6) and (c) the disconnection that still exists between national narratives around the Peace Agreement's pioneering gender perspective or the relevance of the Truth Commission's mandate, and the local experience of LGBTI collectives and LGBTIQ+ people that do not see how these processes could have a real impact in their everyday lives, especially when living in precarious and marginal conditions (see Chapter 6). These insights nurtured my analysis, revealing some of the multiple negotiations taking place in a moment in which official narratives around how sexuality, gender, and violence intersect were taking shape.

While this immersion in the field was an exciting and productive process, none of these informal interviews led me to potential research participants. I finally met various research participants in research-related events, others through snowball sampling, and others through personal contacts (Table 2). I conducted a total of 12 life story interviews, held on two encounters on average with each research participant. Each interview lasted between 4 and 8 hours. While I conducted most interviews in person, I used Skype video calls to complete three interviews, in cases in which I met the research participant in Bogotá during an event and the person travelled back to their city of residence. The place of each in-person interview varied according to the interviewee's desires or possibilities. It ranged between the interviewee's home, public spaces like coffee shops or restaurants, and the interviewee's workplace.

Table 2

Research participants

Name	Department	Gender Identification	Sexual orientation	Point of contact
Nacho	Bolivar	Man	*Marica*	Research event
Claudia	Tolima	Intersex woman	Bisexual	LGBTI Communitarian Centre
Maira	Caquetá	Woman	Lesbian	Personal contact
Miguel	Santander	Man	*Marica*	Research event
Jesus	Santander	Man	Gay	Personal contact
Kiki	Huila	Non-binary/queer	Attracted to (cis) men	Activist event
Juan	Tolima	Man	Demisexual	LGBTI Communitarian Centre
Laura	Cundinamarca	Woman	Lesbian	Snowball sampling
Candelaria	Cauca	Transgender woman	Heterosexual	Snowball sampling
Nataly	Caquetá	Transgender woman	Heterosexual	Snowball sampling
Elizabeth	Valle del Cauca	Woman	Bisexual	LGBTI Communitarian Centre
Adrian	Arauca	Transgender man	Heterosexual	Personal contact

Note: I replaced the interviewees' real names with pseudonyms for security reasons.

I started each interview by discussing ethical issues with each research participant. In this space, I explained the thesis' objectives, political commitments, and research design and detailed the future uses of research participants' data (life story narratives and personal details) for academic purposes. I used a written consent form that was verbally discussed at the beginning of the interview and later read and signed by each participant at the end of our last interview session. Considering the potential risks that might emerge when researching violence and sensitive topics (McCormick, 2012), I followed the insights of gender-based violence research literature, suggesting that consent is not as straightforward as it may appear. When researching sensitive topics, research participants may not have total clarity about the nature of the process to which they consent at the beginning of the project (McCormick, 2012). Working with qualitative methodologies and extended interviewees creates difficulties for both interviewee and interviewer in anticipating the kind of experiences or memories this process may evoke. The interview setting creates an environment in which interviewees may disclose in a way they had not expected and may regret afterwards. Thus, when discussing experiences of violence and trauma, the potential harm varies and is changeable depending on the individual's coping mechanisms and circumstances, which can change rapidly and vary widely (Fontes, 2004).

Consequently, I practised consent as a process (Munhall, 1988) in which I asked research participants if they wanted to add something extra to the form I was using. I pursued ongoing consensual decision-making (Ramos, 1989) in which I obtained their consent before, during, and after the interview, so participants had repeated opportunities to withdraw or to qualify this consent (Halse & Honey, 2005).

Furthermore, in this introductory conversation, I also made clear that my research was not interested in the description of specific violent events and that I was not expecting them to disclose information or memories that might cause them harm or put them at any potential risk. Although, I made clear that I was open to hearing whatever they wanted to share with me. On a few occasions, I had interviewees expressing they did not want to give details about specific events or implicitly eluding some of my questions. I interpreted this as a good sign and evidence of the successful creation of a safe space where my interviewees felt free to set their limits. While my interviewees knew about my psychology background, I clarified that our conversation was framed in a research context where I could not provide any therapeutic intervention. However, I was attentive to their level of distress during the interview and checked on them several times to know if they were feeling fine, wanted to take a break, or wanted to finish our session earlier. Pursuing feminist research ethics (Beorlegui, 2019), I tried to avoid making any judgments about interviewees' experiences, opinions, or expressions, adopted an open and empathetic attitude, and practised active and sincere listening. After finishing each interview session, I gave the research participants time to recover, acknowledging that this research method comprises a high degree of vulnerability and exposition from both interviewees and the interviewer. We discussed their perceptions and feelings towards the interview process in this space. Sometimes, interviewees share more information regarding a particular topic or person they mentioned in their interview. At the beginning of our second (or subsequent) interview encounter, I started the session by asking interviewees how they felt and exploring if they had difficulties or had experienced distress after our conversation(s). Some interviewees expressed in this space that a few memories had started to come back and had experienced dreams related to the experiences or individuals mentioned in the interview. I took the time to go through these emotions with them and evaluate if they could continue the interview process. On all occasions,

they agreed to continue the interview process, and a few of them expressed that this process turned into a space to reflect on past and present life experiences.

Finally, I asked each interviewee for consent to record the interview sessions (only audio). I told them they could ask me to stop the recording at any moment during the interview. I explained that I was the only person with access to these recordings for research purposes and that a third party would transcribe their interview afterwards (I signed a confidential agreement with hired transcribers). They all consented to this process and expressed interest in getting their life story interview transcript back. Although all my interviewees told me they wanted me to use their real names in my research outcomes (thesis, articles, presentations), I used pseudonyms in this document. I also changed the names of some locations for security reasons. While I ensured that any of my interviewees were not in a risky situation at the moment of the interview (taking into account the current critical political scenario in Colombia regarding the safety of social leaders), I am aware of the potential risks (now or in the future) that this sensitive information holds. For the same reasons, I told my research participants that I was not particularly interested in knowing the political or armed affiliations of perpetrators of violence or the names of specific individuals mentioned in the interview. Therefore, when necessary, I avoid any particular naming in the following analytical chapters and use general categories like "guerrillas", "paramilitaries", or "military". Aware of the potential risks when agreeing with interviewees about the physical space to conduct the interview, I let them decide where to meet. If they did not have any preference, I proposed public spaces, ensuring they were safe for both the interviewee and myself.

3. LIFE STORY AS A QUEER FEMINIST RESEARCH METHOD

> These stories – or personal narratives – connect the inner world to the outer world, speak to the subjective and the objective, and establish the boundaries of identities (of who one is and who one is not). Life stories cross the embodied and emotional 'brute being' with the rational and irrational 'knowing self'. They make links across life phases and cohort generations, revealing historical shifts in a culture. They help establish collective memories and imagined communities; they tell of the concerns of their time and place. They bridge cultural history with personal biography. And they become moral constructions, tales of virtue and non-virtue, which may act to guide us in our ethical lives. Indeed, the stories we construct of our lives may well become the

> 'stories we live by'. What matters to people is what keeps getting told in the stories of their life. (Plummer, 2011, p. 395)

Seeking to contribute to the destabilisation of dominant narratives of violence, internal armed conflict, and sexuality in Colombia, my thesis uses the life story research method. Working *with* and *from* life story interviews as a queer feminist research method implies recuperating memories and knowledges historically silenced or ignored and challenging the objectivity that gives value and authority to the expert voices of knowledge production. By locating research participants' voices and experiences at the centre of analysis, this research method intends to contribute to the building of a history *from below* (Beorlegui, 2019) and the co-production of bottom-up understandings around how violence operates in the everyday and the life course of LGBTIQ+ persons in Colombia.

Following Plummer's (2011) classification of the different types of life stories I collected in my fieldwork *researched life stories*, as these are not the product of natural encounters but happened in a research setting using special implements (i.e., voice recorders, informed consent). Thus, my role as a researcher is crucial as I shaped these narratives through my (somewhat sporadic) questions and assembled them in my subsequent analysis in particular ways. I think through these stories as *reflexive and recursive life stories*, considering that storytelling is a fabrication, an act of speech, a mode of writing, and arguing that these life stories do not simply tell the story of a life (Dickens & Fontana, 1994; Stanley, 1992). Consequently, my analysis of each life story combines various perspectives. I work with these life stories as *resources*, which according to Plummer's classification, is when life stories are studied because they might "help us to understand something – a life, a life cycle, a culture" (Plummer, 2011, p. 399). While located in specific geographical and historical contexts and dealing with experiences related to armed conflict and Colombian political histories, interviewees' life stories do not represent "realistic tales" but are resources that give a located account of historical processes and cultural formations. Additionally, by connecting personal biography with cultural history and moral constructions, these life stories are resources that help to understand the place and work of sex, gender, and sexuality and their multiple articulations with violence and the everyday.

Nonetheless, my analysis also thinks through interviewees' life stories as *narrative texts*. I conducted each life story interview using a conversational narrative technique (De Garay, 1999), allowing interviewees to craft non-directed narratives, in which I only intervened on a few occasions to ask questions to facilitate the dialogue and the memory recall. Therefore, my analysis focuses on *what* these narratives tell (the events and experiences these contain) but also on *how* these narratives are told (the form and direction of the narrative text). Following the narrative and interpretative turn led by the Italian school of oral history (Passerini, 1987; Portelli, 1991), this perspective asks for the meaning of the narrative aspect of the life story and argues that what makes particularly valuable oral sources is that these usually include the subjectivity of that who speaks. Life story narratives not only tell what people do but what they wish they had done, what they thought they were doing, and what they think nowadays about what they did (Portelli, 1991). Thus, life story narratives represent cultural artefacts that allow the exploration of the historical dimension of human subjectivity (Portelli, 1991). Interviewees organise their fragmented memories through narrative, giving meaning to their experiences and shaping their identities. From a phenomenological perspective, this means that life story narratives allow us to comprehend how individuals connect their experience with their social context, how the past *becomes* part of the present, and how people interpret their lives and the world surrounding them through this past becoming present (Beorlegui, 2019).

Building on this perspective, I develop a two-fold analysis in the following analytical chapters. On the one hand, I analyse interviewees' narratives to understand processes of subject formation that traverse their life experiences (as gendered, sexed, racialised, and classed subjects) and to comprehend the relationships they have established with their cultural, social, and political environment. On the other hand, I analyse the varied ways in which life stories are told and taking a narrative perspective, instead of creating categories of analysis, I structured my analysis through the identification of the *plot* of each narrative: "a dynamic tension which moves the story on, adds momentum, and provides some coherence"; *nuclear episodes:* "specific autobiographical events which have been reinterpreted over time to assume a privileged status in the story"; and *thematic lines*: "recurrent content clusters in stories" (Plummer, 2011, p. 340). This approach helped me address how violence becomes evident not only through violent events

but also through the narratives that direct a life and how individuals narrativise their memories and experiences.

Using life story narratives as a queer feminist research method demands reflecting on the context in which these narratives were produced. Conducting a life story interview is a collaborative, creative, relational process in which the relationship established between the interviewer and the interviewee determines the outcome (Beorlegui, 2019). Consequently, it is relevant to mention that the social, political, and historical moments in which I conducted these interviews determined how interviewees remembered particular occurrences. My personal and academic motivations framed the research questions of my thesis, influencing the narratives produced by interviewees. Acknowledging that in every interview, the interviewee adapts to social standards, imaginary audiences, and the socially accepted representations of the self, achieving the *psychic balance* of the interview (Summerfield et al., 2010), I do not think with these narratives as texts that "reflect" the lives of interviewees. Instead, I follow Portelli's (1991) suggestion that oral history does not give voice but *receives voice*, which demands an epistemological shift. My analysis does not seek to be the "speaker" of LGBTIQ+ people, but it implies a deep reflection of *who is speaking*, *how they speak*, *what they are saying*, *how they are saying it*, *why they are saying it*, and *in which context*. Hence my thesis argues that "the feminist commitment of interpreting reality does not end in the intention to "reflect" the reality through testimonies, but it answers to an ethical and political call, to a founded suspicion of the opacity of social reality, and seeks to unveil and comprehend its logics to seek for transformation" (Beorlegui, 2019, p. 140).

My analysis is not interested in finding or determining truths, as if the "truth" was something out there, ready to be discovered, known and verified. Embracing partiality, surrendering to the diversity of truths, and recognising the value of half-truths, rumours, denials, or lies as narratives, is part of a feminist research ethics that challenges and exposes the *regimes of truth* (Foucault, 1980) that operate on each society. According to Roxani Krysralli's (2019) reflections on the use of narratives of violence in conflict-affected contexts, this is even more important when working with narratives of violence as telling "fact" from "fiction" or "truth" from "lies" in the face of violence can turn into further symbolic or representational violence. Therefore, the value of interviewees' narratives of experiences of violence – what they saw, did

felt, or heard – does not reside in their accuracy or truthfulness but "in the meaning with which the narrator endows the events or moments she narrates" (Fujii, 2010, p. 234).

In the same way, my analysis embraces the emotionality, partiality, and unreliability of storytelling as crucial strengths of the narrative approach. It turns to interviewees' narratives of violence as "a way to represent the messy ways in which humans embody, remember, and make sense of violence" (Krystalli, 2019, p. 176). In this sense, my analysis considers messiness, incoherence, or contradictions as defining features of violence and, thus, part of its story. In the same line, my analysis interprets silence and absence along with voice, presence, and speech. However, instead of replicating the speech and silence false binary (Fujii, 2010), I explore silence as a form of speech and the constitutive presence of every absence. Thinking about violence and silence can take different directions. Firstly, I examine silence as a narrative choice, acknowledging that, in highly violent contexts, silence can be one of the only forms of agency available to oppressed or vulnerable populations (Das, 1996; Fujii, 2010; Parpart & Parashar, 2019). In this sense, I analyse the silences I encountered in the interview setting. Moments in which I left some *stones unturned* (Malkki, 2012), respecting the boundaries set by research participants and the narration of silences in the life story interviews as strategies to deal with violence in different contexts. Secondly, like my engagement with categories and identities, I think of silences as socially produced and maintained (Dauphinee, 2013; Enloe, 2004; Spivak, 1988). My analysis considers the structural roots of different silences narrated in research participants' life stories.

Thirdly, my analysis pays attention to how bodies speak without words, as researching violence implies encountering trauma and its language. Pursuing a feminist narrative analysis demands learning to read pain (Ahmed, 2013), attending not only to words but listening to the non-verbal language in the interview and through the multiple ways the traumatic event destabilises temporal linearity. Therefore, my analysis identifies the messy and out-of-order way interviewees' bodies remember and recount violence, resisting the temptation to straighten up this altered and fragmented temporality (Edkins, 2003). My analysis suggests that while traumatic events can be located in a manufactured time (e.g., the established temporality of the Colombian armed conflict between 1967 and 2016), "their effects transcend and explode time and other linear narratives as coherent ordering principles" (Dauphinee, 2013, p. 354). Following

the work of Lawrence Langer (1991) with accounts of Holocaust survivors, Dauphinee suggests that time is shattered by the experience of trauma, troubling the relationship between the temporal trinity of past-present-future. In this sense, trauma as memory is not past; it is always already both present and future, collapsing the notion of linearity in on itself. Thus, my analysis explores the c*ontemporeality* of violence and trauma (Langer, 1991) present in interviewees' narratives of violence and thinks through time as fractal, relational, and experiential (Dauphinee, 2013).

Finally, as my analysis is focused not only on the interviewee's narratives but emerges from the co-production of a final narrative account – my analytical chapters *tell stories* – it is necessary to address and reflect on the co-production of these narratives as a site of power. Firstly, in my analysis, I preserve the "I", as suggested by feminist scholars, to avoid the erasure of the self that narrates (Shepard, 2016) and to locate myself as a researcher that tells the story. Secondly, acknowledging the violence and power that academic writing can reinforce, my analysis does not treat interviewees' narratives as "supporting anecdotes" or "evidence" but as the foundation from which theory originates. By transferring the authorial voice conferred to theorists (exclusively) to interviewees' voices, my analysis seeks to disrupt the politics of knowledge production, building a theoretical dialogue between narratives, empirics, and theory. This shift involved using long quotations, when necessary, giving enough space to communicate *why* and *how* interviewees say what they say, as a mechanism to write dialoguing and thinking *with* them, not only about them (Gimeno, 2012). Thirdly, it is worth addressing that my writing process produced fragmentation in the interviewees' narratives. I selected material to include in my analysis from more than 1,000 pages of interview transcripts plus additional fieldwork notes, making decisions about which narratives to include and exclude. This creative process reflects power dynamics as the selection of this material created hierarchies in which I privileged certain voices and not others. Hence, I do not approach the narrative analysis as inherently benign or feminist (Krysralli, 2019). Instead, as a feminist scholar, I pursue a reflexive narration, trying to be mindful of how I can do narrative injustices to interviewees' experiences or reproduce dominant hierarchies of knowledge production.

4. STAYING WITH AMBIVALENCE

The methodology of this thesis problematises the positivistic definition of the researcher as an objective and disembodied subject as it acknowledges relationships of power that are established in the research process. Imbalances of power between researchers and research participants frequently influence and shape study findings and may lead to misunderstanding and misrepresentation of research participants (Fonow & Cook, 2005). To interrogate the implications of social difference in the research context, feminist scholars suggest practising *strong reflexivity*, which considers the diversity of research participants and explicates how differences between researchers and participants shape research processes (McCorkel & Myers, 2003).To acknowledge their own role in data collection and interpretation, feminist scholars advocate making the researcher's gaze transparent by practising disclosure of their identities, as these are thought of *as instruments of vision* constantly mediating the interpretation and translation of reality (Haraway, 1988).

Practising strong feminist reflexivity, I acknowledge that my view comes from a body situated and positioned in a specific time and space. My previous and present experiences as an urban, white, upper-middle class, highly educated, heterosexual Colombian woman are present in every translation or interpretation I make in this thesis. The analysis I introduce in the following chapters can only claim objectivity in terms of my critical position as a researcher, but not from the view "from above, from nowhere" (Haraway, 1988, p. 589). This objectivity emerges from a particular and specific embodiment and argues that "only partial perspective promises objective vision" (1988; p. 582-3). My translation and interpretation of interviewees' life story narratives are not free from mediation but pursue a constant process of reflexivity to mitigate as much as possible issues of representation. This process of strong reflexivity was constant throughout my research process, in the research design, my immersion in the field, and my writing process. Thus, I argue that besides disclosing the researcher's positionality, feminist reflexivity should involve mapping its significance for research practice and knowledge production processes.

As mentioned earlier, my immersion in the field was not a smooth process but one in which I encountered resistance and political tensions, emerging from both my research topic and

the historical conjunction that Colombia is traversing in the "post-conflict" context. When drafting my research proposal, the idea of doing fieldwork represented one of the most exciting phases of my research process. For me, a psychologist and a social researcher, the opportunity to talk to people has always been the principal source of joy when conducting research. Additionally, as a feminist researcher, this joy was accompanied by a sense of rightness and assurance (prompted by the corrective tone characterising most feminist epistemology literature) that placed me and my research design on the side of "good research practice". This joy, however, started retreating when my fieldwork activities turned into a slow and time-consuming process traversed by a complex political scenario, but mostly when I encountered a variety of negative affects revolving around my attempts to approach potential research participants. As mentioned before, I encountered resistance from some persons who expressed distrust in research processes, and on a few occasions, this distrust was communicated through hostility and irony. Consequently, my affective experience in the field changed over months while experiencing the difficulties of this historical political conjunction and facing these uncomfortable and hostile encounters. This affective experience dislocated my sense of self, provoking a different feminist reflexivity – my previous assumptions about how power and difference might emerge in my fieldwork activities needed to be rethought.

Clare Hemmings' work on *affective solidarity* (2012) calls for feminist solidarity that might emerge out of affective dissonances in the experience of onto-epistemological relations, moving away from a feminist politics based on identity. Building Elspeth Probyn's work on *feminist reflexivity* (1993), understood by Probyn as the result of negotiations of the dynamic relationship that exists between ontology and epistemology, "distinctions between an embodied sense of self and the self that we are expected to be in social terms", Hemmings argues that affect and experiences of discomfort, in particular, are crucial for imagining the emergence of a different feminist politics (p. 149). Through her analysis, Hemmings problematises the prioritising of empathy "as the primary affect through which affective connections with others might be achieved" (p.147-8) and as the root of feminist solidarity, highlighting the risks of essentialising women's natural capacities of care as empathy – a well-known feminist debate. Yet, going further, Hemmings' critique stresses the embedded assumptions about the reciprocity of this "feminist empathy" –assuming that "good empathy will always be appreciated" – and

challenges the emphasis on "the reflexive capacities of the empathetic subject as the primary way of resolving difficulties of misrecognition or hostility that attend intersubjectivity" (Hemmings, 2012, p. 152).

Hemmings' analysis is particularly useful to give an account of the negotiations I went through while experiencing the frustration, hostility, and discomfort that characterised some of my fieldwork encounters. I entered this intersubjective space believing that "I was a feminist researcher" (well-intended, conscious of power dynamics and critiques of representation, and seeking social justice through my involvement in my research topic) and assuming that "my way" of doing research would find an echo or generate trust in my potential research participants. However, while encountering these "negative" affects, I discovered that my sense of self, as a feminist researcher, did not match the self I was expected to be in social terms. No matter how much I tried to differentiate my research practice from the role of the traditional researcher, I was read and judged as one. This situation generated frustration in me because I did not find interest in what my feminist approach was "offering".

I found myself assuming, as Hemmings highlights, that my "good empathy" would be appreciated by the other. Instead, I found subjects that refused the terms of my empathetic recognition. They were not interested in my feminist reflexivity speech because they had already considered my position as a researcher as "part of the epistemological terrain rendered problematic by their own experience" (Hemmings, 2012, p. 153). While I considered the possibility of finding resistance in the field when designing my research plan, I did not anticipate the experience of negative affect that might emerge from these encounters. This partly shows that I was still attached to the expectation of reciprocity of my empathy. In doing so, I was risking ignoring "the historical and political reason why others may not be able or not wish to reciprocate" (Hemmings, 2012, p. 153). This frustration and uneasiness made me reflect on the limits of my feminist reflexivity, showing that no matter how hard I tried to delink myself from the "objective, positivist researcher", I was still one. My role as a researcher founded by an elite institution in the UK was not one I could ignore, conceal or disappear by uttering a feminist research practice speech.

Part of pursuing feminist research reflexivity involves disclosing conditions that framed the data-gathering process and how these impacted the subsequent academic analysis. However, more relevant and not always straightforward is the account of how the researcher negotiates and adapts (materially and emotionally) to these conditions, including how intersubjective relationships are established during fieldwork. The negotiations of power in my fieldwork involved how my role as a researcher was framed by my class background and status as an "outsider" in the community I was investigating. Tellingly, these negotiations of power emerged from approaching LGBTI people inside social organisations or working in governmental entities to explore research alliances or access to potential research participants, and not from my encounters with the research participants per se.

My position as a cisgender straight woman locates me as an "outsider" of the "LGBTIQ+ community" (in terms of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression). The researcher's position as "insider" and "outsider" of specific communities is an epistemological matter because this positioning impacts how knowledge is co-created among researchers and research participants (Griffiths, 1998). In this way, my analysis and interpretations in this thesis risk doing a straightening of information and experiences of research participants. However, this position emerged earlier in the research process and interfered with the affective tensions and negotiations of power I experienced during fieldwork. Scholars researching non-normative genders and sexualities have identified advantages and disadvantages emerging from the "insider" and "outsider" positionings (Bettinger, 2013; Hayfield & Huxley, 2015; LaSala, 2003). In my case, being an outsider helped me to access different spaces and to talk with different experts, activists, or civil servants working on LGBTI issues free from the political tensions happening inside the LGBTI social mobilisation in Bogotá. As an outsider of this "community", I was trusted with opinions of disagreement or diverse political interests among various groups and levels of work, which helped me to map the tensions and contradictions within the "LGBTI social sector" in the "post-conflict" context in particular (I discuss these tensions in Chapter 6).

On the other hand, in cases where I encountered resistance in these LGBTI spaces, I felt it was heavily charged by my class background, despite my sexual orientation. In the context of my fieldwork, my class background is of particular significance in thinking about my positionality and the power relations that transcend my research practice. In Colombia, class is

read through various cultural codes, how people dress and speak, which denote one's educational background and spatial location in the city. Race, in this context, is entangled with class indicators. This means that while I am read as a white woman in Colombia, how I dress and speak is what locates me culturally in a particularly privileged background. My privileged position (in terms of class but also as an internationally funded researcher) contrasted with the class and regional background of some of the LGBTI activists and civil servants I approached and with the precarisation of the LGBTI activist work inside and outside governmental institutions.

While I was not confronted explicitly about these issues, I felt through glances and gestures this critical political positioning. One example is a meeting I had with a lesbian activist that works as a civil servant in the Ombudsman's Office in Bogotá to explore the possibility of a research alliance. Maria agreed to meet me because we have a friend in common. My friend (a self-identified lesbian cisgender woman) mentioned Maria was a "hard" person and explained that when they met working together, she used to ignore her because of my friend's privileged class background (emphasising the university she attended). Maria agreed to have a coffee with me near her office. She arrived twenty minutes late to our meeting. Her attention was dispersed while I was explaining my research, and five minutes after I started talking, a friend of hers arrived at the coffee shop. They started talking, and from time to time, she looked at me to continue our conversation. Five minutes later, she apologised and said she needed to go, got up from the table and left me with the check and my just-served coffee. Maria's attitude, which I interpret as a political and critical positioning, represents the affect I encountered in other LGBTI activists and civil servants that resent academia for not getting involved in the hard day-to-day work they perform and embody. These experiences showed me that a degree of commonality (e.g., a non-normative sexual orientation) does not guarantee that an "insider" will understand research participants' perspectives any more than an "outsider", especially if their lives are as different as they are similar through other social characteristics (i.e., race, class, educational level, etc.), which outweigh what is shared (Bridges, 2001).

Embracing these power negotiations and their negative affect pushed me to change my "feminist speech" when approaching potential research participants. Accepting that feminist reflexivity speaks in a language that might not interest individuals located outside academia or

might even be rejected and criticised, I cleared my speech of empathetic assumptions. I approached potential research participants more practically, focusing on my academic and political interests in conducting this research. This scenario reversed the empathetic relationship between research participants and me as a researcher, as some of them placed me in the role of that which is in need – saying they will "help me with the interview" – becoming the object of their empathy. Also, it is important to emphasise that I found affective and political resistance in some LGBTI activists inside social organisations or working in governmental entities. Contrary to the profile of research participants in this thesis, who do activist work but are not part of the denominated "LGBTI social sector" or "LGBTI movement" in Bogotá.

Lastly, the affectivity I experienced in the field contributed to the emergence of an ambivalent attachment to my research topic and my role as a feminist researcher. My excitement about doing fieldwork was confronted with the difficulties and the violence that academic and state-sponsored research has created. My empathy was received with disinterest and hostility. My enjoyment of doing research was confronted with the frustration, anger, and sadness of hearing life stories marked by violence and inequality. All these circumstances shaped my writing process, evolving as an ambivalent state in which the emotional weight of thinking and hearing about violence constantly haunts my pleasure in writing. This ambivalence has materialised in periods of procrastination while trying to avoid this affective confrontation (powerfully experienced when hearing the recordings of the voices and experiences of interviewees several times), in physical and mental health struggles, but also in an ongoing reflexive process in which I constantly question my role as a researcher and how I talk about my interviewees' narratives and life experiences.

My approach turns to this ambivalence as a site of reflexive knowledge production, as suggested by Hemmings (2018), and remains attentive to any feeling of certainty that might obscure the political struggles that constitute my research process and the experiences of violence in the life course of LGBTIQ+ people in Colombia. Finally, I stay with this ambivalence as a reminder that my giving back as a queer feminist researcher does not end in the writing or publication of this thesis or writing a text in Spanish to disseminate my findings. Instead, I hope to dwell in this ambivalence as a political commitment towards turning research into practice: advocating for material restitution and economic redistribution for those affected

by everyday violence and using my academic and social power to open spaces and seek ways to place subaltern subjects at the forefront of social justice struggles.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I introduce my methodological approach to studying the experiences of everyday and conflict-related violence in the life course of LGBTIQ+ people living in conflict-affected contexts in Colombia. Addressing the power and political dynamics operating in the building and consolidation of official narratives of violence in the Colombian context, my methodology pursues a queer feminist approach that seeks to open space for co-producing alternative narratives and understandings. This approach argues for the inclusion of voices, experiences, and interpretations commonly invisible, silenced, or ignored by official narratives, claiming that these narratives are sources of knowledge production and theoretical thinking. Through the various sections of this chapter, I introduce the queer feminist narrative approach that guides my analysis of interviewees' life story narratives. I provide an overview of my fieldwork activities, the complex political scenario in which I conducted the life story interviews, and the ethical considerations of my feminist research practice. Finally, I reflect on my location and positionality as the researcher that co-produces narratives, addressing issues of power and representation in the research process.

Based on this queer feminist narrative approach, in the following chapters, I analyse interviewees' life story narratives as *resources* to explain the place and work or gender, sex, and sexuality and their multiple articulations with violence and the everyday in conflict-affected contexts. Considering life stories as *narrative texts*, in this analysis, I focus on *what* these narratives tell but also on *how* these narratives are told. Each of the following chapters is structured around a *narrative plot* I found in the interviewees' narratives, *silence* (Chapter 4), *displacement* (Chapter 5), and *peace* (Chapter 6). My analysis in these chapters identifies *nuclear episodes* and *thematic lines* in interviewees' narratives, thinking through the research questions of the thesis in conversation with interviewees' experiences and subjectivity. This analysis reveals how gender, sexuality and violence intersect in conflict-affected contexts,

how everyday violence and conflict-related violence intersect in the life course of LGBTIQ+ people, and how they endure, resist and transform violent contexts on a daily basis.

CHAPTER 4. SILENCE AND THE QUEER ACOUSTICS OF EVERYDAY VIOLENCE

INTRODUCTION

> It doesn't affect me that much, this sounds terrible, but AIDS has killed many more [laughs]. Do you know? And we do anything. People still don't have access to medicines. Those coming from Venezuela who didn't cross the border in the “right way” don't have access to treatment and die. That's violence.
>
> A few *maricas*[31] are murdered for being *maricas,* but more *maricas* are dying from AIDS because they [governments] don't do anything. AIDS is forceful in life and death […] The armed conflict sounds terrible to us, but nobody realises that we have a conflict in the health system and in the economy of this country that kills more people.
>
> […] The problem is that violence is also internal, right? So, the armed conflict; is armed with speech armed with discrimination inside organisations. So, let's say I'm like a weird victim because I see many more victims that don't seem like victims to others. After all, it seems that victims are only those affected by conflict. But the victims of everyday life are thousands. (Miguel, 2019)

“It doesn't affect me that much", answered Miguel when I asked him how it feels to know, as a *marica*, that armed conflict persecutes and kills people with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities. Although Miguel's answer, which reads as distant or disengaged, at first sight, may reflect his privileged position as an educated middle-upper-class homosexual man living in Bogotá, it also exhibits a critical perspective influenced by his life experiences as a well-known sexual rights and HIV/AIDS activist in the country. As he elaborates further in his

[31] In the Colombian context, the term *marica* has been historically used to refer to homosexual men (and sometimes women) in a derogative way. Sometimes it refers mainly to homosexual men that perform a "passive" role in sexual intercourse, or their gender expression is feminine. Despite this harmful use, in some contexts, some homosexual men and transgender women use it as an identity category, as a political statement to express pride in their femininity. Others use it in contraposition to the term "gay", which is read as an imported identity category that denotes class and race privileges in the Colombian context.

answer, it is not that he is indifferent to the killings of LGBTIQ+ people[32] amidst armed conflict but that it seems urgent to take a detour from what is commonly thought of and defined as violence and conflict in Colombia. Although Miguel is the first Colombian to be legally registered as an "LGBTI victim of armed conflict", his reflections suggest that if one is interested in the lives and deaths of LGBTIQ+ people in Colombia, armed conflict is probably less representative than other forms of violence.

Miguel's conceptions of violence and conflict in Colombia are best understood as a *violence continuum*, suggesting the existence of small wars and invisible genocides conducted in normative social spaces (Scheper-Hughes, 1996) alongside and beyond armed conflict. His reference to conflicts happening at the core of the health system or the economic structure in Colombia – one that witnesses and sometimes endorses the letting die (Foucault, 1976) of specific populations – talks about some of the routinised everyday violences happening in Latin American contexts (see Chapter 2.). Emphasising the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its connections with non-normative sexuality, Miguel displaces the debate on violence from jungle confrontations between illegal armed groups of men dressed in camouflage to hospital boards and congress plenaries taking place in the capital city. Having been threatened many times by both paramilitary groups and politicians because of his work and discourse on HIV/AIDS, Miguel's life story attests that neither of these (or other) social actors work independently of each other. He implies that what look like spectacular war crimes during conflict are "merely ordinary everyday crimes of public consent applied systematically and dramatically in the extreme context of war" (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004., p. 20). Armed conflict's wartime crimes might be just the reflection and consequences of decades of structural violence configured in our vastly unequal society and an echo of the thousands of lives that have faded because of the heteronormative gender system established in this territory since colonial times.

[32] I use the LGBTIQ+ acronym to refer to people with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities (i.e., non-normative sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, sex characteristics, and sexual behaviours). It includes people self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, or any other identity, expression, or behaviour of sexual or gender dissidence in this context. I use the LGBTIQ+ acronym when referring to the work of my research, the LGBT acronym when referring to the work of state-sponsored historical memory research (which does not include intersex people), and LGBTI acronym when referring to the social mobilisation of gender and sexual diversity in Colombia.

"They don't do anything", "nobody realises", and "I see many more victims that don't seem like victims to others", Miguel claims. Through these expressions, Miguel's narrative articulates the dissonance that takes place when one questions the impunity that fuels everyday violence but additionally emphasises that for an action to be considered "violence" and a person to be considered a "victim", something else needs to happen, beyond the mere violent event. Researchers studying everyday violence insist on the *invisible* nature of everyday crimes. They argue that collective denial and misrecognition are prerequisites for the implicit, legitimate, and routinised forms of violence inherent in particular social, economic, and political formations. Based on three life story narratives, this chapter analyses how violence against LGBTIQ+ people operates through official and everyday narratives that establish what is recognisable as violence and who is considered a victim (or perpetrator) of violence inside and outside conflict-affected contexts. In particular, this analysis focuses on the work of silence (broadly understood as secrets, omissions, concealments, absences, and resistances) in consolidating these narratives and reproducing everyday violence.

One of the main tactics of the Colombian internal armed conflict operation has been the violent enforcement of silence in individuals and communities. Any voicing or speaking up was interpreted as a sign of political opposition and assumed to belong to the "enemy" side of war (Pecaut, 2000, 2013). These constructed silences, usually enforced in communities through the use of terror and the display of brutal violence, have fragmented the social fabric of communities and facilitated the operation of illegal armed groups through an economy of fear (Uribe, 2004; Riaño, 2008). As a result, in contrast to what is now clearly delimited as the internal armed conflict, Colombians did not have a cohesive narrative to talk about "what was happening" for more than four decades. At the local level, in remote towns and communities, this reality was usually recounted as a series of disorganised and unrelated violent events and a constant presence of death. Any open public discussion about these events was forbidden. At the national level, official narratives were focused on identifying individual actors (i.e., guerrillas, paramilitaries, and drug cartels) and major disjointed violent events (i.e., attacks, bombs, massacres). In this way, the historical narrative "us versus them" was entrenched, justifying the governmental exercise of violence against the "enemies" of society.

Persons with non-normative genders and sexualities participating in historical memory reports (CNMH, 2015) have corroborated this evidence. They have described the presence of other silences operating in their experiences of conflict-related violence. Illegal and legal armed groups have not only forced these persons to conceal their non-normative gender or sexualities to continue living in their communities. But LGBTs have also confronted conflict-related violence in complete silence, lacking social or family networks or juridical resources due to homophobic violence and discrimination (CNMH, 2015, 20019, see Chapter 1.). The life story narratives collected in this research confirmed this evidence. Interviewees described their childhood memories while living in conflict-affected territories and not understanding the dynamics of armed conflict at that time. Additionally, some of these interviewees explained how the concealment of their non-normative genders and sexualities was a strategy to avoid conflict-related violence and discrimination from their communities and families. However, some of these narratives revealed that the silences produced by armed conflict dynamics are only a fragment in a long history of *other silences* that shape the embodied subjectivity and life trajectory of impoverished and racialised LGBTIQ+ people in Colombia.

This chapter seeks to contribute to the study of how violence, sexuality, and silence operate in the life course of LGBTIQ+ people in Colombia. This analysis begins with the premise that "silence is never nothing" (Mannergren, 2020, p. 2). Silence, as argued by Kimberlee Pérez, "is not the absence of sound, but a point of entry into deep listening" (2013, p. 200). Building on the work of feminist contributions to International Relations, Transitional Justice, and Peace and Conflict Studies in the Global South (Agathangelou & Ling, 2009; Keating, 2013; Thomson, 2019; Parpart & Parashar, 2019), the analysis in this chapter does not reproduce the modern, Western binary opposition silence/speech – which equates speech with agency, emancipation, presence, resistance, achievement, and silence with passivity, repression, absence, co-optation, and failure (Hansen, 2019). Instead, my analysis recognises the existence of agentic silences crucial to survival, particularly in contexts historically impacted by political conflict, war, and imperial and colonial projects (Parpart & Parashar, 2019). However, my analysis moves a step forward, embracing the ambiguity of silence and acknowledging different manifestations of silence that work as disabling or enabling forces in societal processes of forgetting and remembering and macro and micro-politics of the everyday in highly violent

contexts (Mannergren, 2020). Thus, this chapter approaches silence through an epistemology of ambiguity, that is, through the "recognition that multiple interpretations of silence are possible" (Hansen, 2019, p. 29) and the acknowledgement that the power of silence resides in its ambiguity (Achino-Loeb, 2006). Thinking of silence as *relational, contextual*, and *political* – as it always operates within a particular web of human relationships established through power (Achino-Loeb, 2006; Thomson, 2019) – this chapter explores the role of silence in the creation and maintenance of specific social orders and subject positions in different and non-linear temporalities.

Through the analysis of the life story narratives of three interviewees, Miguel, Maira and Claudia, this chapter explores articulations between sexuality, violence, and silence at two different levels. Firstly, I analyse the role of silence in consolidating and challenging official and everyday narratives that explain and justify violence against LGBTIQ+ people. This analysis disentangles the complex web of *historical silences* (absences, omissions, and non-discourses) that sustain the everyday violence shaping the life course of LGBTIQ+ people in contemporary Colombia. It traces the hidden links that conflict-related violence established with these historical silences to facilitate the escalation of armed conflict. Secondly, my analysis considers how everyday violence shapes the embodied subjectivity of LGBTIQ+ people through negotiations between silence and speech that influence their life trajectories and how they narrativise their life stories. This analysis explores how everyday violence travels across time and space as inherited silences that configure the present of oppressed subjects and how these silences are actualised and transformed through re-interpretations and re-articulations. It listens to how interviewees resist, challenge, and transform the violence embedded in these historical silences through queer manifestations of silence and speech that expose the circuits of power that operate under the concept and instrumentalisation of (binary, reproductive, heteronormative) sexuality.

1. THE SILENCES OF REVOLUTION: RURAL AND URBAN CONFIGURATIONS

I met Miguel at the National Centre for Historical Memory in Bogotá in May 2019, at the launching event of a research report about the human rights of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian

LGBT[33]. When the event was over, I approached Miguel to introduce myself and asked him if he would be willing to participate in my research. As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, Miguel is one of the founders of the Colombian Homosexual Liberation Movement (CHLM) in Colombia and was the first Colombian to be recognised legally as an "LGBTI victim of armed conflict" in 2014. Although I thought that, as a well-known person, Miguel might not have the time or the willingness to give another interview, he accepted my invitation immediately and asked me to call him the next day. After a brief conversation over the phone, he invited me to his temporary home to do the interview.

Interviewing Miguel was a challenging experience, not only because he is an open and talkative man who dominates the conversation but also because, as a "public figure", he has an established narrative about his life trajectory. Arguing that silence is always "an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies" (Foucault, 1978, p. 27), my analysis of Miguel's life story narrative in this section is focused on trying to hear the silences that constitute his firm and well-known speech. In this analysis, I explore various silences (at different levels) that contributed (directly or indirectly) to the concealment and invisibilisation of the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people affected by conflict-related violence in rural areas of the country during the beginnings of the homosexual and sexual dissidence mobilisations in the country.

Silence and the (dis)connections between rural and urban violence

> My first memory is when I met a journalist in 1986, and he is homosexual and is currently working in Spain. This man told me: "They kill many homosexuals in Colombia, and my brother was the first to get killed".
>
> That is how I learned that paramilitary groups were killing homosexuals […] That impacted me immediately because, at the beginning of the homosexual movement, there was an interest in decriminalising homosexuality, and we achieved the decriminalisation of homosexuality. But I was sure from the beginning that changing the law doesn't change social relationships or culture.

[33] Caribe Afirmativo & Colombia Diversa (2019). *¡Es ahora! Investigación de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales de personas afrodescendientes e indígenas LGBT, en cinco municipios de Colombia.* OIM, USAID Colombia.

> […] I started collecting pieces from different parts, and *that's how you realise that violence surrounds you* [emphasis added]**.** You understand that the life of homosexuals is not as easy as in your home. (Miguel, 2019)

Miguel was born in the 1950s in Bucaramanga, an intermediate-sized city in north-central Colombia. Miguel lived in Bucaramanga with his parents and siblings until he finished high school and moved to Bogotá in the 1970s to begin his sociology degree at the university. While Miguel is a victim of armed conflict in Colombia, as discussed later in this chapter, his experiences are different from other interviewees as Miguel suffered conflict-related violence in the city and not in rural areas of the country. The quote above is Miguel's answer to my question of when was the first time he heard that LGBTIQ+ people were affected by conflict-related violence in Colombia. As his narrative describes, hearing about this type of violence took him by surprise even though he was a renowned activist then. As one of the founders of the *Movimiento de Liberación Homosexual de Colombia* (MLHC, from now on) [Colombian Homosexual Liberation Movement], Miguel had been at the forefront of various social mobilisations seeking to increase the visibility of homosexuality in the country since the late 1970s. However, learning about the experiences of other homosexuals living in rural contexts showed Miguel that behind the interests and political struggles of the MLHC, there was another reality he was ignorant about.

