



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
WORK**

Gender-based and conflict-related violence in Colombia

A qualitative study of displaced women in subnormal settlements in rural areas of Florencia and their experiences of empowerment through their work in a women's right organisation.

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Abstract

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine women's experiences of gender-based violence as well as their conflict-related violence. The objectives of this analytical approach is to illustrate the member's community work in a women's rights organization called *Mujeres en lucha por la paz* (MLPAZ) and how the work affects the member's opportunities to achieve empowerment in their social, economic and political life. This study is based on six qualitative interviews with displaced women, all members of the organisation MLPAZ, who lives in Miraflores, a subnormal neighbourhood in Florencia, department Caquetá. In this study, theory of violence, gender-based violence, feminist theory of violence and empowerment as well as relevant literature reviews is used in the analysis of the empirical data. The results depicts that women experience different forms of gender-based violence which were: domestic-, interfamily-, patrimonial-, sexual-, economical- and psychological violence. The results also reveals that displaced women are affected by the conflict in multiple ways which includes experiences of physical violence, threats to life and well-being, intimidation, loss of loved ones, no help from authorities, murders and forced recruitment in the conflict. The findings show that women's opportunities for empowerment were strengthened as a result of their participation in MLPAZ.

Resumen

Este documento tiene como objetivo examinar las experiencias de las mujeres de violencia basada en género, así como su violencia basada en el conflicto armado. El objetivo es ilustrar el trabajo comunitario de las miembros en una organización de derechos de las mujeres llamada *Mujeres en lucha por la paz* (MLPAZ) y cómo el trabajo afecta las oportunidades de las miembros para lograr el empoderamiento en sus vidas. Esta tesis de grado se basa en seis entrevistas cualitativas con mujeres desplazadas, todas miembros en la organización MLPAZ, que viven en un barrio en Florencia, departamento de Caquetá. En este estudio, la teoría de la violencia, la violencia basada en género, la teoría feminista de la violencia y el empoderamiento, así como la investigación previa relevante se utilizan en el análisis de los datos empíricos. Los resultados indican que las mujeres experimentan diferentes formas de violencia basada en género que descubrimos: violencia doméstica, intrafamiliar, patrimonial, sexual, económica y psicológica. Los resultados también revelan que las mujeres desplazadas se ven afectadas por el conflicto de múltiples maneras, incluida la violencia física, las amenazas a la vida y el bienestar, la intimidación, la pérdida de seres queridos, la falta de ayuda de las autoridades, los asesinatos y el reclutamiento forzado. Estas experiencias de violencia están relacionadas tanto con la violencia basada en género como con la violencia del conflicto armado en Colombia. Los resultados también muestran que las oportunidades de empoderamiento de las mujeres se fortalecieron como resultado de su participación en la organización.

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Introduction

It is said that one third of all women in the world have been subjected to gender-based violence during their lifetime. In armed conflicts, rape and other sexual violence are often part of the war. From the battlefield to the bedroom, women are at risk. Women and girls are subjected to gender-based violence precisely because they are women: regardless of class, age, ethnic, cultural or religious affiliation. And the perpetrators almost always go free (Amnesty International).

The United Nations (WHO 2017) definition of gender-based violence explains that any violent act that is committed against an individual based on gender norms and power inequalities targets to hamper women's social, economic political and fundamental human rights and dignity. In addition, The World Health Organization (WHO) defines gender-based violence against women as a global public health problem and a violation of women's rights to life, health, security etc.

Colombia's sixty-year internal armed conflict has had devastating consequences on human rights and gender-based violence in the country. The political conflict and violence between the Colombian Government and different armed groups started in the 1940's, emerging into the civil conflict in the 1960's (The Swedish Government Offices 2017:1-2). This protracted conflict between the Colombian Government and various illegal armed groups, included two guerrilla groups, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) but also right-wing paramilitary groups (Wirtz 2014:2).

According to UNHCR (2018) the conflict has created a protracted humanitarian crisis, leaving Colombia with one of the largest internally displaced populations in the world where more than 6 million people have been displaced from urban to rural areas. Violations of human rights and humanitarian law are most often the immediate cause of displacement, whereas the people that are affected, will suffer the plights from living in informal settlements.

As a result, the peace process with the FARC guerrilla and the Colombian government that culminated in a peace agreement in 2016 has lead to reduced

levels of violence in the Colombian society in general. During the rule of the president Juan Manuel Santos and his government, several important improvements were made to guarantee and promote the human rights of the population. However, it is important to mention that this peace agreement has not corresponded in a reduction in violence against women and other vulnerable groups (The Swedish Government Offices 2017). Violence against women is an extensive and urgent problem in Colombia and its abundance calls for attention, remedies, political and societal acknowledging and changes.

In this study we aim to investigate how the gender-based violence has been addressed in the specific southern region of Caquetá in Colombia. Caquetá is one of the departments in Colombia that has been mostly affected by the armed conflict, whose actors: guerrillas, army and paramilitaries has killed 170,030 victims due to their conflicts about terrain (Unit for victims 2019). Colombia is second to Syria, the country with the largest internally displaced population in the world (Noelle 2016:379). Therefore, Caquetá is a suitable place to investigate the effects of the violence displaced people in general, and women in particular has experienced. The women in Caquetá were at the time of the armed conflict in greater risk to be subjected to gender-based and conflict-related violence.

