Original article

Women Community leaders in contexts of the Colombian armed conflict

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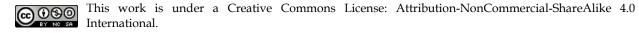cgiraldotan@uniminuto.edu.co

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Abstract

This article presents the findings of the research that sought to identify the possible relationship between historical memory exercises and intentionality in their intergenerational construction. The investigative process was carried out in the municipality of Granada, Antioquia, which was affected by the armed conflict and has a strong history of community organization. The methodology was qualitative based on the phenomenological-interpretive perspective, and for the described purpose, semi-structured interviews were used. It was found that, although the intention of the relay in the Knowledge Meetings (strategy of the organizations) is not clear, it materializes in the connection of children and family members in community processes. On the other hand, community organizations encourage women who experienced both the social violence of the armed conflict and the private violence of machismo in their family and partner relationships to make a political place for public participation, recognition, for the fight for rights and for the transformation of their lives, in sum, to be leaders.

Keywords: Memory; Narrative; Armed conflict; Community Women's leaders; Citizenship.

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How to quote this article?

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Hacerse el lugar. Lideresas comunitarias en contextos del conflicto armado colombiano

Resumen

En este artículo se presentan los hallazgos de la investigación que buscó identificar la posible relación entre ejercicios de memoria histórica y la intencionalidad en su construcción intergeneracional. El proceso investigativo se realizó en el municipio de Granada, Antioquia, afectado por el conflicto armado y con fuerte historia de organización comunitaria. La metodología fue cualitativa fundamentada en la perspectiva fenomenológico-interpretativa y, para el propósito descrito, se usó entrevistas semiestructuradas. Se encontró que, si bien no es clara la intencionalidad del relevo en los Encuentros de Saber (estrategia de las organizaciones) éste se materializa en la vinculación de los hijos y familiares en los procesos comunitarios. De otro lado, las organizaciones comunitarias propician que las mujeres, que vivieron tanto la violencia social del conflicto armado como la violencia privada del machismo en sus relaciones familiares y de pareja, se hagan un lugar político para la participación pública, para el reconocimiento, para la lucha por los derechos y para la transformación de sus vidas, en suma, para ser lideresas.

Palabras clave: Memoria; Narrativa; Conflicto armado; Lideresas comunitarias; Ciudadanía.

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1. Introduction

This article presents the results of the research "Generational change in historical memory exercises of the armed conflict: A commitment from rural women in the municipality of Granada Antioquia," carried out in alliance with the Asociación de Víctimas Unidas de Granada [Association of United Victims of Granada], Asovida and Asociación Tejiendo Territorio para la Paz,[the Association Weaving Territory for Peace], Tejipaz, located in the municipality of Granada, Antioquia, Colombia.

Granada is a municipality in the east of the department of Antioquia, in Colombia, recognized for acts of violence, displacement, disappearances, and systematic crimes within the Colombian armed conflict of more than five decades. In accordance with the tracing registered in the National Center of Historical Memory (CNMH, 2013; 2016), the conflict in Granada "enters" through the paths, initially, directly and differentially affecting those who live in the countryside.

Among the differential effects, rural and peasant women were a "spoil of war" and suffered multiple victimizing events, from the loss of children, husbands, and family members to the use and abuse of their bodies (Cadavid-Rico, 2014; CNMH, 2017). However, the armed conflict does not "inaugurate" (originate) violence against women; it has persisted in the social, structural, and historical conditions that replicate that apparent only place: reproduction and care (Gender Equality Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2022) that continues to perpetuate women in a position of subordination, without prominence or participation in the private and public spheres (Bedoya-González, 2019).

Despite the above, it has been shown that both urban women (Bedoya-González, 2019) and rural women (Chamorro-Caicedo, 2020) have the capacity to transform their history, their context, and the spaces they inhabit through collective organization, unity and togetherness; going from a private scenario to which they have historically been assigned, to being able to recognize the significant power of their word and action, enabling "processes of autonomy and emancipation, which leads to raising the need to redefine the role of women in culture" (Marín, 2013 cited in Bautista-Bautista and Bedoya-Calvo, 2017, p. 134), recognizing their place in actions of resistance, resilience, political participation and reconstruction of the social fabric (Hoyos-Gómez & Nieto-García, 2019).

This municipality is also recognized for its history of resistance and community mobilization, manifested, among others, in scenarios such as the Salón del Nunca Más [1] (Carrizosa-Isaza, 2011) and organizations such as Asovida and Tejipaz, which have been guarantors of the processes of struggle and resistance that have taken place in the territory, enabling the reconciliation between their own victims by transforming painful experiences into a

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[1] https://www.salondelnuncamas.com/

social and political dimension, being a way to overcome the conflict (Pinto-Velásquez, 2011; Ruiz-Romero, 2011).