During his university years, Miguel had his first homosexual relationship with Jan, a French man who, according to Miguel, came to Colombia to hide his homosexuality from his conservative family. The relationship between Miguel and Jan was maintained in "privacy", and after this relationship was over, Miguel started thinking about his non-normative sexuality in political terms. According to his narrative, he was already interested in forming a social movement when he came across an interview with León Zuleta, a Colombian philosopher, academic, and activist, published in a Trotskyist newspaper. In this interview, Zuleta stated that he was a member of a Homosexual Liberation movement with 10,000 members. After reading the interview, Miguel contacted Zuleta to express his interest in becoming part of the social movement. Zuleta answered Miguel's letter saying he was welcome to join the movement but clarified that he (Zuleta) was, in fact, the only member! That is how Miguel and Zuleta founded

the *Movimiento de Liberación Homosexual de Colombia* (MLHC) [Colombian Homosexual Liberation Movement]. Following this, Miguel organised the *Grupo de Estudio por la Liberación de los Gueis*[34] (GELG from now on) [Study Group for Gays' Liberation] with a small group of gay men in Bogotá under the supervision of Zuleta from Medellín.

After the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1981, the work of the GELG became more public. In 1982, Miguel organised the first homosexual march in Bogotá to raise the visibility of sexual dissidence in the country. At that time, as Miguel's narrative describes, the main focus of the GELG was the decriminalisation of homosexuality and the struggle against the police violence that gay men suffered in the city. However, Miguel gained more experience over the years. His political view started widening once he learned about the differences between urban and rural contexts and the variety of violence against LGBTIQ+ people operating in these contexts.

> At university, I worked on an assignment and interviewed a *travesti* sex worker as a sociology student. That's when I noticed another violence, the everyday violence. My professor said: "You have to research important stuff; this is not important". Thankfully I didn't listen to him, and this is still very important to me.
>
> […] I started feeling that violence was appearing in many scenarios. Still, there wasn't a theoretical framework relating everyday violence against the LGBT population, or against women doing sex work, for example, and conflict-related violence.
>
> […] But on the other hand, the problem was that nothing was happening to us, the *maricas* living in Bogotá. It [violence] was affecting those [*maricas*] in the countryside, in conflict-affected areas. But nothing was happening in Bogotá. So, let's say that our discourse was too *universitario* [from the university], too *light* [shallow]. It was a shame because *nos hizo falta* [we needed] more violence in Bogotá [laughs]. It

[34] Zuleta argued against the use of the term "gay" in English, which he considered an element of US imperialism. See Caro, F. C. C. (2020). "Más allá de Stonewall: El Movimiento de Liberación Homosexual de Colombia y las redes de activismo internacional, 1976-1989". *Historia Crítica 75,* pp. 93-114.

> sounds terrible, but we were not direct victims. We never knew someone was displaced because of violence; we only knew that *los maricas de pueblo* [countryside *maricas]* came to live in Bogotá to live more freely.

Miguel's narrative shows the existent disconnection between urban and rural experiences of non-normative sexualities and the variety of violences affecting each of these contexts. While the police were in charge of persecuting persons with non-normative genders and sexualities in the city, paramilitary groups took this "responsibility" in rural conflict-affected regions. That does not mean that police or military did not persecute LGBTIQ+ people in rural areas, but that in these contexts, the policing of sexuality increased, and violence became more lethal as an extension of armed conflict dynamics. In light of these differences, the decriminalisation of homosexuality represented a "gain" for LGBTIQ+ people living in urban contexts (although decriminalisation did not eradicate police violence, as discussed in Chapter 2.). However, this was not so in rural conflict-affected areas where violence against LGBTIQ+ people was exerted by armed actors working "outside the law". However, emerging from right-wing state supporters, paramilitary groups, although officially illegal, operate openly and are widely understood to be a tool of the state apparatus (Payne, 2016). In this sense, the work of paramilitary groups perpetuated violence against LGBTIQ+ people in rural areas as an extension of conservative political interests that lost official power in urban contexts once homosexuality was decriminalised. Therefore, the urban-centred mobilisation of the GELG shaped a political agenda that represented only the tip of the iceberg of a much larger reality that included hidden violent forces that worked beyond the (official) power of the state and the law. While most of Miguel's life experiences (as a middle-class, educated, urban homosexual man) were represented in the GELG debates, other rural experiences remained in the dark. These differences show how various social hierarchies, beyond sexual orientation, mediated how violence against LGBTIQ+ people was thought of and contested.

In addition, Miguel's narrative exemplifies how this separation between urban and rural experiences also happened inside the borders of these urban centres. On the one hand, the experiences of the *travesti* sex worker Miguel interviewed as a student showed him that sexual dissidence had many faces in Bogotá, beyond his university and *marica* experience. Miguel identified the existence of "everyday violence" that shaped the lives of gender non-conforming

subjects and female sex workers occupying marginal zones in the city and living in precarious conditions. Miguel's anecdote about his sociology professor gives an example of how the academy has a particular impact in determining which violences are worth studying or what is considered violence in Colombia (see Chapter 1.) and, consequently, in creating or perpetuating silences around specific violences.

On the other hand, Miguel's narrative shows that the experiences of *los maricas de pueblo* [countryside *maricas*] were primarily interpreted in terms of self-actualisation and the so-called coming out. "We only knew that *los maricas de pueblo* [countryside *maricas]* came to live in Bogotá to live more freely". It is not possible to know if this was only an interpretation of middle and high-class *maricas* of Bogotá or if rural LGBTIQ+ people displaced by armed conflict opted to conceal their experiences of displacement (because of shame or fear of further discrimination). In either case, the silence that surrounded these experiences perpetuated the silence that kept conflict-related violence against LGBTIQ+ people in rural areas a secret for many years. In this sense, the classism and racism displaced persons encounter in urban contexts, in addition to the discrimination and violence that marginal LGBTIQ+ people suffer every day, worked as an extension (in time and space) of the "silent" rural conflict-related violence.

"That's how you realise that violence surrounds you."

In this expression, Miguel shows metaphorically how Bogotá, and urban contexts in general, are located at the centre of the action, debate, and mobilisation. In contrast, the rural areas and experiences surrounding the centre remain silenced in the periphery.

These (dis)connections between urban and rural realities show how everyday violence against LGBTIQ+ people operates through silences (omissions and concealment) shaped by social hierarchies and the contexts these create. In particular, Miguel's narrative reveals that class and race, which are geographically delimited in the Colombian context, determined what kind of violence and which contexts were visible in political and academic settings and which were not. The binary urban/rural established power dynamics that recognised specific violence while silencing others.

Miguel's narrative also shows that while the GELG was born in Bogotá under the supervision of Zuleta, the work and dynamics of the GELG were not wholly aligned with the revolutionary political agenda that Zuleta was executing in other cities of the country. The idea of liberation promoted by Zuleta's work in his independent magazine *El Otro* (1977-1979) not only referred to a quest for identity or the creation of a gay collective subject. It suggested a fusion between political revolution and sexual liberation, envisioning the revolution of all social structures and political institutions that caused social oppression (Serrano, 2012). In his texts published in *El Otro*, Zuleta elaborated a critique of the institutions that pathologised homosexuality, wrote about relations between homosexuals and other oppressed subjects (including women, children, heterosexuals, homosexuals, bisexuals, working-class subjects), and interpellated dominant masculinity and mandatory heterosexuality in modern societies. In this way, it seems that the GELG, while working in and from Bogotá (the centre), did not evolve under these ideas but took a different direction focusing on a political agenda that placed the "homosexual identity" at the forefront of the debate (Naranjo et al., 2021).

Zuleta's work has been revisited recently as evidence of the origins and existence of a liberation movement in Latin America that emerged parallel to the "gay liberation" happening in North-Western regions like the US, Europe and Australia. Serrano-Amaya (2012) underlines that the consolidation of dominant narratives that locate the origin of the gay liberation movement in the Global North has obscured and silenced local and subordinated histories of social movements in other geographies. Arguing that this erasure has reproduced the relationships of the coloniality of knowledge (Quijano, 2000) between the US and Latin America, Serrano (2012) analyses Zuleta's work as founder of the CHLM, arguing that it had similarities with North-based movements but also relevant differences. Beyond the identity politics promoted in the Global North based on the "coming out", "gay pride", and social liberation narratives, the Latin-American mobilisations at the beginning of the 1970s were focused on establishing connections between the political revolution and sexual liberation (Simonetto, 2017). In light of these debates, the division between urban/rural perspectives described in Miguel's narrative possibly worked as an extension of the North/South power relation that tends to silence and obscure local narratives and histories of struggle. While representing the "North", the academic elite that guided the GELG in Bogotá aligned over the years with exported narratives focused on the

vindication of the "gay" identity, separating from a more general understanding of (normative) sexuality and (economic, political, racial, gender) social struggles. In the same way, the urban/rural dichotomy continued operating later in consolidating the "LGBT social sector" (as further discussed in Chapter 2.). The rural voices lost power and representation once the urban-based social sector adopted the (exported) human rights and identity politics discourse (based on fixed sexual identities) to define the LGBT political subject of rights and address the Colombian nation-state.

HIV/AIDS, non-discourses, and everyday violence

> […] When I started working on AIDS issues, I realised that homophobia was very strong inside the movement. They [members] didn't accept that homosexuals could be sick with something other than homosexuality [laughs]. Almost everyone agreed that I shouldn't work on AIDS issues, and for a second time, I left the homosexual movement. I was kicked out before for being a *marica*. I used to say that many were effeminate [movement members], but when they were asked to talk when they had the floor, they assumed a discourse from masculinity. I mean, they used to forget their *plumas* [sissyness].
>
> I used to say, "One has the right to be a *marica*, and even when the discourse sounds *marica* it is still extremely serious." So, they said I was ruining the meetings and kicked me out of the movement. I was out for a week, and because I was not allowed to attend the meetings, I put a five meters sign outside that said, "Being *marica* is a serious thing, and it is a men's issue" [laughs]. So, they asked me to pull that off because they would be kicked out of the library where we used to meet. It was a Christian library, and we were philosophers, not *maricas*.

Besides recreating the urban/rural division, the class status and gender identifications of the GELG members in Bogotá also created internal hierarchies that classified what topics were worth discussing in public and political spaces and which ones should remain concealed. Miguel's narrative discloses silencing practices operating inside the GELG that replicated the patriarchal conventions of society that define femininity as a sign of weakness and something to be subordinated by masculine power. Miguel's sissyness, read as not being "serious",

destabilised the sex-gender alignment (male/man) the group wanted to maintain and represented a threat to the GELG's respectability while blurring the borders between publically and privately expected homosexual behaviour.

In response, Miguel performed internal activism that vindicated his being *marica*, which he considered different from being homosexual or gay. For Miguel being *marica* is related to a vindication of men's right to be feminine but also refers to the political weight that performing the “passive” role in sexual intercourse has. "I believe that homosexuals who only penetrate others follow the *modelo macho masculino falocrático* [phallocratic masculine model], and what makes you *[marica*] different is to *poner el culo* […]. *Lo que realmente es político es poner el culo, no meterlo en el culo* [What is political is to be penetrated, not to penetrate] (Miguel, 2019). Using humour and sarcasm, Miguel exposed the contradictions of the GELG's internal politics that continued reproducing homophobic stereotypes and silencing particular non-conforming gender expressions.

Similarly, when Miguel began his activism on HIV/AIDS-related issues, he found censure in the movement. This situation was not exclusive to Colombia, as Miguel also mentioned further on in his narrative, but an international phenomenon that constructed the representation of the HIV/AIDS disease as a consequence of the “lifestyle” of homosexual communities – promiscuity, drugs use, alcohol consumption, and sex work, among others (Munera, 2016). In this way, to be associated with HIV/AIDS issues risked posing questions about the respectability of the GELG's members, which was sustained by their social class and connections with academia; as Miguel mentioned, they "were philosophers, not *maricas."*

Despite criticism, Miguel continued researching HIV/AIDS issues and became one of the leading activists and researchers on the topic in Latin America. Miguel's social networking in Bogotá allowed him to get in touch with various journalists and mainstream national media in general, becoming the national public face of HIV/AIDS and "*marica* issues", in his words. He explained:

> I met a medical researcher who got 400 HIV tests and helped him to find 400 people to get tested. I met a guy I liked, and when he asked me out, I asked him if he wanted to get tested. So instead of going to fuck we went to

> get him tested, and he was the second person to turn out as reactive [to the virus] […] He told me that he was boyfriend with a bishop before, so I realised, "Wow! This is bigger than what we were thinking, we need to talk about this issue".
>
> I contacted [renowned journalist] and told him we needed to do a TV show about this topic. I convinced him and got the doctor, the *marica* [his friend], and I to discuss the subject. When the TV show came out, they called [renowned journalist] and threatened to kill him and me.
>
> […] that was the first death threat I received for talking about AIDS. Because, of course, AIDS and *maricas* are the same things. At that time, it [AIDS] was still understood as a disease of homosexuals […]

While framed as a "homosexual disease", Colombia's governmental response to the arrival and propagation of the HIV/AIDS pandemic was slow and inefficient, similar to other parts of the world. The first case of HIV-related death in the country was found and documented in 1983, and it was the case of a (cisgender) female sex worker living in Cartagena who had returned from the Netherlands sometime before. Despite this early discovery, some years passed before the HIV/AIDS pandemic became a national public health discussion. In 1985 Miguel was asked to participate in this initial research (mentioned in the quote above), and the TV show came out in 1986. Therefore, Miguel and many others worked on HIV/AIDS prevention programs amid governmental silence for some years. As Miguel's narrative describes, this prevention work was not well received and was silenced through different strategies.

Tellingly, the death threats Miguel received were anonymous, showing how the government's silence around the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its inherent symbolic violence was supported and fortified by faceless powers that enforced silence through the threat or actual physical violence. Miguel's narrative shows that, as argued by Chloe Rutter-Jensen (2008), official discourses that remain silent about the virus transmission and violence against LGBTIQ+ people constitute a "non-discourse" that operates at the material, symbolic and political levels. According to Rutter-Jensen (2008), the lack of institutional prevention programs, the absence of people living with HIV in mainstream media, and the lack of cultural and political representation of their experiences in rural and urban contexts generate hatred and phobias against non-

normative genders and sexualities. The gaps in knowledge this institutional silence creates, Rutter-Jensen (2008) argues, generate violent extra-legal acts such as the ill-named social cleansing raids and the forced displacement of excluded and marginalised populations. Therefore, the "non-discourse" around HIV/AIDS invisibilises the situations of social vulnerability that create favourable conditions for the propagation of the virus (Marquez, 2008), and the lack of recognition of the virus and the extension of its transmission among the population facilitates the social exclusion of the affected groups (Rutter-Jensen, 2008).

Reading Miguel's narrative through Rutter-Jensen's analysis reveals a chain of silences around the HIV/AIDS pandemic that perpetuated violence against LGBTIQ+ people in urban centres and, in particular, exposed rural impoverished and racialised subjects to deadly forms of violence. Miguel was threatened several times for talking openly about the HIV/AIDS pandemic in urban contexts in national media, so violence was used to silence him. In rural contexts, illegal actors of the armed conflict instrumentalised the official silence (and all the stereotypes it allowed) around HIV/AIDS issues to expose LGBTIQ+ people and affirm their power over rural communities. According to recently published historical memory reports, FARC guerrillas arranged HIV testing raids in agreement with local communities to control the epidemic and stop "indecorous" sexual behaviours (Caribe Afirmativo, 2021). While heterosexuals testing positive could also be targeted with violence, members of these communities have suggested that these testing raids were strategically deployed to expose LGBTI people in the community and to justify their killings, disappearances, or displacements (CNMH, 2019). Paramilitaries, on the other hand, were less visible in their strategies and used pamphlets to threaten LGBTIQ+ people, HIV/AIDS positive individuals, sex workers, homeless, and drug users announcing upcoming “social cleansing” raids in the communities (CNMH, 2015; Colombia Diversa, 2017; Serrano-Amaya, 2018). In both cases, the association of HIV/AIDS with non-normative genders and sexualities was articulated by armed groups through historical discourses on sinful sexual behaviour, mental and physical disease, and homosexuality and criminality, gaining social acceptance and increasing their control in these communities. In this sense, while Miguel was threatened because of his visibility and public discourse and was violently told to remain silent, gender and sexual minorities in rural areas were menaced with the possibility of public exposure.

"They didn't accept that homosexuals could be sick with something other than homosexuality." Through irony and sarcasm, Miguel's expression suggests an implicit alignment of some of the GELG members with traditional and pathologising views of homosexuality (expressed in their internal homophobic and misogynist dynamics). It also sheds light on the implicit continuity between GELG's silences and governmental silences around gender and sexual dissidence issues in general and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. While it was not deliberate, the GELG's silences around the HIV/AIDS pandemic contributed to the exposure of rural LGBTIQ+ people to deadly forms of conflict-related violence. As argued in the previous sub-section, the GELG's silences show how sexual orientation was the priority in the group's political agenda, leaving discussions about social class, gender, and race aside and consequently, invisibilising the life experiences of impoverished, marginalised, and racialised LGBTIQ+ people.

The "first" LGBT victim of armed conflict in Colombia

Miguel's narrative also revealed that other forms of sexual violence were concealed and invisibilised through the articulation of the official silences and discourses around the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the life experiences of LGBTIQ+ people in the country.

> Later, when I left the AIDS Global Fund and started investigating commercial sexual exploitation in the DANE [National Administrative Department of Statistics], I received death threats again. So, I thought, it doesn't matter where I'm working. As everything is related, they will threaten me […] Probably because we opened our mouths. For example, in that investigation, I asked questions about children and adolescents first sexual encounters. The survey asked if this first sexual experience was with a guerrilla member, military, priest, teacher, or family member […] That was never published. I left, and they never published the results because they received death threats […] we were discovering that paramilitaries were involved in the sexual trafficking of children. People were laundering money doing this.

As shown in Miguel's narrative, he was not only threatened because of his work on non-normative sexualities or the HIV/AIDS pandemic. He was also threatened with violence for disclosing how sexuality, in general, is instrumentalised by armed conflict actors to control and oppress communities. Miguel's narrative displays how behind governmental and cultural silences

around sexuality, many political and economic powers are disputed by different social actors. Additionally, Miguel's experiences exemplify how non-normative sexuality is used as a scapegoat to conceal the power relations and violence that constitute normative sexuality. By exposing Miguel, the "*marica* who dares to speak", in his words, governmental and illegal powers concealed other forms of sexual violence operating in the everyday in rural communities.

Miguel's political persistence was finally silenced in 2007 when he received a death threat against his family. He decided to leave the country, travel to Spain, and seek political asylum.

> I was giving a conference in Cali for the LGBT population about sexual rights understood as human rights. Suddenly someone in the audience asked me, "Miguel, it's been just announced that senator Araujo will be detained for paramilitarism. He presented a law project favouring same-sex couples in the past few days. What is your opinion about this?". I answered, "Look; if it is proved that [senator] is a paramilitary, I would prefer to lose the same-sex couples project law. I don't want to be granted some rights because a murderer helped out. I rather prefer to have my rights violated".
>
> I finished the conference and was going to the airport in a taxi when I got a phone call from [politician], and she said, "Miguel, I just got a phone call from [journalist], who heard what you said, and he wants to invite us to his TV show tonight". I said, "the problem is that I'm going in a taxi to the airport, and I don't have enough time to get there". And she said, "Miguel, what you've said is serious. They are going to kill you".

Miguel's narrative describes the early leaks of the *parapolítica* [parapolitics] scandal in which nexuses between paramilitary groups and politicians were revealed soon after the demobilisation process that the government of Uribe Vélez agreed with paramilitaries between 2003 and 2006. After this event, Miguel received anonymous phone calls saying, "it would be a shame to find your brother dead, as he looks like you". Miguel affirmed that he endured death threats for many years because he "was not afraid of dying" but that having threats against his family was a different issue. Miguel decided to travel to Spain, where he enrolled in a PhD program through his academic connections and finally asked for political asylum.

While Miguel and others have written about his life story narrative as a social leader and sexual rights activist in Colombia, these narratives usually end with the story of his attack or his decision to move to Spain to escape violence. When our interview got to this point, Miguel said:

> This experience [exile] changed my life completely. First, I began to see the game from the outside, the game I was immersed in here [in Colombia]. You make lots of things and don't realise how important this work is until you find someone external who reaffirms it. So, I realised that what had happened to me was severe the day I gave my testimony to ask for asylum. The police officer asked me why I was attacked, and I answered, "Probably because they didn't like the colour of my hair" because it was pink. The police officer looked at me confused, and my lawyer said, "Don't answer to him. Only talk to me, and I'll answer to him". So, she obliged me to say serious and concrete things [laughs], not to play down my experience. It was severe, and I started crying again because hearing the story of the attack from her voice was very hard. Extremely hard. So, this changed my perspective. I started being a victim, ah?

Miguel's narrative shows he gained a new perspective on his experiences and about violence in Colombia when he stood outside "the game". While Miguel endured constant death threats, suffered an attack with a grenade in his house and confronted everyday violence and discrimination, it was only until he listened to his story as a spectator that he felt this violence and considered his status as a victim of violence. Miguel's narrative shows how violence acquires different meanings in different spaces and how subjects use different narrative strategies to endure violence. Miguel's use of humour and sarcasm, a constant in his life story narrative, is a narrative strategy he uses to expose the absurdity and ordinariness of violence against LGBTIQ+ people. At the same time, as his narrative describes, there is also deep suffering that is not easily expressed behind this narrative strategy.

After losing his privileged position in Colombia as a political figure and a scholar, Miguel experienced other negotiations between silence and speech in Spain. According to Miguel's narrative, he was an unusual asylum seeker as he was an educated man, he suffered violence and persecution in Colombia but not in the context of war, and he was attacked and threatened because of his sexuality. All these characteristics were "unusual" for the asylum system then, which caused Miguel trouble while trying to continue his life in Spain. Miguel was

not permitted to work because his academic degrees were not valid in this country, so he was forced to find other means of survival. In response to this situation and trying to find a way to express his feelings and experiences of violence, Miguel began an artistic career and started writing poetry and practising photography. Miguel found another way to speak and express his experiences despite the multiple ways his exile from Colombia silenced him.

When our interview reached this point, Miguel got up from the dinner table and went inside his room to look for something. When he came back, he had a book in his hands. He opened and started reading:

> Combative absences,
> promises interrupted by murderous voices,
> belongings squeezed with nostalgia,
> luggage undid many times,
> screams of not wanting to leave.
>
> [cries]

Miguel's voice cracked, and he shed a few tears. Then, Miguel said, "I'm living another exile… after all these years, another exile", and continued reading.

While living in Spain, Miguel got involved through his art in humanitarian work with victims of armed conflict, which allowed him to work with other victims and apply to be recognised as an "LGBT victim of armed conflict" under Victims Law 1448 (2001). While Miguel is critical of this category, as shown in the introduction of this chapter, Miguel's fight for recognition (in which his privilege played a crucial role) helped to extend this recognition to other LGBTIQ+ people across the country. When I interviewed Miguel, he had returned only a few weeks before and was still adapting to Bogotá again (including its violence and insecurity). Miguel expressed that he was finding it hard to reconnect with his previous work and acquaintances. He also mentioned that new generations of LGBTIQ+ activists did not know who he was and that "things had changed a lot". Miguel's narrative reveals how his battle for speaking up against multiple forms of violence is a continuum that extended from his work as an activist in Colombia, his years in exile in Spain, and his return to Colombia. Miguel's fight against these silencing

violences demonstrates that the inclusion of dissident voices and sexualities in the official narratives of violence in Colombia is a complex and contested terrain in which multiple forms of everyday violence, including armed conflict violence, intersect.

2. INHERITED SILENCES: COLONIAL NARRATIVES AND EVERYDAY (RE)EXISTENCE

I met Maira through a personal contact, an acquaintance who works as an anthropologist in an NGO working in the Colombia Amazon. I contacted Maira through WhatsApp, as my acquaintance asked me to. She answered enthusiastically, saying she was interested in participating in my research but asked me to email her a description of the project and some of the questions I wanted to discuss with her in the interview. After Maira received my email, she said she was travelling the next week to Bogotá and that we could meet at the NGO's office. From the beginning of the interview, Maira was very friendly and talkative. However, our conversation became more fluid and familiar in our second encounter, which we planned some days later and took place through a Skype call that Maira took from her house in the Amazon.

The beginning of Maira's life story narrative took me to where she was born, Yurayaku (Yurayaco in Spanish), an Indigenous-occupied territory in the Caquetá Department, located in the South of Colombia in the Amazonian Region. Maira's initial description of this place was articulated through short interrupted sentences that waved between memories of her childhood in the jungle in the company of her grandparents and of violent events she experienced while growing up in the middle of the internal armed conflict.

> Well, I was born in Yurayaco.
>
> Yurayaco, in our language, means clear waters, transparent waters. The landscape has changed a lot since I was born, and let's say that since I was a child, I have experienced war.
>
> I have that “clip” [mark] in my head about what has happened to us.

> Although I also lived in the context of my grandparents, with lots of medicine [ambiwaska] and long walks by the river, exploring the jungle, going with my father to collect plants, and fishing.
>
> But I also lived a time... I started to see or to feel too, because something very, very, strong happened to us; the moment they took my brother away, many things happened. During the war, at that time, well, at that time of my childhood.

The way in which Maira's narrative intertwined the memories of her territory on the one hand, and the presence of violence and conflict, on the other was not only present at the beginning of her interview but constituted how her life story narrative evolved as a whole. This interrupted narrative emerged, leaving various silences on the way. Some of these silences were filled with colour and information, but others, later discovered, were narrative omissions and traces of her experiences of diverse *embodied silences*.

Everyday silence-as-speech: the enemy in the making

For more than four decades, Caquetá has been the epicentre of the Colombian armed conflict and the ongoing "war on drugs" supported by the United States and European countries (through financial, logistical, tactical and military aid) to combat the illegal drug trade. Hence, this territory has been occupied and exploited by the activities of legal and illegal armed groups, causing extreme levels of violence and human rights violations. The hostile Amazon geography has facilitated the hiding and operation of these armed groups, which have taken advantage of the abandonment and lack of state presence in the area. Likewise, the quality of the terrain has enabled the growth of thousands of coca plantations, representing for more than twenty years the principal economy of the Department. In this context, Maira's family, as part of the Inga community, has struggled for survival in the middle of economic, political, territorial, and social disputes that have dramatically changed their social and cultural heritage across generations.

While Maira has experienced many violent events living in this conflict-affected context, her life story narrative returned to one particular event. This event appeared in three different moments during Maira's narrative. Each time she expanded her account, she gave me more detail

about what happened that day. The first time Maira mentioned this event was in the introduction of her life story narrative. She noted:

> Something that left a mark on me happened when I was around nine. Yes, nine years old. The military made me talk; they made me talk on the radio, forcing me to tell lies to try my father. To accuse my father of being a caretaker of the M19[35] at that time.
>
> […] They forced me to say; I had to say some words so they wouldn't kill my father. "You have to say this!" And it was a lie, only a lie, and they took him away. *Eso lo tengo muy grabado* [That is still engraved in my memory]. So, all that happened is very much inside me, like a *clip* on my memory.
>
> But also, a significant part [of her memories] was about living a childhood by the river, by the mountains, of closeness with my family.

Maira's narrative of this violent event exemplifies how silence and speech operate in conflict-affected contexts as tools for producing and reproducing official narratives and subject positions. Waving between fact and fiction, Maira's narrative of this event reveals some of the micropolitics operating in the building of the historical narrative "us versus them" that structures and justifies violence and conflict in Colombia at the discursive level. As discussed in Chapter 1, the official narratives that explain and structure Colombia's history of violence tend to reduce conflict and violence's complexity to individual actors and dualistic schemes, an "us versus them" narrative that leaves the broader historical context out of the scope of analysis. In this sense, the "us vs them" narrative, as any discourse, functions both through *speech* – what is openly said – and *silence* – "an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses" (Foucault, 1978, 27). Maira's narrative reveals that the crafting of these official narratives, and their constitutive silences, do not only take place once the expert voice (i.e., academic, political, judicial) is pronounced as a public discourse but also happens in the everyday of conflict-affected contexts.

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[35] M19 or the 19th of April Movement (*Movimiento 19 de Abril* in Spanish) was a guerrilla organization movement that was formed as a result of the allegedly fraudulent presidential elections of the 19th of April 1970 that denied the electoral victory of the National Popular Alliance (ANAPO) of former military dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla.

Maira's account of this day discloses how her speech was used to reproduce the “us versus them” official narrative of armed conflict, displacing her and her father from their “victim” subject position. By (falsely) accusing her father, Maira's words turned into a speech act used strategically by the military to produce both the “witness” and the “enemy” of armed conflict. Through Maira's speech act, Maira's father became the ally of guerrillas, the enemy, and Maira became the witness of his alliances. However, at the centre of the strategic production of Maira's speech act was not the speech itself but the silences, at micro and macro levels, that allowed and sustained it in the first place. At the micro level, Maira's speech (a) emerged from the concealment of information, as she was told that her father could be released if she uttered this accusation, which turned out to be a lie; (b) created a false accusation, and correspondingly a false subject position “the enemy”; and (c) became a silent memory, as Maira was forced to remain in silence after discovering the military deceived her. Consequently, the creation of Maira's speech act required the instrumentalisation of three (or more) silences to sustain the "us vs them" official narrative deployed by the military to administrate conflict-related violence on an everyday basis.

The silences that allowed and sustained Maira's speech act at the macro level appeared more clearly the second time she returned to this memory. When I asked Maira about how she perceived violence and armed conflict when she was a child and how her community and family used to talk about “what was happening” at that time, she answered:

> The military killed one of my cousins; she was seven years old. They [the military] thought she was a guerrilla member, and they killed her. *Colombia doesn't know about this* [emphasis added].
>
> My grandfather protested. He came [to Bogotá] to talk to the president of Colombia. That was reported by a newspaper [..] A nun showed it to me, and there was a picture of my grandfather shaking hands with the president. He [grandfather] came to ask him [the Colombian president] why we were being persecuted […] Why do they [the military] do that? So, the Church intervened. According to my grandfather, the Church greatly influenced the actions and decisions of the military.
>
> […] I started hearing about it [armed conflict] when they [M19] took my brother away. Around that time, they killed my cousin chasing the M19, my

> seven years old cousin Berta, bombing an old woman's *choza* [hut], saying that guerrilla members were sleeping there.
>
> Then, when I was a little older, I witnessed the military taking my father away. They tied him up and tortured him in front of us. They said he was feeding thirty M19 guerrillas, but people usually came to us looking for medicine [medicinal plants]. Even the military came to our house asking for medicine when they were sick. But then, another group [of the military] came saying that we were feeding thirty guerrillas. *We don't know about those reports* [emphasis added]. They said we were hiding weapons […] A helicopter knocked the house down. Then, they kidnapped my father, and Monsignor [name] helped us to locate and rescue him. My mom found him [Maira's father] buried to his neck in San Jose de Fragua.
>
> […] when the military took my father away. When he was being tortured in front of our house, they chose me, who was even younger than the others. They called me and said, "You have to say this if you want to see your father alive". And then we [family] never said anything about what happened because they [military] told us that they could kill my father and us if we said something. *So, we never said anything, none of everything that happened to us* [emphasis added]. We didn't want to speak about it until now. With the Peace Accord and other stuff, little by little, things are becoming visible. So, all these memories and that clip remain here [points to her head].

Maira's narrative reveals that before she was forced to speak against her father, her community and family had been violently persecuted by the military over the years. Her seven-year-old cousin Berta died due to another accusation that recreated the "us versus them" official narrative on a typical day in the Inga community. While Maira's territory has been occupied by all armed actors of the conflict, including guerrillas, paramilitaries, and drug traffickers, Maira's memories of armed conflict focused, particularly, on the violence perpetuated by the military. As this quote shows, and Maira elaborated further across her life story narrative, in the history of the internal armed conflict, Colombian Indigenous communities have been systematically accused of being guerrilla members while inhabiting the same territories as these armed groups[36]. These accusations have instrumentalised historical narratives that link Indigenous communities with

[36] This has been corroborated by the work of the CNMH and the Truth Commission's final report.

uncivilised violence (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2006; Lugones, 2010; Rivera-Cusicanqui, 2012), perpetuating racist narratives cemented in colonial times (as further elaborated in the following subsection of this chapter).

Maira's experience reveals one of the multiple ways in which racism against Indigenous communities has been instrumentalised by conflict-related violence and armed conflict narratives to create fictional enemies, reproducing, at the same time, the coloniality of power in these territories. While living in impoverished and state-abandoned territories, Indigenous communities have been trapped by armed conflict dynamics and by drug trafficking in particular. For many Indigenous communities living in Caquetá, working in coca plantations is their primary way of survival, both because of the lack of state presence and the violent coercion of illegal armed groups. In this way, the violence exerted by both legal and illegal armed groups has been displaced towards Indigenous communities, creating a fictional enemy and invisibilising the historical colonial violence these communities have endured. By accusing Indigenous communities of being guerrillas for occupying the same territories, these communities are (once again) denied the right to occupy their territories through a narrative that invisibilises the fact that Indigenous communities occupied these territories long before the armed conflict began in the first place.

However, as described in Maira's account, this narrative has been resisted by Indigenous communities in a constant negotiation between silence and speech. Maira mentioned that her grandfather protested, talked to the president of Colombia and appeared in a national newspaper. At the same time, she argues that *"Colombia doesn't know about this".* She narrates that the military accused her family repeatedly of hiding guerrillas and weapons and, at the same time, that her family "*doesn't know about these reports".* Her narrative describes that the Church had "influence" over military actions and intervened for her family, although the Church violently evangelised her ancestors (as further discussed in the following subsection). Maira explains that her family has opted to remain silent about many of these attacks to protect their lives. In this way, Maira's narrative shows the complex network of present and historical silences and the multiple actors (i.e., government, Church, national media, the military) that produce the subject position of Indigenous communities as the enemy of society inside and outside conflict-affected contexts on an everyday basis. Maira's speech act, which created her as the witness of violence

and her father as the enemy, was allowed and sustained by years of persecution against Indigenous communities that remained in the dark for decades (in particular, before the internal armed conflict narrative was politically acknowledged), along with the complicities of the Colombian government and its institutions in developing and escalating this conflict.

Maira's insistence in voicing she was forced to speak against her father was the primary memory that appeared to have the urge to come out of silence again and again during our interview. Representing what Vittorio Bufacchi and Jools Gilson define as the "ripples of violence", or "when an act of violence, with a clear starting point and endpoint, evolves into an experience, with much broader and unclear boundaries" (2016, p. 32), this violent event turned into a timeless experience that keeps haunting Maira's everyday. The third time Maira returned to this memory in her life story narrative was when I asked her if she considered herself a victim of violence in Colombia. She went through the description of this event once again, but this time gave me more context of what happened that day:

> […] When the military arrived at my house, they were carrying a radio. They took my sister, younger brother, and the other girls outside and told them to look away. The military took me because I was the one speaking*, la más preguntona* [the one asking questions]. I was asking about my father, and that man, I never forget that that man made me talk through that radio they had, and he told me I needed to talk, that if I wanted to see my father alive, I had to say that, "Yes, my father was hiding guerrillas". He said, "You have to say this so your father can be released". And that was a lie. I will never forget that man from the military; he made me tell that lie. *De hundir yo misma a mi papá* [to sink my own father] [she cries].

Maira's narrative emphasised how in addition to her embodiment as an Indigenous person, her gender also played a role in the experience of this violent event. As Maira describes, while all her siblings were present that day, the military chose her to speak on the radio because she was *la preguntona*, a colloquialism used in Colombia to express that somebody is crossing the line by asking too many questions. Although this expression can be applied to any person, when it is used to refer to a woman, it carries a gendered meaning that feeds the stereotype of women as gossipy. It suggests that women are taking more space than they should – reaffirming that the realm of speech is not for women. In this case, the military punished Maira's loud and

courageous attitude by silencing her and enforcing a speech act that accompanied her for the rest of her life.

"All that happened is very much inside me, like a *clip* on my memory".

Maira used the word *clip* to describe how the memory of this violent event left a scar on her memory – something still present. While I did not ask Maira what she meant by this word, it could be used metaphorically to interpret how this violent event keeps working as an embodied experience in Maira's life trajectory. A clip is a flexible or spring-loaded device for *holding an object or objects together or in place*[37] (emphasis added). Following this definition, it could be said this violent event left a scar, a clip, that holds in place all the other tensions between silence and speech that traverse the life experience of Maira as an Indigenous woman. The violence in this event was about physically hurting Maira's father and forcing Maira to support a narrative that has oppressed her and her Indigenous community over decades. This violent event turned into an experience that altered Maira's perception of herself (as a subject) and her world (Staudigl, 2011) and evolved as traumatic memory on Maira's life trajectory that keeps holding all other violences in a timeless place.

An everyday in translation: silence, epistemic violence and racism

Along with her memories of armed conflict, Maira described in her life story narrative another conflict connected to her Indigenous knowledge and historical silences enforced in and resisted by her Inga community. Maira called this a "massive conflict of racism" and described it as the experience of multiple forms of discrimination and everyday violence that silenced and devalued her in academic settings. I interpret these occurrences as manifestations of *epistemic violence* (Spivak, 1988) Maira has encountered and resisted in her life trajectory. In this sub-section, I analyse how Maira negotiated silence and speech in different contexts showing the persistence of the coloniality of knowledge and racism and how Indigenous communities resist its social dynamics on an everyday basis.

[37] Oxford Languages, 2022 https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/

Maira was born and raised in a family of social leaders that have advocated for the Inga community's ancestral and civil rights over generations. The defence of their native Inga language has been at the forefront of their activism. According to Maira's life story narrative, her mother is a well-known Indigenous social leader in the country. She has a long trajectory of social and political labour as the founder of several organizations that work towards defending the territory, culture and education of both Indigenous and peasant communities in Colombia. Besides having a great interest in recovering the work of women in the practice of traditional Indigenous medicine, as the founder of the Yachaikury school in Yurayaco (the only school available in town), Maira's mother won a prize offered by UNESCO for her work on the recovery and preservation of their Inga language. This is a fight that she embraced in resistance to the historical process of colonization and evangelization that has taken place in the Inga territory, denouncing the effects of the Capuchin mission in particular – which consolidated the region's harshly exploitative and extractive economy.[38]

According to Maira's narrative, while growing up in this context, her parents disagreed on the education they wanted for Maira and her siblings when she was a child. Maira explained:

> My father used to say that studying at school was useless. He used to say, "What do you study for? What you have to do is to drink medicine [*ambiwaska*]". He used to say that one can learn everything from drinking the medicine […] "You learn to read, you learn everything. You learn to understand the world, to understand the water, the sun, the moon. The most important part of studying is to learn to respect what your eyes see". He didn't learn to read and never studied at school.

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[38] The Capuchin missionaries arrived in Putumayo in 1899, invited by the Colombian government to "civilize" the Indigenous tribes of the region. Due to the lack of economic resources and political interest of the Colombian government to control and assist this remote region, the Capuchins were granted sovereign power over this territory and its inhabitants. They had spiritual authority over the whole territory along with civil and judiciary powers over the Indigenous peoples – not considered Colombian citizens at that time (Uribe, 2011). The Capuchin Mission executed an economic plan to exploit the natural resources of the region, which included the construction of a highway to connect the Andes mountains with the Amazon Forest. This civil engineering work was achieved through thirty years of slavery work performed by the Inga community. This process of colonization and evangelization dramatically changed the Inga territory and its population (from 1906 to 1933, Putumayo's Indigenous population decreased from 32,600 to 13,997), creating a social and cultural conflict in the valley (Bonilla, 1972). The development and progress promised by this project never materialized, and, instead, it assisted a process of chaotic colonization and deforestation and consolidated the extractive character of the region, which traces back from the rubber boom in the early 1900s, to the discovery of oil in the 1960s, to the explosion of coca growing and production since the early 1980s (Uribe, 2011).

As Maira describes, her father, a well-known *Taita* [spiritual leader] in the Inga community, argued that as a community, they needed to resist the imposition of colonial knowledges and focus on their ancestral heritage as experts on medicinal plants and their healing powers. On the other side, Maira's mother argued that it was important that her children could learn Spanish and have a Western education (the education offered by the Colombian system). She said, "she didn't want her children to suffer what she experienced when she was forbidden to speak in her language" (Maira, 2019). According to Maira's narrative, her mother lived a "period of mandatory rejection of her language [Inga]". She was forced to learn Spanish while living in a school run by nuns of the Catholic Church in Putumayo when she was eighteen. For that reason, Maira's mother wanted her children to learn Spanish to protect them from the traumatic experience of enforced silence that she experienced while growing up. Therefore, Maira's mother valued their Indigenous knowledges and their Inga language. Still, she wanted her children to have the tools to navigate the oppression Indigenous communities endure nowadays in Colombia. In this way, although her parents had different positions, both agreed on a critical positioning against the historical colonial process that has outlawed, concealed, and invisibilized their ancestral knowledges over the years.

According to Maira's narrative, she finally went to school a little older than the regular age. Because her father kept teaching them Inga, Maira and her sibling speak both languages, or *Ingañol*, as she cheerfully calls it. Facing multiple difficulties due to the lack of access to educational institutions in her region, Maira had to move between different cities to finalise her studies while performing gendered (and illegal as she was a minor) jobs as a housekeeper in family houses[39]. Maira's narrative of these years focused on how she was othered as an Indigenous subject located outside the epistemic authority realm.