In contemporary times, it still remains lack of research that focuses on women's subjective experiences and narratives of how the violence has affected their lives and human rights through qualitative research methods. Bearing that in mind, we seek to learn how the Colombian legislation, authorities and policies have failed to protect victims and displaced women at risk by getting in depth with women's own authentic experiences. Women, that today, have been omitted and left with no choice than to seek redemption through herself, in this case by mobilization and Non-governmental organization. By investigating the organization of women's rights advocacy, it is possible to understand how these women find strategies to achieve empowerment, take control over their vulnerability and support other victims of the armed conflict in their community work and mobilization.

Background

In the capital of Caquetá, two out of ten people live in subnormal settlements according to estimates from the United Nations Development Programs (Arteta Caballero 2018). In Florencia, 43,000 people out of 180 000 inhabitants have been displaced and live in exclusion among rural areas. In general, the population lack access to formal jobs and public documents that authorise them to own the land on which their home is built. Most of them are not entitled to their possessions and homes, and are victims of the armed conflict that affected the city during the toughest time of the conflict. Prior to the displacement, they lived in close contact with the military and the guerrilla which puts them at great risk to receive heavy threats and exposition in their daily life. This population is in need of the attention of the state in order to have their rights to property legalized and protected (Arteta Caballero 2018).

The people living in these subnormal settlements suffer from poverty, disorder and environmental problems due to the contamination of the water sources that cross the land area, mountains or rural settlements. Today, there are very ambitious projects of buildings and condominiums in the subnormal settlements, but the real task of the municipality Florencia is to organize what is already built. The main reason for this is that inhabitant levels are increasing, as a result of displaced people moving into the city of Florencia. The municipality is working to legalize these districts and so far only one subnormal neighbourhood in Florencia has been legalized which took two years to complete. The types of households in which they live in are a risk to their lives. The geographic location is an area outside the urban area, by mountains and rainforests, where they live in huts and small wooden houses and during rainy periods, many people are at risk of flooding. Sewerage systems are not available to everyone. One of the most affected areas is the neighbourhood Miraflores in which the present study was conducted. There were thousands of families that arrived in Miraflores displaced due to the violence in the armed conflict, and now they are taking advantage of

the land to build their new houses for which they are now fighting to be legalized (Arteta Caballero 2018).

The organization MLPAZ- Mujeres en lucha por la paz (Women fighting for peace)

The organization *Mujeres en lucha por la paz* (MLPAZ) is established in Miraflores and the women who participate in MLPAZ are usually financially vulnerable and uneducated. They have grown up in poor and dangerous conditions, as victims of the armed conflict. The women in MLPAZ are not only victims and survivors of violence, but also defenders of human rights and peace builders in their strategy. At the beginning, MLPAZ was a circle of women coordinated by other women's rights NGO-organizations: *Corpomanigua* and *Casa de la Memoria in Neiva*. The organisations had projects in Miraflores as a result of the high extent of intrafamily violence. These organisations had an informative role and gave the women knowledge about different types of violence and also about their fundamental human rights, through various workshops and activities. After these organisations project in the neighbourhood, MLPAZ eventually became a legalized organization in 2016. MLPAZ is part of a network with over 200 women's rights organizations in Caquetá, which aims to address gender-based violence through a collective agenda and defence of women's rights.

The mission of the organization is to ensure the well-being of the members and their community in Miraflores, generating alternative projects of economic and environmental sustainability: strengthening them for the defence and enjoyment of their human rights, towards the participation and impact on the construction of peace and justice in Caquetá. They seek to promote an exchange of knowledge with other women in the community of Caquetá as many of the women does not possess the adequate information on how to combat their impotence in society. In order to deal with this, they establish and provide educational and pedagogical tools to replicate with other people in the community. Creating space funds to support training and to address situations of domestic violence of the associates is

also a part of their work in order to prevent the gender-based violence as well as the domestic violence taking place in the neighbourhood Miraflores.

Problem definition

Violence against women is a severe human rights problem all over the world. The violence takes many forms and the effects are intricate, affecting individual, families and societies (WHO 2013). Although human rights treaties are in place to combat violence against women, national and local forces and culture often more strongly exacerbate men's violence against women. It is therefore very important to gain local knowledge about the violence and how women experience and define the driving forces of violence in their communities in order to identify strategies to counteract this. In the fight to combat violence against women, local organisations are of paramount importance since the collective actions are key to empowering people and to work towards changing local customs and policies. The Colombian justice system has fail to penalize those who violate women, and this have given birth to local organizations run by women with the help of international corporations such as the United Nations and the Delegation of the European Union to Colombia (Franco Rojas 2019:40). In Colombia, women's movements and feminist groups have been central in contesting gender-based inequality and in pushing for change when achieving empowerment. Through the work of women's rights organizations, the members can work preventive against gender-based violence, and raise awareness for the government's obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil the human rights of all women (WHO 2013). These organizations are crucial for help, protections and increasing political awareness especially for the benefit of the displaced women in the rural areas who are generally neglected in the social and political sphere.