However, the territorial tour and the dialogue with key actors in research processes previously developed by this work team (Cataño-Pulgarín et al., 2023) allowed us to recognize a new threat: oblivion, materialized in the fact that the new generations of Granadans seem not to know or not be interested in their history and their people, this being a factor that threatens to make invisible the actions that Granadans have traditionally built from and with their territory.

The problem with this forgetfulness is that it ignores that making memories is a common place for different generations, where they can meet, reconstruct history, and create diverse narratives based on the experiences and meanings given to what was lived and told (Jaramillo-Gómez, 2016); Furthermore, recognizing new generations as memory-building subjects will prevent the narratives of those who have directly experienced the armed conflict in this region from falling into silence, indifference and oblivion, as means of reconciliation and the construction of territorial peace (Condiza-Plazas, 2021).

For this reason, it can be stated that memory has a social and political function because it positions those directly affected in a leading role as they are the ones who seek to raise their voices in the face of injustice and seek guarantees for the non-repetition of the victimizing events experienced. Seen in this way, making memories also favors identity, commitment, and belonging, enabling factors that enable the exercise of citizenship (Montero, 2004; Reátegui-Carrillo, 2009).

Making memory an exercise of citizenship allows the coexistence of particular versions of the people who lived and who can narrate events that occurred, with which the place of the different actors in the narrated event is questioned, judged, or recognized (CNMH, 2013), this is a way to understanding the conflict, especially from the voices of the victims (Idárraga-Alzate & Núñez-Gallego, 2014). In many cases (not in all), this –memory– rests on the orality and practices of women: what they have done, how they have done it, why they have done it and what they have learned from the process, both to survive the problem of the conflict, as well as to convene, mobilize and create spaces so that more women can access a world that we had been told was men's: the public (Bonilla- Montenegro and Pardo-Parra, 2023; Vélez-Bautista, 2006).

On the other hand, there seems to be a recurring assumption that the armed conflict "deprives" its victims of rights and, although the systematic violations of human rights that have been revealed in various reports[2] have confirmed the situations of violation and the subjective,

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[2] For greater depth, you are invited to review the volumes delivered by the Truth Commission. https://www.comisiondelaverdad.co/

communal and territorial effects; it is reckless to affirm that the conflict is the only cause or root cause of the affectation (Ruiz-Romero, 2014).

In the case study that Ruiz-Romero (2014) does on displacement in Colombia, he concludes that physical displacement is preceded by social displacement, that is, the loss of the condition of citizenship understood as that set of characteristics that allow enjoyment of rights of a person born (or resident) to a territory. Thus, it opens the question of how the normalization of violence, which occurs due to the imposition of coexistence with armed actors and the removal of the state as guarantor of the right and care of the citizen, could be the sine qua nonconditions for displacement in some areas and not in others. Seen this way, the question about the differential impact of women in the armed conflict is not exclusive to it; it is related to the historical-cultural burden of the place that has been assigned from the private and how, due to the care and defense of the life, has been able to open itself to public spaces to defend their autonomy.

The Gender Equality Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean (2022) describes that autonomy for women has to do with having the capacity and concrete conditions to freely make the decisions that affect their lives. In this way, the actions of gathering to face adversity, the participation in women's circles and the processes of listening to the events that have occurred, with the purpose of finding support and a form of mourning and resistance, of finding paths to build peace in their territories, with a view to non-repetition, they seem to establish a public space to know and demand citizen rights: the exercise of citizenship (Posada-Zapata and Carmona-Parra, 2018).

In a review of studies that relate the female subject to topics such as citizenship, peace-building, and armed conflict, several authors agree in identifying that the exercise of citizenship for women has barriers based on gender ideas and stereotypes (Posada-Zapata & Carmona-Parra, 2018; Zuluaga- Sánchez & Arango-Vargas, 2013; Bonilla-Vélez, 2007 and Vélez-Bautista, 2006). The barriers are greater when it comes to rural women who not only suffer from the essentialist places of traditional gender roles but, at the same time, have less access to resources (such as education), which favors problematizing the place in which they are located (Posada-Zapata & Carmona-Parra, 2018; Zuluaga-Sánchez & Arango-Vargas, 2013).

Despite these conditions, there are researches that reveal how community organization processes, especially in the case of rural women, favor the recognition of their role in conflict resolution and community strengthening (Flores-Martínez et al., 2022), in the contribution to the construction of peace (Bautista-Bautista and Bedoya- Calvo, 2017) and its place in the construction of democracy and a citizenry aware of the inequality that contributes to both macro changes (social problems) and micro, everyday practices and forms of relationships (Gil & Sánchez, 2019).

Consequently, this research studies the place that rural women have had in the construction of historical memory as a contribution to the construction of peace and how, in the ways of

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making this memory, the generational change has been evident or not carried out as a way to avoid the perpetuation of the conditions that, initially, lead to the violation of rights in the first place: their lack of exercise and recognition. Thus, along the way through the question, we share with women who found in public spaces of participation and community organizations places of leadership that culture, stereotypes, and machismo prevent them from recognizing citizenship.