> I passed elementary school very fast, in only three years […] But we also had to endure a major conflict of racism. My brother, who was killed, dropped out of school because of racism. However, I remember that I confronted everything.

[39] See Chapter 5. for further analyses on displacement and gendered care work.

> I confronted them when they called me *india*[40] [Indian], *india come piojo* [louse eater Indian], *india come gusano* [worm eater Indian]. All bad things were destined for the few Indigenous kids studying at the school. Once, we had to confront them and fought with our fists and stones against the *niños colonos* [settler children] whose parents were racist against Indigenous people.
>
> […] When I went to Medellin, they used to call me *guerrillera* [guerrilla member] in my school. Even the school's principal used to call me that. So, you could feel the rejection at the level of race.
>
> […] The only thing that saved me is that I was clever and agile […] there was a conception that Indigenous were stupid, like backward, but I always had the character to say, to show them that that wasn't true. We [Indigenous] were intelligent, and those who didn't understand anything were them. I always wanted to demonstrate it. So, I did great in my assessments and expositions. It was hard because I didn't pronounce the Spanish words well. It was a big challenge. I had to study and read linguistic research to understand the conceptualization of words in Spanish.
>
> I always fought, also at university […] I heard that many of our grandparents were confined and forbidden to speak in their language. So, they were ashamed of talking in Spanish. They were already old and not able to speak it well […] I wanted to study to show the world that we are not backward but understand the world differently. In other words, the world we speak and describe is different from the world that is felt and described nowadays. That's why I've been called a *peleona* [fighter]. Because I've felt I have many rocks on top of me (Maira, 2019)

Maira's narrative demonstrates that various forms of everyday violence work together in different spaces and temporalities. Maira not only had to leave her hometown to continue her studies due to structural violence, but she had to face the violence of racism while living outside her community. Maira's narrative displays some of the narratives that shape the everyday violence of racism and the epistemic violence that the coloniality of power continues producing against Indigenous knowledges nowadays. Maira's experiences show how the colonial temporality that places Indigenous communities in the past as backward, underdeveloped, and

[40] India/o is a pejorative adjective colloquially used in Colombia to refer to someone who does not have manners, or is rude, or uncivilized.

uncivilized is an ongoing process that negates Indigenous peoples' subject position as epistemic agents (Guzman, 2019). Tellingly, Maira's narrative reveals how these narratives operate in the everyday and how the relations of power established through racial orders begin in spaces like the school and through children's relationality.

Additionally, Maira's narrative reveals a continuity between the silencing of the Inga language during the colonial period of evangelisation suffered by her ancestors and the everyday violence she confronted for not being able to articulate her Spanish without having her Inga roots entangled in her tongue. Similarly, Maira's narrative shows that she was accused of being a guerrilla member since she was a girl and how she interpreted this accusation as an extension of the process of racialisation she confronted in the everyday. However, Maira's narrative also displays how these inherited silences are engaged and challenged by othered (silenced) subjects through everyday negotiations. Maira has not only negotiated the terms of her silence by learning Inga and Spanish languages. Her narrative also reasserts the existence of her community as a "parallel history" (Guzman, 2019) to that of modern Euro-Western history by affirming that "the world that we [Indigenous people] speak and describe is different from the world that is felt and described nowadays". By establishing this temporal difference, Maira's narrative exposes the (fictional) narrative of modern civilization and how the written Euro-Western language is commonly used as the parameter to classify the development of cultures (Paredes, 2015). Echoing Julieta Paredes' work, Maira's narrative emphasises the illiteracy of non-Euro-Western cultures and languages, which contain alternative forms of writing and generating knowledge. Maira's narrative exposes this white illiteracy and reverses the shame of ignorance (silence), emphasizing that white people also embody the subject position of the ignorant, "that we [Indigenous] were the intelligent ones and that those who didn't understand anything were them".

Maira's narrative also emphasised that while working as a social leader in her region and community, she has endured various silence and speech negotiations over the last thirty years. Her decision to endure conflict-related violence in silence to be able to live in their territory and continue with her projects on cultural and language recovery has been, perhaps, the hardest. She explained:

> We have been tied up in the jungle and kidnapped by guerrillas, but we have never said anything. We could not denounce this or say anything to survive in this territory, and we have always remained in silence, always silent, to live in our territory.
>
> For us, our territory is transversal to everything, to all the cultural development of our people. We can't develop our educative proposal if we don't have our territory. Without our territory, we can't find our plants or have alimentary sovereignty. Without our territory, there is nothing. As one of our old women used to say, "Without territory, we are no one".

Maira's narrative reveals that while she has fought to speak against some of her inherited silences, she has also engaged in strategic silences to protect her community and their knowledges and Inga language from conflict-related violence. Maira and her community's silence around conflict-related violence have worked as a resistance against the epistemic violence they have suffered historically through the lack of protection of their cultural and medicinal heritage (which depends on their occupation of this territory) by the Colombian state. At the same time, this silence has been instrumentalised by illegal armed actors to reside in these territories and perpetuate conflict dynamics and drug-trafficking activities. In this sense, silence works in ambiguous ways in this context as it facilitates the articulation of historical, everyday, and conflict-related violences affecting Indigenous communities. At the same time, it is used as an everyday strategy with material effects that contribute to preserving their ancestral culture and knowledge.

On open secrets and engaged silences: historical layers of sexuality

Maira has been interviewed to discuss her work and trajectory as a renowned Indigenous social leader many times, but this was the first time she was giving an interview to talk about her non-normative sexuality. Our conversation about her sexuality emerged briefly during our first encounter when Maira was explaining the traditional marriage process in the Inga community to me, and I asked her if she was married. Still, it emerged properly during our second encounter on Skype. Maira did not have a cohesive narrative around her sexuality. Instead, her non-normative sexuality appeared as a present absence across her life story narrative. When we finally began

talking explicitly about her sexuality, Maira started to fill previously discussed memories with her parallel experiences of desire and romantic love with other women.

Based on Maira's narrative, in this sub-section, I think through what Christine Keating (2013) delineates as *engaged silences* or modes of silence that work as forms of resistance to explore how Maira's silent sexuality has been shaped through interaction with other articulations of silence and everyday violence. Here I trace the many ways in which the absence/presence of sexuality in Maira's narrative is connected to the long history of colonization, evangelization and armed conflict endured by her community. Similarly, I explore through Maira's narrative how and why "being out" or "coming out" are processes with multiple silent layers and how sexual desire constantly operates through the cracks of the unfinished colonial heteronormative project of sexuality. In this sense, sexuality is sometimes articulated as a site of everyday violence, while at other moments, it represents a tool through which modern heteronormative power can be destabilized.

When I asked Maira if she was married, she answered:

> No, no, no. I didn't get married. First, because I don't like marriage, well, 'that one'… Nowadays, I do want to get married [laughs]. As an old woman, I want to get married [laughs]. Marriage was not my expectation. I had many opportunities, but I felt that my gender option was not heterosexual but a woman instead. So, I opted not to [get married]. I said, "No, I prefer to be alone". I had many proposals for getting married or having children. But no, I don't know; I always had that vision. My interest was to study, travel, to travel around the world. Since I was a kid, I wanted to know the world, to get out of our routine of always seeing the same: coca, guerrillas, everything. I didn't expect to stay surrounded by all of that.

Maira's narrative reflects a critical positioning against the traditional social organization structured through peoples' gender and sexuality. She mentioned at different points of her narrative that beyond feeling sexually and romantically attracted to women, she rejected her gender subject position and the roles and duties expected from women. Besides not getting married, Maira emphasised that she was not interested in having children or in filling some of the job positions offered to Indigenous women in her region, as a conflict-affected context: sex

worker or coca leaf-pickers. Instead, Maira wanted to find another place for herself in the world, not as a rejection of her ancestral values but as a critical positioning against the gender system (Lugones, 2007) that was established in her community in colonial times and reproduced and instrumentalized by conflict-related dynamics. Tellingly, Maira's narrative linked the role assigned to women to the evangelization missions that took place across Indigenous communities in different ways, disclosing various gendered silencing processes.

> Our hierarchy is based on equality. But we have a spiritual leadership that is our grandpas and grandmas. When you turn a certain age, you acquire the spiritual leader title. Both men and women […] sometimes roles are differentiated between men and women, but that exists because of processes of colonization and evangelization that divided their functions, what men should do and what women can't do. But that is mostly an imposition from that time because deep in our culture, there is an acknowledgement of women's value.
>
> […] One hears things are different in other communities. I've visited other towns and said, "How is it possible that women can't talk?". It is different in our community; they admire us and me. Although they have tried, even in our own Inga community, those living in the high Putumayo had the process of evangelisation, and you can find many men taking decisions in the name of women […] No, that doesn't have a place in our community.
>
> We have our beliefs around medicine [ambiwaska]. Although at some point, women were forbidden from participating in medicine because of evangelisation in colonial times, they prohibited women from using it because of their menstruation. The Church filled our grandmas' minds with ideas about the impurity of menstruation […] But if you talk with those grandmas that didn't go through that process, they talk differently. So, we have two conceptions that you have to take into account.

Maira's narrative reveals how the role of women in Indigenous communities nowadays is a mixture of the gender system imposed through evangelization processes and communities' resistance to this gendered social structure, which varies widely across communities. In particular, Maira's narrative emphasises how the imposition of this gender system silenced women in different ways, diminishing women's participation in communities' social and

political everyday life. While Maira argued that her community maintains (generally) an equal gender order, this complex mixture of differences across communities and generations has produced different spaces in which she has expressed or silenced her sexuality at various moments in her life. When I asked Maira about her early memories of her attraction toward women, her answer went to many places. Still, her initial thoughts evoked the silence she has performed around her sexuality at many levels.

> I have known it since I was very young. But I never said anything, never. […] Maybe because of my mom's rejection. Because my mom and my dad raised us with a leadership mentality but also guided by respect, my mom doesn't share my option, but she respects it. I think that is thanks to our study of our medicine [ambiwaska] because it teaches us about respect towards differences. Although not everyone, because many people know, right? "Maira is *marica*, Maira is a lesbian". Many of them know, but it is not accepted, even by other towns. I've experienced a process outside my organization at the national and departmental levels, and one can feel the rejection because other Indigenous towns don't accept it.
>
> So, you hear in other towns, "In our community, we kill the lesbian *maricas*". I've had the experience of other social leaders telling me that to my face. Also, institutions here [in Bogotá] are saying they don't accept lesbians. So, one has to be aware of that. It's better to go unnoticed. Also, I don't like to dress like a man. I'm a woman, and I accept it because I don't reject the fact that I'm a woman. I feel it and experience it with emotion, with love, but I prefer to keep it […] I have very few people to talk to about this.

Maira's narrative locates her non-normative sexuality in a complex terrain, influenced by Indigenous traditional beliefs around sexuality. Still, importantly, she remarks that she has confronted harsher discrimination from other Indigenous communities than hers, suggesting these have a more violent control of heteronormativity. It is interesting, however, that despite arguing that her community has more equal arrangements between men and women, Maira describes that her non-normative sexuality is not accepted by her family or community, although they respect it. This tension shows that while some members of her community critically consider gender as a colonial imposition, her community reproduces a binary heteronormative notion of gender in their social structure. As her narrative explains, Maira argues that she is

socially respected in her community because of her social leadership. Still, at the same time, she did not want to follow the traditional role of women in her community by getting married or having children. In this way, while women have more social and political spaces in Maira's community, their (reproductive, heterosexual) sexuality remains a site of control and tension. While Maira's narrative did not clarify if this heteronormative conception of sexuality emerged from the evangelisation process or if it belongs to the traditional social organization of the Inga community, it is clear that non-normative sexualities are silenced through different means in the everyday of these communities.

Maira continued her narrative, describing that, even not in the form of direct verbal attacks, she has also experienced certain pressure coming from spiritual leaders in her community that have confronted her through other forms of communication. Maira explained that her community celebrates sacred ceremonies in which they drink the medicine, *ambiwaska*, to communicate among themselves, take important decisions about the community, and receive messages from their spiritual leaders. Working through the effects of this sacred plant, all of these conversations are established at the spiritual level, as no spoken words are interchanged. This form of communication could be considered an unuttered form in which Maira's sexuality has been questioned and confronted.

> I've encountered many contradictions of acceptance during our ceremonies. There was a time when we had very tough *taitas* [spiritual leaders]. Until the point that I said, "No, I can't take medicine anymore". Because I felt they were claiming me, why? And they would even suggest potential husbands for me during the ceremony. They wanted me to get married to a *taita* Cofan, that was also single. But then, when they talked about it during our meetings, I always answered jokingly to distract them. And then they would joke about it too, saying they had someone to introduce to me, and I would answer sometimes, 'But how old is Cirilo? He is an old man. And if he is still single, perhaps, it is because he is a *marica*" [laughs].

Even though Maira's non-normative sexuality has been questioned in these ceremonies, it is important to underscore that while working on a spiritual level, these questionings are based on communication and respect, compared to the violent comments she has received in other contexts outside her community. However, in both scenarios, inside and outside her community,

Maira's narrative shows that her non-normative sexuality is treated as an "open secret" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 79-82). Maira's sexuality remains in the "glass closet" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 80) as something that is not public but is openly addressed through implicit and indirect questionings and commentaries. In this way, even though Maira has not been physically assaulted or threatened because of her non-normative sexuality, her narrative reveals that the closet is a "shaping presence" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 68), in her daily interactions as an Indigenous woman and a social leader. Maira's narrative also reveals that she has answered these provocations through different uses of silence and speech.

On the one hand, Maira has answered back to some of these situations through a *silent refusal*, or as an "engaged silence" or "a mode of being silent that aims to resist coercion to speak in the service of power and that seeks to challenge enticements to voice in a hegemonic vein" (Keating, 2013 p. 26). By remaining silent or "not coming out" of the closet to answer back to these provocations, Maira has performed a silent refusal. Her silence is not an absence of speech but rather a concrete choice to resist reinforcing a particular narrative about her and her sexuality as negative or abnormal. On the other hand, Maira has employed humour as a tactic to displace her "marica-ness" to question the sexuality of other men, evading the *taita's* suggestions to get married and exposing how men's sexuality is less frequently questioned.

Moreover, Maira has used this silent refusal as a technique to displace the responsibility of explaining why or how she exists in the way she does – a narrative that is commonly demanded of individuals when they "come out" – towards her community's traditional spiritual silences and their narratives around sexuality.

> What I've done in many ceremonies is to present myself as I really am. And I've felt that spiritually the *taitas* have asked me [about lesbianism], and I have answered spiritually, "This is me, and if you want to accept me, this is me. I can't hide it." I've said that both the sun and the moon exist, and neither of them can hide. Thus, I can't hide behind any of them who Maira is. "So, this is me. Here I am," I say to them. "If there is a higher creator of the universe, he is the one that needs to give you an answer *taitas*. He has to provide you with the answer to why there are differences in this world. We all are different. Not all women are the same. Not all men are the same."

> […] we believe that every living thing has a spirit. Grandfathers say, for example, that water has a spirit. Everything is unique and has a spirit. Some unique people feel different because we are part of that world's diversity. But because we ignore our vast creation and don't understand all that difference, we think that all people have to be the same.

Maira's narrative shows how she has refused to talk about her sexuality as exceptional by comparing her existence as a living being to the existence of the sun and the moon as unique entities and never questioned in their existence or individuality. In this way, Maira's speech exposes how Indigenous cosmologies defend and value the diversity of living creatures on the earth but negate the essence of this diversity (and uniqueness) to human beings while classifying them through modern systems of gender and sexuality.

While Maira shared with me memories about her silent negotiations around her sexuality with her community, it was only in the middle of our second interview that she mentioned she had a partner, Ana. They had been together for twenty-seven years and almost sixteen living together. This information surprised me, especially when Maira told me that Ana was part of many of the memories she had already shared with me during the interview. I felt as if I had just been told that a third person was in the room.

Maira explained that she met Ana while Maira was doing a mission with the Bethlemites nuns in Ecuador, trying to learn what the Church did to her community and on which religious grounds. After a while, Maira returned to Colombia to follow her mother's steps as a social leader in her community, but mostly because she and Ana wanted to be together. This transition was not easy and took many years as Ana, an Indigenous woman from Ecuador, hid her non-normative sexuality from her community until she decided to leave it for good. Ana's insertion into Maira's community was a long process, and it was accomplished thanks to Ana's leadership skills, something Maira cleverly presented as a benefit for her community. Ana has been Maira's business partner as they have led many initiatives together, including the management of the Yachaikury school. Just as Ana's presence entered the room, Maira proceeded to reveal that her first lover was the niece of the priest that helped her to travel to Medellín to finish her high school studies. On this occasion (too), Maira's daily confrontations with racism were silently supported by her girlfriend, who helped and defended her on various occasions. These

revelations showed me the multiple layers of Maira's narrative and the complex entanglement of silences that enabled and questioned her sexuality over the years.

Maira's narrative revealed the ambiguous interaction between her social leadership and the silent way she has experienced her lesbianism. As described by Maira, her family and her community have respected her sexuality and her partnership with Ana despite not approving it directly. This negotiation happened through silent agreements that were not explicit or spoken but still exist. These agreements need to be read from a broader perspective, considering the work that Maira does and what she represents for the Inga community and their historical processes of resistance. Her positionality and the power that she holds and represents have possibly played a significant role in her community's "acceptance" of her sexuality. At the same time, this power she represents has obliged her to hide this aspect of her life to perform her role as a social leader representing her community at the national level and in conversation with multiple organizations and institutions, including other Indigenous communities. Maira resents this silence, admitting that she felt bad about hiding her sexuality and sacrificing many aspects of her life "for the benefit of her community." However, this agreement probably involved a sustained silence on the part of the community that worked as a form of protection for her and her partner. When I asked Maira if she has been targeted with conflict-related violence because of her sexuality, she said that they (guerrillas and paramilitaries) did not know about her non-normative sexuality and that she was unaware of the fact that LGBTIQ+ people were persecuted by conflict-related violence.

In this context, neither Maira's silences nor her community's silencing around her sexuality can be analysed in binary terms of "coming out" as an act of empowerment or agency, nor "staying inside" as an act of passivity or lack of agency. Maira's engaged silences are intertwined with other (personal and collective) historical struggles and multiple manifestations of everyday violence that have influenced and been influenced by her non-normative sexuality.

3. THE ILLEGIBLE BODY: MATERIALITIES OF SILENCE

I met Claudia at the Integral Assistance Centre for Sexual Diversity and Genders (CAIDSG in Spanish), participating in an activity planned by the Municipality of Bogotá for LGBTI victims

of armed conflict. At the end of the activity, I approached Claudia and asked her if she would be willing to participate in my research project. Claudia accepted immediately and gave me her phone number to arrange a meeting. She said we could meet next week in the CAIDSG, which she frequented weekly to attend different activities. The interview was held in two encounters we arranged in this space. Claudia was the only research participant who expressed personal "interest" in participating in a research project from a London university. She made a couple of jokes around it, telling implicitly that she felt important by giving this interview. While Claudia's appearance did not reflect a privileged position, later in the interview I discovered that she grew up and still lives with economic privileges, which allowed her to go to university, live in different cities in and outside Colombia, have a stable job, and a beautiful apartment in downtown Bogotá. This mismatch, I later discovered, was not only a matter of (my) perception but was an extension of Claudia's embodied subjectivity.

Claudia's life story narrative was structured around her memories of certain events and experiences connected to her body and embodied subjectivity as an intersex person. While Claudia narrated some of these events in chronological order, she also narrated other events in a scattered manner, going back and forth in her life trajectory. This non-linear narrative left various silences and gaps across Claudia's life story, some of which I tried to fill through additional questions whenever it was possible. Still, many others were left as "unturned stones" (Malkki, 1995, p. 51), respecting Claudia's implicit and explicit avoidances during our interview. While Claudia was open and talkative about her intersex body and embodiment, her silence mainly revolved around some of her experiences of violence. Through different evasive answers or implicit silences hiding behind certain affirmations, Claudia led me to understand that she has had a troubled history with violence, not only as a victim but also as a perpetrator of violent acts.

On monsters and queer corporealities: the silenced body

Claudia was born in the late 40s in Florida, US, after her family ran away from Tolima, one of the most conflict-affected Departments in Colombia. Claudia's mother was pregnant with Claudia when her family decided to leave the country after one of Claudia's uncles was murdered by guerrilla members. While Claudia's family was constituted mainly of peasants established in rural Tolima, the families of both her mother and father owned lands in different

regions of the country, which, according to Claudia, exposed them to various types of conflict-related violence. A couple of months after arriving in Florida, Claudia was born. According to her narrative, her birth was assisted by a Cuban midwife, as their parents "had caused trouble in town". Thus, they could not go to a hospital to receive medical attention. She recalled:

> The midwife saw that I was born like… different, no? It is always the first thing they look at; what is it? Is it a boy or a girl? When she saw… What is it? [the midwife asked]. So, generally, when there is a penis [in an intersex body], it often prolongs the clitoris and is a little bit bigger.

"What is it?"

This question welcomed Claudia to the world – a question that remained open for almost fifty years. According to Claudia's narrative, as the first "authority" to encounter Claudia's sexual ambiguity, the Cuban midwife did not assign a name or qualification to Claudia's body. Instead, the midwife said to Claudia's mother: "*Eso no se cria*" [it won't grow]. According to Claudia, the only knowledge this midwife had about intersex (hermaphrodite at that time) babies was that they usually died after around three months of being born, although she did not know why. Claudia's birth happened amid various silences that emerged in relation to violence. Claudia was born outside Colombia because of armed conflict and outside the hospital because her family had caused trouble in this new city. From the articulation of these silences emerged another space in which Claudia was born, outside the apparatus of scientific knowledge in charge of shaping and naming sexual dimorphic bodies. As a result, Claudia's birth was not endorsed by a speech act that would determine the "nature" of her body in sexual terms (a boy or a girl) or pathologize her dimorphism (as hermaphroditism). This absence of determination protected Claudia from being subjected to surgical or hormonal intervention to "fix" her intersex body or being perceived under scientific meanings attached to the hermaphroditism diagnosis. However, in the absence of determination, the open "what is it?" question did work as a speech act that left Claudia's body as a blank space that was filled with different violent meanings, names, and practices across her life trajectory as part of her process of subjectivation.

According to Claudia's narrative, after about a year of Claudia's birth, her family decided to return to Colombia. Claudia explained that her parents decided to travel back to Colombia

because they “had trouble” adjusting to the life of Latin migrants in the US, but mainly because her parents’ relationship was broken due to Claudia’s arrival. According to Claudia, her father expressed discomfort with Claudia’s body from the time she was born. She said, “My father started fighting with my mother. He used to say to her that she only produced monsters because I was born in that way”. Once they were back in Ibague, her father abandoned Claudia’s mother, arguing that he did not want to have more children with her. He returned to Guamo (another city in the Tolima Department), where he had his business and family. Claudia, her mother and her older brother, went to live with her grandmother in Ibague, where Claudia spent the first years of her life. This would be the first but not the last time that the word *monster* appeared in Claudia’s narrative.

Claudia’s narrative described that she lived those years of her childhood living as an “androgynous” child. However, when Claudia was seven, her father returned to Ibague.

> He said, “what happened with that thing?”. And my mother said, “Hum… here she is”. Well, I was already an androgynous person, practically, and I was always wearing shorts, sandals, and a shirt, which was my clothing.
>
> So, my father said, “No, I’m going to take her; I’m going to take him with me’. Because he wanted me to be a boy. As an imposition, I had to be a boy […] He said, “I’m going to take him with me to Guamo for a while because I want him to learn how to handle our lands and everything else”. So, he took me to get a haircut. Oh my god, I was so angry!

According to Claudia’s narrative, although she lived those first seven years as an “androgynous person”, she knew since she was very young that she “felt more like a woman” and was attracted to women. Nevertheless, when her father took her to live with him, she was forced to dress and behave like a boy under her father’s imposition. Claudia did not give much detail about the time she lived with her father on our first encounter. However, she described the beginning of a daily practice that shaped her everyday for the rest of her childhood, adolescence, and a significant part of her adulthood: the concealment of her corporeality. “My mom used to say, every time she wrote or called me, she used to say: Do not let anyone see you, do not let anyone see you. Because, at that time, that was a sin. We are talking about the mid-fifties, you know?” (Claudia, 2019). Following her mother’s instruction, Claudia developed a series of strategies to hide her

secret (further analyzed in the following sub-section), which she explained in more detail during our second encounter when I asked her some questions about her childhood, trying to hear some of her narrative silences.

Claudia's narrative jumped to describe the event that ended her days living with her father in Guamo.

> I was on a school trip. I saw a high rock next to the river, like a cliff, and all the kids were running and jumping off from there, jumping into the river. So, I thought I could do it too. So, I ran and jumped off, but I couldn't get out [laughs]. I drank tons of water, and I can't remember anything else. When I woke up, my teacher held me from my feet and hit my stomach to get the water out. So, I opened my eyes, but they had taken my pants off. So, everyone noticed it. You know, that small town, big hell. News travelled like a bomb, right**?** "It was a weird thing", they said, that it was a monster. Then, the following Sunday, when I went to mass at midday, the priest of Guamo called me to the front of the church and told me that I was excommunicated and needed to leave town.
>
> He made me come forward and said, "You are excommunicated because that is a monster; that is not God's creation". I felt super humiliated, but I was very aggressive. I used to fight with all the boys and do many things, but I did it to cover my ideas because I looked like a boy. My dad wanted me to be a boy, and I was extremely aggressive. Then I thought: "Wow, what can I do? They discovered me". So, I felt exposed in front of the whole town. I walked away with my head down across the whole church; it was long.

As Claudia's narrative shows, the category of the monster was used by various male authorities to describe her body and existence when she was a child. According to Elizabeth Grosz (1996), the figure of the monster has been historically used to refer to "ambiguous" bodies "whose existence imperils categories and oppositions dominant in social life" (p. 57). The mixity of these bodies challenges the boundaries between sexes, species, life, and death (Grosz, 1996). Representing what Hilary Malatino defines as a "queer corporeality" or "bodies that don't cohere according to cis-centric, sexually dimorphic, ableist conceptions of somatic normalcy" (2019, p.2), these bodies trouble and transgress the categories of being which give the law (civil, canon, divine) its meaning (Malatino, 2019). Claudia's childhood narrative shows that while growing up outside

the logic of modern scientific knowledge of hermaphroditism or intersexual conditions conceived as disabilities (Malatino, 2019), Claudia's body was relegated to the category of monstrosity.

As a monstrosity, Claudia's body was perceived as threatening specific social orders in her family and community, but mainly as a *rupture*, a *fissure*, a *break* in knowledge and material intelligibility. In religious terms, Claudia's body defied the distinctions between what is earthly and divine, challenging religious law and its foundations as a discourse of authority that determines the boundaries between what is the human/non-human, normal/antinatural, moral/sinful, legible/illegible. "That is not God's creation", said the priest in Guamo to justify Claudia's ex-communication from the Church and Claudia's displacement from the town's community. Claudia's physical and symbolic erasure from these spaces exposes how Claudia's body represented the constitutive silence of official narratives that create and maintain social orders through specific conceptions of gender and sexuality. That is why the concealment, erasure, and even extermination of ambiguous, mixed, illegible bodies is always demanded.

While not interpellated by modern scientific knowledges, Claudia's queer corporeality shows, as argued by David A. Rubin, that the story of intersex is not only about "shame, secrecy, and unwanted genital surgery […] but also a story about the regulation of embodied difference through biopolitical discourses, practices, and technologies of normalization that materialize in, though, and as gender" (2017, p. 84). Claudia's "monstrosity" was initially rejected and later "managed" by her father through the imposition of gender. As an authority figure, Claudia's father decided that Claudia's intersex body could disappear through her performance of a masculine gender. In this sense, Claudia's narrative exposes how in intersex bodies, it is not only the materiality of the sex distinction that is at stake but the gender differentiation that binary sex allows and maintains.

Claudia's narrative of how she needed to conceal her body constantly and the day she was "discovered" exposes how gender is constantly surveilled not only as a performative expression but also as a physical materiality expressed in a defined binary sexed body. After Claudia was exposed, she left Guamo and returned to Ibague to look for her mother. Claudia described "her situation" as difficult for her mother and grandmother. However, she said that her mother was an open-minded woman who gave Claudia the freedom to choose her preferred gender expression:

“both my mother and my grandmother told me one day, “dress however you want”. So, I told them, “I don’t feel comfortable with these clothes, and I want to go to an only girls’ school” (Claudia, 2019). From that moment, she was named Claudia and was transferred to a school for girls. While Claudia had a safe space at home to express and perform herself as a girl, the reminder and advice to conceal her body never faded away. However, no matter how hard she tried, according to Claudia’s narrative, she was always discovered, so she had to change schools around four times before graduating high school.

> We moved to Bogotá, and I started another *viacrusis* (ordeal) there. My mother enrolled me in a school run by nuns [..] I felt good because I was dressed like a girl and everything. It was nice because I felt like myself. But one day, the nuns noticed it [her body], and that was it. I was expelled from school. I don’t know how they discovered it; I genuinely don’t know. Maybe someone looked through the toilet doors. Something like that.
>
> So, later, my mom enrolled me in another school. I studied there for a while because the school director was friends with my mom. It was a boarding school, so there was a room in which all girls slept together, but I had to sleep in another room, a tiny room of the house […] it was like el *cuartico de la muchacha* [the service room], so they put me to sleep in there.
>
> […] Then I began to pass from one school to another to study high school. Then, I started drinking and smoking. Ugh, that was terrible […] I became friends with a gay man, our neighbour, who had a gay bar. I used to go to do my homework, drink and smoke. He was adorable, and I became an alcoholic […] I graduated and stopped [drinking], but I had like 3 or 4 days of horrible paranoia … I felt that everyone was looking at me all the time, everywhere… I felt rejected by society, by everyone. It’s like when you have to hide what you are all the time, you know? I was feeling rejected, and drinking was my relief.

Claudia’s narrative shows that the “paranoia” she experienced when she was in withdrawal after she stopped drinking was also society’s paranoia and obsession with sex and gender. Her narrative exposes the constant surveillance of human bodies, including children’s bodies, as violent persecution that treats sex, gender and sexuality as public matters. By describing the multiple times, her body was “discovered”, Claudia’s narrative shows that the closet is a shaping

presence not only for sexual identities, interpreted as sexual orientation but also for ambiguous bodies that threaten the cisgender, heteronormative structure of society.

Performing monstrosity: exposing everyday violence

Along with her memories of how her ambiguous sexed body was concealed and when discovered, read, and defined as intelligible, Claudia's narrative also refers to the multiple ways in which she responded to these interpellations and how her subjectivity was shaped in resistance to the everyday violence that characterized her daily interactions. Claudia's narrative of her memories of the day she was excommunicated from the Church also included a description of her response to this violent event.

> I went home. But later at night, the priest sent someone to my house to tell me that I had to go away, leave town and that our town didn't need that kind of people. So, I said, "Ok, I'm going to leave this town". My dad didn't know what was happening, and he was doing his 'things' at his long parties.
>
> I remember I thought, *juemadre* [damn] priest, I want revenge!
>
> So that night, I went to the church, I removed all the things that the priest had on top of the altar, I took the head of a saint's sculpture off, and I started jumping and shouting, holding the saint's head in my hands, "If you want to see the devil, here you are looking at him!". When the priest came out, 'Ahhhhh!' [He screamed]. I jumped off the table and ran away.

Claudia's narrative shows how she answered back to the speech act that turned her into a monster, into the devil, in front of her community. Embodying the violence and aggressiveness expected from the monster, Claudia exposed the distance between the category imposed upon her body and her existence as a child. As previously argued, Claudia's monstrosity was created through repetitive speech acts, as the externalization of the violence inherent in the heteronormative social structure (and the artificial fixed borders and categorizations constitutive to its proper functioning) that was later "discovered" as Claudia's violence, as the embodiment of the monster. In this sense, this dramatic act enacted by Claudia might be interpreted as an appropriation of the norms and meanings that rendered Claudia as a legible subject, as the evil

monster, and consequently, as a hyperbolic gesture that exposed the violent law that determined her social unintelligibility.

In our second encounter, I asked Claudia about her daily life in Guamo while living with her father for those two years in which she was forced to live as a boy. Claudia said she did not have any friends and preferred to be alone all the time. She described herself as "an ugly, super skinny boy, wearing shorts, with a t-shirt, but always full of holes. Whenever they bought me new clothes, I took stones to damage everything, to open some holes in them". In addition, Claudia described that every day after school, she went to the main town square, where she used to buy a *raspado* [local ice cream] and sit down to talk to inmates. According to Claudia's narrative, at that time, some inmates were allowed to go out for hours and return to jail at 6:00 pm. "They used to come out, and I used to talk to them for hours. They told me all their stories of why they were imprisoned, all of that stuff, you know? I loved talking to them. Then I would go home".

Claudia's insistence on damaging the clothes she was expected to wear could be interpreted as resistance against her father's imposition to dress and behave like a boy and perform a masculine gender. Although Claudia described that she did not have friends, probably because of her need to hide her body from any possibility of exposure, she mentioned enjoying the company of prison inmates. Claudia did not explain in her narrative why she found inmates to be "incredible", as she described them. Still, Claudia's interest in alternative, hidden, silenced narratives manifested in her enjoyment of knowing inmates' life stories and other practices. Knowing that her body exposed the silencing of specific narratives and existences needed for maintaining society's status quo, Claudia became interested in knowing and disclosing *what* was behind official narratives. *That*, which we are not supposed to talk about. Just like her body.

When I asked Claudia about her memories of armed conflict during her childhood, she mentioned some memories of political violence caused by bipartidism during *La Violencia* and the beginnings of the guerrillas. She said:

> Yes, I have read tons about it, and I have some pictures. I have pictures of the sink in our country house, filled with heads and arms of all the people they used to quarter. I was always collecting pictures and things and keeping

> them. But then, I was discovered, and they told me, "What are you doing with those things, keeping those things?" My brother took a lot of them, and he burned some of them, he was very catholic, but those were incredible photos.
>
> I found them [pictures] because every time there was a family reunion, I was always searching in the chest of drawers and everywhere. I was a complete spy, and I was always opening closets looking for… not for money. I needed information, information, information because I was a different person, so I wanted to know why I was feeling different from others. Everyone seemed stupid to me, slower than me, like idiots.

Claudia became a "spy" looking for information that could explain why she felt different and out of place. While she did not find information about her condition, she started disclosing hidden information, much of which was related to different forms of violence at different levels. Claudia found evidence of political and conflict-related violence happening in her family's country house (this is one of the "unturned stones" I left across Claudia's life story narrative, which referred to her family's involvement in illegal or violent practices). Besides disclosing information in her family home, Claudia continued this practice in other spaces and defied other authorities. When I asked about her school days in Guamo, she said:

> I didn't enjoy going to school because everyone was slow. I don't know why but people seemed to me very slow, like dumb, and all the material they taught us […] I always had good grades, but I always argued with teachers; they didn't like me because I always asked why. "Who was Simón Bolivar?" [asked a teacher]. I loved reading history books, and I would tell him [teacher], "You are talking about Simón Bolivar, but he wasn't a remarkable character as you suggest. He was a *viejo vagabundo*" [dubious old man]. I knew that he [Simón Bolivar] was sponsored by the British, did you know that? That is never mentioned in history books; he is described as a saint, no?
>
> I was always looking for books. I loved to read forbidden books, those forbidden by the Church by the government. I love all that is forbidden […] I used to find them in my grandparents' library and other places. I never asked for permission; I stole them instead [laughs]. So, I became the school's subversive because I constantly contradicted my teachers.

Claudia became a "subversive" subject by questioning historical narratives that appeared transparent and treated as the world's truth. Claudia's narrative reveals that as a subversive subject, she created *ruptures*, *fissures*, and *break*s in knowledge, disclosing the fragility and artificiality of official narratives, including the narrative of normativity that turned her into an illegible body and subject. When I asked Claudia if she created a personal narrative or explanation of why she was different from others when she was growing up, she said:

> As my mom told me the story of the stork baby, I used to go to the backyard, where we had some trees, and I used to lay down in a hammock and say, "Stork baby, please take me out of here. I'm bored. I don't belong here [laughs]. Take me somewhere else please". And I stayed there until I fell asleep [laughs]. Then, I woke up and went back into the house. That's what I thought. […] I wanted it to take me to another country, somewhere more *open minded* [laughs].

Claudia's answer to my question reflects that she did not assume that being different was her problem but displaced the "responsibility" to others and the society in which she lived. Since she was a child, Claudia felt out of place, not because there was something bad in her body but because there was no place for her. Claudia developed a critical perspective from an early age through which she questioned the structure in which she was born and its deficiencies and affirmed her existence even in the space of silence and illegibility in which she grew up.

CONCLUSION

My analysis in this chapter explores some of the silences that work parallel to consolidating the official "internal armed conflict" and "LGBTI victim of armed conflict" narratives in Colombia. By listening and exposing the *queer acoustics* of everyday violence, this chapter seeks to question: *what stories are heard*, *what voices have sound*, and *what narratives are transmitted.* This chapter shows how the consolidation of official hegemonic narratives always depends on the silences it produces.

This chapter explores articulations between violence, sexuality, and silence. Through the analysis of the life story narratives of Miguel, Maira, and Claudia, this chapter demonstrates that violence against LGBTIQ+ people in Colombia operates through official and everyday narratives

that determine what is recognizable as violence and who is considered a victim or perpetrator of violence. These life story narratives demonstrate that in articulation with race and class, non-normative genders and sexualities have been shaped as a dangerous menace to society across Colombian history. This chapter demonstrates that the work of silence is crucial in the consolidation of these narratives and the reproduction of everyday violence, and the intensification of armed conflict. Thus, this chapter shows how silence helps to conceal the intersections between everyday violence against LGBTIQ+ people and armed conflict at different levels of analysis.

Pursuing an *epistemology of ambiguity* (Hansen, 2019), this chapter demonstrates that multiple interpretations of silence are possible. In this analysis, I explore different doings of silence. First, I show how silence plays a crucial role in consolidating the hidden links between everyday violence and conflict-related violence. The life story narratives of Maira and Miguel reveal how silences produced by the internal armed conflict work in articulation with other *historical silences* (i.e., racism, classism, and sexism) that traverse the embodied life experience of LGBTIQ+ people. Miguel's narrative shows how the articulation of silences operating inside the homosexual liberation movement and constitutive silences of sexuality and violence's official narratives in Colombia contributed to the re-drawing of the historical urban/rural divide. This symbolic and geographical delimitation obscures the experiences of racialised and impoverished LGBTIQ+ people and exposes them to further violence. Maira's narrative reveals how Indigenous communities have endured historical racist narratives that negate the position of Indigenous communities as agents of knowledge and justify violence against them. The articulation of these violent racist narratives in conflict-affected contexts has created the everyday narrative of the Indigenous as *guerrillero/a* justifying state-sponsored violence against these communities

Claudia's narrative did not include memories of being targeted with conflict-related violence because of her intersex body or her sexual orientation as a lesbian. However, her narrative displays the different layered silences that constitute the official narratives about the "human", "normal", "moral", "legible" body that function as the discursive and epistemological foundations of the violence exerted against queer corporealities (intersex and transexual bodies) in Colombia on a daily basis. This everyday violence, which manifests through discrimination,

physical and emotional violence, unwanted surgical procedures, and social marginalization, has also been spectacularised by armed conflict, displacement, sexual violence, and homicide. It has been instrumentalised by armed actors to generate fear in or attain the support of communities to create and maintain armed conflict dynamics (as discussed in Chapter 1). Thus, this analysis extends the finding of the CNMH by showing how LGBTIQ+ people resist this violence on a daily basis and how other social categories interfere (class privilege in Claudia's case) in how people with queer corporealities live and experience this everyday violence.

Secondly, this chapter also explores silence as an everyday political resistance practised by LGBTIQ+ people living in highly violent contexts. The life story narratives of Miguel, Maira, and Claudia show how LGBTIQ+ people experience daily negotiations between silence and speech in order to avoid or confront everyday violence inside and outside conflict-affected contexts. This analysis reveals different strategic uses of silence as a way to avoid violence but also as a mechanism to challenge and transform violent official narratives.

By listening to the *queer acoustics* of everyday violence, this chapter seeks to reveal how sex, gender, and sexuality are constructs created through violent articulations between silence as speech and speech as silence. Queer acoustics refers to how normative violence works through silence/speech and how LGBTIQ+ people resist, challenge, and transform the violence embedded in historical silences and official narratives. The life story narratives of Miguel, Maira, and Claudia reveal how they challenged violent narratives and practices that attempted to normalise their non-normative bodies, practices, and behaviours. Miguel, Maira, and Claudia resisted these impositions through creative and subversive uses of silence and speech. Additionally, they exposed the violence of official narratives of social difference operating in their immediate contexts. Hence, I interpret these strategies as queer manifestations of silence and speech that have the potential to expose the circuits of power that operate under the concept and instrumentalization of (binary, reproductive, heteronormative) sexuality and other categories of social difference.

CHAPTER 5. THE DOINGS OF QUEER EVERYDAY DISPLACEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Figure 2

Al Sur

Note: By Kiki Zahaira.