Purpose and research questions

This thesis aims to examine how women experience gender-based and conflict-related violence through their experiences in the armed conflict and as a result of their displacement. In this study we aim to gain further knowledge and explore

women's participation in the organisation *Mujeres en lucha por la paz* (MLPAZ) and their role in preventing gender-based violence in the region of Caquetá as well as to investigate how women who are associated to this organization experience and explain violence and aim to improve women's rights. This study is of relevance because it highlights women's vulnerability to violence, due to their gender along with their displacement.

The study intends to examine the aforesaid by answering the following research question:

1. How does women in the organization *Mujeres en lucha por la paz* (MLPAZ) experience gender-based violence?
2. Which experiences of violence does displaced women in the organization *Mujeres en lucha por la paz* (MLPAZ) have from the armed conflict that has been going on in Colombia the last 60 years?
3. How does the organization *Mujeres en lucha por la paz* (MLPAZ) affect the achievement of empowerment of the members?

Delimitations of the study

In this study we have chosen to analyse the armed conflict linked to the vulnerability of the neighbourhood Miraflores. Hence, we will not describe in-depth the consequences of the Colombian conflict that lasted 60 years, due to lack of time and space. Although it would have been interesting to include men's view of the work of gender-based violence, we decided to focus on how women understand and experience gender-based violence. This limitation is due to the fact that it only works women in the organisation MLPAZ.

Prior knowledge

We will in the following paragraph discuss how we have handled our biases and preconceptions. As both the researcher and the participants influence each other and the result, it is impossible to ensure objectivity (Kvale & Brinkmann 2017). When conducting this thesis this became important to consider as being

transparent with the research process is of importance when claiming credibility (Bryman 2011).

Our university education has helped to improve our knowledge about men's violence against women and the different factors that can lead up to the abuse as well as how it can be prevented. Having basic knowledge of the field as well as knowledge of the context the researcher is studying is essential (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011). During our time in Colombia we were invited by MLPAZ to join their workshops. By participating in their workshops we got the opportunity to deepen our knowledge and understanding of the phenomena we aimed to research. This enabled us to get to know the women, build a relationship with them which generated in them having confidence with us. However, as two Swedish researchers, conducting this thesis in a Colombian context, we were aware that we had to reflect over our western position. According to Mohanty (2003), researchers that conduct their studies in cross-cutting cultures and derives from high income countries tend to view women from less developed countries as powerless in the study-based country. As researchers, we understand that our position might represent not only us as individuals but also the country from which we are from, that is, a more high income country. Being aware of this power relationship that may arose out are pertinent in order to even out the power discrepancy in the meeting with the women. Our understanding is that how we perceive the world i.e. our biases and our preconceptions have had an impact in the result of this thesis.

One of the researchers (SCD) has, besides from her university studies, participated in an educational program about domestic violence and women's rights for a non-profit organisation. The risk to be biased are conceivably, which in this context can mean that researchers have a predetermined theoretical background and attitude to the phenomenon they aim to study (Mohanty 2003). We manage this risk by being aware of this and accept that there are other explanations and theoretical understandings of the phenomenon. Inevitably, our knowledge regarding men's violence against women prior to the research are

based on a Swedish context; therefore our position during the research was to have an open minded approach to the conflict-related violence taking place in the Colombian society. We accentuate that our education along with the educational program SCD has undergone, have contributed to a greater understanding of men's violence against women. When meeting our interviewees, we believe that this has been of importance, seeing that we could understand and theorize the information they shared. We are ensured that this has lead to fewer misunderstandings with the women we have interviewed. Particularly since our supervisor Patricia Franco Rojas has given us relevant knowledge about the violence against women in a Colombian context which differs from the violence against women in a Swedish context. This has been beneficial for us since we initially were aware of our prior knowledge and how it might have an impact in our results.

SCD has also worked in a women's shelter prior to conducting this thesis. Through the non- profit organisation, the researcher came in contact with one of the participants of the educational program, who was acquainted with professor Patricia Franco Rojas from the University of Amazonia that came to be our supervisor abroad. Therefore, the main reason for investigating gender-based and conflict-related violence specifically in Colombia, was a result of us coming in contact with our supervisor Patricia Franco Rojas, whose expertise in this subject has enabled us to investigate the different forms of violence that the women in the women's rights organization MLPAZ has experienced along with their possibilities to achieve empowerment.

Definitions of core terminology

In this section, we will clarify the definitions of concepts and how we have applied them in the study.

Gender

Gender refers to the biological, physical and anatomical differences between a female / male (Pinzón Paz, 2009: 356-357). Male and female social roles are created based on the biological condition of their sex (ibid.). The power

relationship between the sexes is manifested through symbols, normative concepts, social institutions and organizations. Stereotypical gender behaviour is learned in a human being, but it varies depending on the characteristics of the group in which each group resides in or is raised in (ibid.). Gender refers to “the sociocultural and psychological shaping, patterning, and evaluating of female and male behaviour” (Schur 1984:10 In: Renzetti, Edleson, Bergen 2011).

Gender-based violence

The discussion on gender-based violence was spread within the feminist movement at the United Nations Congress about women's rights in 1995. This Congress created a global debate on women's protection and the recognition that gender-related violence affects women in equal circumstances. Under this influence, the definition of gender-based violence was created: The definition is the following: "Any act of violence based on the female gender that has or may lead to physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary detention, whether in public or private life." (United Nations 2005). This term covers several forms of violence including physical, psychological, economical and sexual violence (United Nations 2014). These types of violence can be expressed in intimate partner relationships, violence in families, that is domestic violence but also institutional and cultural contexts (ibid.)