As described above, the article was structured in three sections:

a) A methodological section, where the path that was built to approach the exercises that women in organizations carry out, is presented. In this, general elements of the research design are given, and the route developed for the specific objective that supports the findings presented is specified.
b) One of the findings, in which the keys developed from the conversations with the participants are presented in two ways: "narratives of the conflict: what did not happen" and "memory: making it, accompanying it, claiming it"; in addition to the reflection that originated the title of the article and, as an emerging category, it promoted the conversation with the reviewed references.
c) The final section presents the conclusions drawn from the process.

2. Methodology

The specific objective to which this text responds was to identify the possible relationship between the historical memory exercises carried out by rural women from the municipality of Granada, Colombia, and the intentionality in their intergenerational construction. Based on the theoretical review and the conversation with key actors in the process, a diversity of strategies for the construction of historical memory in the territory is recognized; however, the generational change is not necessarily intentional in the actions. Adultcentrism and the difficulty of dialogic spaces in families seem to affect the intention of handover, in addition to the low will (and interest) of many young people to get involved in community processes.

The participants were rural women who live in the municipality of Granada. The sample was intentionally corresponding to strategic or convenience criteria in accordance with the research objectives: rural women who have lived in the municipality of Granada during the period of violence between 1995 and 2006.

The research design was emergent, characterized by being open and flexible (Galeano-Marín, 2012) since the meetings, dialogues, and debates with the participants provided key elements for the research team to review and adjust the phases of the process. A qualitative perspective was followed (Galeano- Marín, 2012), supported by the comprehensive interpretive paradigm (Vargas-Beal, 2011).

In that order, we worked with information collection techniques for research in three categories: documentary, ethnographic, and biographical. The first two will be briefly mentioned, and the third will be discussed in more detail, given that the data of this writing emerges from these. The documentation techniques were documentary tracking, bibliographic records, and analysis matrices (Galeano-Marín, 2012) that were used to review the memory processes that have been carried out in Granada and to track guiding theories and concepts. The ethnographic ones: participant and interactive observation in the Knowledge Meetings[3]. The instrument was the field diary designed from the research categories that arise with the tracing: memory, narrative, and generational change; readings and rereadings were carried out to refine the information and its classification through the following processes: segmentation, coding and open and axial categorical classification (Galeano-Marín, 2012). In the review of the data from the first techniques, the need to design and apply a new method that would allow us to deepen the particular experiences of some participating women to respond to the described objective was identified.

Finally, the biographical interview (Landín-Miranda & Sánchez-Trejo, 2019), with which we sought to know the intentionality of the replacement from the women's experience, the semi-structured interview was chosen considering that it is a technique that allows oriented interaction, flexible with the topics of research interest (Duque & Aristizábal, 2019). It was done with five women who participated in the processes of organizations, both from administrative positions and as volunteers. They were identified because, in their narratives during the Knowledge Meetings, there were topics of interest for research.

Thus, five (5) interviews were conducted with five women focused on two major elements:

a) A general characterization of women in relation to their participation processes in organizations and their possible intention of generational change. They inquired about how long they have been in the municipality if they have left at some point (and the reasons for leaving and returning), their training, and their role in organizations (see Table 1).

b) Conversations about memory and generational relief. Regarding the first, we sought to talk about the knowledge they have about the history of the municipality and their history with the armed conflict and what they do with that knowledge (if they give it to others); also, dialogues about transmission, appropriation, and construction; and as for the second, appreciations about the place of young people and children in memory spaces and their perception of the importance and intentionality of participation.

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[3] These are spaces organized and carried out by social grassroots organizations: Asovida and Tejipaz, which are committed to community strengthening through fair trade and agroecology

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The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (AFI) guided the construction of data; this favor understanding the meanings that the participants give to their experiences, in this case, the intentionality of the generational change in organizations that mobilize in issues of historical memory in which the research team played the role of hermeneutic (Duque and Aristizábal, 2019). The route was to record, transcribe, and prepare the AFI file for each interview, following three parameters:

a) Initial comments (based on the analysis of the content expressed by the women and tagged with descriptors)

b) Emerging themes, where the descriptors are grouped, in which relationships of recurrence and thematic proximity were established, and Categories.

c) That is, those macro themes are oriented by the deductive categories of the research (historical memory, generational change) and the emerging ones. (Narratives of the conflict, memory: making it, accompanying it and claiming it, and making a place for themselves: women in public spaces, women who lead)

Finally, in the analysis of the prepared sheets, readings of each category were made, conceptual relationships, and their corresponding mappings.

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Table 1. Characteristics of the women narrators in the research.