> These green fragments are similar to the area in which I was born, where I took this photograph. These areas share a similar landscape. These are fertile, mountainous lands with lots of fog, and they are fragments because when you look at them from above, they are tiny pieces of land called smallholdings. They look like small fragments in different green colours with different tonalities. These are very common in cold regions like Nariño, Boyacá, and Cundinamarca.
>
> I was born in green fragments. I was born in the countryside. But since I was conceived, I was named Luis Ricardo, my dear. Luis Ricardo was going to be a gentleman! [laughs]. When I took this photograph, I wanted to show that we were born in this land and that we became dissidents of this land in a way. (Kiki, 2019)

Kiki Zahaira was born in Cartago, a small city in the Valle del Cauca Department in southwestern Colombia. After living their first six years in this place, Kiki's mother decided to move to another town. Tired of dealing with the alcohol abuse of Kiki's father and multiple experiences of domestic violence, Kiki's mother decided to leave this city with another man and her son Ricardo – as Kiki was named after they were assigned with a male gender at birth. The newly formed family travelled to San Adolfo, in the Huila Department, looking for a job as peasants on local farms. According to Kiki, their mother rapidly found a job, but the day before arriving at the farm that hired them, an armed group broke into the property and killed all people inside. The farm's owner had not paid *la vacuna*[41], and the FARC massacred all employees as revenge against the owner, according to Kiki's memories. After this incident and feeling "traumatised", in Kiki's words, the family travelled to another town a couple of hours from this place. Kiki grew up in Pitalito, in the Huila Department, where they lived with their mother, their step-father and a little sister who was born sometime after the family arrived in this town. Kiki left this place when they were sixteen and moved to Pasto in the Nariño Department to begin university studies. At the University of Nariño, far from the life that their mother's Christian beliefs have built and imposed upon them, Ricardo found a space to explore his gender and sexuality, finally embodying a non-binary self renamed Kiki Zahaira, sexually and romantically attracted to men, with a gender-fluid expression and "mother" of a numerous family of *hijas* [daughters] (see Chapter 6 for more on Kiki's life story narrative).

Kiki's life story reflects a narrative pattern I found in all of the life stories I collected during my fieldwork. Instead of organising their life story narrative around heteronormative life stages (e.g., childhood, school, marriage, employment, reproduction, among others), interviewees structured their narratives around various periods that started or ended because of their movement through different spaces, places, and geographies. While mobility is a constitutive aspect of social life and human experience, what was characteristic of the great majority of movements described in interviewees' narratives was a direct connection between the threat or experience of different forms of violence and the need or desire to move.

[41] "*La vacuna*" [the vaccine] is the metaphor used to describe a monthly fee charged by armed groups to local farmers or land-owners to continue their economic activities within conflict-affected areas.

In Colombia, forced displacement is the type of conflict-related violence that has caused more victims around the country. Human rights and historical memory reports have shown that LGBT people living in conflict-affected regions have been particularly affected by this type of violence (CNMH, 2015; CNMHa, 2018; CNMHb, 2018; CNMH, 2019; Colombia Diversa, 2017). Most interviewees in this research described experiences of forced displacement caused by armed conflict. Interviewees were sometimes displaced from their hometowns because of their non-normative gender expression or sexual orientation. In other cases, they experienced forced displacement during their childhood after their entire family decided to move to another city because of conflict dynamics in their hometown. These narratives of forced displacement reflect the evidence collected by historical memory reports, as interviewees described multiple negative consequences they had to endure after leaving their hometowns, running away from threats and other forms of conflict-related violence. However, in addition to these experiences of forced displacement caused by armed conflict, all interviewees in this research also described other forms of *movement* or displacement that have impacted their life trajectories in particular ways. The diversity of movements described in these life story narratives shows that forced displacement caused by armed conflict is only one among many other experiences in which violence and movement intersect in the lives of LGBTIQ+ people[42] in Colombia.

This chapter is focused on these *alternative narratives of displacement*, seeking to shed light on displacements that are "hidden in plain sight" (Adey et al., 2020, p. 7). Based on the life story narratives of three research participants, Candelaria, Elizabeth, and Nacho, this analysis decentres the official internal armed conflict narrative to think about displacement as a form of everyday violence – and not merely a one-time conflict-related event. Such a theoretical shift suggests that displacement is one of the ordinary, implicit and invisible forms of violence operating in the everyday lives of LGBTIQ+ people (see Chapter 2.). This chapter joins a current wave of displacement studies that consider "other spatial scales of analysis" beyond national boundaries or the Nation-State logic and the lived experience of subjects "so that other forms of

[42] I use the LGBTIQ+ acronym to refer to people with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities (i.e., non-normative sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, sex characteristics, and sexual behaviours). It includes people self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, or any other identity, expression, or behaviour of sexual or gender dissidence in this context. I use the LGBTIQ+ acronym when referring to the work of my research, the LGBT acronym when referring to the work of state-sponsored historical memory research (which does not include intersex people), and LGBTI acronym when referring to the social mobilisation of gender and sexual diversity in Colombia.

internal displacement and their everyday re-occurrences are not overlooked" (Adey et al., 2020, p. 5). Consequently, the following analysis considers displacements *from* and *within* the home, cities, regions, and institutions (i.e., family, Church, military, carceral system, and sex work).

Besides describing experiences of displacement at smaller scales of analysis, interviewees' life story narratives described that in addition to situations in which they were forced to leave certain places (they were *displaced from*), they also experienced periods of forced stillness on other occasions. To consider this variety of experiences, my analysis in this chapter is theoretically informed by concepts of mobility studies to explore mobility and immobility in the everyday of LGBTIQ+ people. Therefore, this chapter explores questions posed by critical mobility studies concerned with how (im)mobility is related to power structures: *How do people move? Who has to move? Who can stay put? Where are they going? Where are they detained?* (Cresswell, 2010; Sheller & Urry, 2006). By asking these questions, this chapter builds on empirical analyses that, since the early 2000s, have explored the issue of displacement and (im)mobility in the life experience of LGBTIQ+ people in the Latin American context (Esguerra, 2020; Ritterbusch, 2016; Rojas-Wiesner & Winton, 2018; Winton, 2107, 2019). This analysis seeks to shed light on how displacement is a form of everyday violence and how displacement and (im)mobility allow and maintain the articulations between different forms of violence that shape and *orient* (Ahmed, 2006) the life course of LGBTIQ+ people.

This chapter also considers the non-normative body as a point of departure to explore the intimate, embodied and emotional dimensions of displacement. Therefore, in the analysis of interviewees' life story narratives, I think of displacement both as a *process* (moving out of place) in which social differences (i.e., gender, sexuality, race, and class) play a role in its material, political and emotional consequences, and as a *condition* (being out of place) (Bakewell, 2011) to think metaphorically about the constant becoming of dissident identities, subjectivities, and embodiments across multiple spaces (Ahmed et al., 2003; Fortier, 2001, 2003; Gorman-Murray, 2007, 2009; Manalansan, 2006; Patton and Sanchez-Eppler, 2000). Arguing that "sexuality is not only not essence, not timeless, it is not fixed in place; sexuality is in the move" (Sanchez-Eppler, 2000, p. 2), this analysis explores how sexuality is configured and reconfigured through the experience of displacement and (im)mobility. It considers the cultural and symbolic displacement that dissident subjects and desires produce in the everyday. In

particular, I explore how the presence/arrival of queer desire has the potential to displace violence from specific contexts and social dynamics.

1. HOME AS ALWAYS ON DEFERRAL: TRACING THE ROOTS OF FUTURE MOVEMENTS

Most life story narratives in this research started with memories of the interviewees' early years. While some of them focused on describing the geographic location where they were born, others offered a description of their family composition. These descriptions were brief and rapidly moved to memories of violent experiences caused by different types of violence. Some interviewees mentioned their families came from "patriarchal", "*machista*"[43], "traditional", or "heteronormative" family formations, making emphasis on experiences of gender-based and domestic violence suffered by their mothers or homophobic or transphobic violence experienced by them. Other interviewees focused on describing the conflict-related violence affecting the region in which they were born. In either case, all interviewees mentioned that these violent experiences obliged them to move out of their place of origin (i.e., family home, town, or region) from an early age. Consequently, the childhood memories described in these life stories were centred mainly around experiences of violence and movement and how interviewees experienced various spaces while growing up.

The idea of a *family home* appeared differently in each life story narrative in this research. While some interviewees had the experience of growing up in a family home – as part of a (heteronormative) nuclear family and a physical space called home – others started their life journey outside this space. Among the first group of life stories, I found experiences of a few interviewees who grew up in a caring and supportive family home and others that suffered specific forms of violence inside this space because of their non-normative gender or sexuality. In this section, I focus on the latter case, that is, interviewees who were moved out of their family home when they were still children due to different forms of violence. This is the case of

[43] Machismo culture demonstrates male dominance in some Hispanic cultures. Some Hispanic males displaying machismo demand ultimate respect from their family members and expect to be regarded as the highest authority within the household. The machista culture creates a power dynamic in which the male has control over household decisions and finances and the woman is subservient to the male. Machismo culture is chauvinistic in nature and places females in a lower social position than males.

Candelaria, an Afro-Colombian transgender woman activist, born in Puerto Tejada in the Cauca Department in Colombia. Echoing the words of all other interviewees, Candelaria's life story narrative emphasised how for marginalised LGBTIQ+ people, conflict-related violence does not represent the origin of the violence they have experienced across their life trajectories, nor the violence they are most interested in drawing attention to.

Candelaria was in her early thirties when I interviewed her in Bogotá in 2019. I got Candelaria's contact details through another research participant, Nacho (see next section), who said I needed to talk with her because she was a strong and admirable activist. After a difficult phone call in which Candelaria expressed her critical perspective of academic knowledge production and distrust of research processes led by the government around victims of armed conflict in Colombia, Candelaria agreed to meet the following day early in the morning in La Candelaria, a historic neighbourhood in downtown Bogotá. As she lived in this neighbourhood, I asked her to choose a place to have a coffee to chat about my research. Candelaria took me to a nice hostel that served breakfast and brunch. When the waitress arrived, I asked her to order whatever she wanted; it was my treat. Candelaria ordered the largest dish on the menu, and although this was my second breakfast of the day, I ordered something similar to join her. We spent around three hours talking about the difficult reality of transgender women living in Colombia, armed conflict, black and feminist activism, and a bunch of love stories. When I met Candelaria, she was recovering from a beating she had suffered a couple of weeks before, although she did not give me any details about what happened to her. In general, she looked tired and sad, and when her breakfast arrived at the table, I wondered if this was the largest meal she had had in days.

After finishing our meeting, Candelaria agreed to participate in my research and told me to call her the week after to arrange our meeting. We met in La Candelaria again, and she invited me upstairs to interview her in her apartment. When I arrived, Candelaria was cooking homemade jam and explained that she was selling it to make money around those days. Candelaria's life story narrative was an interrupted account that waved between different spaces and temporalities, making it difficult to keep track of the chronology of the events and memories she shared with me. Nonetheless, her narrative was structured around the violence she

experienced from an early age inside her family home and the consequences she suffered (and continues suffering) after her father threw her out of her home when she was still a child. Candelaria lived her childhood travelling between Puerto Tejada and Cali (35 km away from Puerto Tejada) with her parents and sister due to armed conflict violence. She described how illegal armed groups like guerrillas and paramilitaries had different rules to control people's daily routines, including their daily mobility. However, Candelaria affirmed that she was living inside another conflict, her "family conflict", which worsened after she started performing her gender expression as a transgender child. Candelaria's non-normative gender expression was punished by her parents as soon as it became visible.

> I was eleven years old, and I wanted to make my transition. I have a twin sister […], and I went to school one day as a girl [with her sister's clothes]. My father beat me up because that was not acceptable. Everyone, including the psychologists, coordinators, and school, didn't understand. I understood what was going on. I liked it. I felt attracted by it and didn't feel it was bad. So, when I arrived at my house, my father beat me and kicked me out of the house. He kicked me out when I was eleven years old.

According to Candelaria's life story narrative, before being displaced from her family home, she experienced physical and emotional violence while living with her family because of her "feminine behaviour". Candelaria described her family home as violent and insecure, not as a site of relatedness or familiarity, and connected the violence she received from her father with macro manifestations of gender-based violence that defined the typical gender roles operating in her community.

> My father had many financial problems, but he was also very *machista* and violent with my mom and us [Candelaria and her sister]. We were afraid of him. And also, my extended family, my uncles and my cousins, they lived that kind of violence, you know?
>
> […] My father was not a role model for us. My mom suffered a lot, and in the end, I was always involved [in domestic violence] because I was very visible because of my gender identity […] My father wanted me to be a soccer player like him, the typical black *macho*, which was his position in his *masculinidad caucana* [masculinity from Cauca]. I was always against

> that, so I received all this violence. Not only physical but psychological and emotional. All kinds of violence.

Candelaria's narrative situates the domestic violence she experienced while growing up in a complex network between the precarious economic conditions in which her family lived and the violence that characterised the performance of the black masculinity of her father while born and raised in this geographical location of the country. According to Mara Viveros-Vigoya (2016), the structural violence that was imposed in the Spanish Conquest through mechanisms of racial inferiority and gender subordination translated into intimate and domestic acts that continue operating nowadays in Latin America. Viveros-Vigoya argues that the masculine identities (of conquerors and colonisers, as well as colonised and enslaved men) that emerged from the violent colonisation processes continue operating through hegemonic and subordinated masculinities in these contexts (Cruz Sierra, 2013; Gutmann & Viveros-Vigoya, 2005; Ramírez, 2005; Viveros-Vigoya, 2002, 2011). Analyses from different locations in Latin America show that as many men belonging to subaltern groups (whether based on class, ethnicity, race or sexuality) have been subjugated by white, wealthy, heterosexual European men, many of them "have come to believe that strengthening their masculinity and their authority over women is an essential part of their emancipation" (Viveros-Vigoya, 2016, p. 231). In this way, Viveros-Vigoya (2016) suggests that the structural and symbolic violence of racism and classism of which men of subaltern groups are victims is translated into political violence and new forms of interpersonal violence within communities. When I asked Candealaria what she meant by *masculinidad caucana* [masculinity from Cauca], she explained that she did not understand what it meant to behave in "that way" at that time and said she did not understand why paramilitaries and armed groups in general, had to impose rules and norms upon their communities. Later in her narrative, she added:

> Besides being dangerous, they [armed groups] had a specific perspective they imposed on the lives of people in the town. They were the authority, saying you have to do this and that, you have to go to bed at 8:00 pm, girls can't wear miniskirts, nobody is allowed to smoke in the streets, that kind of things about people's behaviour. And if someone did one of those things, they [armed groups] killed or disappeared them.
>
> […] Later, when I started questioning the history of my life, I started asking myself why they killed my friend, a trans girl who was my friend,

> who stayed there and was murdered. And that is when I started asking myself what was happening. Because besides armed conflict, there was another conflict, and it was the conflict of the people that were not part of the conflict but were different in the armed conflict.
>
> In Colombia, we don't talk about that; it is invisibilised. We talk about the conflict, but what happened beyond the conflict? What were those family issues within the conflict? Starting from displacement, but also within that displacement is the lack of education, acceptance, and the differences that some of us lived. Violence was not about armed conflict violence; it was about family violence.

Candelaria's narrative established a link between the violence that she suffered at home and the violence or armed groups, as these both operated through the performance of a violent masculine authority that subordinated women or any expression of femininity. As Candelaria's narrative describes, she did not feel identified with her father's masculinity. She rejected this gender role, not only because she had a feminine gender expression but also because she rejected the violence that was at the core of the performance of this *masculinidad caucana*. In the same way, Candelaria's narrative shows how gender expression, more than sexuality, is what her parents tried to regulate and discipline, "as gender is often a more public display than sexuality and how sexuality is often read onto the body" (Robinson, 2018, p. 384). While still a child, Candelaria was displaced from her family home the day in which she disrupted the gender role she was assigned at birth, not only through everyday feminine gestures of her body but dressing up as the woman she wanted to embody. Candelaria's narrative reveals that behind the homophobic and transphobic violence, she suffered in her family home, an entanglement of other forms of violence (i.e., gender-based violence, domestic violence, conflict-related violence, colonial violence) was operating in the everyday of her community. It also shows how gender was instrumentalised by figures of authority, primarily men, to exert control over the community inside and outside the sphere of the family home.

According to Candelaria's narrative, after being displaced from her family home, she travelled to Cartagena (1,110 km away from Puerto Tejada) to live with her godmother. While Candelaria found shelter in this other family home, she described suffering extreme violence in

this space as her godmother and her children could not understand Candelaria's feminine behaviour, who was still named Maicol and expected to behave like a masculine boy.

> It was so bad [violence] that the neighbours helped me. They called *Bienestar Familiar* [social services], and they took me to Turbaco, Bolivar [10 km away from Cartagena], to live in an institution called *Niños y su futuro*. I also lived in *Renacer* [social services institutions]. But in the end, I was always wandering from one place to another without a network of emotional support, and I used to feel completely alone. I spent seven years without seeing my mother or my family. That was pretty hard for me.
>
> Well, something positive is that my godmother was religious and used to go to a Catholic Church. And the priest was from a Franciscan missionary community. I was the altar boy, I mean, helping the priest. And he, Alfredo, was not from here [Colombia]. He used to do a lot of social work with black communities in Cartagena and helped me a lot […] I was able to go to school.

Once Candelaria was displaced from her family home, she began a process of movement between different spaces without having a safe space to stay put. Candelaria's experiences show that in addition to domestic violence, homophobic and transphobic violence moves children out of the space of the family home and into institutionalised spaces that control children's mobility. Candelaria's narrative highlights the emotional impact of her process of displacement, which not only refers to the movement between (physical) spaces but also to how she inhabited an emotional space of isolation for several years while growing up without emotional support or closeness to her mother. Candelaria's narrative also reveals that she found a safe space to stay put in a religious institution (she told me further in the interview that she lived for some time in the parish house of the Church). The emotional and material support she received in this space allowed her to finish her high school studies. Candelaria's displacement process structured the rest of her life story narrative, and her narrative kept going back to the traumatic experience of losing her family home when she was still a child

This narrative structure was also articulated by Elizabeth, another interviewee, who was also removed from her family home when she was seven years old. Elizabeth is a bisexual cisgender woman in her late forties, born in Jamundí, a small town in the Department of Valle

del Cauca. Like Candelaria, Elizabeth's life story narrative began with her memories of the day she was removed from her family home when she was seven years old.

> They [Elizabeth's parents] started fighting. And suddenly, I heard my mother saying, "You can take your girls with you!".
>
> I was bored with my mother. To be honest, I didn't like the way that she treated us. I didn't like the way that she lived with us. I love my mother, and I'm a woman, but there was a time when I hated her […] I wanted to get out of that house. We [she and her sister] used to live a bit crazy, ungroomed and dirty. I mean, like neglected. So, when I heard that, I thought: 'Wow, this is my opportunity to get the hell out of here, to go somewhere they love me truly, where we [Elizabeth and her sister] can get some attention'. I wanted to study, but my mother didn't send us to school.
>
> So, my dad said, "You know what? I'm leaving one here with you, and I'm taking the other one with me". Like if we were merchandise. Beautiful, ah? So, [she cries] I left with my father, and my sister stayed with my mom.

While Elizabeth's first displacement was not related to her gender or sexuality (as Candelaria's early displacement was), it emerged from the precarious conditions in which her family lived and the gender-based and domestic violence that characterised the everyday lives of Elizabeth, her mother and her sister. Elizabeth lived her first years with her mother and younger sister in her grandfather's home. Her father worked as a lorry driver and used to spend most of his time travelling across the country, only visiting them in Jamundí for a couple of days from time to time. Later in her narrative, Elizabeth described her mother as very young when she first met Elizabeth's father. Although they never had a stable romantic relationship, he visited her occasionally until she got pregnant with Elizabeth and her sister. Elizabeth's father was often absent and gave them scarce and unstable financial support. While Elizabeth remembers some of her father's visits as happy moments, she described in her life story narrative that she found out later in her adult life that her mother suffered all these visits, as her father was a heavy drinker and was violent with her.

While Elizabeth mentioned that she understands nowadays that her father was a violent man and that her mother "did her best" as an impoverished oppressed woman, Elizabeth's life

story narrative described how she used to blame her mother for abandoning her. As Elizabeth's narrative describes, she envisioned this first displacement as a way out of the space of neglect in which she and her sister lived. However, far from being a possibility, this movement turned into a violent process of displacement Elizabeth experienced while being moved constantly across different “family homes” during her childhood. When Elizabeth was removed from her mother's home, her father did not take her to live with him but left Elizabeth with one of his cousins in Cali for almost two years without calling or visiting her.

> My father's cousin had many children, most of whom were boys. They were horrible. They used to hit me and kick me […] One man wanted to rape me. Every time I was taking a shower, he sneaked into the bathroom. He had lots of curly hair. He looked like a bear. So, instead of screaming, I used to say to him, "Mr. please, get out of the bathroom. What are you doing here? Go away!". But because I did not have a father or mother, I told him I would tell my aunt, my cousin. I named lots of people, but in the end, no one arrived […] Until one day, I screamed so hard that a woman came in and took him out […] He was like a distant relative of my father's cousin […]. He was doing the same to two other girls; that is why they were so aggressive because they could not say anything. They told me nobody believed them when they tried to say something. And, it is true, people don't believe you. When I was little, that was hard. They didn't believe me because I was a problematic child.

Elizabeth suffered physical, psychological, and sexual violence in this hostile family space. Without the possibility to leave the house, Elizabeth was forced to stay put in this family home while her feminine body was gendered and sexualised in violent ways. Elizabeth's narrative reveals that sexual violence was a daily threat, not only for her living in this space without her parents but also for other girls living in the same house. However, this narrative also shows the multiple strategies Elizabeth employed to defend herself from this constant threat and to speak up even though her attempts were dismissed by characterising Elizabeth as "a problematic child". Elizabeth's feelings of abandonment and not belonging grew further in this space, turning into a condition of displacement that accompanied her for many years while feeling "out of place" (not belonging and also as a "problematic child") and having the perception of not being where she wanted to be (Bakewell, 2011, p. 22).

When Elizabeth turned nine, her father finally picked her up and moved her to his parent's home in Bogotá. This place represented the third family home and the third city where Elizabeth lived during her childhood. Her account of those years described a slightly better situation as she found a caring figure in her grandmother and enrolled in school for the first time. However, her memories of these years also described violent occurrences, including the numerous times her grandfather attempted to violate her. Elizabeth's years living with her grandparents finished when she turned thirteen, and her father decided to move her out of this home and took her to a separate household with her stepmother and her younger half-sister.

Elizabeth described this space as one of the most challenging periods in her life trajectory. Her narrative of these years was a crude, disturbing account of the multiple ways her stepmother maltreated and tortured her behind her father's back, who was out of town most of the time. Elizabeth's tone and body language changed while going through these memories. Her narrative turned into a testimonial account of violence, in which she described various forms of child abuse that she experienced (i.e., extreme physical and psychological violence, torture, neglect, malnourishment, and sexual harassment) over the years. Through the expression of words, silences, and tears, Elizabeth transmitted all the pain and suffering these memories still trigger in her emotional embodiment.

After more than two years of surviving in this violent scenario, and marked by scars of physical violence, extreme malnourishment and psychological trauma, Elizabeth ran away from this house with the support of one of her friends from school. According to Elizabeth's narrative, she found in this friendship a support network that showed her that what she was experiencing was not “normal” but highly problematic.

> She [her friend] cried with me every time I told her about those abuses, you know [she cries]. It was hard. So, one day she said to me, "Do not let her. You are old enough to defend yourself. Hit her back!". And I answered, "No, because she is like my mother", and she said: "No, that's not a mother, one's mother doesn't hit you, or did your mother used to hit you like that?" And I answered, "Yes, my mom used to hit me, but not like this".

This conversation reflects how in Elizabeth's eyes, violence became the norm over the years, as the type of sociality operating in the family sites through which she was displaced and emplaced. However, even in this pervasive presence of violence, Elizabeth differentiated between these types of violence and realised that the extreme abuse she was suffering was operating at a different register. Feeling that she was older and physically strong enough to fight the abuses of her stepmother back, Elizabeth hit her back on one of these occasions and ran away to her friend's house.

Throughout this long process of displacement and abandonment, Elizabeth grew a longing to return to her mother's home. Elizabeth's desire was supported by her friend's mother, who helped Elizabeth to find a job as a housekeeper in a wealthy neighbourhood of the city, where she worked for some months to save money to travel back to Jamundí to look for her mother. Elizabeth, still a minor, was illegally hired in this family household to perform a feminised low-pay job that exposed her, once again, to the constant threat of sexual abuse, as her boss' son sexually harassed her on many occasions. Once Elizabeth saved enough money, she travelled alone on a bus from Bogotá to Jamundí (490 km away from Bogotá) without knowing where to go exactly, just following vague memories from her childhood. Her mother did not live in their old house anymore, so it took Elizabeth some days to find her. According to Elizabeth's narrative, when they finally met, Elizabeth's mother was happy to see her again and told her that she regretted letting Elizabeth's father take her away from her.

While describing different contexts and experiences, the narratives of Candelaria and Elizabeth challenge the naturalisation of homes as origin or sites of relatedness or familiarity (Ahmed et al., 2003). Their narratives reveal that their family home was the first site of estrangement and violence they encountered in their life trajectories and the origin of their displacement processes. However, Candelaria and Elizabeth's narrative of displacement revealed differences in how each one experienced (im)mobility during their childhoods due to their birth-assigned sex/gender. Their narratives of displacement show that "mobility is a resource that is differentially accessed", as mobilities are both productive and produced by social relations that involve the production and distribution of power (Creswell, 2010, p. 21). Elizabeth's narrative shows that once out of her family home, her (im)mobility (as a girl) was determined by her father's decisions to move or leave her in different family homes while she was growing up,

leaving no space for Elizabeth's agency to move outside the domestic space. Besides not being able to move from the various family homes in which her father left her, Elizabeth's experience of these spaces was marked by the constant threat of sexual violence as both relatives and strangers sexualised her body. In this sense, Elizabeth's narrative shows how mobility shapes gender through the forced emplacement of women in the domestic space and the sexualisation of feminine bodies as part of the reproduction of the family home.

Additionally, Elizabeth's narrative of displacement shows how women's mobility is allowed under specific conditions and how gender has shaped her mobility. Once Elizabeth decided to escape from the violent family space in which she cohabitated with her stepmother, Elizabeth's mobility was enabled by taking a feminised low-pay job as a domestic worker in a family home. By mirroring the experiences of other displaced women at the national and international level, Elizabeth's narrative shows how impoverished and racialised women that need or desire to move are commonly inserted in a precarious labour market of care work as an extension of their (imposed) gender role as caregivers and workers in the domestic space[44] (Esguerra-Muelle, 2014, 2020, 2021). The articulations between gender and mobility operated differently in Candelaria's case. While treated as a boy, Candelaria was kicked out of her family home and expected to find a place to live independently. Even though Candelaria experienced reduced mobility while being institutionalised by child services, her narrative of that time focused on the many times she was transferred from one place to another, wandering without a place to stay put, contrary to Elizabeth's narrative, which expressed a constant desire to move or leave the places in which she was forced to stay put.

Despite these differences, Candelaria and Elizabeth mentioned in their life story narratives that they found a way to return to their family homes looking for their mothers. In both cases, interviewees managed to return and find their mothers and described their arrival as a happy reunion as both mothers thought their children had disappeared. However, the narratives of Candelaria and Elizabeth described that this feeling did not last long as violence came back to this space. Candelaria stayed for a year in her mother's house but had to leave because it was not a safe space for her to express her gender option due to armed conflict dynamics. Candelaria

[44] Elizabeth's experiences mirrors Maira's account of how she worked as a housekeeper when she was a child to continue her middle and high school studies in other cities of the country. See Chapter 4.

decided to leave, and her process of displacement continued over the years across different cities while trying to find a place where to be as she wanted to exist. In Elizabeth's case, she told me that within months of Elizabeth's arrival at her mother's house, their relationship started deteriorating once again. Elizabeth began facing physical and psychological violence coming from her mother and sexual harassment coming from her mother's partner. Due to the family's economic circumstances, Elizabeth could not continue her studies. This space turned rapidly into a scenario of violence and neglect, and after having a violent argument with her mother, Elizabeth decided to leave her mother's home again. She was sixteen years old at that time, and without having any place to go, she decided to travel to Villavicencio, a city in the Department of Meta, because she wanted to know where she was born. Without the fantasy of having lost a secure family site to which she could return, Elizabeth's displacement was directed towards the only reference of origin she had left, the place where she was born.

Candelaria and Elizabeth's narratives of home and displacement echo Anne-Marie Fortier's (2001, 2003) work on queer migration, showing that not only sexuality but also gender hold a relevant place in how subjects experience the space of home. By analysing narratives of queer migrations, Fortier's work explores how home, migration, and belonging relate to each other in multiple ways. Finding that for some queer subjects, the original site of their trauma is the (heteronormative) family home, unlike other migrants that experience trauma from losing their family home, Fortier (2001) argues that in some narratives of queer migration, home is a destination rather than an origin. Candelaria and Elizabeth's narratives reveal that, unlike other narratives of displacement in Colombia, displacement was preceded by other forms of everyday violence (i.e., domestic and homo/transphobic violence). In this sense, for both Candelaria and Elizabeth, the original site of their trauma is their family home. Consequently, their displacement processes turned across time not as a return (to home) but as a destination (to home), trying to carve a place to belong. From this moment, when Candelaria and Elizabeth left their family homes for the second time, in their following displacements, there is no return (to home), only arrival (to home), and as Fortier (2001, 2003) argues, an arrival that is always deferred (as I explore further in the following section).

2. QUEER ORIENTATIONS AND EVERYDAY VIOLENCE

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, interviewees in this research did not follow traditional, heteronormative life stages (i.e., childhood, school, marriage, employment, reproduction, among others) to structure their life story narratives. Instead, most structured their life story narratives around various periods that started or ended because of their movement between different spaces, places, and geographies. In this section, I focus on the processes of displacement that structured the life story narratives of Nacho, Elizabeth, and Candelaria to explore the connections between violence, sexuality, and space.

In this analysis, I build on Sara Ahmed's (2006) theorisations of queer phenomenology to think of sexuality as a spatial formation not only in the sense that bodies inhabit sexual spaces but also in the sense that bodies are sexualised through how they inhabit space. Thinking through the *orientation* in sexual orientation from a phenomenological perspective, Ahmed argues that if orientation is a matter of how we reside in space, as posited within phenomenology, "then sexual orientation might also be a matter of residence; of how we inhabit spaces as well as "who" or "what" we inhabit spaces with" (2006, p. 1). In this way, Ahmed suggests that if sexuality is presumed as crucial to bodily orientation (to how we inhabit spaces), "then the differences between how we are oriented sexually are not only a matter of "which" objects we are oriented toward but also how we extend through our bodies into the world" (2006, p. 67-68). Building on Ahmed's theorisations, in the following analysis, I explore how sexuality is not determined only by object choice but also involves differences in how one relates to the world, that is, one's orientation.

In this section, I analyse how Nacho's narrative of displacement and (im)mobility exposes the role of everyday and conflict-related violence in the enforcement of heterosexuality as an orientation. According to Ahmed, queer desire can be considered as a twisted sexuality that does not follow a "straight line" (2006, p. 67), which is the presumed neutral orientation of heterosexuality. Therefore, the normalisation of heterosexuality involves the requirement to follow a straight line, "whereby straightness gets attached to other values including decent, conventional, direct, and honest" (2006, p. 70). Through this perspective, one *becomes* straight, and the very idea that bodies "have a natural orientation is exposed as fantasy in the necessity of

enforcement of that orientation, or its maintenance as a social requirement for intelligible subjectivity" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 85). In this analysis, I explore how Ahmed's queer phenomenology works in a context affected by armed conflict and how the reproduction of the "straight line" is associated with specific spaces and positions men and women are supposed to inhabit and perform. This analysis shows how sexual orientation is enabled and disabled in different spaces, (re)directed through movement, and how Nacho resists, challenges, and negotiates such impositions.

Additionally, I analyse how violence produces specific orientations that direct the life of LGBTIQ+ people towards marginality and precarity. In this analysis, I explore how the narratives of Elizabeth and Candelaria expand Ahmed's perspective by showing that sexuality produces not only normative "lifelines" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 17) that orient subject's lives in particular ways but also that impoverished and racialised queer subjects (while refusing to follow the orientation of normativity) are confronted with lifelines that (re)produce marginality and precarity. In this sense, this analysis exposes how everyday violence while working through movement, space, and sexuality determines how LGBTIQ+ people experience their lives, that is, how they reside in the world.

Sexuality on the move: the carving out of a space to become a *marica*[45]

Nacho's life story narrative was structured around his memories of different movements he has experienced across different physical and symbolic spaces. This relentless movement was articulated in Nacho's narrative as in constant connection with his non-normative sexuality and, most of the time, mediated by the presence or the threat of violence. In this sub-section, my analysis of Nacho's narrative of displacement focuses on his queer mobility as a shifting balance between opportunities and oppression (Manalansan, 2006), fleshing out the entanglements between space, sexuality, and violence in Nacho's narrative of his becoming *marica* while

[45] In the Colombian context, the term *marica* has been historically used to refer to homosexual men (and sometimes women) in a derogative way. Sometimes it refers mainly to homosexual men that perform a "passive" role in sexual intercourse, or their gender expression is feminine. Despite this harmful use, in some contexts, some homosexual men and transgender women use it as an identity category, as a political statement to express pride in their femininity. Others use it in contraposition to the term "gay", which is read as an imported identity category that denotes class and race privileges in the Colombian context.

growing up in a conflict-affected context in the 1970s and 1990s. In this analysis, I identify different actors, spaces, and institutions that produce queer displacements in conflict-affected contexts on an everyday basis (besides illegal armed groups) and explore how Nacho's sexuality was enabled and disabled by specific social spaces.

After seeing Nacho in various events related to “LGBTI issues” during my fieldwork, I approached him at the end of one of these events to invite him to participate in this research. On that day, Nacho participated in the open discussion at the end of the event. He explained that he worked in a social organisation focused on "Afro-Colombian populations" and was in charge of handling the "LGBTI perspective" in the organisation. Nacho enthusiastically accepted to participate in my research project and said that he wanted to write a book about his life, so this could be an excellent opportunity to have a draft of his life story. I visited Nacho at his workplace, where we met twice to do the interview.

Nacho was born in the 1960s in Maria la Baja in the Bolivar Department near the Colombian Caribbean coast. Nacho's life story narrative began describing his family home, which he portrayed as a traditional *machista* peasant family. His narrative about his early years was brief. It only included the description of the two times his father disappeared, leaving Nacho's mother pregnant and taking care of Nacho and his siblings on both occasions. According to Nacho's narrative, the second time his father returned home, his father told Nacho's mother that he had another partner and a newborn baby with her. After hearing this news, Nacho's mother disappeared from town, leaving all her children behind. Nacho was twelve years old when he was moved out of his original family home, an event that inaugurated a process of displacement that shaped Nacho's life trajectory in particular ways.

> Xiomara, who was just born, went to live with my mother's sister. Jose, who was two years old, went to live with my uncle. And we, the older three, went to live with my dad and his new lover. Everyone was living in that house; we were around nineteen people.

Resembling the gender arrangements characterising Candelaria and Elizabeth's family structure, Nacho's narrative placed gender-based violence and domestic violence at the base of his family formation and as the principal reason that led to his family home disintegration. This first

displacement represented a traumatic experience in Nacho's life trajectory. He told me he spent much of his childhood and adult life feeling resentment against his mother and women, in general, and experiencing a sense of abandonment that shaped how he related to different individuals and spaces. According to Nacho's narrative, things became complex and violent between them when he moved to live with his father and his partner. After a while, Nacho decided that he did not want to live with his father anymore. Nacho started living between family homes, sometimes at his aunts' or grandmother's home. While Nacho struggled with this instability, he became close to a neighbour, an older man living next to his father's home. According to Nacho, whilst fighting with his father, this man and his house became a site of trust and shelter for him. Nacho's account of his sexuality began with describing how this neighbour sexually abused him once he gained Nacho's trust.

> He [Nacho's neighbour] started talking bad about my father, and I started trusting him. "Your father is a jerk, and he is a motherfucker", he said. Until the point in which I fell in love with him, or he fell in love with me and sexually abused me.
>
> From that moment, I started the search for my identity. Maybe. I don't know.
>
> When he abused me, I got hospitalised […] I was like fourteen years old. I went to my grandma's house, and I was shaking, and my little sister, the one that lived with my grandma, hugged me and asked me, "What's wrong with you? What is happening, Nacho!" And she ran to find my grandma […], but I didn't say anything; I couldn't speak. So, they took me to the hospital […] I remember I got out three or four days after a psychologist diagnosed me, "He has a trauma because of his mother's absence". And that wasn't true, I mean in a way, but the event was that I was sexually abused!

Nacho's narrative of this event shows one of the ways in which the absence of his mother in the family home was culturally and scientifically interpreted as the source of violence and suffering in Nacho's childhood. The social judgement raised against his mother's absence – her absence in her natural role as a woman, mother, and caregiver – obscured the source (perpetrator or structure) and dynamics of the domestic and gender-based violence that provoked the experience

of abandonment in the first place. In this case, Nacho's narrative shows that the same gender-based violence continued operating, even in his mother's absence, casting Nacho's mother as the origin of trauma and the perpetrator of violence, obscuring both the absence of Nacho's father as a caring figure and the neighbour's violent sexual behaviour. According to Nacho's narrative, he never told anyone about this abuse. While experiencing ambivalence towards this man, as he was the source of trust and abuse, Nacho continued visiting his house after getting out of the hospital.

> The abuse continued. But then it was not only abuse, but the selling started. Right? With his friends, and I didn't know. His friends used to reach me to have sex with me. Homosexual relations. Right? But they were paying this man, and I didn't know that. And this happened for a long time.
>
> So, after some time, I ran away from my town. Because people in Maria la Baja started saying, "He is the town's homosexual. He is the *marica* in town". A series of events happened that made me feel used and intimidated. There was a whole process. I didn't know who I was if I was *marica* or what. Because I was having sex with many guys, right? And I liked one man. But I was always wondering, what's wrong with me? Why do I have to look for men? Why do men have to reach me to have sex with me? And not for something else. So, all of this pushed me to escape from my town. I was sixteen years old when I ran away.

As Nacho's narrative describes, his abuse evolved into a situation of sexual exploitation in which he was objectified and exploited by this man. As a result of this abuse, Nacho's sexuality became a public matter through rumours across town which made him question his identity while feeling intimidated and abused. Located in the 1970s, when homosexuality was still criminalised in Colombia, and living in a Caribbean Afro-Colombian community with a rigid imposition of masculinity, being a *marica* was not an option for Nacho then. Nacho's narrative shows that even before he was able to self-identify with a non-normative sexual orientation, he was named a *marica* and pushed out of the closet by his community, which forced Nacho to move out of his town. From that moment, Nacho's life story narrative evolved as a long list of (autonomous and enforced) movements and displacements he has experienced across his life trajectory while trying to find a safe space to hide or express his non-normative sexuality.

According to Nacho's narrative, he travelled to Cartagena to live with one of his aunts. Nacho stayed in this family home for a year but decided to return to his town after having an affair with one of his cousins and causing a family dispute. Nacho's narrative continued:

> After I came back, everything changed as I started serving in the local Church's youth group. Everything was different. In the company of the priests, I found a new dynamic. I didn't stop being gay. But I was not the *marica* that was sold, I was just a *marica*, and I accepted myself. In that space, no one reached me to have sex with them. So, I found friends in that space.
>
> By that time, in the year 1979, different groups started to emerge in the territory of Montes de Maria. Paramilitaries, guerrillas, the ELN [National Liberation Army], and we were part of a youth group with other perspectives. We believed in other things, and we talked about Liberation Theology.
>
> I met a lovely nun and opened up to her to disclose who I was. I wanted to be happy. So, she said to me one day, "What's the problem with being gay? You are Nacho. You have your essence. Being gay is an orientation. It is a condition; it is not a disease". Because I was told that it was a disease, you know? I had a girlfriend in the group but also a boyfriend. He was my friend, he was lovely.
>
> So, this nun told me, "You need to go to therapy to get over this, to explore this". So, I told my grandma, "I need a therapist". And she found the way and sent me to a psychologist. I liked it, and it led me to take some decisions. I decided I wanted to become a priest. It was like a choice, "This is what I want". No more girlfriends, boyfriends, no more nothing, only to be a priest.

Nacho's narrative exhibits how gender and sexuality are enabled and disabled by different social spaces. Returning to his hometown as a *marica* demanded in Nacho the need to find a place to 'be', although not necessarily outside the closet. As Nacho's narrative describes, he found a safe space in the local Church's youth group to explore his sexuality in a non-violent manner. Paradoxically, Nacho described this religious community as a space in which his queer desire found a place (as he described having a romantic relationship with a man), but also as a space that validated his non-normative sexual orientation, displacing the fear that was prompt in Nacho's exploration of his sexuality by the narrative of homosexuality as a disease. In this sense,

Nacho's narrative shows that in following this path, occupying this religious space, he found a way to divert from the "straight line" (Ahmed, 2006. p. 70-71) he was supposed to follow. Nacho not only found a person to disclose and talk about his non-normative sexuality but this person, the nun, advised him to go (directed him) to a therapeutical space not to re-direct Nacho's desire towards a straight line but to confirm the essential value of his sexual *orientation*. However, as Nacho describes, despite the support he found in this space, he decided to "cancel" his queer desire, and any desire, by becoming a priest. When I asked Nacho why he took this decision despite the support and validation he found in his nun friend and the therapist he visited, Nacho said that at that age, that decision looked like the easiest way out of the confusion he was experiencing. However, Nacho also mentioned that after all these years, he has a different reading of his decision. He said:

> I think that the idea of confronting who I really was, was kind of trapped and oppressed inside my head. Recently, I've thought that being a priest could help me hide that I was a *marica*. As a *marica,* you cannot be with a woman or a man. You cannot have a home. Instead, like a priest, you can live alone or in a community, you can do whatever you want, and nobody will judge you.

Nacho's answer to my question reflects that he turned towards this religious space and its orientation, trying to find a social connection and a sense of belonging. As a *marica,* Nacho was trapped in a space of social impossibility that he thought could be resolved through his engagement with an institution that offered him a space to be, through the negation of his sexuality – by not performing any sexual desire. Nacho interpreted this religious communitarian belonging as working outside the logic of heteronormativity and as an opportunity to find a place to stay put, to have a home. Nonetheless, according to Nacho's narrative, when he announced his decision to become a priest at a family lunch at his grandparents' house, he was confronted by his father. Hitting the dinner table with his hand, Nacho's father shouted at him:

> Priests are either *maricas* or guerrilla members, and I don't want a *marica* or a guerrilla member in my house! My grandfather agreed with him. That was a big shock for me because I wasn't a guerrilla member, but I was a *marica*, but nobody knew that at home. That caused immense suffering in me. I thought, well, am I a priest? Or a guerrilla member? Or a *marica*? What am

> I? What am I looking for? This situation took me to a difficult moment in my life, and I tried to kill myself.