Violence

WHO defines violence as “intentional use of force or physical force, in actual fact or a threat to oneself, another person or group/community, causing or having a high likelihood of causing: injury, death, mental illness, developmental disruption or poverty” (WHO 2003).

According to the Law 1257 (2008 Art.2) in Colombia's legislation, violence is any action or omission, which causes death, damage or suffering, physical, sexual, psychological, economic or patrimonial to women, because of their cultural status

as women, as well as the threats of such acts, coercion or deprivation arbitrary of freedom, in the public or private sphere. Women victims of violence have the right to receive free medical, psychological, legal and legal assistance, from the moment the act of violence is made known to the authorities (Law 1257 of 2008).

Johan Galtung describes violence as a deprivation of basic human rights, or in more general terms against life itself, also against the search for happiness and prosperity and will result in a reduction of one's basic needs (Galtung 2016).

Sexual violence

WHO defines sexual violence as: “Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic or otherwise directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work” (WHO 2012).

Sexual violence manifests itself through actions that undermine the right to decide on sexuality and encompasses any form of non-consented intimate contact, abuse, harassment, intimidation with sexual content, exposure to pornography and prostitution for exploitation (Barrera Téllez 2017).

Patrimonial Violence

Actions against women seeking loss of patrimonial assets and that include all kinds of acts that generate economic limitation with the intention of controlling women’s money, depriving them or the means to obtain it autonomously, for example, when women cannot have property or make use of their own money, property rights, among others. Examples of patrimonial violence against women is: men taking away women’s inheritances received or your income, steal personal items or women’s real estate’s as well as selling women’s personal items or property without consent (Asudelma 2019).

Economic violence

The acts of control and monitoring of the behaviour of an individual in terms of

the use and distribution of money, and the constant threat of denying economic resources (European Institute for Gender Equality 2019).

Domestic violence

Domestic violence means intimate partner violence. It includes physical, sexual, and emotional violence and controlling behaviours to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship (WHO 2012). The term can also encompass child or elder abuse, or abuse by any member of a household.

Physical as slapping, hitting, kicking and beating. *Sexual* violence as forced sexual intercourse. *Emotional* abuse as insults, belittling, constant humiliation, intimidation (e.g. destroying things), threats of harm, threats to take away children.

Controlling behaviours as isolating, monitoring their movements and restricting access to employment, education and medical care.

The reasons for why women may stay in domestic relationships can be the fear of retaliation, lack of alternative means of economic support, concern for their children, lack of support from family and friends, stigma or fear of losing custody of children associated with divorce and lastly: love and the hope that the partner will change (WHO 2012).

Intrafamily violence

Intrafamily violence is any act committed within the family, by one or several of its members, which causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to others of its members, undermining their integrity and damaging their personality or family stability. Intrafamily violence is a form of interpersonal violence, such as physical aggression, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, neglect, abandonment and maltreatment, among others (Machado et. al 2014:94).

Psychological violence

Psychological violence consists of the action or omission destined to degrade or control the actions, behaviours, beliefs and decisions of other people. This violence involves the perpetrator invoking fear through intimidation by

threatening to hurt themselves or the victim. It can occur through jealousy, manipulation, shouting, humiliation, disqualification, prohibition among others (Asudelma 2019).

Internally displaced people (IDP)

Internally displaced people (IDPs), according to the *United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, are "people who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border." IDPs are vulnerable to deprivation, further displacement and other protection risks, such as lack of access to basic services, family separation, sexual and gender based violence, trafficking, discrimination and harassment (UNHCR).

Previous research

This chapter presents eight previous researches connected to women and gender-based violence in Colombia. The previous research we have used highlights the multifaceted problems women in Colombia have experienced by interconnecting gender-based violence with conflict-related violence.

The reason for including a global estimate of violence against women is relevant because it illustrates a general overview of how women in the world can experience gender-based violence. The Latin-American studies are also connected to our study due to the fact that it contributes to an overview of why women is exposed to gender-based violence in Colombia. Continuously, we present the gender-based studies conducted in Colombia, which will be helpful in order for us to answer our research questions about what personal experiences of violence women in the organization have. We illustrate the theory of empowerment through two Colombian reports which describes how women in Colombia were able to accomplish empowerment through rights-work. We included these in order to comprehend what strategies were essential in order to achieve empowerment to find resemblance within our study.

Global estimates of violence against women

In the report “*Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*” by the World Health Organization (2013), the first global systematic review and synthesis of the body of scientific data on the prevalence of two forms of violence against women is presented— violence by an intimate partner (intimate partner violence/domestic violence) and sexual violence by someone other than a partner (non-partner sexual violence) was presented (WHO 2013:2).

Of the result compiled, it becomes clear that violence have important effects on women’s physical, sexual, reproductive and mental health (WHO, 2013:5). The survey showed that women who were subjected to violence by a partner more often reported negative health conditions, such as problems related to sexual and

reproductive health and depression. Women who have been subjected to sexual violence outside a couple relationships reported more often that they suffered from depression, anxiety and addiction (WHO 2013:7-8).