Narrator *	Organization and Role	Belonging to the territory	Reasons for departure	Reasons for return	Participation spaces
1	Tejipaz/ Volunteering	Birth	Movement during the armed conflict in 2002. Three months	No adaptation to the territory in which she arrived	9 years in Community Action Secretary of Government Rotary 2 years as a catechist President of the aqueduct Volunteer in Tejipaz
2	Tejipaz/ Volunteering	Birth	Movement during armed conflict and family illnesses Several mobilizations	Death of familiar. There was no adaptation to the place where she was.	Participate in training spaces in agriculture and entrepreneurship. It begins to form and becomes more active in organizations. Her training takes her to Tejipaz, where she joined as a volunteer
3	Asovida/ administrative	Birth	Movement during armed conflict / Three months	Longing Home	She started as a community mother for 5 years. Then, Fami [4] mother for 12 years. Since 2003, she has attended meetings with victims and, later, became part of the foundation of Asovida.

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[4] Community mothers are "community educational agents" who accompany early childhood education. https://www.icbf.gov.co/programas-y- estrategias/primera-infancia/acerca-de/madres-comunitarias

| 4 | Asovida y Tejipaz/ administrative/ Volunteering | Birth | Lived intraveredal displacement. Has not lived in another different place than Granada. | Does not apply | She began attending meetings in 2004 and in 2007 she assumed a management position in the organization and became a community leader. |
| 5 | Tejipaz/ Volunteering | Birth | Lived intraveredal displacement. Has not lived in another different place than Granada. | Does not apply | She enters the Tejipaz spaces under the volunteer figure. She knows about these spaces through her mother, who, as a community leader, had been participating in community processes for years. |

Source: self-made.

Participants will identify themselves with the word "narrator" followed by a number (sequential) as part of the identity care agreement.

Assuming that social research is a means to build knowledge that provides tools for ethical-political reflections among the agents involved in its construction, implied, first of all, keeping in mind the characteristics of the participating population (victims of the armed conflict) and that the interview could generate emotions and effects in them, therefore, the research team - the Team - was trained in key elements of psychological first aid to be attentive during the interview and follow up days and weeks after the application; Second, the interviews carried out were conducted as a space for conversation that began by remembering the purposes of the research, the possibility of ending them early (if they so desire) and stopping the recording if there were elements that they did not want to be included in the research process analysis and, third, the preparation and signing of the informed consent.

3. Findings

The findings are presented in two sections. The first, "narratives of the conflict: what happened to us" corresponds to the experience converted into a story (Landín-Miranda & Sánchez-Trejo, 2019; Larrosa, 2006) in which what they lived, how they lived it, and what they felt in the middle of the conflict are rescued (Ramírez-Acevedo, 2007). It should be noted that, although these experiences were not the center of the investigation, the conversational spaces provided by the semi-structured interview and the trust woven during the process favored their expression. One of the narrators, regarding the reason to talk about what happened, in relation to the intentionality of the memory exercises, states: "[talking and feeling accompanied allows] one to be able to express the pain that all the violence generated." the feelings it produced in each one" (Narrator 3, personal communication, August 2, 2021).

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The second section, Memory: Making It, Accompanying It, and Claiming It, collects the findings in relation to the understanding of memory that goes beyond turning it into a story. For these women, remembering, telling, and teaching about what happened is configured in spaces of personal and community dignity. The first, as they manage to give voice to what they experienced and to those who are no longer here; the second, in terms of being able to reconstruct what the municipality was before, during and now (times marked, in this case, by the armed conflict) but that, in the now, recognize that it is not only about the chronology of the "hard" time of the conflict (mid-90s until, more or less the end of the first decade of the 2000s, Cataño-Pulgarín et al., 2023; CNMH, 2013) but to make use of what they know to prevent the circumstances are repeated.

3.1 Narratives of the conflict: "What happened to us?"

When the characteristics of participants are analyzed (see Table 1), some particularities are observed. All of them agree on the experience of displacement, both intra-veredal (moving quickly from one place to another for days due to dangerous conditions in their homes) and out of the territory to other municipalities (in three of them). Also, in returning (days, months later) for reasons of adaptation, longing (for the family, for the land), and that deep sense of belonging that, in all of them, is part of the reasons that lead them to participate in community spaces. However, not all of them focus on talking about what they experienced during the conflict, which, without being the focus of the conversation, was a starting point given as it sought to explore what the people did, knew, and how they lived (and lived) it, community participation processes, the place of historical memory and whether generational change was being favored.

In this way, there are narratives that focus on the stories of what happened to them during the armed conflict. Among the victimizing events mentioned is displacement and the subjugation and control of daily life by armed actors. We are faced with stories of those who stayed, those who returned, and some memories - in the voice of the narrators - of those who are no longer here.

Regarding the first, displacement, they tell of the pain experienced by having to leave their lands, leave behind what they know, and see how the paths were becoming depopulated. The few who stayed were subjected to the will of others: "whatever the armed groups wanted to do with them" (Narrator 1, personal communication, August 2, 2021), and when they tried to return, they faced the difficulties of return, understood as the internal and external conditions that seem to hinder individuals and families from being able to return and sustain themselves while the economic, family and institutional means to achieve this are scarce.