Nacho's narrative reflects that following a straight line in conflict-affected contexts directs subjects towards different objects and spaces. The reaction of Nacho's father reveals that both being a guerrilla member or a *marica* was perceived as a diversion from the straight line that men were supposed to follow in the cultural and socio-political context of Maria la Baja (amid the intensification of the armed conflict and emergence of different guerrilla groups). The reaction of Nacho's father not only replicated the stereotypical *machista* questioning of the masculinity and heterosexuality of religious men but also expressed his political positioning as a conservative against the emergence of the National Liberation Army (ELN in Spanish) at that time.

The ELN was a guerrilla group founded in 1964 and headed by a series of Roman Catholic priests, exponents of Liberation Theology, denouncing the economic inequalities in the country and promoting political liberation for oppressed peoples. In this context, both guerrillas and *maricas* were perceived as dissidents of the straight line – reflecting the historical fantasy that overlaps non-normative sexualities with left-wing revolutionary politics, which survived in contemporary political discourses and haunted the peace referendum in 2016 through the gender ideology narrative – and so Nacho, as a man and son of his father (a renowned conservative in his town), was forbidden to follow any of these orientations. In this sense, while becoming a priest, Nacho threatened to not follow the family line (Ahmed, 2006) by not becoming his father (as a heterosexual, masculine man) and not reproducing the family, but also threatened the political orientation he was supposed to follow as a member of a conservative family in this conflict-affected context.

Showing, as suggested by Ahmed (2006), that objects do a work in "becoming straight", as objects direct and orient subjects in a certain way, the "dinner table" appears in Nacho's narrative as a "kinship object" that enables forms of gathering that direct us in specific ways or that make some things possible and not others" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 81). While gathered around the dinner table, Nacho's father re-directed Nacho's orientation (supported by Nacho's grandfather) and required him to follow specific lines. Placed at a crossroads, in which he could not identify with either of these options or an orientation to follow, as he was not a guerrilla member but

could not confess that he was *marica*, Nacho's sense of impossibility and disorientation grew to the point of trying to kill himself, in the absence of a physical and symbolic space to be, and so to live.

Following these events, Nacho received therapeutical treatment, supported by his grandmother and one of his aunts, and he was feeling "better". However, Nacho's narrative continued describing another violent event that pushed him to leave his hometown for the third time. According to Nacho, he was walking back home one night when a group of men assaulted him on the street. One of them menaced him by pointing a gun at his head and shouting: "We don't want any *maricas* in this town, we don't want jerks, and we are going to kill you. Go away, leave this town!" (Nacho, 2019). After experiencing these violent threats and knowing that he needed to leave Maria la Baja for his safety, Nacho accepted an offer made by his father: to join the navy.

> My father called me one day and said, "Would you like to be a marine officer? I can help you to get in. I can talk with your uncle Hector; he can help us". I talked with my uncle Hector; he and my aunt took me to Cartagena, and I joined the Navy. My father couldn't be happier because I was going to be a marine officer, and he spent a fortune to get me in.
>
> I enter the Navy. I spend one year in the Navy. I fall in love with a guy. The guy falls in love with me. But we can't say we are *maricas* because that was forbidden at the military school. Somebody finds out that I'm in love with somebody and that somebody is in love with me. That soldier follows me. I don't want anything with him, and he heavily abuses me. I entered a crisis, just like the first time I was abused sexually.

As Nacho's narrative describes, in the face of the everyday violence he was exposed to as a *marica* living in his hometown, Nacho did not have more choice but to follow his father's direction. This decision was facilitated and well-received, as oriented towards the straight line Nacho was supposed to follow. The happiness of Nacho's father shows how "family love requires "following" a certain direction, or even having a certain orientation" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 73). However, as Nacho's narrative shows, there is always a path to divert from normativity inside normative spaces. Nacho's queer desire found an object of orientation, although that movement was punished again through violence.

> [After the sexual assault] They took me to the hospital again, inside the navy. I spent like three or four months there. My crisis was deep. I couldn't walk, I couldn't move, I couldn't talk. They ran many tests on me but couldn't find out what was happening. They pinched my legs, and I couldn't feel anything […]
>
> My only thought was that I wanted to die […] One day they put a wounded man in the bed next to mine, and he noticed that I cried every night. He told the nurse […] they tried to make me talk with a psychologist, and after some time, I exploded […] I started crying. I cried for about 12 hours straight […] with the help of one of my aunts and a priest, I finally confessed what had happened to me.

Showing that traumatic experiences have the power to displace individuals across time and space, this second experience of sexual abuse moved Nacho back in time to his first sexual abuse. Nacho was displaced back in time and remained immobile, physically and psychologically, in the psychic space and time of the traumatic experience. While this immobility is remembered as a traumatic experience by Nacho, it also worked as an "embodied practice of resistance" (Ritterbusch, 2016, p. 429) that kept Nacho (immobile) in a safe space, in the hospital under watch and not in the military school, where he could be subjected to further violence. When Nacho was finally able to speak and reported what happened to him, he recovered his ability to walk but was forced to stay put in this space for some other time while the navy was evaluating if Nacho was out of risk (as he continued having suicidal thoughts), to avoid any legal implications for the institution in the future. According to Nacho, the soldier that raped him went to a military prison, and Nacho was “asked” to sign a document in which he declared his voluntary withdrawal from the navy, agreeing to exempt the institution from any responsibility.

After this experience, Nacho moved back to Maria la Baja, and with the support of his grandmother and aunts, Nacho finally joined the seminary to become a priest. He moved to Medellin and joined the Claretians.

> When I was in Medellin with the Claretians […] I fell in love with a seminarian and had sex with him […] Later, I had a problem with someone because they found out that I was *marica*, so I got kicked out of the seminary […], And I came back again to my town.

> I'm a *marica* in my town […] I said, "I'm here. I already lived, and in my life, I want to be who I am. I don't want to be a priest, nor a soldier, nothing. I want to be me". And I started working with the priests as a social leader.
>
> But what happened? After one year and a half of being there, I met an old friend in the street, and he said to me, "I need to talk to you. Let's go to have lunch together" […] He said, "Look, I'm already out of the navy [where they initially met], and I'm working in a judicial investigation. Things are getting ugly here in Maria la Baja, and there are many movements on the rise, paramilitary groups and ELN guerrillas. I'm one of the soldiers investigating what is happening in Montes de Maria. But I was surprised because I was given a list, and you are enlisted there. I know you. I know who you are, so I need to know if this is true".
>
> He had a list of about seventy people, and I was among them. He asked me, "Are you part of any of these groups?" and I answered, "No, Camilo. Never!" And when he showed me the list, I saw all the names of the young people that were part of the Church's youth group and some others I didn't know. He said, "We are going to kill all these people. That is my job. But I need to know if this is true, that you and these people are part of these groups".
>
> […] He said, "I need you to become my informant. I'm going to pay you whatever you want. You are going to have guaranties," and he cried. I told him, "Look, Camilo, you are my friend. I appreciate you, but I'm not a *sapo* (snitch)". He says, "You've never talked to me". I answered, "Camilo, I've never talked to you" […], and he said, "Ok. You have to leave this town now".

As his narrative describes, Nacho's process of displacement kept operating over the years as a strategy used by Nacho to escape from violence and as a manifestation of everyday and conflict-related violence. According to Nacho, he served for many years on the ELN's ideological side without knowing he was part of a guerrilla group. After all these years, Nacho interprets many ways in which his non-normative sexuality interfered in how he was both involved and instrumentalised by this guerrilla group. According to Nacho, while he openly spoke about his homosexuality with one of the leading nuns of the group, his sexuality was never openly

discussed in this religious group. It remained an open secret. He interprets this silence as a form of protection, as homosexuality was prohibited in leftist guerrilla groups and was punished with the death penalty. Therefore, Nacho believes that he was placed on the ideological side of the group as a form of protection. However, Nacho also resents that although he was a powerful and talented social leader, he was never given a leading position within the group, probably as an act of discrimination against his homosexuality. In this sense, Nacho identifies protection and discrimination functioning in this space. Additionally, he points out that his sexual orientation also prevented him from being enrolled in the armed side of the group (as not being "apt" for war, not masculine or heterosexual enough), something he perceives as an advantage, as he mentioned that many of the people he knew at that time, died in armed confrontations.

Escaping from these deadly threats, Nacho decided to leave his work as a social leader and left his town one more time. Nacho moved to Cartagena, where he started a "new" life, away from the Church and his "gay life", working in a local hardware store. However, after some time, Nacho started a romantic and sexual relationship with a male co-worker. They agreed to have parallel relationships with women in public to cover their sexual orientation. Isabel was Nacho's girlfriend at that time. According to Nacho's narrative, Isabel found out about Nacho's relationship with this other man after going out for a few months and confronted Nacho, asking him if he was gay. Nacho confessed his relationship to Isabel, but she did not accept breaking things up with Nacho and started following him everywhere. After some months, Nacho ended his relationship with his boyfriend and spent some days in Maria la Baja with his family. Isabel arrived by surprise, and as Nacho's family was happy about meeting Nacho's girlfriend, particularly his father, Isabel stayed with them for some days. According to Nacho's narrative, "in a night of drinks and dancing, he got her pregnant". That is how Nacho decided to marry Isabel, and they lived together as a married couple for a couple of years. "When Yara was born, I was the happiest man on earth. I was not thinking about my homosexuality anymore. I was just thinking about me". Nacho, Isabel, and baby Yara moved to Cartagena to live together, but after a while, Isabel told Nacho that she wanted to separate from him and asked him to leave their house. Some months after their separation, Nacho arrived at the house of Isabel's parents to pick Yara up, but he was not allowed to see his daughter:

> Her father and mother came out of the house and said, “Look motherfucker, you don’t have a place here. I said, “I came to visit my daughter,”. And her father said, “No, no. Yara is not your daughter, and Yara cannot be the daughter of a *marica*. We know everything, and we know what you did to our daughter”. I said, “What? What did I do to your daughter? And then Isabel’s father says, “Isabel already told us; that she found you in bed with another man”.

When Nacho denied this accusation, Isabel’s father came out of the house, beat Nacho with a wooden stick and told him to leave town. Nacho took legal action against Isabel’s family, as he feared for his safety and did not want to lose custody of his daughter.

> They wanted to remove Yara’s surname, custody, and everything because I was *marica*. I’m talking about the 1990s, we already had a new constitution, and the law was different. So, we went to the family judge, and he said, “He can be a *marica*, and he can be a *travesti*. He can be whatever he wants, but Nacho is Yara’s father, and as her father, he has all the rights, and I’m not going to take her away from him. So, you better respect him and respect his condition. As a person, as a human being”.
>
> That was one of my happiest moments: a national judge giving that kind of sentence […] That court settlement was like a life relief, you know? Although it was a successful court settlement, the problem was already around society, around my family. All these issues were already at the level of the community.
>
> […] One of my aunts kicked me out of the house. She said, “Rosita [Nacho’s grandmother] can’t take this anymore. She can’t take this suffering. You are going to kill her. Go away!”. One of my uncles told me, “I’m going to give you three million pesos, so you go to die somewhere else. You are a shame; you are the scum of this family. We don’t want to know anything about you”. So, even if I had judicial satisfaction, this social issue left a great mark on me.

Nacho’s narrative of the period in which he followed the orientation of the straight line that took him to inhabit the family space of heteronormative marriage illustrates how while living in a “glass closet” (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 80), Nacho’s deviant orientation was strategically overlooked by his family, including Isabel, his wife and mother of his daughter. Nacho’s experiences show

that coming out is not only about one's decision to disclose a deviant orientation but also a matter of public negotiation in which the implicated person has low control over information about their sexual orientation (Sedgwick, 1990). Despite knowing about Nacho's sexual orientation, his family and Isabel preferred to remain silent to reproduce the family line Nacho was supposed to follow as a man. His narrative confirms that before the "public" coming out takes place, there is always a previously established disadvantageous relation of power working through "silent contempt, silent blackmail, silent glamorization, silent complicity" about the deviant orientation (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 80). In this way, Isabel had control of information about Nacho that she could use strategically at any moment. While it is Nacho's interpretation that Isabel used this accusation against him to cover her own infidelity (which is impossible and not of my interest to argue if it is true or not), Nacho's narrative reveals that many other people aligned with Isabel's accusations reconfirming Nacho's orientation as different and deviant from this social alignment. Displaying how the closet and its exits can be volatile and even violent (Sedgwick, 1990), Nacho's public and enforced coming out was accompanied by different forms of violence and caused him another experience of displacement in his life trajectory. This displacement not only pushed him out of his home town for good, as after this experience, Nacho moved to Bogotá and never returned to Maria la Baja, but also removed him from the family tree by negating his fatherhood. Nacho's narrative exhibits how sexual orientation gets conflated with gender and sex in the heteronormative structure of the family as the primary institution of society. Even though Nacho is a man with a body that produces reproductive sex, Nacho could not embody the subject position of Yara's father in the family tree because his deviant orientation, his queer desire, threatened to break the straight line that reproduces the family line (Ahmed, 2006).

Nacho's narrative of his process of displacement reveals crucial connections between space, mobility, and sexuality in the context of everyday violence and armed conflict in Colombia. Nacho's experiences display how sexuality is spatialised, as some spaces (family home, public space, the Church, the navy, guerrilla groups) may enable or disenable specific sexual behaviours, and how the (im)mobility of LGBTIQ+ people is determined by straight lines that (re)produce specific subject positions in conflict-affected contexts. Additionally, Nacho's process of displacement reveals that displacement works both as a type of everyday violence that is used to prevent or disenable the emergence of non-normative sexualities and as a strategy

used, by those who can, to avoid violence or follow queer orientations. It is important to highlight that while Nacho suffered various forms of violence and his *becoming marica* was constantly (many times violently) interrupted and re-directed, his narrative shows that he enjoyed certain privileges that protected him from other violent scenarios. While being a male, Nacho had the autonomy to move and decide the direction of some of his displacements. While supported by his extended family (mostly his grandmother and aunts), Nacho always had safe spaces to stay put. According to Nacho, his family was not very wealthy but had social status in their community. Some of his relatives had political positions in his town for some generations. This social status allowed Nacho time and space to negotiate his security while always having material means to live, opportunities for education, and a family home to return to as many times as needed. Finally, Nacho's experiences unveil alternative narratives of how queer subjects interact with and move through institutions like the Church or guerrilla groups in conflict-affected contexts, which go beyond mere prohibition or oppression. Nacho's narrative expands the official narratives of the "LGBT victim of armed conflict" by showing that despite his sexual orientation, he participated, indirectly and not violently, in conflict dynamics. His narrative demonstrates that other social categories like class and gender play a crucial role in how violence against non-normative genders and sexualities is exerted and experienced.

The orientation of everyday violence and precarity

According to the life story narratives of Candelaria and Elizabeth, after they left their family homes for a second time, they continued experiencing a process of displacement that extended through all their life trajectories. These displacement processes differed for each of them, as their lives took different directions, and they arrived and departed from different spaces and geographies over the years. However, the narratives of Candelaria and Elizabeth revealed that their displacement processes shared a common trait: the lack of material means to secure a safe space to live, which translated into several forced (im)mobilities in different physical and symbolic spaces. This constant movement was associated with a fight for survival and disrupted the temporality of Candelaria and Elizabeth's life trajectories. While associated with the materiality of survival, these displacement processes show how marginality and precarity are

conditions created and lived through violence and movement and how gender and sexuality shape these conditions.

After describing her second displacement from her family home, Elizabeth's life story narrative continued describing her arrival in Villavicencio, the city in which she was born but never lived before:

> I arrived at the bus terminal, and I was very happy. I was like levitating. "My God! I'm in my land, where I was born; what an excitement!" I liked the city and started walking around with my little bag. Where was I going? I don't know. I didn't know where I was going, but I was hopeful because I was free, nobody would hit me, and nobody would maltreat me. I mean, I could go wherever I wanted.
>
> I was walking and stopped in a park because I was feeling tired. Suddenly, a man approached me, a *chacero* [street vendor], one of those guys that sell candies on the street. And he said, "*Está como perdidita, no?*" [You are a bit lost, uh?]. And I said, "Why?" And he said, "Because I've been following you for a while, and I can see that you are not from here, right?" So, I said, "They say that I am from here, but I don't know the city". He said, "What do you mean?". He sat next to me, and I told him my story of why I had travelled there, all my issues at home, and that I wanted a new opportunity but didn't know anyone in Villavicencio. So he asked me, "And where are you going to live?" I said, "I don't know". He said, "I have a job for you! Let's go. I can take you there". I had already worked in a family house, so I thought that was the job he had offered me.
>
> He took me to a family house, supposedly. I thought it was a family house, but it was a *casa de citas* [brothel]. I had very long and beautiful hair, and when we arrived, there was a lady named Magola. She had many 'businesses' there, in that area of Villavicencio. When she saw me, she opened her eyes and said, "Wow! Where did you find this one?" She looked at me and checked me all over the place. I thought, why is she looking at me that much if I'm only going to be the housekeeper? What is she looking for? "She is perfect!" she said. And he said, "Look, she is looking for a job in a family house, so I told her that this was a family house". And she said, "Why did you tell her that?" He answered, "But what else can I do. That is the only thing she knows. She doesn't know anything else". So, she said, "Ok, let's try her".

As Elizabeth's narrative describes, she felt joy and hope when she left her mother's home for the second time, just as she described in her first displacement when her father took her away. Having the possibility to move away from the violent space of her family home was lived and interpreted by Elizabeth as an opportunity to be free and happy. However, as her narrative describes, this emotion did not last long as she was taken to a place in which she found violence, once again, and lost her freedom by being forcibly emplaced in this space. Elizabeth was trapped in this house against her will for about a year. In the beginning, she worked in the kitchen cooking food for other sex workers, but after some months, she was forced to work as a *copera* [escort lady], and her job was to sit with men in the brothel and drink with them. Elizabeth's narrative shows that her gender mediated her mobility. The possibility for survival she was offered included her role as a caregiver and the sexualisation of her body. Tellingly, Elizabeth's experiences show how sex and care work overlap, becoming the (principal) enablers of impoverished women's mobility once out of the family home.

Elizabeth's narrative continued by describing that she met a client who helped her escape from this place after he noticed that she was a minor and trapped against her will. This man took Elizabeth to a restaurant and told her he was investigating child sex trafficking and that he would get her out of that place. They devised a plan, and after a couple of months, he sent Elizabeth to live in a charity run by nuns in Bogotá. Elizabeth stayed in this place for a while, but after some months, she was told she could not stay longer because there was not enough money to support her. While wandering in the streets of Bogotá, Elizabeth met another *chacero* [street vendor]. After hearing Elizabeth's story, he asked her to live with him in Fuente de Oro, Meta, where his family had a farm. Elizabeth agreed to go to a hotel with him that night because she did not have a place to stay and because she "liked him and he treated her well" Elizabeth decided to travel with him to Meta after a few days. That is the story of how Elizabeth met the father of her four children.

According to Elizabeth's narrative, after some years, Elizabeth was finally living in a family house and learning to work as a peasant when armed conflict took her husband away. She was forcibly displaced from this town by guerrillas. Elizabeth travelled to Granada Meta with her three children, her mother-in-law and pregnant with her fourth child. According to her narrative,

she performed various informal jobs to sustain her family. However, after a while, Elizabeth started working in a brothel, which was the easiest way to find enough money in short periods of time. Elizabeth kept her work secret and never told her mother-in-law where the money was coming from. After some months, Elizabeth started dating a man who worked in the brothel and decided to go to live with him. "I told him I don't want to prostitute myself, and he said, don't worry, prostitute yourself only with me [laughs]", Elizabeth said. Elizabeth went to live with this man, and while he was covering the house expenses for Elizabeth and her children, he started being violent with her and forbade her to leave the house. He offered her a way out of the brothel by forcing her to rest immobile in his house. After a while, Elizabeth decided to leave him and travelled back to Bogotá with her children.

Elizabeth's narrative of her displacement process shows that her mobility was determined by men who provided her with the possibility to move or forced her to rest immobile in violent spaces. Without having an education or experience doing other jobs, Elizabeth's possibilities to find economic resources to support her family were reduced, and sex work became a space to which she constantly returned as a means of survival. Elizabeth's narrative echoes the experiences of other women displaced by the armed conflict that find in sex work or domestic work the "easiest" and, many times, the only way to survive in urban centres. However, Elizabeth's narrative reveals that hers was not an arrival but a return to sex work, showing that the consequences of her displacement caused by armed conflict are explained and aggravated by a process of displacement that began years before Elizabeth lived in a conflict-affected context. Gender-based violence is a constant in Elizabeth's process of displacement, which evolved across the years from her sexualization in the different family spaces she experienced during her childhood to her forced involvement in sex work.

Elizabeth's narrative continued:

> I arrived in Bogotá with my children wearing a t-shirt. Arriving here was easy but finding a place to live, clothes, and food was difficult. All those things represented money. As I already had my art, supposedly, which was prostitution, I said, "Well, I'll survive with that", and because I was doing well at that time, I would only go out for a couple of hours and make money for the day.

> I rented a room, bought a two-level bed for the kids, and started buying things. I bought a thermos and a shopping trolley. I started making *empanadas* [pastries] with my grandmother's recipe, selling coffee, tea, and *empanadas*. I was selling all that stuff all around the city.
>
> At that time, we had the same major in Bogotá that we have nowadays [Enrique Peñalosa], who doesn't let people sell things on the streets. Because "the city looks ugly", he says, "with all those street vendors all over the place". So, I was taken to *el calabozo* [cell] many times. I received many beatings from the *tombos* [police officers]. As they tried to take my coffee thermos away, I smashed their heads repeatedly because they hit me harder. I was imprisoned in the police station. I was there for four months because I hit a *tombo*. They also hit me but didn't take me to Forensic Medicine. I ended up with various accusations, but they didn't check what had happened to me.

Elizabeth mentioned in her life story narrative many attempts to find another economic activity besides sex work, or "prostitution" as she called it, during our interview. While she does not hold any negative judgement against herself or other women doing sex work, she repeatedly mentioned that she always wanted to "get out" of sex work and find another way to survive. As her narrative describes above, soon after she arrived in Bogotá with her children, she returned to sex work but started saving money to buy implements to sell food and beverages as a street vendor. However, her attempt failed because her mobility was interrupted once again by the local government law in Bogotá, which prohibits informal workers from occupying public space, even though this is the only means of survival for thousands of impoverished, marginalised, racialised, uneducated people in the city.

During the four months that Elizabeth was imprisoned, she suffered high levels of physical violence from other inmates and was confronted with the constant threat of death. When Elizabeth left prison, social services had taken her children away and institutionalised them, and she was told she needed to find a job and a place to live to have them back. Without any other option, Elizabeth secretly went back to sex work to gain money and fight to get her children back. From that moment on, Elizabeth's narrative described a long list of displacements she has experienced while moving between houses, neighbourhoods, sex work, and prison over these years (she has been imprisoned three times in her life). Over the years, her mobility continued to

be conditioned by men who offered brothel jobs or a place to live (which happened three more times than the story described above). In both scenarios, Elizabeth has decided to offer her body and sexuality in exchange for material means. She expressed that her main objective was protecting her children and giving them opportunities.

Elizabeth's process of displacement displays how mobility and violence are connected. As shown in the work of Alisa Winton (2015, 2017, 2019) on migration, displacement, and mobility of marginalised populations in the Latin American contexts, Elizabeth's narrative of displacement exemplifies how marginalised people's strategic mobilities may be best viewed as a complex balancing act of different kinds of harm (Winton, 2015). Elizabeth's constant movement between different spaces was always associated with the necessity to move away from different forms of violence and find means of survival. Furthermore, Elizabeth's experiences of (im)mobility show how marginality and precarity are conditions produced and reproduced through violence and mobility. As her narrative describes, Elizabeth's mobility was determined by external forces that prohibited her from moving across specific spaces and forced her to remain immobile in others. Despite many attempts to move away from marginality, Elizabeth's life conditions forced her to "return" to sex work through her life trajectory as a space where her survival was achieved. However, her condition as a marginalised, impoverished woman was maintained. As a sex worker Elizabeth was exposed to many forms of violence while performing a non-regulated job (i.e., physical and emotional violence coming from her clients, urban violence, police violence, and social discrimination), struggled to find economic means to sustain her family, and did not have educational opportunities. These conditions kept reproducing over the years through the many times Elizabeth returned to sex work to survive, creating a cycle of marginality and precarity and demonstrating that "marginality is not only created violently, it is also lived and reproduced through violence" (Winton, 2015, p. 4). Every time Elizabeth returned to sex work, she did it in spatial and temporal terms, returning many times to the first moment she was forced to perform this job while trying to escape from violence and looking for a safe space to stay put.

Elizabeth's life story narrative shows that violence creates an orientation in the lives of oppressed and marginalised subjects. Elizabeth kept going back to sex work, "following a line", walking through "a path well-trodden" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 16) that she and many other

impoverished, racialised women had followed, walking towards survival. While Elizabeth's narrative described many active attempts to change her life's orientation and the present and future conditions (orientation) of her children's lives (as when she tried to survive as a street vendor, worked as a security guard, and finished her high school degree studying whenever she found the opportunity and the time), different forms of everyday violence kept pushing her back to sex work and the marginal conditions of this physical and symbolic space. Elizabeth's narrative of displacement and mobility demonstrates that "lifelines" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 17) are not only established to restrict the proper orientation of bodies towards normativity but that, in addition, violence and precarity create particular lifelines that orient marginalised bodies through symbolic and physical spaces that reproduce precarity. As "lines are both created by being followed and are followed by being created" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 16), Elizabeth's narrative reveals how the orientation of violence and marginality is rendered invisible by marginalised bodies' constant movement.

Candelaria's life story narrative was shorter than Elizabeth's (and other interviewees) because our first interview was interrupted when her roommate arrived at their house, and our second encounter never happened[46]. Despite these circumstances, Candelaria's life story narrative briefly described how her displacement process continued once she left her mother's home for the second time. As mentioned in the introduction of this sub-section, Candelaria's narrative of displacement emphasised how she has struggled to secure material means and a safe space to live in over the years, somehow mirroring Elizabeth's experiences. However, what structured Candelaria's narrative of displacement was a non-linear, interrupted temporality that fluctuated between the past and the present showing that trauma keeps troubling her everyday experience. Candelaria's narrative kept returning to her childhood suffering, the origin of her displacement, which continues haunting her present adult life as a lived memory that displaces her across different temporalities and as a precarious material reality that keeps Candelaria stuck in a life of constant beginnings.

[46] During our first encounter, Candelaria told me she was planning to travel to Switzerland to participate in a transgender activism event. When I tried to arrange a second meeting with Candelaria, she mentioned that she was busy packing but told me to pass by her house the next day. Ten minutes before our encounter, Candelaria cancelled our meeting by text saying she was too busy packing for her trip. I was already in Candelaria's neighbourhood, so I got out of my car to have a coffee. Five minutes later, I saw Candelaria walking down the street with two other friends drinking and dancing. I texted Candelaria back later that day, wishing her good luck with her trip, but she never answered. I interpret Candelaria's refusal to continue with our interview as part of her critiques against academia and its research processes and as a political gesture of resistance.

> [after leaving her home] I started travelling a lot until I arrived in Bogotá, here in *La Candelaria*. This neighbourhood has given me many opportunities and empowerment to be Candelaria. But I have also confronted difficult situations here. Time has passed, and I want something different, and I want a change. I don't like to be still in one place, and I've learned to be in movement.
>
> Remembering is hard for me. I've buried some of these memories, but [long pause and cries] there are moments when one is exhausted, and you question yourself. I've tried building relationships, friendships, and social networks as an adult. Still, it's been too hard [cries] because being alone and not having the support of your family when you needed it, that you felt abandoned and then to confront society, that was not easy.
>
> And well, here I am. I'm still here. And I'm tired of it. Right? I want to stop this.
>
> […] I want to continue living, but sometimes I don't know how to persist. Because look, I've been more than one year without a job because I don't work in prostitution or a beauty salon. But how can Candelaria survive? No? How can Candelaria achieve her dreams? How to achieve emotional well-being beyond material means. It is about the emotional. Because I've never had that [emotional well-being], you know? How can I get there?

As Candelaria's narrative describes, she has found in movement a strategy to be and to live and express her gender identity and sexuality. However, this movement has also represented a constant instability in Candelaria's life trajectory, which has been attached to her difficulties finding material means to live. While refusing to work as a beauty stylist or a sex worker, the most common informal, precarious jobs available for transgender women in rural and urban contexts in the country, Candelaria has lived in conditions of poverty and marginality, which has exposed her to further violence. Candelaria's narrative shows that she has been living in a "temporality of survival" or "moving on" that works through immediate or day-to-day negotiations without the possibility of a sustained, future-oriented project (Kojima, 2014). Without material means, without access to higher education or a formal job as a transgender woman, Candelaria's life trajectory has been interrupted by a constant movement or acts of survival (Winton, 2015) that keep Candelaria trapped in a temporality of constant beginnings.

Like Elizabeth's life story narrative, Candelaria's narrative shows that while oriented towards marginality, she feels stuck in spaces that do not allow her to move "forward" in life. In addition to the material difficulties, Candelaria's narrative emphasises the emotional weight of fighting for her survival every day. Exposing that impoverished, racialised transgender women in Colombia do not only "live" but fight daily to find ways to *persist*, Candelaria's narrative shows that displacement is a condition that impacts how subjects perceive themselves and signify the world surrounding them.

3. QUEER DISPLACEMENTS OF EVERYDAY VIOLENCE

I end this chapter by considering how LGBTIQ+ people are not only displaced by violence but also how their presence/arrival in certain spaces holds the potential to produce cultural and symbolic displacements. In this section, I take as a point of departure the established meaning of displacement as "the removal of someone or something by someone or something else which takes their place"[47]. Thinking through this definition, in this section, I consider how the relationality of violence is interrupted and displaced by the relationality of queer desire. This analysis focuses on how Elizabeth and Nacho's narratives of displacement also included experiences in which their queer desire displaced not only normativity but also the violence that shapes specific contexts and institutions and their social dynamics. This analysis seeks to give queer desire a different space in narratives of violence in Colombia, considering how queer desire is not only constantly persecuted, displaced, and negated but also how it always persists, holding a transformative potential to displace everyday violence.

Queering sex work

I met Elizabeth at the Integral Assistance Centre for Sexual Diversity and Genders (CAIDSG in Spanish), participating in an activity planned by the Municipality of Bogotá for LGBTI victims of armed conflict on a Saturday afternoon. At the end of the group activity, Elizabeth shared with the group that this was the first time she was coming to an "LGBTI thing", that she was a sex worker and found out that she also liked women sexually and romantically years ago. After

[47] Oxford Languages, 2022 https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/

hearing that Elizabeth was a victim of armed conflict and self-identified as a bisexual woman, I approached her at the end of the activity. I invited her to participate in my research. Elizabeth agreed enthusiastically, and we exchanged numbers.

Elizabeth's life story narrative was centred around violence and sexuality, although not in the ways one would expect when hearing that she is a bisexual woman displaced by armed conflict. As described earlier, Elizabeth's narrative of violence and sexuality was shaped around her early traumatic displacement from her family home and how her gender and sexuality as a cisgender woman influenced her process of displacement and, consequently, her mobility across different social spaces. Contrary to more straightforward stories of queer displacement, Elizabeth's narrative shows that displacement not only moves queer subjects out of their homes but that everyday violence displaces subjects into queer sexualities. As a sex worker, Elizabeth was placed at the bottom of the "hierarchical system of sexual value" (Rubin, 2011), becoming more prone to be subjected to a presumption of "disreputability, criminality, restricted social and physical mobility, loss of institutional support, economic sanctions, and criminal prosecution" (Rubin, 2011, p. 149). While describing her life as a sex worker – living in the queer side of sexuality – Elizabeth mentioned multiple occasions in which she has been discriminated against because of her economic activity, different situations that have exposed her to criminality and substance abuse, and a constant threat of violence and death.

In general, Elizabeth's narrative of her bisexuality was scattered and not very specific; it was not something central in Elizabeth's life story or the narrative of violence in her life trajectory. While not placed at the origin of Elizabeth's process of displacement, her queer desire appeared later in her narrative, taking Elizabeth's life story in another direction.

> I was selling coffee and tea, but this ambulant sale caused me many troubles, and I had to immerse myself in prostitution. I continued working there, but because I didn't want to prostitute myself, I performed the role of an escort lady. When meeting a client, I would try to chat with him, asking him about his wife or daughters so they lose the impulse to do something. Do you know what I mean? Sometimes, some of them ended up crying [laughs]. That was my strategy […] That worked only for some time.

> One day, a client arrived offering good money for a threesome. I didn't know what was that […] So, we started [she and another sex worker], moving my hair and performing the show, no? Everything was a show, and we were pretending […]
>
> But one day, I met a girl [sex worker], and she said, "Things are real with me". And I said, "No, I haven't done that before". And she said, "Well, you are going to do it. He likes it. He is paying good money, but he knows which are shows and which are not. He wants the real thing, and he chose you. He says he has been with you many times, but you are always doing shows only."
>
> After this first experience, I felt super weird. I thought, Oh God, what happened to me? I feel violated. I mean, it was something nice, exciting, and delicious, but at the same time, it was weird. What a disgust, what a shame, awful! I mean, I had mixed feelings.
>
> […] I became famous with clients. They only looked for me so I would find girls, right? They didn't want to be with me. They only wanted to watch us [having sex]. And I was happy because they were not going to penetrate me.

As her narrative describes, Elizabeth discovered her desire for women while using different strategies to avoid having sex with male clients. Although Elizabeth's first time having sex with a woman was a confusing event, while feeling transgressed and finding pleasure in it at the same time, after this experience, Elizabeth started developing sexual and romantic attraction for other women. The discovery of this queer desire allowed Elizabeth a different space in her economic activity as a sex worker. While enjoining her sexual encounters with other women, Elizabeth found a safe space inside sex work, in which she avoided the violence she experienced while needing to have sex with male clients and a space for desire and pleasure that was never available for her in this economic transaction. In this way, Elizabeth capitalised on her queer desire and used it to displace the violence she confronted while doing sex work.

According to Elizabeth's life story narrative, her sexual exploration was difficult as she confronted her homophobic thoughts and feelings towards lesbianism and queer desire in general. However, Elizabeth overcame these contradictions, and besides using this newly discovered queer desire to transform her experience as a sex worker, Elizabeth experienced

various romantic relationships with other women. According to Elizabeth's narrative, these relationships were more intense and meaningful than those she had had with men. Elizabeth found in her queer desire a space for pleasure and control inside her economic activity as a sex worker and a new form of relationality that brought love and romance to her life.

While Elizabeth affirmed that she has not been in a relationship with a woman for some time now, she mentioned that her relationship with male clients has changed over the years, as her bisexuality has impacted how she relates with men. Elizabeth did not articulate it explicitly, but she implied that she is more aware of the violence that characterised her previous romantic and business relationships with men and has developed a more pragmatic way to relate to them. When we met, Elizabeth was holding a "relationship" with an old client, Ricardo, who had the keys to Elizabeth's house and would come every once in a while, to be with her. Elizabeth explained that he was still paying to see her, but they also had a close relationship.

> At this moment, I'm not being faithful to Ricardo. I feel bad for him sometimes. I ask for silent forgiveness when I'm not faithful, but I need to earn some money. Money that he hasn't given me […] he tries, but I notice that he doesn't have more money sometimes.
>
> I have a couple of good old clients. They adjust to my time and needs. You know that the prostitute, in quotation marks, is subjected to the man because he is paying, right? So he can be satisfied. But when you have experience and good assertive management of clients, those clients look for you even if you charge higher prizes
>
> […] Sexuality is something that is there, it is tangible, and you need to learn to enjoy it. Nothing lasts forever, but I would like a real relationship. I would like to have a relationship; if it is with a woman, perfect. If it is with a man, perfect. But I want something tuned to what I think and feel.

Elizabeth's narrative reflects various negotiations she feels entitled to make nowadays, after having a long trajectory in sex work and a different conception and experience of her sexuality. As her narrative describes, her relationship with Ricardo is between a romantic and sexual relationship, from which Elizabeth receives company and support in difficult moments. Still, at the same time, it is a relationship mediated by money, as Ricardo pays her for being with him

when he can find the money. In this way, Elizabeth's relationship with Ricardo differs from those with other men (previously described in her life story narrative), as Elizabeth controls various aspects of the relationship. As her narrative describes, they meet in Elizabeth's house, in her space. She is not economically dependent on him, although she receives money from him occasionally. They do not have a monogamous relationship as Elizabeth continues working in sex work to meet her material needs. These negotiations reveal a queering of Elizabeth's romantic and sexual practices as the concepts of fidelity, relationship, and sex have gained new meanings and articulations outside heteronormativity.

Queering prison

Nacho's process of displacement did not end with his arrival in Bogotá. When I asked Nacho how was his experience living in his neighbourhood with his partner, he answered:

> We lived in that *machista* context, in Palermo Sur, in Bogotá. We were living as a couple. It was really hard. But we confronted the situation. We used to live in a big house, and we had a first-floor apartment. The owner of the house was a woman that was Rafa's cousin. But I was the only black person. All of them were white from Bogotá or Fusagasuga, white lands. I was the only black, but we had some kind of family protection […]
>
> […] One day, a woman that used to live in the house accused me of trying to sexually assault her son, and I was so stupid that I told her to go together to the police station to solve the issue. But the police officer said, "We got him in flagrant. We caught him in the sexual act". Come on! That never happened. I said, "Never! Don't you see that I came here because she falsely accused me?".

As a result of this event, Nacho went to prison for two years. In this case, Nacho's displacement was mediated by his queerness and blackness. According to Nacho's narrative, the neighbour that accused him was angry for other reasons (her husband had abandoned her and her children), and she found an easy target to displace all her anger and frustration in Nacho. She was friends with Nacho, and after seeing him incarcerated, she tried to withdraw her denunciation, but the judge told her that she could go to prison for defamation. Hence, she decided to step back from the judicial process. Nacho's displacement – displaced out of his home, relationship, and daily

life – was caused once again by the arbitrary decision of another to take Nacho out of the closet, which increased his neighbour's credibility and decreased Nacho's possibility of reaction against the law.

According to Nacho's narrative, during his imprisonment, he faced various types of violence due to the precarious conditions of Colombian prisons and his unexpected leadership inside this violent space. Nacho explained that the prison was divided into prison yards, and each yard was controlled by a *cacique* that was a leader inmate with power over other inmates and guards.

> When I arrived, I had some knowledge about social issues and human rights, not like nowadays, but I had some. So, I noticed there was a difficult situation. There was a *cacique* [chief]. And the *cacique* was a *paraco* [paramilitary] […] This guy asked me, "Why are you here?" And I answered, "I don't have to tell you why I am here. I'm not going to tell you anything about it. And if you feel so powerful, force me to tell you". He was with more guys, and I said, "Beat me, kill me, do whatever you want, bro. But don't you think I know my rights? […] If you want to know, why am I here, bring me a lawyer". And he said, "Okay, don't worry, but I'm the chief here". And I said, "Perfect, be the chief. I don't care. But don't come after me asking why am I here".

Before being arrested, Nacho worked as a social leader and directed social programs for young people living in marginal neighbourhoods in Bogotá. According to Nacho's narrative, this previous experience gave him the tools to manage various situations inside the prison. Nacho's confrontation with this *cacique* gave him social recognition with other inmates and guards. Despite being honest about his homosexuality, Nacho was elected as the *cacique* of his yard after a few months.

> You could hear young men saying, "A *marica* is in charge of the yard. A *marica* is leading us. A *marica* is governing us". But this *marica* had the Attorney General's Office in his favour because I was receiving a weekly visit, and I had a lawyer in my favour. And I knew many people working in the Justice Ministry.
>
> […] If human rights were violated, I denounced it. Immediately. If there was a violation of human rights among inmates or coming from guards

> against inmates, I didn't stay silent […] that is why they tried to kill me so many times. They [guards] used to put me in isolation, like in a *calabozo* [cell], all the time.

According to Nacho's narrative, he had regular visits by lawyers from the Attorney General's Office (although he did not explain why or how he knew these people), which gave him protection and power inside the prison. While Nacho was a *cacique*, he was confronted with the violent masculinist dynamics of the carceral system. Still, his social leadership allowed him to fight for his and other inmates' human rights. Nacho mentioned he survived three attacks on his life, including when he was moved to another prison in another city in the middle of the night so he could be killed in this space. On this occasion, Nacho managed to talk to the director of this other prison, who protected him and sent him back to his prison in Bogotá. After surviving this third attack on his life, Nacho decided to fill an official denunciation, causing the dismissal of various guards that helped to plan his murder.

Nacho's narrative of his experience of incarceration shows that in Colombia, "state punishment does not just mean the deprivation of liberty, but it configures a "space of death" as a disciplinary technology inside the prison" (Bello & Parra, 2016 p. 367). Nacho's description of this space reflects the abandonment, violence, corruption, overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, and absence of rehabilitation and resocialization programs characterizing these spaces of death (Iturralde, 2011). Nacho's narrative reveals how the carceral system is an expression of the necropolitics operating in Colombia against marginal populations (Bello & Parra, 2016) while describing how the paramilitary held power inside the prison yards and guards were part of a violent system that produced killings and human rights violations on a daily basis. His narrative of the two years he was imprisoned centred around experiences of violence and how he managed to survive in this space, not only through his knowledge of human rights but also by reproducing a violent masculinity to affirm his power.

However, Nacho's narrative also included how his labour inside the prison queered the everyday violent dynamics of this space.