Latin-American perspective of violence against women

In the report “*Gender-based violence: conceptual framework for public policies and state action*” by the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations in Peru (MIMP 2016) they aim to contribute with a direct understanding of gender-based violence offering a framework with concepts that unifies corresponding public policies.

By using Johan Galtung's triangle of violence and symbolic violence in male domination, they illustrate how different types of violence intersect and relate to each other (2016:11). Intersectionality, gender, violence and the construction of male and female identities as an approach to address gender-based violence were used to explain women’s multifaceted vulnerability (2016:15). The report indicate that it is not possible to understand gender-based violence without analysing the intersections between gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation or culture among women. Thus, studies made by the United Nations demonstrate that some groups of women are at greater risk to be exposed of gender-based violence than others. This include aspects such as age or the number of children which are key factors regarding the level of domestic violence. The studies showed groups of women between 25 and 44 years of age as well as women with two or more children to be more exposed to domestic violence. Furthermore, the article’s purpose is to describe the current situation of the most prevalent types of gender-based violence in Peru as well as the international situation.

Gender-based violence in Colombia

In a Canadian report by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada that focused on various aspects of domestic violence in Colombia (2017), it was found that violence against women has become "normalized" to the point that it is invisible to authorities and society in general (Santiago de Cali 2017; Sisma Mujer 2016:9). The corporation Sisma Mujer which advocates for women’s rights,

indicates that, in many cases, women prefer not to report domestic violence out of fear of being stigmatized or revictimized by state institutions (Sisma Mujer 2016:9). According to the National Survey on Demographics and Health, 76.4 percent of women never sought help in cases of violence committed against them (ibid.). In cases where the violence was reported, 40.3 percent were reported at a police station, 37.2 percent at the Prosecutors Office, 19 percent at a Family Commissary, 7.1 percent at "another institution," and 2.4 percent at a court (ibid.).

In the dissertation “*Gender-based Violence in Colombia: New Legislation Targets Femicides and Acid Attacks*” by Jolin Noelle (2016), she aims to deepen the scope of analysis about gender-based violence in a Colombian context. Violence against women is presented as a worldwide epidemic (2016:374) and in order to understand violence against women in this context; the author sheds light on describing how the struggle to end the civil conflict in Colombia has increased, directly and indirectly, gender-based violence. The author describes the machismo culture in combination with Colombia’s violent history, as a partial reason to worsened gender-based violence that results in the killings of Colombian women by their male partner in Colombia (2016:375). The machismo culture holds up a male superiority over women in which women are seen as the caregivers and nurturers. Noelle means that machismo can be described as representing patriarchy, a form of male domination over the female in both the public and private areas. The author states that children, due to their gender are socialized different from an early age (2016:376). A compounding problem related to this is that women tend to be discouraged to report domestic violence. The author exemplifies various cases where women have been murdered by their ex-partners or husband they were in some way familiar with and how the Colombian justice system recurring times has failed to protect these women due to high rates of impunity and lack of resources (2016:377). The author states that Colombian women have been disproportionately affected by the longest-running conflict in the Americas spanning over five decades. The violence against women are rarely

reported due to fear of retaliation and when they do report, it is common that that women are met with indifference by authorities (2016:380). Noelle means that this impunity reinforces the machismo culture. The article concludes that a contributing factor to gender-based violence is the cultural attitudes that persists inequality in the societal structures (2016:399). Social norms and cultures have mutual effects in maintaining gender-based violence and in combination with insufficient legal protection that society withholds, women are omitted and powerless.

Violence against displaced women

In the research “*Gender-based violence in conflict and displacement: qualitative findings from displaced women in Colombia*” by Wirtz et al (2014), the objective was to understand the context and different types of gender-based violence experienced by displaced women in two of Colombia’s urban and rural areas. Gender-based violence being prevalent in conflicted areas is a heterogeneous phenomenon resulting in many documented cases of violations of women and girls. Intimate partner violence in both physical and sexual forms has also been documented in the last two decades of the Colombian conflict. It is illustrated that the conflict itself may serve as a trigger for intimate partner violence, hence aggravating the ongoing violence both at home and in the social spheres. Survivors of gender-based violence and internally displaced refugees have to seek help from healthcare, justice department and protection services in order to achieve it. Due to various reasons such as shame, stigma, poor knowledge and indemnity, an under-reporting of gender-based violence progresses, meaning that the services available for the survivors are under-utilized (2014:2).

The article draws its primary evidence from extensive individual in-depth interviews with 35 internally displaced women, as well as focus groups discussions. For ethical reasons the requirements for the female survivors included the female gender, age 18 years or older, internally displaced as their self-reported status and that they were receiving services from an organization or had reported it. In the six focus group’s discussions a total of 31 service-providers.

Four interviews were also conducted with this target group. The study documents comprehensive gender-based violence committed towards women based on the context of two environments. One being the ongoing conflict setting and the other the area where the female survivor was displaced (2014:5). The former showed five types of gender-based violence specific to this context. Women in this context where exposed to forced or early marriage, forced recruitment and work and several displacement by armed actors. Whilst in the latter context, intimate personal violence was dominant- often including threats, sexual and physical violence generally due to gender norms or power differences (2014:7).