Internal conditions are those effects and individual affections that prevent the body from moving through the physical spaces that were inhabited due to the marks of violence, death, and dispossession that are subjected, which usually translate, among many things, into fear and

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incapacity, and "the pain of returning" (Narrator 2, personal communication, August 2, 2021). External conditions are caused by two factors: social and institutional. In social cases, the loss of land or its sale for ridiculous prices makes it difficult to have it again. In addition, some formed new families and settled in other places, which means that they do not seek to return. In the institutional ones, they claim to have little support from local administrations; although they have carried out some actions such as delivering bonds for the market and fertilizers for planting, these are overwhelmed by the state of deterioration of the places and the period/process which implies making them productive again.

Regarding the second, subjugation and control of daily life by armed actors, they describe what happened to their lives when they were prevented from carrying out daily actions, and the threat of losing their lives became a recurring fear. The armed groups, established with intimidation, mandates, and threats, began to determine times of entry and exit from the farms: "You couldn't do anything because they were in charge (...) You had to ask for permission even to go to the bathroom; it was like ... that is, you couldn't have freedom; it was as if you were kidnapped in your own home" (Narrator 2, personal communication, August 2, 2021).

Her experience was one of "kidnapping"[5]. However, this word, in her narrative, seems to be talking about the actions of control over her life that were carried out by both the armed actors during the armed conflict and the actions of submission that she experienced with her husband during the relationship (before and during the conflict):

> I had a husband who had me deprived of my freedom, so I had no right to talk to anyone; I couldn't be in groups, I couldn't do anything, I only rarely came to see my mother and come back, I didn't have access to anything so I didn't know The world, the world turned and turned, and I only lived in it, but I didn't know anything. (Narrator 2, personal communication, August 2, 2021).

Thus, the obstacles to the exercise of their autonomy are not exclusively associated with being a victim of the armed conflict in the period and ways in which it was established in the municipality; they also occurred due to gender status due to the idea that women were in charge of the care and support, also, work in the fields. In this way, the effort involved in caring for the home and working in the fields (with money that contributes to the household economy) increases the conditions of submission: "After he was able to manipulate me completely, he always punished me." physically and rudely, and he cheated on me as many times as he wanted and I had to endure all those things for fear that my children would be in need" (Narrator 4, personal communication, August 10, 2021).

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5   The expression used by one of the participants to describe the situation of being forced to stay at home for fear of retaliatory actions by armed actors who took possession of her house

It is important to clarify that although the violence experienced within couples does not appear as a cause of the social and political problems that are part of the armed conflict, it is significant how the conditions of marital violence experienced by these women (before the conflict) seem to influence the normalization of violence and the naturalization of the violation of their exercise of autonomy, which, in cases of political violence, ends up prioritizing the second and making the first invisible.

3.2 Memory: make it, accompany it, claim it

As mentioned, the Knowledge Meetings are the community strategy through which the members of the organizations strengthen territorial fabrics with a commitment to fair trade and added value in the harvest of products in the villages. Although the meetings were not intended as spaces of historical memory, dialogic conditions were created for them to talk, learn, and promote environmental, social, and trade knowledge.

Likewise, they talk about memory but without limiting it to the recounting of the chronological moments of the armed conflict that took place in the municipality; that is, the members of the organizations do not start from the idea of history as the act of reproducing milestones of the past based on a previously established timeline, here historical memory is built "from the personal, from what I feel, what I live to be able to transmit it" (Narrator 3, personal communication, August 2, 2021), therefore, and it is assumed as a political act that emerges from the personal to find its public space in the polyphony of versions that build knowledge and seeks to remember in order to commemorate, to vindicate, to heal through those spaces that they were building from their efforts:

> [With stories and conversations] people were made to understand what memory means, because people said: no, no, don't mention anything about memory issues to me, I don't want to know about that, because that hurts a lot. (Narrator 4, personal communication, August 10, 2021)

In these built spaces, they relate from their experiences; they found resistance to remembering, the pain of recovering what happened to them and, perhaps, with this, a justification of forgetting as a balsamic effect in the face of the pain that had happened "I told them (. . .) It is necessary to remember, it must be done without so much pain, you must speak to be able to understand" (Narrator 4, personal communication, August 10, 2021). Thus, they persisted in the idea of making memory as a scenario to avoid repetition and sustain the strength that opens with the exercise of consciousness and autonomy:

> What can happen? [if memory is not remembered] that history returns and repeats itself, that history returns and repeats itself (which one?), all of them, because it is not only the history of the conflict in Granada (...) sometimes we simply construct a discourse, and that speech is

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there, and you don't even feel it, you don't even agree with many things it says. I am fascinated because I know another truth to tell people. (Narrator 4, personal communication, August 10, 2021).