> The prison's director called me into his office. He said, "We dismissed four people, and we are investigating to disclose what happened to you. You

> have to be very careful". And then he said, "What do you want? Tell me […] I answered, "Do you know what I want? I want to teach other inmates how to earn a living. To be re-socialised, to think about something else and not only about drugs. I want to teach these old men how to live with the unbearable pain they are living in here. "But they have schools", he said. And I said, "No, I want to begin an internal process. I want to teach them to craft bracelets. I need needles and threads and other materials".
>
> I assumed the challenge of teaching these kids the art of making bracelets. And we started selling them. It was not allowed to sell things inside the prison, so we gave the bracelets to visitors, and they helped to sell them outside for us, and then they sent the money to these kids. So they could have money for their daily expenses. It was a whole work of socialization, and now when I think about it, I say, "How a *marica* was able to do such a beautiful thing, a process like this in a prison like that one".
>
> […] I ran a sensibilisation process. A sensibilisation to understand that we are human beings. That we are people with or without accusations, we were there only with presumed accusations. Because if there was a new inmate called a rapist or a gay man, everyone wanted to maltreat him, kill him, or even violate him.
>
> When I was released, you cannot imagine; I've never seen so many men crying. They gave me a serenade with *mariachi*, and they said it was for the most beautiful person they had ever had. I only thought, "God, what is happening here? What is this? And they said to me, "Nacho, you are the only one who cares about us, and now you are leaving". I will never forget this. That was an exceptional gift for me [cries].

As described in Nacho's narrative, he used his influence in this place to improve the living conditions of his fellow inmates. Nacho implemented a resocialization program inside the prison, teaching inmates feminised craftwork to have a learning space and find material means to cover their needs. Nacho's narrative reveals that his presence and life experiences brought a different *sensibility* to this masculine space, displacing some of the violent logic of the carceral system and cracking the reproduction of normative state-sponsored violence. Through a "sensibilisation process", Nacho restored some of these men's dignity by generating an emotionality and sensitivity that displaced the violence of masculine dynamics through which power was established and maintained in this space. While I do not want to imply that Nacho's sexual

orientation, his queer desire, was the source of that sensibility, Nacho's narrative insisted on highlighting that he could not believe that he could achieve this process while being a *marica*. Nacho's narrative not only shows that he was able to achieve power inside this space despite his queer orientation (which he also achieved through violent means to survive). It also reveals that his being, *marica* generated an emotionality that transformed how inmates related to Nacho but also among themselves. Describing that these men cried and gave Nacho a serenade when he was released, Nacho's narrative shows that a sensibility displaced normative violence from this space, at least for some time, and created a space for inmates' emotional expression and connection. Tears accompanied Nacho's narrative of this event and great emotion, showing that in this experience, Nacho felt (and still feels) valued and recognised.

CONCLUSION

Kiki's photograph (at the beginning of this chapter) is part of a three-piece visual project called *Al Sur* [To the South] that explores critical links between the concepts of land and identity. This artistic project emerges from Kiki's activism, which aims to create bridges between the rural territory and peasant culture in which they grew up and the world of gender and sexual diversity they have been exploring and transiting in recent years. It took Kiki a displacement from Pitalito to Pasto, located in the southwest of Colombia, and five years of undergrad studies in which they transited between different subcultures and knowledges, to deconstruct the *caballero* [gentleman] they were meant to be. This photograph is the result of being and moving out of place, as well as the emplacement of new meanings, of new beginnings. Kiki's photograph opens and closes this chapter by shedding light on alternative, queer narratives of displacement in Colombia, tuning our senses to the spatiality of gender and sexuality and the queer displacements of everyday violence.

In this chapter, I analysed narratives of displacement and (im)mobility experienced by LGBTIQ+ people, disclosing crucial connections between violence, sexuality, and movement inside and outside conflict-affected contexts in Colombia. My analysis in this chapter demonstrates that displacement is not a one-time conflict-related event but a process of constant movement that shapes and orients the lives of LGBTIQ+ people in particular ways. Through the analysis of Elizabeth, Candelaria, and Nacho's life story narratives, this chapter sheds light on

alternative narratives of displacement that happen on the everyday and at smaller scales of analysis, such as the home, town/city, regions, and institutions. By following the displacement processes of Elizabeth, Candelaria, and Nacho, this chapter shows that everyday violence (e.g., domestic violence, gender-based violence, structural violence, sexual violence) *produces* but also *functions through* the displacement of non-normative genders and sexualities. This analysis shows that the family home is not a site of familiarity and safety for some LGBTIQ+ people, nor (necessarily) the place from which conflict-related violence displaces these subjects.

This chapter shows how sexuality is (re)configured through processes of displacement between different spaces, shedding light on how spaces are sexualised but also how sexuality is spatialised. My analysis of Nacho's narrative of displacement demonstrates that armed conflict produces multiple displacements beyond the enforced departure of families and communities from their hometowns. Nacho's experiences reveal that in conflict-affected contexts, the reproduction of heterosexuality is associated with certain spaces and positions men are supposed to inhabit and perform. This analysis reveals how everyday violence and conflict-related violence work through the displacement of LGBTIQ+ people and how these subjects resist, challenge, and negotiate these violent conditions of life on a daily basis.

This chapter also considers how social categories such as gender, sex, class, and race determine subjects' (im)mobility between different physical and symbolic spaces. The narratives analysed in this chapter demonstrate that LGBTIQ+ people are not allowed to stay put in social spaces that enable the reproduction of (normative) life (i.e., family home, school, and job market). At the same time, they are forced to remain still in social spaces and institutions that interrupt their life trajectories and push them towards marginality (i.e., sex work, prison). This analysis demonstrates that the life trajectories of marginalised and racialised LGBTIQ+ people are oriented towards a temporality of survival and constant beginnings that exposes them to further violence and reproduces their orientation towards marginality and precarity. However, interpreting some of LGBTIQ+ people's (im)mobilities as "small acts of survival", this chapter not only shows how Elizabeth, Candelaria, and Nacho move *away from* violence and *towards* survival on a daily basis but also how queer desire does not disappear no matter how many times it is violently displaced.

My analysis of Elizabeth, Candelaria, and Nacho's life story narratives shows how conflict-related violence intersects with everyday violence in the life course of LGBTIQ+ people through displacement and (im)mobility. These narratives reveal how violence against LGBTIQ+ people, while operating through gender, sexuality, and space, exceeds the spatio-temporality of the official "internal armed conflict" narrative. Finally, this chapter sheds light on how sexuality is always located in a specific time and space and how LGBTIQ+ people resist the violence of normativity (including the imposition of sexual and gender categories) through everyday resourceful and unexpected ways. This chapter opens new analytical paths in the study of displacement in LGBTIQ+ people's life trajectories, addressing potential shifts in its (academic) conceptualisation and debates around public policy strategies.

CHAPTER 6. INTIMATE PEACE: QUEER DISRUPTIONS OF EVERYDAY VIOLENCE

INTRODUCTION

While exploring the question of *peace* was not initially included as one of the objectives of this thesis, research participants' life story narratives revealed how narratives of violence can also (and often do) contain narratives of peace. My analysis in this chapter focuses on how peace appeared in some interviewees' life story narratives, seeking to expand the empirical and theoretical comprehension of how people with non-normative genders and sexualities participate in peace and peacebuilding in Colombia. The analysis divides into two sections. In the first section, I explore interviewees' experiences and perspectives on the government-led implementation of peace and peacebuilding strategies that started operating under Victims' Law 1448 (2011)[48] and continue working as part of the implementation of the Peace Agreement signed in 2016. Through the analysis of interviewees' narratives, I explore how the inclusion of "LGBTI victims of armed conflict" in peacebuilding initiatives and victims' reparation mechanisms operates on the everyday. In this analysis, I explore some of the gains and limitations of this inclusion, highlighting the everyday difficulties and blind spots of the "differential approach" through which LGBTI and other "vulnerable groups" are included in the implementation of peace and peacebuilding in Colombia.

In the second section of this chapter, my analysis detours from the government-led implementation of peace and peacebuilding and focuses on events, gestures, and manifestations of what I conceptualise as *intimate peace*. Besides showing how violence is endured and resisted in the everyday, the life story narratives of interviewees in this thesis also revealed instances in which they have interrupted and transformed violence. Through the analysis of *queer disruptions of everyday violence*, this section explores *why* and *how* the lives and experiences of LGBTIQ+

[48] The Victims and Land Restitution Law (1448) was signed in 2011 as part of a transitional policy to facilitate the steps towards the post-conflict scenario in Colombia. This Law grants the legal status of "victim" to individuals affected by armed conflict. It offers an integral system of protection, assistance, and reparation, with an intersectional perspective that seeks to recognise different needs in various populations according to their gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnic backgrounds (CNMH, 2012).

people[49] may bring an alternative epistemological perspective to the conceptualisation and study of peace and peacebuilding processes in this context. My analysis in this section builds upon the critical feminist theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 by thinking of peace and peacebuilding outside the traditional dichotomies of war/peace, conflict/post-conflict, and victim/perpetrator. In doing so, this section explores peace as a practice that occurs in the everyday, amid ongoing violence and beyond or in parallel to the implementation of peacebuilding led by the nation-state, its institutions, and transitional justice frameworks.

1. PEACEBUILDING AND THE LGBTI VICTIM OF ARMED CONFLICT

The inclusion of the voices and experiences of LGBTI persons in transitional justice mechanisms represents an international breakthrough in recognising LGBTI political and civil rights. Latin American countries (i.e., Peru, Paraguay, Ecuador, and Brazil) and South Africa are initial efforts to address violence against LGBTI people in transitional justice mechanisms; truth commissions, in particular (Bueno-Hansen, 2020). Colombia stands out for not only addressing this violence but also for inviting representatives of the so-called LGBTI sector and LGBTI victims of armed conflict to take part in peace negotiations, historical memory initiatives, and the Truth Commission's mandate (Maier, 2019). Despite the conservative political backlash these inclusions have generated (Krystalli & Theidon, 2016), the Victims' Law 1448 (2011) continues to recognise LGBTI people as victims of armed conflict. LGBTI people are legally included in the Peace Agreement's implementation and the work of the Unit for Attention and Reparation of Victims[50] (Victims' Unit, from now on).

While all research participants in this thesis have been victims of conflict-related violence, only some are legally registered as "victims of armed conflict" in the Victims' Unit

[49] I use the LGBTIQ+ acronym to refer to people with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities (i.e., non-normative sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, sex characteristics, and sexual behaviours). It includes people self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, or any other identity, expression, or behaviour of sexual or gender dissidence in this context. I use the LGBTIQ+ acronym when referring to the work of my research, the LGBT acronym when referring to the work of state-sponsored historical memory research (which does not include intersex people), and LGBTI acronym when referring to the social mobilisation of gender and sexual diversity in Colombia.

[50] The mission of the Victims' Unit is to lead the actions of the state and society to address and integrally compensate the victims for contributing to social inclusion and peace.

database. Some are under the LGBTI category, and others are under specific victimisation events, such as forced displacement. In general, registered or not, all interviewees expressed a critical position regarding the "victim or armed conflict" category, the implementation of the Peace Agreement, and the corresponding integral restitution of victims. Some of these critiques highlighted how the category of the victim of armed conflict carries a negative affect associated with how society perceives and interacts with victims and their situation of precarity. "Being a victim in Colombia is negatively perceived because of prejudice and social stereotypes […] being a victim is associated with poverty, with disdain, it is associated with mendicity […] here in Colombia is like if the victim was the guilty party" (Juan, 2019). Other critiques emphasised how deficiencies in implementing the Victims' Law 1448 (2011) has produced situations and dynamics of re-victimisation, mainly when dealing with victims' economic restitution. Some of them argued:

> I don't make part of any program for victims in Colombia, that's why I can't give an opinion. But being part of the victims' program is like being an unknown person, like a stranger (Maira, 2019).
>
> I'm a victim of armed conflict, of displacement. I started working in prostitution [after being displaced] because I was a peasant and didn't go to school […] But what am I going to do? Should I keep fighting with the institutions to get compensation? [..] No! I have to find my way to get out of there, to get out of that re-victimisation (Elizabeth, 2019).

In general, all interviewees refused to self-identify with the category of the victim of armed conflict. Some emphasised the difference between experiencing a violent event (victimisation) in the past and "becoming a victim" as an identity category that extends over time. This refusal is attached to the negative affect mentioned above. It represents a political positioning because, as expressed by Elizabeth, getting involved in victims' governmental-led initiatives is perceived as a struggle, a "fight". The Colombian approach to peace is integral as it considers both "negative peace", the absence of direct violence (i.e., the demobilisation of guerrillas), and "positive peace," the absence of indirect or structural violence, restoration of relationships, and peacebuilding processes (Galtung, 1996). In this way, the Peace Agreement signed in 2016 seeks not only to stop armed conflict but also to repair decades of social injustice, expressed in

economic inequalities, state absence in rural areas of the country, lack of political participation of marginalised communities, and longstanding impunity.

The Colombian Peace Agreement has been praised internationally as one of the most complex and comprehensive peace agreements in recent decades. Correspondingly, its implementation is complex and has encountered many struggles[51]. As mentioned above, interviewees in this research emphasised how the economic reparation of victims is perceived as a flawed system. Some interviewees classified this reparation system as *asistencialismo social* [social aid], questioning the long-term impact of this restitution model. Nacho expressed:

> Oh my God, that [victim] is a huge word… since World War II, they created that system of *asistencialismo social*. They built in people's minds and societies the idea that being a victim is only to be the beggar of other people. […] But *asistencialismo* distorts what being a victim is about. (Nacho, 2019)

In this section, I analyse how the inclusion of LGBTI victims of armed conflict in peacebuilding and mechanisms of reparation operates every day. I focus on the experiences of some interviewees that have participated in peacebuilding governmental activities led by the Victims' Unit through their involvement in *Mesas de Participación de Víctimas* (MPVs, from now on) [Victims Participation Roundtables]. The MPVs are democratically-structured roundtables that seek to promote the participation of victims of armed conflict in the design, implementation, and oversight of public policies aimed at this population and facilitate communication with local authorities to address their grievances. The MPVs operate in 1,122 municipalities of Colombia. They are constituted by victims of different "victimisation events" (e.g., forced displacement, sexual violence, forced enrollment, physical or psychological violence, and threats against life and freedom, among others) and follow a "differential approach" to ensure the participation of "vulnerable groups" such as women, Afro-Colombians, Indigenous peoples, and LGBTI[52]. In this analysis, I explore some of the gains and limitations of the inclusion of the LGBTI victim of armed conflict, highlighting the everyday difficulties and blind spots of the "differential

[51] https://www.wola.org/analysis/a-long-way-to-go-implementing-colombias-peace-accord-after-five-years/
[52] https://mesanacionaldevictimas.org/

approach" through which LGBTI and other "vulnerable groups" are included in the implementation of peace and peacebuilding in Colombia.

Juan, a self-identified demisexual man in his early thirties when I interviewed him in 2019, has participated in the MPVs as an "LGBTI representative" for some years. I met Juan at the *Centro de Atención Integral a la Diversidad Sexual y de Géneros* (CAIDSG in Spanish) [Integral Assistance Centre for Sexual Diversity and Genders], participating in an activity organised by the Municipality of Bogotá for LGBTI victims of armed conflict. Juan gave me his contact details after I approached him at the end of the activity that evening. We went for a coffee some days later, and I explained to Juan the objectives of my research project. Juan was very friendly and open but also critical of the academy and its lack of connection with governmental or political institutions that could impact the everyday life of victims of armed conflict in Colombia. Juan's experiences as a social leader in issues related to the LGBTI population and victims of armed conflict have shaped his critical perspective. After spending more than three hours talking, Juan agreed to be interviewed, curious about the life story approach but without leaving his critical tone aside. I interviewed Juan in two research encounters. One initial interview was at my undergrad studies university, and the second was at his university. Although Juan was not enrolled in the university at that moment due to financial difficulties, I felt that Juan's request to take me to his university (his space) was part of our negotiation of power in the development of the interview. It was a way to position himself as a subject of knowledge and the experienced social leader he is.

Juan's life story narrative began with memories of his childhood in Tolima, very close to armed conflict dynamics and in the company of his mother and her partner, as Juan's father abandoned his family when he was a child. Juan experienced various displacements during his childhood and adolescence. According to his narrative, on some occasions, his family moved to other towns looking for better economic opportunities. On others, Juan moved alone due to his troubled relationship with his stepfather because of Juan's effeminate behaviour. While Juan's narrative included these and other childhood memories, most of his life story narrative focused on his recent years. His life story narrative touched upon several topics but emphasised one in particular: his continuous (past and present) struggle to access education. Juan's struggle represents one of Colombia's leading causes of social inequality. One of the main causes of the

low access rate to higher education[53] in Colombia is the lack of economic resources, as the public coverage is minimal and is located in major cities. Juan's life story narrative reflects this national panorama, born in a rural context with limited economic resources. However, Juan's narrative revealed that in addition to Juan's class background, his gender and sexuality have also mediated his possibilities of accessing higher education in specific ways. In particular, Juan's narrative described how different peace-seeking policies (through armed confrontation and militarisation) and peacebuilding mechanisms (as part of the implementation of the Victim's Law 1448) had shaped some of these efforts.

Juan left his hometown in Tolima when he was seventeen and moved to Bogotá looking for better educational opportunities. Juan found a job in Bogotá through a family contact and started saving money for his university studies. However, after some time, Juan lost his job. He began struggling because he could not find a new job without the military passbook, as he was already of legal age. Until 2017, the military passbook was a legal requirement in Colombia to employ men older than eighteen. In light of these circumstances, Juan decided to apply to serve his military service at the local battalion in Bogotá, where it was possible to do an office job instead of going into *el monte* (into the jungle or mountains to fight against guerrillas).

After finishing his military service, it took Juan five years to find a part-time scholarship to start his university studies. In 2013, Juan began his studies in dramatic arts, but his scholarship was denied in the second semester of his program because he did not achieve the required GPA. According to Juan's narrative, it was around that time when he got involved, by chance, in peacebuilding initiatives:

> My mom used to attend some meetings [with other victims of armed conflict)] and asked me to go with her […] But like many other Colombians, I considered myself apolitical and always tried to avoid those situations.
>
> I finally attended one of the meetings one day […]. They were forming different organisations for victims of armed conflict, and I became

[53] In 2019, only 39,7% of high school graduates got enrolled in university studies after getting their high school diploma, and only 39% of these students got into accredited universities. See https://www.elespectador.com/educacion/solo-el-39-de-bachilleres-en-colombia-continuan-con-estudios-superiores/

> interested in what they were planning […] The attendees liked how I expressed myself, my fluidity, and my ideas. So, they decided they wanted me to represent the organisation, to be the spokesperson.
>
> […] We constituted the organisations according to the participation protocol […] When I saw the LGBTI seat, it caught my attention, and I was the only person running for that differential approach […] I was the first [LGBTI] delegate for the district's victim's participation roundtable in its first effective period. That is how I started in what is called activism.
>
> In that first meeting, I heard that the Victims' Law determined that one of the types of reparation for victims of conflict was to facilitate access to higher education. That is how I continued studying. But that process has been a disaster because I had to interpose *tutelas* [constitutional injunction that aims to protect fundamental constitutional rights]. A very complex process.

Juan's narrative shows how different governmental structures and his gender and sexuality mediated the "administration" of his right to access higher education in conflict (through his enrolment in the military as a man) and post-conflict (through his enrolment in peacebuilding activities, as an LGBTI person) temporalities. Despite his "apolitical" standpoint and critical attitude to the notion of the victim of armed conflict, Juan got involved in the MPVs as it represented an opportunity to continue his studies. When Juan joined the VPRs, he knew he did not self-identify as heterosexual but was still working on his "sex-gender-psycho-affective identarian construction", as he calls it. Juan mentioned that before joining the MPVs, he had worked on a class assignment at the university, where he decided to investigate "gender and sexual diversity". Based on the information Juan had collected then, he decided he could be somehow located within the LGBTI category included in the Victim's Law's differential approach. Although Juan did not self-identify with any of the identity categories of the LGBTI acronym, he got involved in LGBTI activism, which had a personal impact on his life. He explained:

> I continued this research [about gender and sexual diversity] because I said, "If I'm going to be in this space of political participation, in the representation of an LGBTI population, I have the responsibility of knowing about the thing I'm representing. Because I cannot represent something I don't know".

> So, I needed to be informed to make the best representation possible. So, I used to say to people in meetings, "I have to be a lesbian, a gay, a trans. I have to be bisexual, and intersexual. Why do we only have one seat? [at the VPRs] I'm all of them". And that is how my desire to continue my research emerged: to know how to represent these people and what I wanted to work for. At the same time, it helped me to define and understand myself as a person. Schools' curricula should include all those investigations so these identity conflicts, how to define ourselves or know who we are, would not exist among us.

Juan's narrative shows that the inclusion of the LGBTI human rights discourse opened a political space for dissident voices in peacebuilding mechanisms. However, this political space is delimited by one identity category, named the LGBTI subject, under which the needs and experiences of multiple subjects are summarised (a problem that persists in the documentation of cases in the Victim's Unit and the Truth Commission's mandate, as discussed in Chapter 1). In parallel, Juan's narrative discloses that no previous, transparent subject is born ready to be recognised as an LGBTI subject of rights. Instead, it illustrates how LGBTIQ+ people go through a "sex-gender-psycho-affective identarian construction", in Juan's words. This process of subject formation is not similar in all individuals, nor does it find closure in self-identifying with specific sexual identity categories. Juan, who self-identifies as a "demisexual", defines this category as a "metamorphosis" in which sexual orientation (including the absence of sexual desire), romantic attraction, the assigned biological sex, and gender expression do not work together but as separate entities that change across time. Despite the limitations of the LGBTI acronym, Juan's experience shows that having this political space of representation functioned as a platform to validate his non-normative sexuality (although not in alignment with and critical of the LGBTI discourse). In this sense, Juan's narrative exposes the ambiguity emerging from articulating the LGBT human rights discourse in peacebuilding mechanisms. It simultaneously produces political gains and social misrepresentations that reaffirm the existence of a monolithic LGBT subject of rights.

When discussing his experiences as an "LGBTI delegate" in the MPVs, Juan's narrative exposed the existence of a gap between the macro-politics of the peace agreement and the everyday micro-politics of the implementation of peacebuilding initiatives. Juan mentioned that

as an LGBTI delegate, he could not get in touch with other LGBTI victims of armed conflict living in Bogotá for a long time because he was denied access to victims' personal information due to security protocols. While Juan expressed an understanding of these measures, he said that his attempts to achieve advancements in these processes were unsuccessful due to the excess bureaucratic procedures and various clashing political interests. The day I met Juan, he raised his hand at the end of the activity at the CAIDSG and stated that he was "glad to see that the local administration was *finally* calling LGBTI victims of armed conflict living in Bogotá to work together".

Juan's participation on that day echoed the informal interview I had with Juan Carlos Prieto, the Sexual Diversity Director in the District Planning Secretariat, some months before meeting Juan. In our brief meeting, Prieto suggested there was a gap between the strategic mobilisation of the LGBTI movement concerning the implementation of the Peace Agreement and the debates happening at the local and communitarian levels. He affirmed that these LGBTI communities wanted and needed material and legal solutions for their precarious situation and demanded tangible restitution for what they had suffered. He said people "were not interested in participating in research reports", referring to the Truth Commission's activities. Prieto explained that the "armed conflict discourse" was starting to be discussed at the local level but continued representing a strategic articulation within the macro narratives in the country without a real social or communitarian impact. He ended our conversation by saying there was a growing distrust of the local government among LGBTI social organisations, making it more challenging to work with the community.

Prieto's perspective was challenged by informal conversations I had with lesbian and trans social leaders during my fieldwork, in which they expressed a shared discomfort and dissatisfaction with the work of the LGBTI social movement in Bogotá and with the political representation they had in the local government. They argued that there is an overrepresentation of gay men in the movement, and the political representation positions are usually occupied by middle-class, urban, educated gay men that do not represent the needs of rural and non-gay populations. Thus, some of these social collectives, transgender, in particular, were not interested in working with the local government as a sign of protest and resistance. In various events I

attended during my fieldwork, I listened to the interventions of various LGBTI social leaders working in non-urban contexts who argued that the agenda of the LGBT movement continues to be dominated by and centred on debates about urban contexts. This political environment and Juan's narrative of his experiences as an LGBTI delegate in the MPVs demonstrate that the early 2000s questionings of the adoption of the acronym and global LGBT discourse are still current inside the LGBTI social mobilisation (See Chapter 1). The problems of representation that emerge from such political discourse continue operating through the implementation of peacebuilding initiatives and transitional justice mechanisms. This situation partly explains the disconnection between the macro-politics of peacebuilding initiatives and the everyday of LGBTI victims of armed conflict, many of whom still reside in or have returned to rural contexts.

In addition to these issues of representation, Juan's narrative described some of the difficulties he has encountered in the (tangible) implementation of peacebuilding initiatives in the everyday. At the personal level, Juan explained the difficulties he has encountered trying to access his educational allowance as an LGBTI victim of armed conflict without success. At the communitarian level, after working with the local government with different social initiatives directed toward various groups of victims, Juan's narrative described a context of hopelessness and distrust:

> People do not trust the government or institutionalism because of the pervasive corruption in this country. When you approach a population, the first thing that comes to their minds is corruption, that they [government] are going to *manosearte* [use you]. That they only want you to show numbers, to show fake results.

The economic restitution of victims of armed conflict appeared in interviewees' narratives as a critical point in which various political interests come together, including the micro-politics of the differential approach that seeks to include different marginalised and underrepresented populations in peacebuilding activities. Elizabeth (her life story narrative is analysed in Chapter 5) included in her life story narrative a detailed description of this situation through her experiences of participation in different peacebuilding initiatives.

> I didn't have anything to eat, not even money to pay for the bus, and she [Maria, a sex worker Elizabeth knew from the Santa Fe neighbourhood] called me and said, "There is a meeting today. Let's go! We can have lunch there. At least you can eat something today". And I thought, well, I'll have to go because I hadn't eaten anything the day before. So, I went to the meeting and started listening to the discussions, and I heard Maria talking about "My population, my population". And I was wondering, what population is this woman talking about? She said she had a population in Santa Fe [neighbourhood] and was a social leader. But that wasn't true, so I continued attending the meetings to investigate her.
>
> I started following her, and one day they made a re-structuration of the roundtable [MPV]. They started selecting people based on the victimisation events. I wanted to take the seat for drug addiction because of my son. But then, she [Maria] reunited us, we were five, and she started delegating the seats. She assigned me to the prostitution seat, and I said, "But why are you deciding for us?" and said, "Don't worry, just do it, my friend; this is going to work out". People participating in those roundtables are like *asistencialistas* [that live from social aid]. They go to see what they can gain from their participation. The more they are poor, the more they *se empobretean* [act like a poor person], the more they become victims, and they think people will feel sorrier for them.

Resembling Juan's narrative, Elizabeth arrived in this space of political participation after rejecting many invitations and facing economic difficulties. Elizabeth's narrative reveals a paradox concerning the economic incentives offered to the victims to participate in these spaces and the corruption this mechanism has produced. On the one hand, many victims accept participating in these spaces because they can receive an economic incentive (like money or food), even for the day or the week. On the other hand, Elizabeth expressed a judgment against persons participating in these spaces only to access these reliefs without any political investment in working for them or their communities. In her case, Elizabeth mentioned that she attended MPVs meetings and was involved in processes even if she was not paid. However, she also mentioned that she couldn't do all that work for free and sometimes had to pause her social leadership because she needed to work to survive. Elizabeth's contradictions demonstrate that these mechanisms for victims' participation offer temporal restitution to victims through small economic incentives (without having a long-term impact). At the same time, peacebuilding work

is expected to be executed by local actors as free labour. Additionally, as mentioned by Juan and Elizabeth's narrative, these victims' restitution processes have been affected by corruption at the governmental level. Juan and Elizabeth witnessed cases in which local government institutions or peacebuilding initiatives falsely reported assigning budgets or productive projects to specific populations.

Elizabeth's narrative about her involvement in the MPVs was ambivalent as she experienced positive and negative effects from this political participation. Elizabeth values having the opportunity to voice the needs and demands of sex workers affected by armed conflict, generally ignored and invisibilised. She explained that this leadership has allowed her to participate in other peacebuilding activities (like artistic projects financed by the National Historical Memory Centre and leadership training developed by academic institutions), an experience she highly appreciates. However, Elizabeth also described various experiences of discrimination from other victims because of her economic activity as a sex worker. She mentioned the emergence of a "fight for resources" among the LGBTI sector and the sex workers population on various occasions. While occasionally grouped under the same category in differential approaches for the assignation of public policy budgets, these two populations have to share spaces and resources, which according to Elizabeth, is not well received as sex workers are generally discriminated against in these spaces.

To conclude, the LGBTI acronym and the LGBTI victim of armed conflict category are helpful political strategies that allow for the political recognition of life experiences and violence against LGBTIQ+ people. One example is how the LGBT human rights discourse has allowed Colombian social organisations to access international aid to advance research on the specific violence that Afro-Colombian, Indigenous, and rural LGBTIQ+ people have suffered in the context of armed conflict. In the absence of governmental resources, and social and political disavowal of the contributions of LGBTIQ+ people to the Peace Agreement, this international aid has been of great importance for LGBTI local organisations and social leaderships. While doing my fieldwork in Bogotá, most research reports on LGBTI issues to contribute to the Truth Commission's mandate were financed by international organisations. While there is also a problematic side in allowing international donors to fund and influence the local process of peacebuilding and memory work, all local LGBTI social organisations I contacted by that

moment affirmed they had total freedom to decide the theoretical and methodological framework of these investigations.

However, as shown above, when the LGBTI acronym and the LGBTI victim of armed conflict category are articulated as monolithic identities in the implementation of peace, they tend to obscure different levels of subordination and the power relations that operate in the political mobilisation and the everyday of these populations. The narratives of Juan and Elizabeth demonstrate that the groups defined by the differential approach working in peacebuilding activities are not homogeneous, inside or in comparison to other marginal social groups. In addition, Juan's narrative shows the gap between the macro-politics of peacebuilding and the mobilisation of the LGBTI sector and the micro-politics of how peace is implemented in the everyday. The differences between rural and urban areas and between LGBTI political representation and local communities of LGBTIQ+ people expose some limitations of the advancements in the legal and political representation of "gender and sexual diversity" in Colombia. The inclusion of the voices and experiences of LGBTIQ+ people in the peace agenda represents a historical breakthrough (locally and globally). However, it is still necessary to translate this political and legal representation into material and tangible long-term restitution of LGBTIQ+ people affected by armed conflict (most marginalised and living in rural and precarious conditions).

2. INTIMATE PEACE

I experienced varied emotions and bodily sensations while conducting the life story interviews during my fieldwork in Bogotá. Listening to the narratives of violence perpetrated against or by research participants produced anger, sadness, empathy, confusion, and even nausea in my body – as I had somehow anticipated. However, while acknowledging (and consequently witnessing) narratives of violence, suffering, and injustice was (and continues to be) an emotional challenge in the making of this thesis, I was particularly touched by a nameless sensation that emerged from listening to interviewees' narratives of *human kindness*. Counterintuitively, I felt less prepared and more vulnerable and *touched* when knowing about circumstances in which interviewees decided to be kind, selfless, and human with others, despite all the violence they had suffered and endured across their life trajectories. This nameless sensation, which left me

speechless at specific points of the interview, materialised in various pauses and silences and came out of my system through intense crying after some of these research encounters. Emerging from this personal and emotional reflection, my analysis in this section explores these narratives of human kindness as sources for developing alternative understandings of what is commonly denominated as "peace" or "peacebuilding" processes in post-conflict societies.

While I did not discuss the concept of peace with my interviewees, nor did they use this concept/word to refer to the narratives this chapter engages with, I interpret various events, gestures, and manifestations described in these narratives as part of *intimate peace* practice. My conceptualisation of intimate peace builds on critical Peace & Conflict Studies (PCS, from now on) scholars who turn to everyday life to study and theorise peace. This approach is critical of the limitations of orthodox notions of peace built on liberal institutionalism, the so-called *liberal peacebuilding*[54]. Critical and feminist PCS scholars argue that liberal peace works through peace-building interventions in "sites of conflict" that use a standardised, top-down reconstruction model that prioritises Western politico-cultural norms and neo-liberal economics (McGinty, 2007). These critiques have shed light on how these liberal peace-building interventions tend to reinforce, rather than disrupt, hierarchical structures and relations of power and emphasise the gap between these normative agendas and local stakeholders' everyday realities, needs, voices, and interests (Donais, 2012)[55]. Emerging from this critique, new concepts like the *local turn*, *hybrid peace*, or *everyday peace* recognise that the top-down model of liberal peace is, nevertheless, contested, challenged, and transformed by local actors (McLeod, 2015; Richmond, 2009).

Analyses of the Latin American context have widened the study of peace globally and are at the forefront of this turn to the everyday in PCS. Scholars working in Central and South

[54] The framework of "liberal peace" and "liberal peacebuilding" established internationally after the Cold War, combines traditional forms of peacekeeping, mediation, and negotiation of conflict with a range of activities designed to "promote democratization and good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, an active civil society, and the development of open market economies" (McLeod & O'Reilly, 2019, p. 135).

[55] Feminist PCS scholars, in particular, have highlighted: the inconsistency between international rhetoric on Women Peace and Security agendas and the reality of its implementation (George & Shepherd, 2016); the lack of representation of women in peace-building implementation (UN Women, Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections Between Presence and Influence (2012), 3, http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/Headquarters/Media/Publications/en/03AWomenPeaceNeg.pdf); and have shown that these initiatives tend to reproduce patriarchal gender orders (Deiana, 2018), failing to name and overcome gender-based violence (O'Reilly, 2013).

American countries have shown multiple ways local communities subvert, exhaust, renegotiate, and resist liberal peacebuilding interventions (Pierce & Dietrich, 2019). However, stressing the various forms of violence that operate in the everyday in Latin American societies, some scholars argue that peace and peacebuilding fields of research and practice need to find responses not just to war but to post-war and non-war violences (Pearce & Perea, 2019). This approach thinks of peace and peacebuilding outside the frames of war and as practices that occur in the everyday and the midst of ongoing violence. In this aspect, the Colombian case stands out for its multiple ongoing violences and various creative and communitarian efforts to make and build peace (including amid armed conflict). Critical decolonial scholars have argued that peace in Colombia is *plural*. According to this perspective, this *plural peace* cannot be reduced to the modern narratives of peace consolidation, liberal democracy, capitalism, the modern nation-state model, and neoliberal subjectivities (Jaime-Salas et al., 2020).

One of these plural peaces is proposed by Esperanza Hernández (2004, 2009), who coins the concept of *paces desde abajo* [peace from below]. According to Hernández, these are peace manifestations led by women, peasants, afro-Colombians, and Indigenous communities that create and organise peaceful cohabitation strategies and "*buen vivir*"[56]. This peace from below generates life projects amid, and despite, violence, achieving the de-intensification of armed conflict, protecting life, and strengthening the communitarian organisation (Jaime-Salas et al., 2020). From this perspective, peace is unfinished, imperfect, and community-based. Another proposal comes from Alejandro Castillejo (2017, 2019), who coins the concept of *small-scale peace*. Castillejo is concerned with how communities inhabit and move towards a post-violence society. His analysis explores tensions between transitional justice mechanisms that "implant" ideas of peace, reconciliation, justice, truth, and memory at the institutional level and the diverse practices of each community. The concept of small-scale peace emphasises the importance of small and multiple strategies people and communities use to reinhabit worlds affected by violence (Jaime-Salas et al., 2020). Erika Parrado & Jefferson Jaramillo (2019) explore what they denominate as *peace from the margins and the margins of peace* to consider alternative

[56] Rooted in the cosmovisión (or worldview) of the Quechua peoples of the Andes, *sumak kawsay* – or buen vivir in Spanish – describes a way of doing things that is community-centric, ecologically-balanced, and culturally-sensitive.

experiences of peace that are not contemplated by or in tension with liberal and neoliberal rhetoric.

My conceptualisation of intimate peace is framed within this turn to the everyday realities of people living in conflict-affected contexts. It seeks to contribute to the study of plural peace in Colombia. However, instead of thinking about how "local" communities contest top-down peacebuilding interventions, my analysis in this section focuses on everyday peace work that is not responding to or resisting the tenets of liberal peace itself or associated with formal organisations of civil society. Thus, intimate peace refers to everyday peace work practised beyond or in parallel to the implementation of peacebuilding led by the nation-state, its institutions, and transitional justice frameworks. This approach builds on Helen Berents' (2015, 2018) conceptualisation of *embodied everyday peace*. Based on feminist theorisations of the everyday, Berents (2015) suggests that peace is built and sustained in the routines and practices of everyday life. So, it is dependent on relationships and community. Acknowledging how in the Colombian context, poverty, social exclusion, and informal means of livelihood can allow violence to manifest, Berents argues that everyday peacebuilding in these communities "not only perpetuates the relationships and practices of everyday life but is a complex response to institutional marginalisation and a construction of forms of existence that empower individuals without reliance on the distant, disinterested state" (2015, p. 194). Thus, Berents' approach to peace argues that peacebuilding is the carrying out of daily, embodied activities despite ongoing violence and exclusion.

My analysis of intimate peace builds on Berents' theorisations by focusing on everyday life's small, creative, taken-for-granted practices and recognising peace as grounded, embodied struggles for everyday existence (Berents, 2015). However, seeking to expand Berents' perspective, my conceptualisation of intimate peace adds a layer of analysis. I suggest that analyses arguing that peace is built and maintained through the perpetuation of everyday rhythms of relationships, practices, and roles assume that violence and the everyday are separate entities. Violence is located outside the everyday that needs to be reproduced despite ongoing violence. Based on the queer feminist conceptual framework of this thesis (see Chapter 2), my conceptualisation of intimate peace sheds light on how violence is embedded in everyday social relationality, mainly when it is analysed as a product of normative notions of sex, gender,

sexuality, and power relations more broadly. Thinking of everyday peace as the reproduction of everyday life amid violence remains insufficient, and it risks concealing the multiple ways violence works as a relational phenomenon through the everyday of communities. Intimate peace, thus, refers to how the (many times violent) everyday is transformed into new and less violent ways to (re)produce social relationality.

Taking the life story narratives of interviewees as a point of departure, I argue in this section that LGBTIQ+ people not only endure and resist violence on the everyday but also interrupt and transform everyday violence. My analysis in this section interprets various events, gestures, and manifestations described in interviewees' narratives as *queer disruptions of everyday violence* or interruptions and transformations of normative (violent) social relationality. I argue these queer disruptions of everyday violence are at the base of an intimate peace practice and have the potential to produce a less violent social relationality. The *intimate* in intimate peace refers to a practice of peace that: is familiar or involves close and personal relationships, happens on the everyday in "private" personal spaces, and emerges from an embodied subjectivity traversed by non-normative genders and sexualities. In the following subsections, I analyse different workings of intimate peace practice.

Intimate deconstructions: violence and vulnerability as social conditions

In their life story narratives, most interviewees described experiences in different spaces of social and political participation for victims of armed conflict and/or LGBTI activism. While some have participated as attendees or members, and others have assumed social leadership inside these groups, all of them emphasised in their narratives how this participation has impacted their personal lives – leaving the political or judicial gains achieved by these spaces aside. Contrasting the scepticism of some around the capacity of armed conflict official narratives or transitional justice mechanisms to offer actual (material) restitutions to LGBTI victims of armed conflict, these interviewees described in a hopeful tone the positive impact and transformation they have experienced in their everyday lives as a consequence of their participation in some of these social spaces. I argue in this sub-section that some of these transformative consequences are part of an

intimate peace practice that establishes a social relationality that disrupts the violence inherent in the social hierarchies and unequal relations of power produced by categories of social difference.

According to some interviewees, their participation in "LGBTI spaces" (e.g., LGBTI civil society organisations, government-led LGBTI communitarian centres, LGBTI activist groups, and LGBTI support groups, among others) has provided them with information about non-normative genders or sexualities. This information has contributed to their personal growth and acceptance of their bodies and sexualities. Claudia explained:

> I felt alone here in Bogotá, bored because I was the only weird person. But one day, I went to the city centre to buy some antiques, when I heard a noise, like a crowd, so I went out to see, and it was the LGBT pride march. I saw like ten blocks of people marching. Wow! I had never seen that many *maricas*[57] together […] And then a guy passed by and gave me a flyer [of the LGBT communitarian centre].
>
> […] The first time I heard the word intersexual was in the communitarian centre [CAIDSG] […] I knew I was hermaphrodite until I met a great psychologist, [name], who explained these things to me […] I opened myself to him and showed him all my documents and medical record, and he understood me, you know? I started downloading information; I still do, to find something similar to me. Because you know there are 65 or 66 intersex cases, not all of them are the same. You can be an intersex person and hadn't noticed it, you know?
>
> That was like 4, 5 years ago […] I learnt to know myself because before that, I used to go to GAAT [Group of Action and Support for Transgender People] meetings, and I would listen to the experiences of trans women. Some of these were similar to mine, but then I would go to Enigma [Diverse Women Network] meetings, and I would also feel identified with the experiences of lesbians. I learnt a lot, trying to locate and identify my own experience. I owe that to this centre. For me, it has been like a university.

[57] In the Colombian context, the term *marica* has been historically used to refer to homosexual men (and sometimes women) in a derogative way. Sometimes it refers mainly to homosexual men that perform a "passive" role in sexual intercourse, or their gender expression is feminine. Despite this harmful use, in some contexts, some homosexual men and transgender women use it as an identity category, as a political statement to express pride in their femininity. Others use it in contraposition to the term "gay", which is read as an imported identity category that denotes class and race privileges in the Colombian context.

> Because I didn't know myself at all, which is hard for one, you know? I knew that I was a monster, nothing more. I was running, trying to kill myself, and was aggressive and violent, but I did not realise that I was running away from the problem, but the problem was in me, and it was with me.