Diana Carolina Pinzón Paz (2009) has conducted a study on how gender-related violence and sexual violence in Colombia's armed conflict have expressed and affected women. The study is based on interviews with exposed women. She describes that in the conflict setting, the violence can be intensified and more invisible. In internal wars, violence will primarily affect civilians, refugees, men, women and children. Violence is usually used as a weapon in armed conflicts and wars. Gender-related violence and sexual violence are usually strictly related to women (Pinzón Paz 2009:354). The various forms of violence that women may be subject to are intrafamily violence, exploitation, sexual slavery, sexual harassment, induced abortions, sex without consent and genital mutilation. These types of violence can be used to humiliate, terror, punish, control, offend, intimidate and destroy communities (Pinzón Paz 2009:366:387). Violence is also used in times of war to achieve military goals. It is described that these forms of violence occur in their houses, camps, military headquarters, places for kidnappings and other settlements. Women and children are the most common groups that are victims of both these types of violence. The violence affects not only the victim itself, but also the family and the community.

The conclusions drawn are that the victims are subjected to violence because the authorities have an inability to protect women. The extent of impunity, the fact that many men who cause violence are not punished, lack of protection policy and

preventive work has resulted in women not daring to report their vulnerability. However, those women who dare to report are often guilty of what has happened to them, according to interviews with the vulnerable women in this study. This is why it is difficult to study the phenomenon of gender-based violence, because it becomes difficult to measure the extent, size and distribution of sexual and gender-based violence. The consequences for this are that they can not always get the adequate help and support from the state and society (Pinzón Paz 2009: 389).

Empowerment

In the report “*Leaders against all odds: Women victims of conflict in Colombia*” by Elvira Maria Restrepo (2016), it is highlighted that Colombia currently surpasses 3, 5 million respectively 7.6 percent registered women victims of conflict (WVC) of the total population. The paper aims to challenge the image of women as victims, since much of the current research regarding conflict describes women as burdens and powerless. Therefore Restrepo’s principal aim with her study is to demonstrate that women’s own experiences of being disproportionately impacted by the armed conflict, can contribute to peace-building by promoting women’s agency particularly since they have overcome their own victimhood. The article describes that displaced woman in general have few economic possibilities and have to handle loss of their homes, communities and identities (2016:4).

In order to gather evidence the author has conducted a series of personal interviews with 16 WVC:S lower profile leaders, whom most are single mothers and family providers. In connection with this, the article also collects its primary evidence from ethnographic work and data on women victims in Colombia. The study resulted in several findings, one of them being that in order to overcome their victimizations and trauma the interviewed women had one thing in common which was to join or create victim’s organisations. To help other than themselves, the interviewed women expressed being part of their own healing process (2016:7). Another finding from the study illustrates a lack of knowledge about the organisations existence, resulting in that some WVCs do not join organisations. It

was prominent that WVCs ability to join organisations was affected by their fear of personal safety and the informality of some of these organisations (ibid.). The article comes to a conclusion that women's involvement can increase the possibility of peace. In the Colombian context, women's movements have accomplished in transitioning women from being perceived and perceiving themselves as victims to "becoming agents of change who empower and heal other victims, demand legal rights and state accountability and press for wider social change." The final remarks that are presented, states that the dual role of WVCs as both leaders and victims puts them in the perfect position to heal and empower victims since they have overcome their own victimhood (2016:10).

The authors Pilar Domingo, Alina Rocha Menocal and Verónica Hinestroza of the rapport *"Progress despite adversity: Women's empowerment and conflict in Colombia"* (2015:2) describes how women's experience of the armed conflict represents a valuable example of how women strive for achieving empowerment. The women engage with wider issues of both political change and gender equality, and influence the discourse and policy direction of justice, accountability, peace and security to take account of vulnerable and excluded groups and women's rights. The rapport emphasises that women's movements and feminist groups have been central in contesting gender-based inequality and in pushing for change, which is possible when achieving empowerment. Support at the individual level and through the work of women's rights groups/organisations, victims' associations and women's rights advocates has enabled women victims to move from being perceived – and perceiving themselves – as passive victims to being agents of change. However, displaced women in Colombia continue to face major challenges to their more substantive and substantial empowerment. (Domingo, Menocal, Hinestroza 2015:5).

The experience of women's empowerment in Colombia shows that progress is uneven. Women's experience of conflict is closely associated with related patterns of exclusion and discrimination. Women who are subjected to conflict-related violence have below average levels of education and are often illiterate (Diaz and Marin, 2013). Displaced women from rural areas compared to urban areas faces

greater difficulties in achieving empowerment. The reason for this is that women from urban areas have the means, education, skills and even basic inclination to enter the formal political and policy-making arena (Domingo, Menocal, Hinestroza 2015:5). Women in rural areas, who are often poor and illiterate, are also more often exposed to the risks of gender- based violence, discrimination and displacement (ibid.).

Theoretical framework

This section aims to provide an overview of the theoretical base that is relevant for this study. In this section we present the theoretical concepts we use in the survey. We will describe the theory of violence and the concepts of empowerment which we believe illustrates our empirical material. Using our theoretical starting points, we can explain and deepen the women's experience of different kinds of violence as well as their sense of empowerment. It is our firm belief that our theories creates broad understanding and can explain why women are exposed to violence. When describing each theory, we will discuss their relevance to this study.