In the conversations with participants, the observations of the Knowledge Meetings were deepened: getting together to exchange knowledge, recover knowledge, the social fabric, and promote fair trade. For this reason, they talk about memory (in the interviews) and associate it with commemorating, remembering, recovering, telling, and testifying that they move between individual, family, and community learning: "[memory first personal learning, first dignity, that is because one of the things about memory is that no one is allowed to point fingers at anyone, that is to say, to justify" (Narrator 3, personal communication, August 2, 2021).

Memory, what does it do? Open eyes, my love, open consciousness, (…) How many of us have been inert there in the world, taking up space, but we don't know anything, then what does memory do: come on mijito, react you are here in this little land Colombia. (Narrator 4, personal communication, August 10, 2021).

On this path to awareness (Montero, 2004), a citizenry is created (Reátegui-Carrillo, 2009) that demands rights, seeks truth and makes itself heard. For the participating women, it was not only the space to learn how they were affected in the conflict and what happened to others; it was to realize that they were silenced and kept in the space of private violence sustained by the idea that women have no place.

My dad told me that every day if my husband told me the same thing, that I was no good for fucking shit, because that was his word, always all the time... and I, uh, incredible, and to the point that I was to go out with him on the street and he wouldn't let me... don't you flag me down(expression used to say that you ridicule someone) (...) they were things that were very complex and I internalized them and I became like that. (Narrator 4, personal communication, August 10, 2021).

Power is usually assumed to be something you have, and based on that, you can make decisions. However, Max Weber (Montero, 2006) defines it as the probability of imposing one will on another. From that notion, it seems that, from power, consensus could not be conceived. The intentionality of memory is an intentionality of power. In the sum of versions about what happened from a specific situation (historical memory) is the commitment to recognize(oneself) with a voice to say what happened, as it can be elaborated through the story.

Thus, memory is a path to forming citizenship as it favors conditions in which knowing, asking, and claiming to create political subjects who control, participate, and act. However, they are not simple bets; there are obstacles to continue building it: ignorance, disinterest, dismissal (of the power that knowing testifying implies), presentism, such as living without memory, in the

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sense described by Baró (2006) and non-involvement of the generations that did not directly experience the effects of the conflict.

In this way, raising awareness of how these spaces (and others dedicated to building memory) are a means to reflect and form critical beings aware of their own social reality could strengthen positions of resistance and not just action, which would allow recognition of the systems of oppression in the history of the conflict in order to promote leadership and participation in the territory as a form of liberation.

3.3 Making a place: women in public spaces, women who lead

The results of the research lead to the conclusion that the knowledge built by the participating women is not reduced to the training and participation spaces that they have carried out over the years. Although collective organization, unity, and togetherness have been configured as one of the conditions in which women have made a public place as they lead community and political processes by promoting and exercising autonomy, memory, and the exercise of citizenship. The existence of another condition, which in the research was named subjective, enhanced the force with which they took hold of that public space. The subjective condition mentioned has to do with elements such as curiosity, interest in learning, a deep sense of justice and rootedness in the search for options to escape from conditions of oppression, intimate partner violence, and forms of violence created by armed actors, are knotted and create that power that makes them continue mobilizing, leading, working from and with their territory and community.

Being part of the processes of grassroots community organizations, first Asovida and then Tejipaz, became ways of being accompanied and learning how to do it with others:

> To be able to express the pain that all the violence has caused, all the feelings that it produced in each person, in children, young people, adults… [to] be able to talk about it and say that there are other people who have also experienced it in a different way, but who also have the same affectations that we have, we have many emotions inside. (Narrator 1, personal communication, August 2, 2021).

The results obtained allow us to identify how these are scenarios to recover bonds of trust, which make it possible to talk about what has been experienced as a means of healing together and contributing to the construction of peace (Bautista-Bautista and Bedoya-Calvo, 2017). However, these spaces were not ready; they were created through the coming together and the will of people who assume that community organization is part of the actions for social transformation and is a form of community resistance (Molina-Valencia, 2005) against the situations of violation of rights to which they were subject.

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In the case of the participants, they arrived by different routes. Some are invited as victims to be part of processes, both accompaniment and knowledge of rights (Narrator 3); Others, through the radio, listen to calls for meetings for victims of displacement (Narrator 4), and Narrator 2 knows about productive projects that reach the villages and is interested in learning, knowing, getting out of the confinement in which she lived. Although, Bonilla-Vélez (2007), Posada-Zapata and Carmona-Parra, (2018), Vélez- Bautista (2006), and Zuluaga-Sánchez and Arango-Vargas (2013) affirm that the barriers to accessing the status of citizenship in women are based on gender stereotypes; in the case of the narrators, situations of interpersonal and social violence deepened them.

Regardless of the way they get there, they find in the initial meetings a place that they did not have: to talk, to ask, to know. They learn from the process, they study about laws, and they become citizens, in terms of investigating their place of participation, the rights they had, and what to do in the event of their violation. They face speaking in public and the security risks: "We almost didn't go out because of fear, in total suffocation with this issue of paramilitarism" (Narrator 4, personal communication, August 10, 2021).