As Claudia's narrative describes, her involvement in the physical space of the formerly called LGBTI Communitarian Centre gave her a sense of community by finding other persons with non-normative genders or sexualities. After living most of her adult life hiding her body and her sexual orientation (See Chapter 4), Claudia found in the LGBTI Communitarian Centre a safe space to open herself up and share some of her life experiences. Finding a different concept (intersex) to describe or name her non-normative body interrupted the violence Claudia had experienced while being called a monster (or hermaphrodite) all her life. Claudia's narrative shows that having access to this information – knowing that gender and sexuality are social constructs that are non-static but are constantly changing across history and that there is no such thing as a complete male or female sexed body – gave her a new understanding of herself and the violence she suffered while living as a silenced body. Tellingly, Claudia's narrative reveals that her experiences in this space interrupted not only the violence she had experienced as a non-normative subject but also the violence she was exerting towards others and herself while feeling isolated and living as an unintelligible body and self.

Echoing Claudia's reflections, other interviewees explained in their narratives that their experiences in these LGBTI spaces had prompted a reflection on how they have been both victims and perpetrators of violence. This was the case of Adrian, a transgender man in his late twenties, when I interviewed him in 2019. Adrian was born in Arauca, a conflict-affected Department located in the East of Colombia. According to his narrative, Adrian arrived in spaces of LGBTI political mobilisation to "hook up with women". However, after some time, he got interested in the information these spaces provided regarding legal protection for LGBTIQ+ people. While Adrian's family did not confront his gender transition with violence, Adrian mentioned that some years ago, he had a "conflict-related problem"[58] and was forced to leave his

[58] Adrian did not explain what happened to him, as he said, "it was too painful to talk about certain things."

farm, where he lived with his partner. Adrian found in these LGBTI meetings legal information that helped him to deal with these violent events. This is something Adrian perceives as a process of "empowerment."

> My empowerment consisted of going to meetings, marches, and *reuniones LGBTunas* [LGBT meetings] with the *Defensoria del Pueblo* [Ombudsman Office] […] they helped me to file a complaint with the police, one against the police and another one against the ELN [guerrilla group] […] I liked it [going to meetings] because you could learn about the law, about how to demand respect. I mean, using other tools aside from violence or aggression.
>
> […] I was [violent]. I was super aggressive. What is more, if I hadn't been involved with these issues of going to support groups [for transgender persons], I would not have been talking to you at this moment. You could not make me listen. I was always right. Do you know? That was my defence mechanism.

Adrian's narrative reveals that his empowerment involved reflecting on the violence he was reproducing as a transgender man. Adrian described in his life story narrative that he grew up in a highly *machista*[59] family in which his masculine behaviour was never punished by his father because "he was happy to have another son". Adrian replicated the *machista* model of masculinity as a transgender man, was aggressive with other men and had *machista* attitudes and behaviours against women.

Adrian's narrative echoes the experiences of other interviewees who said that participating in "LGBTI spaces" or groups of victims of armed conflict has helped them to deconstruct their subject position regarding gender and sexual difference. According to interviewees, this deconstruction has made them aware of the origins of different forms of violence they have suffered in their life trajectories. It has also shown them different ways in which they have been violent with others. Adrian argued that since he frequents LGBTI and trans

[59] Machismo culture demonstrates male dominance in some Hispanic cultures. Some Hispanic males displaying machismo demand ultimate respect from their family members and expect to be regarded as the highest authority within the household. The machista culture creates a power dynamic in which the male has control over household decisions and finances and the woman is subservient to the male. Machismo culture is chauvinistic in nature and places females in a lower social position than males.

activist spaces led by transgender women with a feminist agenda, he has deconstructed those violences recognising that his gender transition needs to be critical of how gender establishes unequal relations of power. Adrian said, "we have to deconstruct ourselves, no? To deconstruct all that was implanted on us; that women belong to the kitchen, that women need to serve men […] now I go back to my city, and I hear those things, and I say no! We can't think like that".

Adrian's and other interviewees' narratives reveal that their experiences in these LGBTI spaces have impacted how they relate to others, becoming aware of violent forms of social relationality that sustain and reproduce unequal relations of power and historical systems of oppression. Other interviewees shared:

> Yes, I've been violent. I don't consider myself violent, but I've been violent. There have been moments when there is suffering in my ego; as a being, I've acted unconsciously in a violent way […] So that is inside me [the possibility of being violent]. But I've learned to deconstruct it. Based on all the work I've done as a social leader that fights for the rights of women and black gay men. I've started to deconstruct it, my masculinity also. When I got the certification in peaceful conflict resolution, I started deconstructing it. And it has been tough to construct it again. (Nacho, 2019)

> Since I came here, I have turned into a more human person, more humane. Because I was tough, and these people here changed me completely. Sharing with other people and seeing that they were not what I thought […] I thought that all trans women were prostitutes and all those awful things. But when you start sharing with them and knowing that they have a life story too, that they have suffered, and that they are fighters, that is nice […] Now, I love everyone here in the centre […] I talk with everyone, whether a boy or a girl; for me, everyone is the same; they are just people. (Claudia, 2019)

The narratives of Nacho and Claudia suggest that these LGBTI spaces do more than naming and fix categories of gender and sexual non-normativity (as expressed by the LGBTI acronym). Instead of giving an account of how finding common ground based on a shared sexual or gender identity category organises a social mobilisation to shed light on how everyday violence affects the lives of LGBTIQ+ people (as violence of heterosexuals against non-heterosexuals), these narratives show another form of peacebuilding. These narratives reveal that these spaces also

produce critical deconstructions of social difference, destabilising the binary victim/perpetrator and bringing light to the complexity of how everyday violence operates. Nacho's narrative emphasises how he admits that violence is "inside him" as a possibility and how that violence is related to his performance of normative masculinity, despite his non-normative sexual orientation. Likewise, Claudia's narrative highlights how she recognises she used to have classist and transphobic judgments against transgender women, despite her non-normative corporeality and sexual orientation.

The narratives of Adrian, Nacho, and Claudia show that a practice of intimate peace takes place in these LGBTI spaces through the critical deconstruction of social difference. I argue that these deconstructions of social difference operate as queer disruptions of everyday violence that generate new, less violent forms of social relationality, in which the common ground is not the sexual or gender identity of people but the shared experience of everyday violence. Claudia's narrative shows how her social interactions in these spaces have taught her to recognise the "humanity" of others. Finding common ground with others in terms of suffering and resisting violence – or having a "life story too", as Claudia argued – has turned Claudia into a "more human person". Participating in these LGBTI spaces has reminded Claudia of the sameness that connects all humans, how all human bodies are open and exposed to violence and how all bodies are vulnerable to one another (Butler, 2004). Interviewees' decision to be less violent, changing their social relationality with others, might emerge from acknowledging how this same everyday violence has also shaped their embodied subjectivities and life trajectories as oppressed and marginalised subjects. As part of an intimate peace practice, these deconstructions have located interviewees as victims and perpetrators of violence, and this recognition functions as a queer disruption of everyday violence (that questions and challenges fixed identity categories), laying the foundations for a less violent social relationality.

In addition to showing how these critical deconstructions have interrupted and transformed violent forms of everyday social relationality, interviewees' narratives also reveal that these queer interruptions of everyday violence have motivated them to do activist work on peace and peacebuilding. The narratives of some interviewees participating in spaces designed for the assistance of LGBTI victims of armed conflict described how knowing about others' suffering has mobilised their desire to do activist work. Not to talk about their own experiences

(only) but to address how violence is differently lived and experienced by less privileged others. Some explained:

> Last month I went to Medellín [to participate in an artistic event with an LGBTI activist organisation], and I talked with several kids about what they are going through […] We were talking. One of them showed me bullet scars on his body. So, I thought, "Oh shit, these are real victims!". I can be a victim because they [paramilitaries] caused emotional damage in me and damaged my house, but that's it. But when I saw this 17-year-old kid, with a bullet scar from four years ago, and knowing that he had to live in the streets and *putiar* [sell his body], I only realised that what I've been through is nothing, right? [...] I get goosebumps only to think about him. Violence occurs whenever he touches his skin or sees himself in the mirror. You can't take it off. (Miguel, 2019)
>
> I could say that armed conflict hasn't affected me that much because I've worked having contact with people [victims of armed conflict] whose victimisations have been highly cruel. The situations they experienced were extreme, and maybe, I was innocent about armed conflict because it was a silenced topic. But the issue is that we are not only talking about me. There were a lot of people reflected in me. Because of the representation, I was doing [while having a seat at the MPVs] […] In my life as an individual, it [armed conflict] didn't have a significant impact. But if we talk about my social being, it has significantly impacted me. Because even listening to the stories of the people I've worked with affects my life. And these people are reflected in what I do in my everyday life. That is why I decided to write the theatre play *La Crisis.* It emerged from all the stories and experiences I've heard, and even my own. (Juan, 2019)

As described in these narratives, Miguel and Juan have developed a sense of connection with other LGBTI victims of armed conflict not because they share an identity with them (either as LGBTI or a victim) but because they have recognised how suffering is differently allocated. By recognising how less privileged others experience violence differently, Miguel and Juan have felt connected to a social body, a "social being", in Juan words, that has moved them to do activist peace work for themselves and others. Tellingly, his activist work is not focused on an LGBTI rights discourse but on bringing light to how some (LGBTIQ+) bodies are more exposed to

violence than others, that is, how sexual and gender difference intersects with other categories of social difference such as race and class in the Colombian context.

In Miguel's case, his narrative emphasises how seeing the wounded body of a kid created an affective embodied impression on him, realising that others have suffered violence that has compromised their physical body. While it at first appears that Miguel's narrative reinforces the hierarchies of experience of violence that this thesis has been interested in interrogating, affirming that physical violence produces "real victims" compared to other forms of violence, what it also does is allow for an intersubjective, affective response to the precarity in which other bodies live. Miguel acknowledges his privileged position and how he has experienced violence differently than others in his narrative by arguing that some are "real victims". He emphasises the materiality of the wounded body as a residual of violence, "every time he touches his skin or when he sees himself in the mirror, violence is there". Miguel's narrative describes how this materiality caused an affective impression on him, not only in that moment but as a bodily sensation that continues with him, "I get goosebumps only to think about him". Miguel's narrative displays how violence moves from one body to another (through a queer spatio-temporality) and how this affective impression (feeling the violence others have suffered) is a queer disruption of everyday violence that can spark a critical consciousness and political mobilisation. This felted impression dissolves the individual body into a social body, creating the possibility for demanding and imagining a more peaceful social future for oneself and others. Turning into an intimate peace practice, this experience has pushed Miguel to continue his activism, focusing mainly on the experiences of less privileged LGBTIQ+ people affected by armed conflict and everyday violence.

Similarly, Juan's narrative shows that while he was not interested in participating in the MPVs because he did not feel identified with the victim or LGBTI categories, he developed a sense of responsibility and belonging over the years through his work with other victims of armed conflict. Juan's narrative shows that beyond representing a sexual or gender identity or a victim category through his work in the MPVs, he has come to represent the suffering of others. This experience has affected how he relates to other people's experiences and has incited reflections about his experiences of violence and armed conflict. Juan argues that armed conflict did not impact him directly – even though his family was displaced and he suffered a personal

attack amid conflict. However, he describes how it has nevertheless impacted his social being. Beyond his work as a representative in the MPVs, Juan decided to continue his activist work through his professional activities as an artist. He wrote the theatre play *La Crisis*, inspired by all the stories he has listened to over the years. The play was presented on a national day for victims of armed conflict in Colombia (9th of April) in the *Plaza de Bolivar* [main square] in Bogotá.

> *La Crisis* started as a social pedagogy project […]. It touched upon various social problems, but mainly the war. The play is not located in Colombia, necessarily, but it emerged from my work with people here [Bogotá].
>
> […] it [the play] starts with a dialogue, a man says, "I'm tired of being here, in this damned confinement. I can't even feel the wretched breeze. I can't tell if it is day or night" […] and the other character answers, "But why are you complaining? This is not what all humanity wants? to have a tranquil, full life, without worries, and have everything solved? We have a roof, a bed, they are feeding us".

According to Juan's narrative, these two characters think they are in prison, but as the play moves forward, they realise they are in a psychiatric hospital. One of the characters, Alzaga, was a victim of armed conflict. He witnessed the violation, torture, and murder of his grandmother, which caused him a mental breakdown that made him believe that he was imprisoned in jail because he was his grandmother's murderer. As the play moves forward, Alzaga understands that he is in a psychiatric hospital receiving treatment for this traumatic experience and then starts questioning what victims of armed conflict have to confront after the violent event, including the generalised social indifference in Colombia.

While Miguel's narrative emphasises the material consequences of violence, the wounded body, Juan's narrative sheds light on how violence continues operating at the emotional level and how certain affectations go beyond the material reparations a victim can receive. Juan mentioned that he wrote this play as a project of social pedagogy to raise awareness about the emotional consequences of armed conflict, generate an affective impact on the audience, and decrease social indifference. Mirroring Miguel's experiences, Juan's narrative reveals that his felt recognition of others' suffering (the affective impression) mobilised him to do activist peace work using his artistic abilities. These emotional encounters connected Juan to his social body

and pushed him to create an artistic piece to impress others through the intersubjective experience of violence and its afterlives and create social awareness around the experiences of the victims of armed conflict in Colombia.

The practice of intimate peace appears in Miguel and Juan's narratives as an affective (embodied) experience, that is, the sense of connection with others that emerges from the (felt) recognition of a social body that is open to violence and its consequences and the awareness that vulnerability is not equally distributed. These narratives show that peace is "something that becomes expressed, takes place, through acts and points of everyday contact between variously situated and variously vulnerable bodies, namely corporeal events where accountability, recognition, and acknowledgement emerge" (Väyrynen, 2019, p. 28). In this case, this affective recognition decentred Miguel and Juan's experiences as persons with non-normative genders and sexualities. Instead, it sheds light on how all bodies are differently exposed to violence depending on other categories of social difference, such as class and the living conditions determined by these social positions.

Intimate reconciliation: interrupting the inherited cycle of violence

In addition to the reflections on how social relations can be re-configured inside these LGBTI and victims spaces, the interviewees' narratives described how these effects had transcended this spatiality, impacting how they have resignified and restored violent relationships in their personal lives. Giving an account of what is commonly known as forgiveness, these narratives open the possibility of considering alternative workings of what traditional PCS denominates as *reconciliation*. Reconciliation is the restoration or establishment of social relations in previously divided post-conflict societies and is considered a condition for sustaining peace. Scholars working in the Latin American context are critical of this definition, suggesting this narrative is too narrow to approach the complexity of this context. In Latin America, violence is not reduced to armed conflict, and the temporal divisions between conflict and post-conflict are anything but linear. Contributing to this critique, and thinking about the Colombian case, Anika Oettler & Angelika Rettberg (2019) argue that while the global trend is to frame reconciliation issues in the context of victim-centred transitional justice, there is a need to consider a broader perspective. They suggest this perspective should go beyond welfare and victims' identity to engage broader

social relations and think of reconciliation in contexts of chronic violence. Building on these critiques, in this sub-section, I think of reconciliation in relation to the everyday violence that shapes the life trajectory of LGBTIQ+ people in Colombia.

Thinking about reconciliation concerning the life experiences of LGBTIQ+ people opens new analytical questions. As suggested in this thesis, despite being victims of armed conflict (at different levels), most interviewees did not place conflict-related violence at the top of their grievances. In most cases, what interviewees emphasised as the source of their suffering was the effect of the violence they lived inside their household, their community, or as poor, marginalised subjects. Therefore, these narratives open the question of how reconciliation might look outside conflict-related violence. Or in other words, what social relations need to be restored or established to acknowledge these varied forms of everyday violence and achieve and maintain peace?

While some interviewees described different experiences of forgiveness in their narratives, the narrative of Elizabeth was the most straightforward in delineating how her work as a social leader and her experiences in peacebuilding spaces have shaped her experiences of forgiveness. At different points in her life story, Elizabeth emphasised how she used to blame her mother for all the violence and difficult circumstances she suffered. Representing the first source/perpetrator of violence, Elizabeth identified in her childhood; her mother represented the origin of her abandonment and the cause of her subsequent involvement in sex work. However, as her narrative evolved, Elizabeth described that her relationship with her mother has changed over the years and how this change has been attached to Elizabeth's resignifications of what violence is and how it has impacted her life.

Explaining how she perceives her mother nowadays, Elizabeth said:

> My mother always had troubled relationships with other men. My father was always fighting, that was horrible […] My mother used to say that we were very poor. I don't know if she thinks the same nowadays, but she used to say, "We are poor, and because we are poor, we don't deserve anything. Not even our life". That was hard. I used to answer to her, "No. That cannot be like that. I'm not poor. I'm rich". I used to say that to her and cry.

[…] I wanted to be with my mom and dad, but I couldn't. My mom didn't love any of us (sisters). I think she didn't love herself either. My father used to humiliate her all the time. My grandfather battered her every time he found her doing something. She was a very neglected child. She was raised in Jamundí with all those parties and things. People used to leave their children and houses abandoned to go to parties. My mom has changed a lot.

When I asked Elizabeth how her relationship with her mother changed over time, she answered:

Daniel arrived [in prison], our teacher, my master. He started speaking in a language I had never listened to before. He talked like I talk nowadays, sort of. About other lives, angels. About reconciliation and forgiveness. About peace. That language was unknown to me. Until that moment, I had never listened to those nice words he was using.

One day, we did a seminar about conscious breathing. It was like a meditation […] He told us to lay down in a foetal position and to continue breathing […] Later, I felt I was in a dark place. Like inside a little sack […] I started gaining consciousness and realised I was inside my mom's belly […] I was hearing everything she was talking about, and my dad's voice […] and then I noticed an awful situation. My dad arrived from work on his truck with a lot of dirty clothes for laundry […] So, my mom said, "That disgusting old man, filthy, degenerate. He is sick. He comes with AIDS. He comes to infect me and force me to be with him [to have sex]" […] Suddenly, I started feeling fear. But it was something she was passing on to me. All that I was feeling, she was feeling it first. I felt fear, then despair, sadness, and disappointment. She was crying a lot. Ugh, I still get goosebumps from remembering it.

When the session ended, I felt infinite love for her […] I went straight to call her […] I told her, "Mom, mom, thank you. I love you. God bless you. Forgive me. Forgive me for beating you. Thank you for accepting me and giving me my life". She answered surprised, "Why are you talking like that? What is going on with you? […] I explained my experience, and I told her that I was thrilled to know who she was, and she said, "What? Didn't you know who I was?" I told her, "No, mom. I recognise you as my mother now. Can I ask you a question? Were you happy when you were living with my father?" She replied, "No, *mija*. Happy? He was a scoundrel old man, filthy, stoner. He was always fucking everyone; he left me alone all the time" […] and then she told me about all the things I felt in my meditation.

> And this is when I reconciled with her. It was not easy. She is a difficult person, but we are trying.

Through this emotional experience, Elizabeth gained a new perspective on her mother's experiences and the violence that shaped their lives. Understanding her mother's suffering as a woman gave Elizabeth a different perspective from which to understand her mother's struggle to cope with a violent environment that demanded from her a position of subordination. From this understanding, that is, the acknowledgement of her mother's vulnerability and how violence shaped her subjectivity and behaviour, Elizabeth rejected the possibility of positioning her mother as a perpetrator of violence (and the origin of Elizabeth's suffering). Instead, Elizabeth placed the source of this suffering in the hierarchical, unequal structure that (violently) determines specific gender roles for men and women. Through this experience, Elizabeth identified her father's actions as a source of gendered violence that conditioned her mother's well-being and her possibility to live and perform her motherhood.

Elizabeth's narrative of forgiveness offers an example of alternative processes of reconciliation that might take place when we think about violence beyond armed conflict and peace outside transitional justice. Elizabeth's narrative reveals that reconciliation occurs in the private sphere, not only through public exposures of grievances and forgiveness as promoted by truth commissions and beyond rigid delimitations between victims and perpetrators of violence. When I asked Elizabeth about her definition of the word victim, she answered:

> Well, we are all victims because we are the children of victims, right? For me, we are all children of victims, but I decide if I want to continue being a victim. So, I say, I might be the victim, in a moment, of a particular situation, of certain circumstances, but it has to be temporary; one cannot stay there too long.
>
> […] Now, I can choose. I'm the daughter of a victim. I'm the daughter of war. But I now decide to be the mother of peace […] I started using that thought of peace in me, and it started becoming conscious inside me. In my body, in my neurons […], and that's when the process of forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace begins.

Elizabeth's insight, "we are all victims because we are the children of victims", emerges from her process of reconciliation, which, as described earlier, involved feeling herself *inside* her mother,

as *part of* her mother, and *like* her mother. However, by affirming that the status of the victim can be inherited, Elizabeth's insight does not imply that being a victim is the inescapable fate of those affected by violence and their descendants. Instead, Elizabeth's narrative implies that everyday violence reproduces through time and space as a form of relationality that turns victims into perpetrators and perpetrators into victims in a spiral that obscures the structures of power that organise and determine such relationality. In Elizabeth's reflection, by "being a victim", she is referring to repeating the inherited fate of reproducing violence by her own hands. In affirming her agency in being a victim or not, Elizabeth is challenging the inherited fate of being a perpetrator, that is, reproducing everyday violence. By forgiving her mother, that is, understanding the source of her violence, Elizabeth disrupted the continuum of violence produced by gender-based violence and precarity. This act of reconciliation has become the basis for rethinking her own behaviour.

To be the mother of peace in Elizabeth's reflection refers to the effort of making everyday violence visible, to acknowledge that she has made several mistakes as a human being and as a mother, and to make a conscious everyday effort to "start using that thought of peace" in her. Later in her narrative, Elizabeth explained that her reconciliation with her mother pushed her to reflect on her own motherhood. In various excerpts of her narrative, Elizabeth mentioned she was violent with her children and how she recognised in some of these moments an uncanny reproduction of scenes from her childhood, in which she was on the other side of the violence. This unconscious reproduction of violent scenes (including using the same objects in the house to beat her children) was disrupted by Elizabeth's reconciliation with her mother and her acquiring a new and embodied understanding of violence. Elizabeth affirmed that she knows she "hasn't been the best mother", as she was unable to raise some of her children because of her lack of economic resources, her precarious work as a sex worker, and her addictions to drugs and alcohol. However, Elizabeth also acknowledges that she did what she could with the conditions of her life as a poor, uneducated, displaced woman.

As Elizabeth's narrative explains, by using that thought of peace, by having it inside her body, in her neurons, she has come through a process of reconciliation that has shown her that in the acknowledgement of interdependency and the potential for violence in every living bond, violence against the other is violence against oneself (Butler, 2020) – or that "we all are the

children of victims", in Elizabeth's words. That is not to say, however, that Elizabeth is not involved in violent action from time to time. What it means is that there is a new and intrusive peaceful thought that mediates her behaviour and her conscious understanding of everyday violence. This intrusive peaceful thought functions as a queer disruption of everyday violence and represents a manifestation of her daily practice of intimate peace. Elizabeth's narrative of reconciliation shows that while violence is transmitted across generations as a form of social relationality, it can be interrupted by an embodied understanding of how the social structures in which marginal subjects live are the source of the violence they experience and reproduce on an everyday basis. In Elizabeth's narrative, this embodied understanding is the beginning of a practice of intimate peace that emerges from the body and takes place in the intimate sphere of the family home, holding the potential to resignify familial bonds outside the logic of violent gendered structures.

Queer kinship: social fabric otherwise

Besides showing how intimate peace disrupts the reproduction of everyday violence against others and the self, interviewees' life story narratives revealed that intimate peace might also encompass the creation of new (dissident) social bonds and the maintenance and reproduction of life. In this sub-section, I consider how intimate peace operates through the body as an embodied practice and how LGBTIQ+ people reconfigure violent social formations opening possibilities for re-imagining social bonds, family formations, and maintenance and reproduction of life.

Bodies of peace

The inclusion of the voices and experiences of LGBTIQ+ people in the Peace Agreement's implementation has been accompanied by the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people as civil servants in some peacebuilding institutions. In most cases, LGBTIQ+ persons are incorporated into these institutions to manage issues related to the "LGBTI community". This inclusion has increased the social and political representation of LGBTIQ+ people at a national level and ensured (somehow) the implementation of the differential approach regarding LGBTI issues in peacebuilding strategies. Besides this positive impact, during my fieldwork, I noticed through informal conversations with some civil servants (working in the JEP and Truth Commission) that

these persons were also performing an additional job within these institutions. Their presence, and sometimes their embodiment (one of them is a lawyer known for going to work wearing a suit and tie and high heels), impacted other civil servants and the organisational culture. By generating everyday conversations around non-normative ways to live and express their genders and sexualities, these civil servants were demystifying negative and violent stereotypes against LGBTIQ+ people, changing some of their colleagues' beliefs and behaviours. During these informal conversations, I noticed that these civil servants perceived this "extra" job as positive sometimes but also as an everyday burden. The organisational transformation was not always easy, and they still had to face everyday discrimination coming from some colleagues.

I found a similar situation in the life story narrative of Kiki, one of the research participants in the thesis. I met Kiki in the *IV Encuentro de Liderazgos Políticos LGBTI de América Latina y el Caribe* [IV Meeting of LGBTI Political Leaderships in Latin American and the Caribbean] in 2019. The event was organised in a hotel in Bogotá, and during lunch, I sat at a table next to Kiki by coincidence. Kiki caught my attention when they intervened in one of the workshops that took place early that day. They talked about their activist work trying to join together the "peasant culture" of rural Colombia and "sexual dissidence". Kiki had short hair and wore a colourful skirt, military boots, and make-up, including pink and blue glitter in their bushy beard. Later at lunch, they explained a little about their activist work and dissident aesthetic expression. I told Kiki about my research, and they agreed to participate in the life story interview. As they were in Bogotá only to attend the event, we decided to talk some days later through Skype.

As briefly introduced in Chapter 5, Kiki was born in Cartago, a small city in the Valle del Cauca Department in southwestern Colombia. When Kiki was born, they were assigned with male sex and named Ricardo. Kiki's life story narrative described their childhood memories while growing up in a rural context, as their parents were peasants and lived in Pitalito, in the Huila Department. Kiki's narrative also described how their effeminate behaviour, which was visible since they were a child, was constantly straightened by their mother, a devout Christian. Kiki's narrative emphasised how their performance of a masculine gender was associated with becoming a "*caballero*" [gentleman] or the "ideal religious man," according to Kiki's mother.

> That *caballero religioso* represented my mom's dreams. The *caballero* is defined as a person with values and education based on the Bible. But it also represents a particular civility; it is a good citizen, moralist, based on religious principles, and that influences aesthetics, right? You wear a good shirt and grandpa's shoes. And it is interesting how these men are associated with honesty, respect, tolerance, and kindness, but also with something that gave me room in that structure and is the topic of sensibility.
>
> The *caballero religioso* has a sensibility that is not allowed in heteronormative *caballeros.* They can't express, "I'm hurt. I'm affected by social causes, by family situations". But we could as *caballeros religiosos*. And that aligned with my sensibility since I was a child, like taking care of others and trying to understand their issues and suffering. So, I was accepted. That idea of *caballero* functioned in binary terms, but I was also given that possibility [being sensible] commonly assigned to women in binary structures.
>
> But of course, this *caballero* is also called to be more comprehensive to dominate their wives, no? It is quite a toxic issue [laughs]. You are disguised, my love; it is horrible [laughs]. You are this good husband with values and feelings, so you receive the admiration of your family and children.
>
> But of course, I arrived at the university temple, and thank God, they washed my sins away and cleansed me from those structures.

Kiki's uneasiness with the sex and gender they were assigned at birth was particularly associated in their life story narrative with the clothes they were expected to wear. When Kiki went through puberty, they could not find clothes to wear, and they even mentioned they spent a whole year wearing the same red t-shirt, the only one they felt comfortable with, to go to classes (for technical school) every Saturday. With time, Kiki found in the *caballero* aesthetic a "relief" because it made their mother "happy" and offered them a safe space to express a type of masculinity that was also sensible. While Kiki felt the *caballero* aesthetic was a religious imposition, they strategically embodied and performed this masculinity. They remained critical of the power relations and subordination that this masculinity sustained as part of a binary and heteronormative structure to which Kiki did not belong. When Kiki turned sixteen, they moved

to Pasto in the Nariño Department to begin university studies. As Kiki's narrative describes with humour and sarcasm, they found in this "university temple" another way to be.

Kiki's life story narrative was mostly centred on their university years. This focus is partly explained due to Kiki's age; they were twenty-four when I interviewed them, the youngest of my thesis' interviewees. But also, this narrative emphasis reflected that during their university years, Kiki, still named Ricardo and performing a masculine gender, found a space (far from their family) to explore their gender and sexuality, a process that had many stages. Kiki's encounter with different cultures and beliefs at the University of Nariño, an institution characterised by cultural diversity due to its geographical localisation, showed them a more colourful world than the caballero's monochrome.

> I arrived at the university, and wow! I can't forget; I still have the lived memory. The first thing that caught my attention was to see people's journeys. I saw the first dissident expressions of different sub-cultures, no? There was the punky movement, the hippie movement, indigenous sub-cultures, Afro, the university revolution, and feminists. But what enchanted me was seeing a pair of purple trousers. This young man was walking by with this pair of super tight purple trousers, and for me, that was like boom! Aesthetically speaking. He looked terrific, and I saw him walking so freely. That wasn't something I had seen in my territory. He was outside the normality of what I was used to seeing, outside the limits I considered possible. It was so impressive that I bought the same purple trousers and made them tight, just like his. My love, that was *the* inspiration!

These purple trousers inaugurated Kiki's exploration of their gender and sexuality. Through their involvement in different "sub-cultures" (i.e., critical and feminist theory, heavy metal culture, student and anarchist movements), Kiki started exploring their gender identity, expression, and desire for men. While in the beginning, Kiki explored their romantic and sexual desire for men without changing their gender identity or expression as a man (although less masculine than what they experienced before), with time, they began experimenting with other dissident aesthetics. The "culmination" of this process of experimentation took place on Kiki's graduation day. According to their narrative, they prepared a special attire for that day, with the help and support of their girlfriends, whom Kiki calls their *hijas* [daughters]. Kiki's attire had a specific

symbology and their decision to perform this gender-fluid expression on their graduation day represented a political statement and a milestone in his journey. Kiki explained:

> I designed the skirt, and the mother of one of my *hijas* made it. I was going to pay her, but in the end, she gave me the skirt as a graduation gift. My inspirational element was the Greek topic. It was like a Greek coronation, with a crown made of olives and the expression of the divine and all those things. Because that was how I felt, no? I did it as Ricardo, still, but it was a Ricardo very *marica*. A Ricardo that didn't care, that questioned all aesthetics, that enjoyed it and was not afraid of it.
>
> […] I painted my nails and went to the barbershop to fix my beard. The barber was Afro, so it was weird for him to see me with those nails, a perfect beard, and my eyebrows perfectly waxed. […] I put on red lipstick, a skirt, a blue blazer with a shirt, and silver high heels. We were ready to go to the make-up stylist. Two of my *hijas* were coming with me; this was like a wedding, my dear; they were like my maids of honour. But one of them fainted before going out, so I had to go to get my make-up done alone.
>
> […] I had to walk like three blocks dressed up like that. I was so nervous. It was very potent; I was walking, and everyone stopped what they were doing to look at me […] Even a homeless was passing by, and he stopped; he couldn't believe it […] The make-up stylist was. shocked, as she was waiting for a woman, of course […] I took a taxi, and the taxi driver was pro-diversity. He was heterosexual, but he valued and respected the movement. He told me, "I congratulate you because you are graduating from a career, and you demonstrate many things. Your look is spectacular". It was a very intense experience.
>
> […] I arrived at the graduation ceremony, and everyone was looking at me […] I received compliments from some peers and started feeling more comfortable […] When the ceremony started, I was super nervous […] They started calling names one by one, and my moment arrived. I felt I was walking super slow, slow, *madre mia;* I said, what is this slow walking as if the world was going to end! […] I got to the stage and realised that men were given a handshake with their diplomas, and women received a kiss on the cheek. And I thought, what about me?
>
> […] The faculty's director received us. He was a very nice man, and he used to call me Richard. He looked at me and said, "Richard,

> congratulations!" [laughs]. And I thought, ok, I receive my diploma, and I'll continue walking to avoid making people uncomfortable. But I received my diploma, and he hugged me and congratulated me. So, people started clapping, and the next lady also hugged me, and the rest of them hugged me. They didn't give me a handshake or a kiss because it was all very confusing, no? It was a binary dictatorship.
>
> […] I felt that was a really nice lesson I learnt from him. Now I hug everyone. I hug them because that is how I connect with people, thanks to that beautiful experience.

Kiki's intense and emotional narrative of their graduation day shows the beginning of an embodied peace work Kiki has been doing in the past years through expressing their gender-fluid identity. As their narrative describes, their presence caused multiple disruptions of the forms of social relationality defined and determined by the normative violence constitutive of gender's performativity on the everyday. Kiki's performance, their Greek coronation, had an impact on their immediate community: the mother of Kiki's *hija* who made her skirt; the Afro barber that groomed their beard; the neighbours and the homeless man' the make-up stylist; the taxi driver; her university peers and their parents; and the university faculty. Kiki's presence generated a shock and a sense of confusion in the affectivity of all these persons, disrupting their everyday relationality with others in the world. Kiki's narrative may be exceptional, as not all people or gender expressions outside heteronormativity are well received, and many are straightened up through violence. However, Kiki's narrative shows the always latent possibility of destabilising gender norms and the transformative potential of these disruptions.

While Kiki's narrative does not explain if their presence had a long-term impact on these people (as something almost impossible to know or measure), Kiki's narrative reveals how their gender-fluid aesthetic generated a new gesture of social relationality outside the "binary dictatorship" that characterises everyday social interactions. The emergence of the hug, as an alternative between the gendered gestures of the handshake and the kiss, gave Kiki a place in this "new" (for them and others) social interaction. The hug, endorsed by the public's applause, disrupted the violence of the "binary dictatorship" and opened the possibility of recognition for Kiki and future non-binary others. Kiki's walking towards the stage felt slow, "as if the world was going to end" because, in effect, Kiki's performance of their gender-fluid identity on that day

changed the world as they knew it until that point. Kiki's embodiment, as a queer disruption of (normative) everyday violence, opened the possibility of creating a new social relationality that does not reaffirm the binary performativity of sex, gender, and sexuality. Their embodiment evolved into the materiality of the hug, a gesture that became part of Kiki's intimate practice in their everyday day[60].

From that day on, Kiki continued exploring their dissident aesthetics in different spaces, including professional environments. After graduating in Agroforestry Engineering, Kiki started working on different sustainable development projects with peasant communities in different regions of the country. Most of these projects have been developed by national and international NGOs. Kiki's immersion in these spaces continued expanding their intimate peace practice through everyday interactions with these communities. Kiki explained:

> […] peasant leaders are always surprised. They don't expect someone like me. Maybe they know people with diverse sexual orientations but not with non-binary gender constructions […] I presented myself [in one of these projects], and they thought I was another institutional ally to help them with communitarian environmental projects, which generally appear once and never return […]. However, I was present every day, and one day I proposed a structured idea, and they liked it […] they started to see me, and they talked to me because they understood I was committed to the process.
>
> […] they started to be more open and began asking questions. Why do you dress like that? Are you a man or a woman? And I explained to them a little about myself, and they said, "Yes, you are right; we shouldn't think that everything is feminine or binary". And they started calling me Kiki, and it was a beautiful process.

Kiki's narrative shows how their presence in traditional and male-dominated spaces of peasant mobilisation has impacted how peasant communities perceive LGBTIQ+ people. Kiki has strategically used their privileged position as an educated, employed person to open spaces of reflection and socialisation around gender and sexual non-normativity. Kiki explained further in

[60] However, as with everyday peace practices, Kiki's performance happened amid violence. Kiki's parents violently rejected their decision to appear at their graduation dressed like that. When the ceremony was over, their parents yelled at them, told them they were ashamed of them, left the auditorium and missed the graduation lunch planned afterwards. Kiki's parents do not support their non-normative gender and sexuality, especially their mother, who, as a Christian, sees Kiki's non-normativity as a sin but mainly as a source of shame for her in her community.

their narrative that their presence has provoked conversations around gender-based violence, homophobic and transphobic violence, and normative masculinity in peasant communities. These conversations and the closeness Kiki have achieved with some of these persons have generated the prospect of less violent forms of social relationality. By calling Kiki by their non-binary name, these persons have validated Kiki's presence, which might open the possibility of recognising other non-normative bodies and subjectivities among these traditional peasant communities.

According to Kiki's narrative, their gender-fluid identity and expression have also impacted spaces of social mobilisation. They explained:

> After I graduated, I did a diploma course called *Diplomado Semillas de Educación Rural* in Bordó. We discussed peasant education, cultural roots, belonging, and how educational programs should reflect the peasant way of life […] so that we could respond to those educational models coming from the city, which ignore the rural context. But nobody talked about how to restructure pedagogy around diversity […] that was the first time I publicly shared my position about this issue […] I said we need to highlight that within the peasant movement and the peasant identity, it is rural and peasant LGBT diversity that lives with them.
>
> […] I participated in a rural innovation lab with environmental leaders, peasant movements, water and biodiversity defenders […] I arrived on the first day, and, of course, I was very enigmatic to them. They knew about all kinds of political struggles, but the problem persisted. We don't conceive a peasant struggle along with the diversity topic. It is disconnected. So, I came to explain to them that we can be on both sides, no? […] It was interesting […], I became more comfortable, and people started opening up. They asked me to take pictures with them; I felt admired […] they didn't ask why are you like that? But it was more like a conversation, like tell us about what led you to choose this gender option and why you made this dissidence, more constructively and positively.

Kiki's presence in spaces of peasant and environmental mobilisation has rendered visible how the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people and their political struggles continue to be overlooked in many of these political mobilisations. Kiki's narrative describes how their presence and discourse in these spaces have interrupted this invisibility, showing (and embodying) the existence of subjects

within both social struggles. Suggestively, Kiki emphasises how the aesthetics of their gender-fluid identity and expression generate a particular affectivity that, representing a queer disruption of everyday violence, allows for a different social relationality around gender and sexual non-normativity. Kiki's narrative reveals that their intimate peace practice has complemented and enlarged traditional notions of peace. Arguing that achieving peace in rural contexts should not only involve the revindication of peasant knowledges and the protection of natural resources but also the inclusion and recognition of "diversity" within these communities., Kiki has shed light on the limitations and blind spots of traditional (normative) notions of peace.

Furthermore, Kiki also described in their life story narrative how their dissident gender-fluid identity and expression has been at the core of an intimate peace practice that has reimagined and materialised new queer bonds of social relationality. When I asked Kiki who their hijas were and why they called them like that, Kiki said they had founded a family some years ago under *familia Monasterios.* Kiki explained they knew about "diverse families" created by transgender women in Pasto, which, according to Kiki's narrative, resembled the history of transgender and queer families presented in the Netflix series *Pose* (Murphy, Falchuk & Canals 2018) in some ways. However, Kiki argued that some of these diverse families in Pasto were associated with night and party dynamics in queer bars and could turn into violent spaces of envy or rivalry between people. Thus, according to Kiki's narrative, they decided to find a "different" family with other values and philosophies. Kiki explained:

> I founded the family *Monasterios*. It is curious because most of my family members are heteronormative women, diversity allies.
>
> Those families [queer and transgender] were associated with diversity, no? But I noticed that this process of creating a family could include heterosexual people because many of my girlfriends had troubles and felt alone and abandoned. They felt without a place where to belong. For example, María del Sol's mother died, and she had an absent father and a violent sister; María Zafiro had many troubles at home and with her husband. So, I took the role of the mother and started caring for them.
>
> […] Compared to other diverse families, mine is not associated with economic survival. My family is more centred on emotional support […]

As their narrative shows, Kiki's queer family formation emerged from Kiki's desire to care for others. Contrary to other queer family formations they knew, Kiki decided to include their heterosexual female friends as *hijas* in their family, stressing the violence they experience every day. Focusing on providing emotional care and support, Kiki's family represents a queer disruption of everyday violence while creating a safe space for Kiki and others. Interestingly, Kiki's queer family not only interrupts the violence in familiar normative bonds of heterosexual families but is critical of the violence that might appear in "diverse" spaces. Thus, by including heterosexual, cisgender women in their family, Kiki's intimate peace practice does not place sexual or gender identities at the core of this less violent form of social relationality but an ethics of care that seeks to create new social bonds and emotional support.

When I asked Kiki why all their *hijas* are called María, they answered:

> That is my problem that I like to make fun of the classist, moralist structures of those *señoras* [ladies] who think they will save the world; those who are pro-life, sorry [laughs].
>
> [...] My photography project talks about that *odioseo* [critique] I have against those *señoras*, who are slaves of toxic religious and patriarchal systems. I take inspiration from their beauty, beliefs and social ideals, and one of them is the name, María. It is the name of the sound, correct woman, a housewife, like the virgin María. But it is also a questioning of the binary and femininity. Because even when some of my *hijas* are straight women, they don't follow that femininity. They say they have learnt to stop being *that woman* [emphasis added] with my advice and company.
>
> I've met some of the real mothers of my *hijas,* and they always laugh; they like the dynamic. I've felt a sense of gratefulness because they feel my family has given their daughters a space to be heard, loved, and appreciated, and they value that.

Kiki's narrative reveals that their intimate peace practice involves a critique of how the intersection of class and gender produces specific values shaped by violent social structures like racism and patriarchy. In their photography project *Al Sur* (Figures 4 & 5), Kiki combines their peasant culture and the aesthetics of some of these *señoras*, which according to Kiki's

perspective, reproduce a violent social relationality through classism and racism. Kiki's project not only destabilises gender's normative binary expression but also questions the material conditions that sustain and allow traditional expressions of femininity in the rural context. By bringing light to the connections between religious practice and wealth, Kiki's project exposes the contradictions of traditional values and morality and how these are articulated and reproduced through women's gender performativity. Kiki's artistic expression creates a queer disruption of everyday violence through the hyperbolic representation of how sex, gender, race, and class are everyday social constructions traversed by different axes of power.