Theory of violence

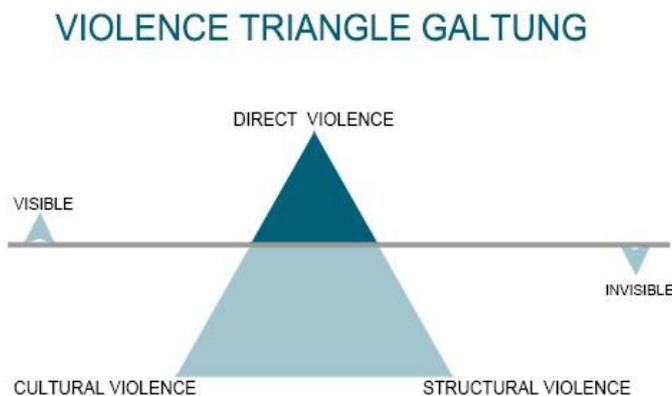
Johan Galtung's theory of forms of violence is chosen as a main theory on this study (Galtung 2016). Even though Galtung's theory can be deemed as very generalizing, we found it useful to understand and analyze in what ways violence against women express itself with support from this theory.

Johan Galtung has shown that there are several different ways of explaining violence. The types of violence according to him is 1) personal or direct, (2) structural or indirect, and (3) cultural or symbolic. Galtung (1981) himself points out that violence manifests as behaviours (action or omission) and consists of avoidable contradictions and attitudes that prevent the development of physical, mental and social potential of people and social groups.

Johan Galtung's different forms of violence are illustrated in his triangle which is presented in MIMP article (2016:12).



(In English)



Structural and direct violence

Structural violence is usually invisible and imbedded in society's political-, social, and economic structures. Galtung (1996) includes gender as one variable and describes patriarchy as one form of structural and cultural violence. Structural violence and its effects can be seen as invisible and hidden in the structures of society, but it will still impact the victim's everyday life. Structural violence

appeals to the unequal and discriminatory way in which society is structured, takes place in the contradictions of the political, economic and social system that generates suffering and segregation. Patricia Franco Rojas (2019:51) describes that structural violence is manifested in the imbalance of power relations. It creates obstacles to participation in decision-making areas, the exclusion of individuals or groups as well as unequal access to resources and development opportunities, and this is a consequence of the unfair organized society. It is also described in the research done by the ministry of women and vulnerable populations (MIMP 2016) that poverty, misery, hunger, disease, strong inequality in income distribution and discrimination in its many forms (racial, class, age, sexual orientation, gender and ethnicity) are expressions of structural violence present in today's society. *Direct violence* distinguishes from structural violence because it has a perpetrator who actively harm with his action. As can be read in the triangle, direct violence is visible. The structural violence on the other hand is the violence that exists in the structural itself and does not include an actor. More specifically, social injustices can be synonymous with structural violence (Galtung 2016).

Cultural Violence

Galtung (1981) describes cultural violence is as “any aspect of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form” (Galtung 1981). The cultural violence seems to normalize the direct and structural violence by making the violence invisible since it is a part of a culture, religion, language or ideology (Galtung 2016). Galtung gives examples of how cultures, religion, ideology, language, art justify and legitimize structural and direct violence If violence occurs in a particular culture, it is assumed that it is the behaviour expected of the perpetrator of the violence This reproduces an unequal gender order where men are superior to women: economically, socially and sexually (Galtung 2016). The conclusion is that direct violence is an occurrence, structural violence is seen as a process and cultural violence as something permanent (ibid.).

Feminist theory of violence

Renzetti, Edleson, Bergen (2011) describes in “*Sourcebook on violence against women*” about the feminist theory of violence. The theory is important in this study because it elaborates a truly complex understanding of equality and oppression against women exposed to violence (Sosa 2015). According to Okun (1986) feminism is the most important theoretical approach to conjugal violence/ women abuse and we therefore argue that this theory is of relevance. Feminist perspective focus on how broader social forces such as patriarchy contribute to violence against women. Patriarchy is defined according to the author as: a sexual system of power in which the male possesses superior power and economic privilege.

Men's violence against women is an expression of male dominance and a way for men to maintain this order (Jasinski 2001). Feminism assumes that there is a link between a person's gender and experiences of violence. Violence is a way of constituting masculinity and is seen as an expression and prerequisite for the unequal power relationship between the sexes (Wendt Höjer 2002). In a patriarchy where men are the norm, violence against women becomes a normalized act that is allowed to be used against women who question and threaten men's power (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Steinmetz, 1987; Yllo & Straus, 1990). The feminist approach describes how men, for example within the family, reproduce power and privileges through various forms of exclusion, domination, oppression, exploitation, control and violence against women and children (Pence & Paymar 1993). This issue is particularly important in displaced communities where gender roles may undergo rapid change resulting in altered living conditions but where gender norms remain patriarchal (El-Bushra & Sahl, 2005). Feminists argue that women should not be regarded as a homogeneous group, all having similar experiences and needs regardless of their race, class, sexual orientation or any other social category of distinction (Sosa 2015). This type of intersectional approach, which refers to an individual's categories and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power, can be seen as a reading strategy for doing feminist analysis (Sosa 2015).