When we think of leaders, the archetypes of people with ease of words, clarity of thought, and the ability to influence and mobilize the masses come to mind, coming to attribute unique conditions to those who lead and, in any case, masculine (Mora- Guerrero *et al.*, 2019; Pacheco-Ladrón *et al.*, 2023). However, it was found that it is not so simple, that leading is a process and, for the participants, it was configured as a political commitment that led them to become citizens: leave private settings, train in community settings and participate, and present their voice in public settings. What is not unknown, consistent with the findings of Posada-Zapata and Carmona-Parra (2018) and Zuluaga-Sánchez and Arango-Vargas (2013), is how gender and social stereotypes (rural women) persist in limiting them to a single place: the deprived of care.

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Therefore, making a private place for yourself as a woman is not a simple issue. First, the place is recognized as a portion of space where things are located and done (Ramírez- Velázquez and López-Levi, 2015) whose meaning is produced in the configuration of relationships that are interwoven. In this way, when the expression "making a place" is used, we speak both of those physical spaces in which the encounters were made possible and of the relationships and actions in which they found and heard their voice to leave the limited spaces of married life and to know what was happening in the municipality:

> They announced on the station that there was a meeting to talk about what we had experienced about displacement (...) It caught my attention that they were going to talk about what happened, I wanted to understand (...). However, I also wanted to free myself from the space of drowning on the farm (...) There continued to be meetings, and I did the same thing (...) Every time there was a meeting, they talked about these topics, and I became more and more curious. (Narrator, 4 personal communication, August 10, 2021)

Second, the experiences of the participants range from forms of violence, abandonment, silencing, and limited access to formal education to couple relationships in which the naturalization was maintained that the only place for women is the private sphere and in the condition of the Kantian minority was sustained: that without the guidance of another and his support, one is incapable. In this way, making a place is also about that awareness in which one actively participates in the community (Posada-Zapata and Carmona-Parra, 2018); in the words of (Londoño-Cardona et al., 2005, p. 77), "from the house to the plaza" condenses the movement and path that the women who lead have taken in the processes of community organization.

Therefore, collective organization, unity, togetherness, and as an important element of sisterhood, the "pact", is the path taken by women towards the construction of the feminine public (Londoño-Sossa and Vergara-Arias, 2019), achieving some changes that have allowed them to act and transform their private scenario (where they did not appear as a subject of law, with autonomy and freedom to determine themselves), allowing them to recognize their rights, their capacities and strategies that contribute to social transformation from the different spaces of resistance and begin to be seen as references in the community. However, they struggle with the mandate to decide between public and private places.

> My husband, when that was very oppressive, said no, if you go out on the street, no, if you are not there at a certain time, then you are neglecting the home; the time came when I was allowing him to also agree to not let me see my family, that I would not study, that I would not look anywhere if it were not for my house and if it were not for my home. (Narrator 5, personal communication, August 10, 2021)

For the narrators, grassroots social organizations were the "exit" scene of escape from what they were experiencing privately. This was the initial motivation to participate. The costs they assumed to take part ranged from telling lies to their husband (about the purpose of the meetings) to "escaping" the maternal role with the consequences for their daughters. Findings like those were found by Flores-Martínez *et al.* (2022).

This last case is that of narrators 4 and 5, mother and daughter. The first finds in the meetings of victims and the subsequent grassroots organizations a scenario to avoid the violence that was experienced at home; however, for the second (Narrator 5), the absence of the mother (not the leader of the community) implied that she was led to assume the role of caregiver and that she looked education as a way out of this situation.

> My father got very angry [every time my mother went out to meetings]; at that time, he was angry if he didn't have food, if she didn't take care of the children (...), then I was the one who washed clothes, took care of the cows, the pigs, go sow, because I collaborated with my daddy Don Héctor, sow or keep an eye on the little boy because my mother left me the child who was about ten months old. (Narrator 5, personal communication, August 10, 2021).

There is something particular about that "she left the child". The voice of Narrator 5 is affected by the implications she had of growing up with a woman who was a mother and as a public woman: "It was very hard for me when, for example, she said, I'm going to Cartagena, I'm going to Bogotá, three or four days and I'll say when you will be back!" (Narrator 5, personal communication, August 10, 2021). A kind of feeling of abandonment of the role of maternal care adds to the costs and indications that are in the stories of some of the narrators about the implications they experienced when being part of community processes.

However, do they participate and lead only as an exit option, an escape option? Arendt (2016), in "The Political Promise," describes, locating herself from the Greek polis, the difference between the wise man (the philosopher) and the man of understanding. First, he will say that his love for knowledge leads him to take charge of issues external to the polis. The second, on the other hand, "Knows what is good for oneself (…) knows what is good for the polis" (p. 46) and, therefore, can lead.