Figure 4

Al Sur

Note. By Kiki Zahaira.

Figure 5
Al Sur

Note. By Kiki Zahaira.

Kiki's artistic expression and political statement have evolved into an intimate practice in which Kiki and their *hijas* mimic and make fun of these violent structures on an everyday basis. As their narrative describes, Kiki's family has provided their *hijas* with emotional support and promoted critical reflections about normative femininity in their everyday lives. Kiki's intimate peace practice demonstrates the transformative potential of the dissident aesthetics and embodiment of non-normative gender-fluid identities and expressions. In Kiki's narrative, intimate peace is an embodied practice that disrupts the everyday violence of gender and sexual normativity and opens possibilities for new and inclusive forms, gestures, and expressions of social relationality. Kiki's intimate peace practice has created new queer social bonds, which are critical of violent social hierarchies determined by gender and class and how these sustain violent relationships through social formations as the normative family structure.

The gift from the mountains

Almost at the end of the second part of our interview with Maira (see Chapter 4), she mentioned that she had a daughter. This information surprised me, as Maira had not mentioned her daughter

before in her life story narrative, challenging how children are pillars of heteronormative life course narratives. But also because Maira mentioned several times during her interview how she grew up rejecting the idea of becoming a mother. Maira said that 15 years ago, she received a "gift from the mountains", her daughter. When I asked her about the story of this *gift,* she said:

> At that time, I was studying in Medellín and constantly travelling between Medellín and Florencia […] I didn't have much money, so I used to ask a friend in Florencia to stay with her, and I used to ask Jairo, a guy with a car, to take me to Yurayaco, and there I asked my mom for money to pay for the ticket. That day, I didn't have any money. Nothing in my pocket.
>
> We were only three women in the car, and Jairo, the driver […] it was like 3:30 am when a man appeared on the road out of nowhere. He was hitch-hiking, and Jairo said, "I'm not picking up any motherfucker because you never know." And it was true. Nobody would pick somebody up late at night because it could be guerrillas or paramilitaries. That was the psychosis at that time […] Sitting next to him, I told him, "Jairo, why don't you stop? Maybe he is a good person. Not everyone has to be a bad person. Pick him up. Let's trust that he is a good person". He looked at me and said, "Ok, let's pick him up."
>
> He stopped the car, and the man got in. We were scared because he had an old cap and a poncho, and one of his arms was under the poncho, hidden. We were terrified. Nobody was talking […] suddenly; the man asked, "Could you stop for a moment, please?". Jairo stopped the car. That is when we freaked out. "What is happening here?" I thought.
>
> And he said, "I didn't want to tell you before, ladies, but I have a mission […] I'm coming from the mountains, like three hours from here. I want to know if any of you can save the life of a creature, could you?" They answered, "No, no, no, I'm tired from raising my children; I can't" […] He continued saying there was a woman who, when she had children, would throw them down to the hill, in the mountains, new-born babies, or that she would give them away. Oh! It gave me a chill. So, my half-cousin said to him, "Ask Maira; look at her; maybe she can save the life of a creature".
>
> I was utterly muted. I was shocked and scared by all this man was saying. I said, "Oh God, is this true?". Because, in the context of war, one cannot trust anyone, in no one. I don't know why, but *they killed my trust*

> [emphasis added]. That is another problem war caused in me. So, I looked at the man and said, "I'm considering it, sir, but I can't say anything without knowing what I have to do to save this creature's life. But from what you've said, I would be willing to save the life of a creature". He asked me like three times more […] I said, "Yes, tell me where I have to go. I don't have any money, but I can ask them for money". I collected 40,000 pesos [£8], and I told them to continue without me, that I was going back with this man. So, we were already entering Belen de los Andaquies [town], and Jairo stopped in front of the town's chapel. The man asked me again, "Madam, are you sure you can give life to a creature". And I said, "Yes, sir. Just tell me where to go". I was getting out of the car when he said, "No, madam, the creature is here with me".
>
> Oh! It was a surprise! I started crying when he took the poncho off and showed me the arm he was hiding. He had a small bag, and inside that bag was a newborn baby. He said she was born at 2:35 am. Then, he got out of the car and passed Jairo 2,000 pesos, and his hand was trembling. He didn't say thank you or anything, and I only said, "Sir, tell this creature's mother that she is in the arms of someone that is going to save her life". But I didn't think about asking about her mother's name or anything, and he didn't ask me anything about who I was, my name, or where I was from. Nothing!

Maira's narrative of how she became a mother illustrates the work of intimate peace at different levels of analysis. Maira's narrative shows that in contexts affected by armed conflict and everyday violence, maintaining social relations, which by default generate and sustain life, is a complex work that demands active defiance of the effects of violence. Life does not simply "happen" but needs to be pursued. Any attempt to sustain or create a social fabric in these contexts is an active interruption of the pervasive and continuous cycle of violence. As Maira's narrative carefully details, saving the life of a creature – the creature that became Maira's daughter and turned Maira into a mother – demanded the happening of a series of gestures that interrupted the social relationality that violence has produced in these contexts.

As Maira explains, violence rips apart the social fabric by planting distrust in communities. However, Maira's narrative shows that this violent strategy is challenged through a practice of trust among acquaintances and strangers in the everyday, even amid the worst

conditions. Saving the life of this creature happened as the result of a series of gestures of trust detailed in Maira's narrative: Jairo trusted Maira to pay for her ticket upon her arrival in her town; Maira asked Jairo to stop the car and pick up a stranger in the middle of the night trusting he could be "a good person"; and this stranger trusted in Maira as being capable and willing to save the life of a creature. I argue that these gestures of trust are manifestations of an intimate peace practice that takes place in the everyday of communities and allows for a less violent social relationality with the potential to enable, reproduce and maintain life amid violence.

Maira's narrative continued:

> Finally, I asked Jairo to stop in San Jose, and with the 40,000 pesos I collected, I bought a baby bottle and some milk. So, I arrived here [Maira's town] with a baby.
>
> I arrived at my house with the baby, and Ana [her partner] was there. Everyone in my community was surprised. Ana told me: "No, Maira. It is better to take that baby back. I'm terrified". But I felt inside my body that it was mine.
>
> When I opened the bag, I saw that it was a girl. I started crying and crying, like a *Magdalena*. I don't know if I was excited or if it was pity what I was feeling. It was a confusion of feelings.
>
> […] Everyone said I should take her to social services, but I talked with the *taitas* [spiritual leaders] of the community, and one of them told me, "Don't return her. She is your baby. She is yours, and you need to give her your name". So, I obeyed him because it was the *taita's* mandate. No! I was not taking her to Child Services because we knew that wasn't the best solution. If the baby arrived in our community, is because she belonged to us, I thought.

Maira's narrative exposes how intimate peace may take the shape of a practice of care that defies the social relationality imposed by the capitalist and individual values of modern societies. This care practice alleviates some material consequences of everyday violence in impoverished, marginalised, conflict-affected contexts. Maira decided to save the life of this creature without having any money in her pockets, and this decision was supported by her ride companions, who

chipped in and shared their own (scarce) resources to buy some food for the baby. In the same way, Maira's town welcomed this baby as her daughter and as part of the community. Maira assumed the care of this baby without questioning the individual responsibilities of (naturalised) motherly care – without judging the baby's biological mother for not assuming the care of her baby. Maira's narrative exemplifies how taking care of others in these contexts extends from emotional to material support, allowing for the collective maintenance of the social fabric and reproduction of life conditions.

Maira's decision to assume the care of this baby is a queer disruption of the everyday violence that exposes certain bodies to suffering and death. As Maira's narrative describes, she refused to take the baby to Child Services because she knew that the care this baby could find in Maira's community was different from that she could receive through institutionalised responses to child abandonment. By assuming a long-life commitment as the caregiver of this baby, Maira demonstrates one of the multiple ways in which marginalised, oppressed communities resist and transform the relationality of violence. Maira's narrative reveals an intimate peace practice that functions outside capitalistic logic or paternalistic solutions to vulnerability, as those implemented by peacebuilding implementations operating through *asistencialismo social* [social aid].

Maira's narrative reveals the creation of a queer kinship that emerged from an intimate peace practice that places vulnerability and interdependence at the centre of human relationality. Maira's family is an example of queer kinship. Not only because Maira and Ana are a lesbian couple but also because Maira's decision to become a mother did not emerge from her desire to reproduce normative life stages but from an ethics of care that goes beyond the structure of the heteronormative family formation. Maira did not want to become a mother but decided to "save the life of a creature", recreating the familiar bonds at the base of the normative family structure. While Maira's narrative mirrors the communitarian values through which some indigenous communities organise their everyday lives, reading Maira's narrative only through that perspective risks concealing the queer peace work her decision to save the life of a creature performs.

On the one hand, Maira's community is organised in nuclear family formations, with separate houses and dynamics. Therefore, by becoming a mother, Maira assumed a lifetime responsibility that rests on her shoulders, not in a communitarian care dynamic. On the other hand, by saving the life of a creature, Maira created a queer family formation that challenged and interrupted the pressure she had received from the leaders of her community to follow a heteronormative life and desire. Thus, Maira's decision to save the life of a creature and create a queer family alongside Ana shows an intimate peace practice that contributes to re-imagining normative notions of family, ethics, and care.

CONCLUSION

When Maira narrated how and why she thinks her daughter is "a gift of the mountain", we talked through Skype, and due to the weak internet signal she had in her house, we had our cameras off. As Maira's story progressed, I experienced various emotions in my body, which got entangled in a knot in my throat. As soon as Maira explained how opening that bag and seeing this baby produced intense crying in her, the knot in my throat dissolved, and I started crying. Maira's account stopped for some seconds, and while I was trying to hide my tears, we stayed silent for a moment. After some seconds, I realised we were four different women crying in silence: Maira in the past, Maria Magdalene in a far more distant past, Maira in the present, and me, as the new witness of how many lives are possible and flourishing, thanks to an intimate peace praxis that disrupts and redirects our violent everyday. After finishing our call, I went back to bed. We had started the interview at five in the morning, as requested by Maira, which is when she begins her days in the Amazons. Before I could fall asleep, the crying came back, which lasted almost an hour. Meeting Maira, and all the other interviewees, was an experience filled with many emotions but mostly appreciated as a privilege. I ended Maira's interview with high appreciation and admiration for her, inspired by her arduous and valuable work as a social leader and her transcendental way of interpreting life. However, listening to how she approaches and practices her *humanity* left me emotionally exposed, feeling the vulnerability through which we are done and undone by a set of relations that can be as destructive as they can be sustaining.

This chapter explores some of the ways in which peace appeared in interviewees' life story narratives, seeking to contribute to the discussion of how the inclusion of "LGBTI victims

of armed conflict" in transitional justice and peacebuilding in Colombia operates in the everyday. The first section of this chapter explores the experiences of Juan and Elizabeth as representatives in the MPVs' activities. This analysis reveals some of the gains and limitations of this inclusion, highlighting the everyday difficulties and blind spots of the "differential approach" through which the MPVs and other peacebuilding activities operate. Interviewees' narratives show a critical perspective against the articulation of the victim category and emphasise the gaps between macro-narratives of peacebuilding and the micro-politics of its implementation. In doing so, these narratives reveal various tensions between urban and rural realities and bring light to multiple divisions among the LGBTI social mobilisation in the country.

In the chapter's second section, I analyse different workings of intimate peace. In this section, I follow Dianne Otto's invitation to think: "What do imaginaries of peace start to look like if we refuse to conceive of peace through the frames of war? If we admit that the distinction between war and peace may be obscuring the many violences of what we call peace?" (2020, p. 30). In doing so, this chapter explores peace as an embodied practice that occurs in the everyday, amid ongoing violence, and beyond or in parallel to the implementation of peacebuilding led by the nation-state, its institutions, and transitional justice frameworks. I propose the concept of *intimate peace* to analyse the everyday peace work that LGBTIQ+ people perform in parallel to institutionalised peace. Based on the narratives of various interviewees, my analysis in this chapter conceptualises intimate peace as *queer disruptions of everyday violence* that happen on the everyday, in private and familiar spheres, and through corporeal events, for which these are *intimate* interruptions. My conceptualisation of intimate peace practice proposes an everyday perspective that focuses on how LGBTIQ+ people interrupt and transform normative (violent) social relationality through everyday events, gestures, and manifestations amid ongoing violence and social exclusion.

This chapter analyses three doings of intimate peace. Firstly, exploring interviewees' narratives of participating in LGBT spaces and peacebuilding activities, this chapter shows that intimate peace occurs through the critical deconstruction of social difference. Secondly, this analysis explores how this critical deconstruction allows for different forms of reconciliation. Thirdly, this chapter explores how intimate peace might also encompass the creation of new (dissident) social bonds and the maintenance and reproduction of life. This analysis considers

how intimate peace operates through the body as an embodied practice and how LGBTIQ+ people reconfigure violent social formations opening possibilities for re-imagining social bonds, family formations, and maintenance and reproduction of life amid ongoing violence.

Building on the thesis conceptual framework (see Chapter 2), my analysis of interviewees' narratives explores how human's generic vulnerability is at the core of the different faces of violence; as victim, perpetrator, and witness of the violent experience (Staudigl, 2013). By thinking of violence as a phenomenological experience, this analysis shows how violence is a form of social relationality that works through the lived body. However, by proposing the concept of intimate peace, this analysis explores how peace might also emerge from this shared condition of vulnerability. Arguing that vulnerability "is not synonymous with or reducible to injurability" (Butler, 2009b, p. 34), intimate peace sheds light on how vulnerability is also at the core of all responsiveness to what happens, including all the various ways in which we are moved, entered, touched, or ways in which ideas and others impress us. Thus, vulnerability is "the condition of possibility for love, desire, care, hope, and life" (Lloyd, 2015, p. 214). Intimate peace, thus, shows how vulnerability and the lived body are at the core of the experience of violence but also sheds light on the transformational (peaceful) potential of queer disruptions of everyday violence that are produced and sustained by non-normative subjectivities, embodiments, and social formations.

This chapter seeks to listen beyond narratives of violence, suffering, and loss to recuperate and shed light on how LGBTIQ+ people contribute to imagining and practising a more peaceful social relationality on a daily basis. At the core of this chapter rests the question of what peacebuilding is and how it works if we move from the armed conflict narrative to thinking about the causes and consequences of everyday violence in the life course of LGBTIQ+ people in Colombia. By proposing the concept of intimate peace, this chapter contributes to developing a more comprehensive conceptualisation of peace and peacebuilding based on the narratives and interpretations of marginalised subjects. This chapter recognises and highlights the differential peacebuilding work that LGBTIQ+ people practice daily, parallel to dominant and official (government-led) peacebuilding initiatives. As this chapter demonstrates, the intimate peace LGBTIQ+ people practice in the everyday not only disrupts everyday violence but also creates a less violent form of social relationality that promotes social justice.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

¡Las mujeres trans no somos peligrosas, estamos en peligro!
[Trans women are not dangerous; we are in danger!]
Red Comunitaria Trans, Bogotá.

Figure 6

Note: Photograph retrieved from RTC's Facebook page.

The *Red Comunitaria Trans* (RCT)[61] is a Bogotá based communitarian organisation founded by a group of transgender women sex workers living in the Santa Fe neighbourhood. Santa Fe was built and established in the 1930s by one of the wealthiest families in the country. European immigrants, including Jewish people and wealthy families, first occupied it. After the end of World War II, these families moved to other parts of the city, and some returned to Europe. According to historians, Santa Fe's population changed dramatically over the years, becoming a

[61] See: https://redcomunitariatrans.org/

commercial neighbourhood inhabited by immigrant families from other parts of the country, students, artists, and merchants. Santa Fe's closeness to the railway station and the city's main access routes increased the neighbourhood's commercial activity. Various hotels and businesses opened to cover the needs of the new floating migrant population, including establishments selling sex. In 2002, Bogotá's local government declared a portion of Santa Fe as a "High Impact Zone" [red-light district] in which many bars and brothels operate and thousands of sex workers live and work.

Daniela Maldonado Salamanca[62], the founder of the RCT, arrived in Santa Fe after leaving her natal city, Ibague, when she was sixteen. Since then, Daniela has encountered multiple difficulties while trying to survive as a transgender woman sex worker living in Bogotá. Besides experiencing marginality and social discrimination, Daniela has witnessed how several transgender women, including close friends, have been killed under the rubric of "social cleansing" with complete impunity. After living as part of a trans community for years and having the opportunity to work with a social organisation dedicated to the attention of homeless and trans populations, Daniela decided to create a social space to mobilise the needs and demands of her community. Daniela founded the RCT in 2012, and she has been working for the recognition of the human and sexual rights of this population since then, having a particular impact on the lives of hundreds of transgender women that arrive yearly in Santa Fe after being displaced by conflict-related transphobic violence.

In the last five years, some local artists have joined the RCT to explore different channels of communication and forms of activist expression. These collaborations have grown into a creative, unique, and subversive artistic movement that seeks to expose and denounce the vulnerable position of marginal transgender people living in the city (i.e., as poor, transgender women sex workers, displaced, HIV+, homeless, among others). Through various *artivist* projects[63], the RCT has: denounced police brutality suffered by transgender sex workers; exposed the consequences of conflict-related violence and everyday violence in transgender life trajectories; and raised a voice against the discrimination that the (white, elitist, gay-dominated,

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[62] See: https://enciclopedia.banrepcultural.org/index.php/Daniela_Maldonado_Salamanca
[63] See: https://redcomunitariatrans.org/index

Bogotá/urban-centred) LGB[T]I[64] movement produces against this community. During these artivist performances, the RCT members have coined a series of powerful slogans that have called the attention of public opinion at local and national levels. One of these slogans, cited at the beginning of this section, represents one of the principal messages this thesis seeks to convey: *LGBTIQ+ people are not dangerous; they are in danger.*

Many of the RCT's artivist performances developed in the last years are directed towards challenging and questioning cultural prejudices attached to the non-normative transgender body and sex workers more broadly. Due to the precarious conditions in which they live and the physical space of illegality, drug trafficking, and drug and alcohol abuse that surrounds them while living in Santa Fe, transgender women are commonly portrayed as "dangerous", "criminals", or "bad members of society". It is a framing that only worsens when adding all the many other prejudices and negative narratives attached to their non-normative bodies, genders, and sexualities. In response to this portrayal, the RCT has put at the forefront of their manifestations that, on the contrary, it is the transgender body that is in danger on a daily basis. Denouncing that the life expectancy of transgender women ranges from 35 to 41 years old in Latin America or even lower in Colombia (due to the levels of violence they confront and the precarious living conditions in which they live), the RCT's artivist work discloses the multiple forms of violence impoverished and marginalised transgender women suffer in the everyday.

Besides their artivist work, the RCT has developed a social and political space that, working under a feminist intersectional perspective, seeks to mitigate some of these violent consequences. This space aims to help and work with marginal individuals socially excluded and framed as violent or dangerous, as is the case of the homeless, drug users, and (cis) sex workers. The RCT headquarters has become an activist, peacebuilding space that works daily to improve marginal individuals' living conditions and mobilises peacebuilding artistic expressions outside normative, institutionalised standards. While I did not interview any of the RTC's members, I wanted to introduce the Conclusion of my thesis with the relentless and inspiring work of the RTC because my research findings echo these dissident voices and experiences in multiple ways.

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[64] They consider rather ironic that the T is included in a social movement that doesn't represent or fight for the rights of transgender Colombians, and particularly for those that live in the margins of society as sex workers, homeless, HIV+, and poor.

Located in Colombia's "post-conflict" context, my thesis sought to expand the empirical and theoretical comprehension of how people with non-normative genders and sexualities live and experience everyday violence in conflict-affected contexts. The research design and the analytical work this thesis developed sought to answer the following research questions:

- How does conflict-related and everyday violence intersect in the life course of people with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities?
- How do sexuality and violence intersect in conflict-affected contexts in Colombia?
- How do people with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities endure, resist, and transform violent contexts?

Arguing that the inclusion of the voices and experiences of LGBTIQ+ people[65] in official narratives of internal armed conflict in Colombia has specific limitations (as discussed in Chapter 1), the thesis proposed a queer feminist theoretical framework and methodology to explore how armed conflict has affected the lives of LGBTIQ+ people from their perspective. The methodology sought to generate *situated knowledges* (Haraway, 2004), opening a space to listen to LGBTIQ+ people's *subjectivity*, perceptions, understandings, and embodied experiences and practices. I developed a queer feminist narrative analysis of interviewees' life stories to grasp the complexities of how violence is experienced, resisted, and transformed in the everyday of LGBTIQ+ people living through conflict-affected contexts.

The analysis of research participants' life story narratives in this thesis has confirmed that conflict-related violence is only one among other forms of violence affecting the life course of LGBTIQ+ people growing up and living in conflict-affected contexts in Colombia. This thesis has argued for the need to conceptualise violence differently, seeking to explore this variety of forms of violence and explain how everyday violence intersects with armed conflict in the life course of LGBTIQ+ people. In general, this thesis makes a case for a reframing of non-

[65] I use the LGBTIQ+ acronym to refer to people with non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities (i.e., non-normative sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, sex characteristics, and sexual behaviours). It includes people self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, or any other identity, expression, or behaviour of sexual or gender dissidence in this context. I use the LGBTIQ+ acronym when referring to the work of my research, the LGBT acronym when referring to the work of state-sponsored historical memory research (which does not include intersex people), and LGBTI acronym when referring to the social mobilisation of gender and sexual diversity in Colombia.

normative gender and sexuality and violence in the Colombian context by (a) showing how conflict-related violence works alongside and is predated by everyday violence, (b) showing some of the limits of the internal armed conflict narrative and the LGBTI victim of armed conflict category, which cannot capture how LGBTIQ+ people experience violence and work through it, and (c) pointing towards the need to think about "post-conflict" peace differently.

In the following sections, I summarise the main findings of the thesis, highlight its novel contributions, reflect on its limitations, and suggest avenues for further inquiry.

1. BEYOND THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL MARKERS OF ARMED CONFLICT

My thesis has decentred the official armed conflict narrative to study how violence affects the life course of LGBTIQ+ people. By taking a feminist everyday perspective (Chapter 2), the thesis has demonstrated that spectacular manifestations of violence against LGBTIQ+ people exerted by armed actors in conflict are part of a continuum of everyday violences operating in the life course of LGBTIQ+ people before, during, and after conflict. Through destabilising, war/peace, ordinary/spectacular, and conflict/post-conflict analytical dichotomies, the analyses developed in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 have shown that violence against LGBTIQ+ people exceeds the temporal and spatial markers of armed conflict in Colombia.

Analysing life stories as *resources* (Plummer, 2011), my analysis in Chapter 4 has shown that historical narratives around (normative) sex, gender, sexuality, and race that produced hierarchical social orders and established power relations, oppression, and subordination in colonial times, continue operating in the current realities of Colombian LGBTIQ+ people. This chapter has focused on how these historical narratives produce specific silences through which violence against LGBTIQ+ people is concealed, experienced, and resisted. Through the analysis of the life story narrative of Maira, an Indigenous woman with non-normative sexuality, the analysis has disclosed how Indigenous communities fight everyday racism that perpetuates their marginal position in economic, epistemic, territorial, social, and cultural terms. This analysis has exposed how racism and sexism determine how Maira experiences her non-normative sexuality in her family home and inside and outside her community.

While many violences operate in Maira's everyday life, her life story highlighted the violence her Indigenous community suffered in colonial times. This analysis has exposed how this violence continues structuring how Maira is allowed to perform her social position as a woman with a non-normative sexual orientation nowadays and how armed actors have instrumentalised and reproduced this violence to achieve their goals during the armed conflict. Maira's experiences of armed conflict have revealed a continuum of violence between the historical absence of the government in Indigenous territories, the marginalisation and precarity derived from this political disinterest, and the violent actions of armed actors in the conflict – including the role of the military in creating and reproducing historical and everyday narratives that portray Indigenous communities as the enemy of society.

Chapter 4 has also revealed how normative notions of sex and gender emerging from evangelisation processes in colonial times continue operating in the present time through violent binary systems that classify bodies and subjectivities as legible and illegible. The analysis of the life story of Claudia, an intersex, lesbian woman, has exposed how religious institutions continue perpetuating historical narratives that negate the existence of corporealities that defy the binary (colonial) representation of sex and gender. By taking a historical approach, this analysis has argued that the violence that armed conflict has exerted against non-binary bodies and genders (sometimes in alliance with communities) is part of a continuum of violence rooted in colonial times and reproduced by religious and scientific narratives of normalcy and (heteronormative) functionality. These narratives operate in public spaces but also in the private sphere of the family home.

Following this thread of argumentation, Chapter 4 has explored how the historical social order established in colonial times in Colombia plays a crucial role in how violence against LGBTIQ+ people operates nowadays. Such social order was determined by the unequal distribution of economic resources between white and racialised communities and their distinct geographical localisation in the national territory. The analysis of Miguel's experiences as an activist in homosexual and AIDS/HIV causes has revealed how this historical inequality and racialised/classed territorial distribution determined how violence against LGBTIQ+ people has become visible as a social issue in recent decades. This analysis has shown how the homosexual movement, later evolved into the LGBTI social mobilisation, has reproduced an urban/rural

divide that concealed how violence against LGBTIQ+ people is differently exerted and experienced, dependent on racial and class statuses. The urban/rural divide facilitated the concealment of conflict-related violence against LGBTIQ+ people living in rural areas, whose experiences were not included and represented in urban-centred homosexual and LGBTI mobilisations. This analysis has revealed that armed actors instrumentalised this urban/rural divide using different forms of violence against LGBTIQ+ people living inside and outside conflict-affected areas.

Echoing queer feminist theorisations in Latin America, this thesis has demonstrated that violence against LGBTIQ+ people has its roots in colonial violence and continues reproducing through different forms of racism, sexism, and classism and their intersections in the everyday of LGBTIQ+ people. Based on this argument, the thesis findings have shown how racialised and impoverished LGBTIQ+ people are differently exposed to violence.

Adding to the analysis of how violence against LGBTIQ+ people exceeds the temporal and spatial markers of armed conflict in Colombia, my thesis has demonstrated in Chapter 5 that displacement is not a one-time conflict-related violent event but a violent process that shapes the life course of LGBTIQ+ people. The analysis in Chapter 5 has revealed that for some LGBTIQ+ people, the family home is the first site of estrangement and violence they confront. Thus, for some LGBTIQ+ people, their process of displacement begins early in life while being violently moved out of their family home because of their non-normative gender or sexuality. Through the analysis of various processes of displacement experienced by LGBTIQ+ people, the thesis has shown that previous displacement experiences determine or worsen the consequences of conflict-related displacement. This analysis has revealed that displacement is a violent phenomenon that impacts the lives of LGBTIQ+ people in particular ways and exceeds the official internal armed conflict narrative as it includes displacements before, during, and after conflict. Similarly, this analysis has demonstrated that displacement involves other spatialities not contemplated in this official narrative, showing how LGBTIQ+ people experience displacements from the home, cities, regions, and institutions (i.e., family, Church, military, carceral system, and sex work).

This thesis has also considered how social categories such as gender, sex, class, and race determine subjects' (im)mobility between different physical and symbolic spaces. This thesis has

shown how LGBTIQ+ people are not allowed to stay put in social spaces that enable the reproduction of (normative) life (i.e., family home, school, and job market). At the same time, they are forced to remain still in social spaces and institutions that interrupt their life trajectories and push them towards marginality and precarity (i.e., sex work, prison). This analysis has demonstrated that the life trajectories of marginalised and racialised LGBTIQ+ people are oriented towards a temporality of survival and constant beginnings that exposes them to further violence and reproduces their life orientation towards marginality and precarity. Consequently, the thesis has argued for the need to expand the scope of analysis to consider how everyday violence against LGBTIQ+ people works *through* and *as* displacement, inside and outside the armed conflict spaces and temporalities.

These findings demonstrate that the official "internal armed conflict" narrative does not fully grasp the complexity and spatio-temporality of everyday violence against LGBTIQ+ people in Colombia. The analysis developed in this thesis seeks to expand the process of documentation carried out through historical memory and the Truth Commission's approach. The complexity exposed throughout the thesis seeks to generate critical reflections on Colombian society's responsibility in visibilising and challenging everyday violence against LGBTIQ+ people. As my analysis has shown, LGBTIQ+ people encounter violence in public and private spaces, and this violence is exerted by armed actors but also by institutions, civil servants, communities, and families. Therefore, the empirical and analytical findings in my research address the structural, social, and cultural changes that are still missing in order to close the gap between legal advancements for the recognition of LGBTI human rights and the violence they confront in the everyday.

2. LISTENING TO SUBJECTIVITY

By decentring the "LGBTI victim of armed conflict" category and taking an everyday perspective on violence, my thesis has shown how the experience of everyday violence shapes LGBTIQ+ people's subjectivity. As explained in Chapter 3, I analysed interviewee's life stories as *narrative texts* (Plummer, 2011) to understand processes of subject formation that traverse the life experiences of LGBTIQ+ people (as gendered, sexed, racialised, and classed subjects) and to

comprehend the relationships they have established with their cultural, social, and political environment. Thus, the thesis has listened to interviewees' subjectivity to understand how they define the violence phenomena and analyse how violence, as a type of social relationality, shapes their experience of the everyday and their sense of self. Through analysing interviewees' life story narratives, this thesis has explored the everyday as a site of resistance and transformation of violence. Building on these methodological and theoretical underpinnings, the analysis in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 has demonstrated that LGBTIQ+ people's subjectivity is shaped by how they experience, resist, interrupt, and transform violence in the everyday.

My thesis has explored how *normative violence* (Butler, 2004) operates in the everyday of LGBTIQ+ people. The analysis in Chapters 4 and 5 has shown how sex, gender, and sexuality are social constructs produced and maintained through the work of power relations and the use of violence. I have demonstrated through this analysis that those bodies and subjectivities that do not conform to normative notions of sex, gender, and sexuality are differentially exposed to violence. In Chapter 4, I have revealed how non-normative bodies are categorised as illegible, and this illegibility is interpreted as violent. The life story of Claudia showed that her queer corporeality while challenging and exposing the instability of binary notions of sex/gender, was continuously questioned, exposed, and framed as dangerous, inappropriate, abnormal, and sinful. In this analysis, I have shown how normativity is reproduced by violence through impositions of binary sex and gender and how Claudia's subjectivity was shaped by her everyday resistance and refusal to conform to these impositions.

Chapter 5 has revealed how behaviours and subjectivities that challenge gender performativity are policed, punished, and removed from social spaces. My analysis of Candelaria's life story narrative has shown that as a transgender woman, she has been exposed to violence from an early age and struggled to find a physical space to live and material means for survival. This analysis has confirmed how those who refuse to reproduce gender normativity are exposed to (induced) *precarity* (Butler, 2009) and processes of social marginalisation. My analysis in Chapter 5 has also exposed how LGBTIQ+ people's mobility is conditioned by how their non-normative gender and sexuality are policed in private and public spaces. The analysis of Nacho's displacement process has revealed how his mobility was determined by how others gendered and sexualised him. Nacho's displacement process has disclosed how his non-

normative sexuality as a *marica* man was concealed, denied and policed through his imposed (im)mobility between different spaces. Specifically, this analysis has shown that in conflict-affected contexts, normative gender and sexuality are reproduced through specific subject positions (i.e., military, priest, social leader, conservative) and how these reproduce violence in the everyday.

Findings in Chapter 5 have confirmed how human mobility is enmeshed in power relations and implicated in how subjectivities are shaped and how sexuality and gender performativity are attached to specific ways to inhabit physical spaces. Nonetheless, the analysis of Candelaria's and Nacho's displacement processes and possibilities of (im)mobility has revealed that subject formation is not a closed and finished process but a constant tension between imposition and resistance.

By listening to interviewees' subjectivities, this thesis has also demonstrated that LGBTIQ+ people resist everyday violence through different located and embodied practices. This analysis has revealed that LGBTIQ+ people living in conflict-affected contexts do not naturalise violence, as argued in some historical memory approaches (CNMH, 2015). The analysis of interviewees' life story narratives across the thesis has shown how LGBTIQ+ people *endure* (Walker 2010) the (many times violent) everyday; suffering, surviving, resisting, and simply living through and despite ongoing violence. My analysis in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 has shed light on how LGBTIQ+ people endure the everyday through persistent, powerful, subversive *small acts of living* (Wade, 1997). Chapter 4, for example, has revealed how LGBTIQ+ people resist and challenge everyday violence by breaking historical silences embedded in narratives of normative sexuality, colonial racism and sexism, and armed conflict.

In Chapter 5, my analysis has shed light on how LGBTIQ+ people resisted everyday violence through movement and displacement. This analysis has shown that LGBTIQ+ people move away from violence and towards survival on a daily basis. While many displacements interviewees experienced were violently imposed by others, I consider it crucial to emphasise that between violence and displacement, there is always resistance and a desire to persist in the world that represents a small act of living. This analysis has also confirmed that queer/non-normative desire always reappears and persists no matter how many times it is violently policed,

punished, and displaced. Interviewees' life story narratives included stories of romantic and sexual relationships that emerged amid ongoing violence and inside gendered and sexualised normative spaces (i.e., military, Church, sex work, family home, prison). Additionally, this thesis has suggested that queer desire has the potential to displace violence in these spaces.

My thesis has also explored *why* and *how* the lives and experiences of LGBTIQ+ people may bring alternative knowledge to conceptualising and studying peace and peacebuilding processes in the Colombian context. My analysis of interviewees' life story narratives has demonstrated that LGBTIQ+ people not only resist but also interrupt and transform everyday violence. Chapter 6 has introduced the concept of *intimate peace* to analyse how LGBTIQ+ people produce *queer disruptions of everyday violence*, interrupting and transforming everyday violence. This analysis has sought to rethink peace outside the frames of war and as an everyday located embodied practice that has the potential to reconfigure and reimagine violent forms of social relationality. In this analysis, I have argued that LGBTIQ+ people interrupt and transform normative (violent) social relationality through everyday events, gestures, and manifestations amid ongoing violence and social exclusion. Chapter 6 has demonstrated how LGBTIQ+ people practice intimate peace through a critical deconstruction of social difference, intimate reconciliation processes, creating new dissident social bonds, and maintaining and reproducing life amid ongoing violence and social exclusion.

By listening to LGBTIQ+ people's subjectivity, this thesis has sought to expand historical memory approaches and enable a more complex analysis of how LGBTIQ+ people experience violence. Thinking outside the "LGBTI victim of armed conflict" category allowed me to explore violence as a form of social relationality. In this analysis, I have shown how sex, gender, and sexuality are not fixed or finished subject positions but processes of subject formation enforced through violence and resisted in creative, subversive, and peaceful ways. Through these findings, my thesis seeks to shed light on the political power of LGBTIQ+ people's testimonies of violence and to emphasise LGBTIQ+ people's daily efforts to practice and re-imagining a more peaceful social relationality in Colombia.

3. READING VIOLENCE THROUGH NARRATIVE

My thesis constitutes an original and critical contribution to the study of violence in Colombia. The queer feminist narrative analysis developed in the analytical chapters of the thesis provides a novel methodology to study how violence works in the everyday of LGBTIQ+ people and across their life trajectories. Using the life story method allowed me to analyse how violence operates, not as an event but as a process of social relationality. Instead of analysing life stories as linear accounts with clear delimitations between past, present, and future temporalities, I have shown how violence queers linear temporalities of human experience. By shedding light on the *ripples of violence* (Bufacchi & Gilson, 2016), my analysis has focused on how violent events (or acts of violence) evolve as an embodied experience with broader and unclear boundaries.

In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I have suggested that violence as a phenomenon (Staudigl, 2013) extends and (re)produces across different temporalities (as an embodied experience lingering in conscious and unconscious bodily/affective memory) and spaces (affecting how bodies inhabit, move, or stay put in physical and symbolic spaces) through subjects' embodied subjectivity. Following this theoretical and methodological approach to violence, my analysis in this research has also considered how the experience of violence might evolve across time and space as the reproduction of violence. Analysing how interviewees' have used violence in their everyday lives, this thesis has blurred the borders between the categories of the victim and perpetrator of violence. This analysis has shown how interviewees reproduced violence in the everyday as a strategy to cope with violent contexts/relationships and an inherited form of social relationality.

Considering life stories as *narrative texts* (Plummer, 2011), my analysis in this research has focused on *what* interviewees' life story narratives tell about violence in their life course and *how* these narratives are crafted. Through this two-fold approach, I structured my analysis of interviewees' life story narratives identifying *plots*, *nuclear episodes*, and *thematic lines* (Plummer, 2011). Using this analytical structure, I have identified how each interviewee centred their life story around: a dynamic tension that provided cohesion to their narrative (plot), autobiographical events prioritised in the narrative (nuclear episodes), and recurrent content clusters in their stories (thematic lines). This approach has helped me to address how violence

becomes evident not only through violent events but also through the narratives that direct a life and how individuals narrativise their memories and experiences.

At the end of each life story interview, I asked research participants to define some concepts in their own words, including the concept of violence. All research participants gave me a different definition of violence. Tellingly, this definition was aligned with how interviewees had structured their life story narratives. The plot of each life story narrative reflected how the life trajectory of each research participant was impacted by a specific type of violence, which was prioritised above others. This analysis has allowed me to find that as an embodied experience, violence, no matter its nature of violence (physical or symbolic), impacts how subjects perceive and make sense of the world, others, and themselves (Staudigl, 2013). Additionally, this analysis has shown that not all LGBTIQ+ people place their non-normative gender or sexuality at the centre of their life story narrative. In the same way, they do not always locate the violence they have experienced because of their non-normativity at the top of their suffering.

This thesis has revealed how the life trajectories of LGBTIQ+ people are shaped and oriented by violence and how interviewees resist, interrupt, and transform violence in their everyday lives. Considering that violence, as a social phenomenon, disrupts how subjects perceive and make sense of the world, others, and themselves, this thesis suggests that interviewees' capacity and courage in building a life story narrative represents an act of resistance, interruption, and transformation of violence. By giving an order, meaning, and spatio-temporal localisation to their memories and experiences, interviewees in this research confronted and resisted the violence they experienced across their life trajectories. Additionally, this thesis has confirmed that exploring experiences of violence and *which violence matter* for specific subjects is extremely important when peacebuilding is seen in broader historical, sociological and political terms (Pearce & Pereira, 2020). Interviewees' practice of intimate peace has revealed that thinking about how violence is experienced and defined is crucial in delimiting what is considered as peace and reconciliation. Instead of being "interventions" or "projects", these appeared to be rooted in differentially experienced micro and macro processes (Pearce & Pereira, 2020) in the life course of research participants.

4. LIMITATIONS AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE INQUIRY

As mentioned in Chapter 3, using life story narratives as a queer feminist research method demands reflecting on the context in which these narratives were produced. While produced in a research context, these narratives do not represent the "truth" of specific events, nor their analysis seeks to claim objectivity. On the contrary, these narratives and my analysis are located in a particular context. They are the product of collaborative, creative, relational processes in which the relationship I established with research participants determined the outcome. These narratives reflect the social, political, and historical moments in which I conducted these interviewees. These conditions determined how interviewees remembered particular occurrences and structured their life story narratives.

In this thesis, I have analysed the life story narratives of LGBTIQ+ people from different regions in Colombia. While each narrative provided a situated account of how violence works through different axes of power determined by various categories of social difference, the analysis developed in this thesis cannot account for the specificities of regional differences across the country. Nor for how different processes of racialisation determine the experiences of violence in the life course of LGBTIQ+ people. This represents a limitation in my research and an area of future inquiry. Along the same line, while my research has included life stories of (cisgender and intersex) women sexually and romantically attracted to women, much work is still needed to explore how everyday violence affects the life trajectories of women with non-normative genders and sexualities. The historical invisibilisation of their voices and experiences, whether due to political erasures or political refusals to engage in research activities, represents a gap in knowledge and empirical evidence that recent historical memory efforts have further increased.

Based on my experiences in fieldwork, I would like to emphasise the importance of providing economic support to transgender persons and communities so they can advance their research agendas. Various trans collectives in Bogotá have a political statement against how academic and governmental-led research work is conducted, particularly when engaging with transgender people. Along with this political statement, these collectives are reclaiming an epistemic authority historically denied to racialised and impoverished LGBTIQ+ people. New

and creative methodologies are needed to engage with these collectives, to generate collaborative processes of knowledge production.

This thesis introduces the concept of intimate peace based on the analysis of interviewees' life story narratives. This conceptualisation represents a first attempt to address and explore the specific peace work performed and enabled by LGBTIQ+ people and the so-called "LGBTI spaces" of social participation. Future research may extend this conceptualisation or expand the empirical documentation of this intimate peace practice. In the same way, after six years of the Peace Agreement with FARC guerrillas, it seems pivotal to explore how rural LGBTIQ+ people have resisted and transformed governmental-led peacebuilding processes.

Finally, the findings in this research extend an invitation to rethink concepts of *reparation* and *impunity* in "post-conflict" Colombia. Showing how violence is a relational phenomenon, in which located violent events evolve across time and space as an embodied experience, this thesis opens analytical paths to ask which are the restitutions needed to address the consequences of everyday violence (including conflict-related violence) in the life course of LGBTIQ+ people? Similarly, showing that much of the violence that LGBTIQ+ people confront daily comes from family, community, or acquaintances, this thesis questions the limitations of how violence against LGBTIQ+ people is judicialised and opens the possibility to rethink the concept of impunity outside its legal and punitive framework.

CONCLUSION

Findings in this research echo the RCT's work (introduction of this chapter) by exposing how LGBTIQ+ people have been historically framed as dangerous enemies of society in Colombia and how they resist and refuse this violent attribution. Similarly, this thesis exposes the marginality and induced precarity that racialised and impoverished LGBTIQ+ people confront in the everyday, as argued and actively denounced by the RCT. Finally, this thesis wants to exalt the relentless peace work LGBTIQ+ people and LGBTI, queer, and dissident collectives do in the everyday to create a less violent social relationality in Colombia and promote social justice for them and others, as the work of the RCT has inspiringly shown.

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