To that extent, making a place for public and political participation is read from Arendt's (2016) second meaning: knowing what is good (fair) for the community and acting accordingly. These are women of understanding who are making a place for themselves in "the polis" with their journeys, bets, and experiences. In their narratives, it is identified that they assume an important social responsibility: that of narrating what happened in the municipality and in the country with the conflict as a form of collective historical memory and guarantee of non-repetition. Accompany others, fight for dignity.

In summary, the leadership of the women narrators was identified as a psychosocial process in which subjective conditions (curiosity, interest, will) are connected and mobilized in relation to conditions of community organization (organization, self-management, and mobilization) and, above all, the role of the mother of the female narrators; therefore, this is developed (not innate). It is a political commitment that leads them to constitute themselves as citizens and to build gender awareness: to recognize (themselves) claim rights, to promote autonomy, and to limit acts that prevent them from returning.

4. Conclusions

Stating that the participating women have found a place in a public space with political effects occurs in terms of the recognition of how the exercise of autonomy has been like for them when finding in their memories, transformed into narratives that they have moved from silence in various forms of violence to find their voice (with the voice of others) to give themselves a place of recognition as political actors who demand to understand what happened, communicate how it happened and prevent it from happening again in scenarios such as the participation of organizations such as Asovida and Tejipaz. This coincides with the findings of Pinto-Pérez *et al.*

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(2021) where the active participation of women in community life creates a place that is traditionally masculine. Thus, these women speak, denounce, testify, and commemorate their pain, their struggles, and their losses, and, in that way, they lend their voice to others to remember that forgetting does not alleviate what the route to recovery is to claim the truth and remember.

Making memory challenges the social order that naturalizes indolence by questioning those discursive practices that establish passivity as a subjectifying characteristic of marginalized or vulnerable sectors, associating them with uncritical, ahistorical, and apathetic. To show, contrary to these trends, that memory is a social and community practice that opens ways to develop "a critical attitude towards the social world" (Reátegui-Carrillo, 2009, p.31).

The relay of memories and knowledge is a way of resisting in their territory, and the activity of gathering knowledge is in itself configured as a space for the relay. To that extent, leadership, participation, and care among them (which materializes in these spaces) favors the creation of a space for the exercise of citizenship from the meeting. Situations that disagree with the study by (Zuluaga-Sánchez and Arango-Vargas, 2013) in which they affirm that there is a depoliticization of women's achievements when they are taken as an extension of the role of caregivers.

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In this way, women, through collective organization, have achieved some changes that have allowed them to act and transform the private scenario, favoring the recognition of their rights, their capacities, and strategies that contribute to social transformation from the different spaces of resistance. With this, then, it is important to claim their fundamental role as a political actor in the territorial consolidation of the country, in organizational processes, resistance, or as vital support of daily life. From their narratives, they have had an important social responsibility: to narrate the conflict as a form of collective historical memory and a guarantee of non-repetition. For this reason, Marín (2013, cited in Bautista-Bautista and Bedoya-Calvo, 2017) highlights that:

> When women manage to appropriate their word, body, and actions, they achieve processes of autonomy and emancipation, which leads to raising the need to redefine the role of women in culture, but also in politics and the economy in the construction of a comprehensive peace. (p. 14)

Thus, women are recognized as peace-building agents (UN Women Colombia, s.f.; International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2016) given that from different social and collective processes, they have been a pillar for contributing to the reconstruction of the social fabric in the different territories, especially in contexts that have been marked by armed violence. Their leading role and resistance have been recognized in the protection and fight for the rights of victims, as well as in the strategies that have been implemented to contribute to the resignification of commitments to peace and reconciliation.

Through these stories, the participants illustrate the paths they have taken in their individual - and later collective - struggle for autonomy in terms of making their own decisions and not being subject to male command regarding what they can or cannot do. For their rights and for the care of their bodies (in the key of not being violated). In assistance and support in training, training, and organization spaces, they found and co-created ways to have a place for themselves.

To embrace the right of citizenship is to recognize oneself as a participant in one's community, to have a voice and vote in leadership spaces, and to be political subjects and actors in their territories.

Finally, a qualitative social study favors the construction of knowledge by the subject who lives, interprets, and acts in her world; the scope of the findings is limited to the conditions of the interlocutors of the encounter in terms of the chosen technique, the depth achieved or the multiple voices that can be achieved. In this way, recognizing the impact that organizations have on the positioning of women as political actors, the intentionality of the replacement of the constructions of memory that they carry out, and the strategies that they have used to achieve it may require studies that cover a larger population as well as other techniques for collecting information.

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Shirley Viviana Cataño-Pulgarín: conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, research, methodology, writing (original draft), writing (review of the draft and revision/correction); Claudia Milena Giraldo-Tangarife): formal analysis, methodology, writing (original draft), writing (review of the draft and revision/correction); Eliana Andrea Jiménez-Ortiz: data curation, formal analysis, resource acquisition, project management, research, methodology, writing (review of the draft and revision/correction).

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