Empowerment

Using empowerment as an analytic tool contributes to shed light on how the women in our study are able to overcome their own experiences of violence through the work of the women's rights organisation. Empowerment, as an active and participatory process, is used as a concept to explain how individuals and groups need empowerment to overcome social barriers to self-realization. Empowerment in practice aims to work with long-term change for an individual with opportunities to influence services and decisions that affect their own lives (Payne 2008). Through empowerment individuals and groups obtain considerable control over their lives, gain rights and reduce marginalization (Maton2008; Rappaport1981 In: Peterson 2014).

For researchers and practitioners in social work and other disciplines it is about providing individuals with enough resources to be able to feel in control of their own life. Most often, individuals have the power to influence their own lives but do not have the ability to use it, or they do not feel that they have any power (Järvinen 2013). Empowerment as a representative "for an inexperienced driven approach underlines the capacity people obtain facing challenging life circumstances or community conditions that interpret and vigorously engage in solving the problems that encounters them (Baxamusa 2008; Ozer et al.2013; Prati and Zani2013;Zippay1995).

Empowerment can act as a tool for social workers as it has a power of decision for clients, by involving clients in aspects that are important to them. This makes empowerment a positive power as it aims for the individual to feel in control of his or her own life, strengthen the self-image and increase self-confidence. The idea is that clients should not experience a dependence on the social worker to feel power, but that the social worker should involve clients to such an extent that they should feel sufficient power over their own lives (Payne 2008).

Methodological approach

This chapter contains the study's methodological approach. Reliability, replication, validity and generalization will be presented as criteria for a quality assessment presented by the study (Bryman 2018). The ethical considerations that have risen during the methodological process will be explained and discussed. A qualitative research method will be used in the following research in order to investigate a specific phenomenon.

Literature search and information search

Our scientific and theoretical basis for this study has been found via literature searches at the University of Gothenburg's library's "Super search" function. We used the following keywords: "violence", "empowerment", "and empowerment Colombia", "gender-based violence, feminist theory on violence", "domestic violence", "violence and empowerment". We narrowed our search to scientific articles with the time interval 2000-2018. By studying the reference lists from the literature review, which we considered relevant for our study, we have found literature that relates to our field. As a complement, we used the Social Science database provided by Gothenburg University. In addition to this we have collected studies and reports advised by our local supervisor Patricia Franco Rojas in Colombia.

Study design

This study used qualitative methods to answer its aim and research questions. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) qualitative interview is based on interpersonal interaction and is advantageous for receiving detailed information on a topic. In the semi-structured interview guide, the researcher starts from a list of questionnaires, but the order and new questions that are not included may be added (Bryman 2018).

The strength of using an interview is a privileged access to the interviewee's everyday world. We have chosen to use the interview method because it gives a conversation through an interpersonal relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, and where both contribute to a knowledge construction. A

qualitative interview method is very useful in our research because it gives the possibility to be more open to structuring the research questions as these may change or be angled depending on what the researcher brings up in their study. This means that qualitative research is characterized by the *open methodology* (Kvale & Brinkmann 2014).

The starting point for qualitative interviews is that the researcher is interested in the individual's experiences, opinions, beliefs and attitudes. Yet, how the interviewer acts and constructs his/her role influences the design of the interview context as well as the material (Kvale & Brinkmann 2014). Our role as Swedish researchers in a subnormal settlement in Colombia became very important to reflect on, in particular during the interviews. However, our privileged position was something we were aware of throughout the entire research process. It is possible that our material and our interview people might have been impacted by this position. According to Giota (2005) the researcher's awareness of their role could link the relationship between the researcher and the interview people together. Thus, awareness has provided a respectful attitude during the interviews with the women and made it possible for us to get around this issue.

Geographic location

We chose to conduct our study in a subnormal settlement of Florencia (178500 inhabitants), Caquetá in which the neighbourhood Miraflores is situated (2500 inhabitants). The women in Miraflores have been displaced, forced to move to Florencia because they were subjected to threats and therefore not allowed to stay in their original home. This study has been conducted between October-November 2019 in Miraflores.

Population

The population in this study is internally displaced people in Florencia, Caquetá. Because of the fact that we want to examine gender-based and conflict-related violence, we chose to interview displaced women that work in the organization MLPAZ. Our supervisor professor Patricia Franco Rojas helped us get in contact with this organisation since she had previously worked professionally with the

organisation and through activism. As both Patricia Franco Rojas, representing the University of Amazonas and the organisation MLPAZ are part of a network with over 200 women's rights organisations, they met during one of these meetings and worked together with other organisations in one of the many projects in Caquetá that the network addresses. We as students were assigned a task in which we were encouraged to contact these people through our supervisor Patricia Franco Rojas. Our role was to plan a meeting with the leader of the organisation to present our research idea and then come to an agreement on expectations and a timetable.

Sample

Selection groups in qualitative studies generally tend to be *goal-directed* (Bryman 2018: 495). Goal-controlled selection is made on the basis of the objective of the research and is made on the basis of criteria that make it possible to answer the research questions (Bryman, 2018: 498). A *snowball selection* has been used which is a form of *non-random selection* of people where, through pre-selected people, in our case the leader of the organisation Patricia, who initially seek out to other women who may wish to participate in the research (Bryman 2018: 504). Patricia is the study's gate keeper.

It is the research questions that have guided the selection of participants. The sample in the present study consists of six women working in the organisation MLPAZ. The women are aged 21- 72. The sample group are women who have experience of violence themselves. We argued that the selection group in the organization MLPAZ will describe their reality in a concrete way, which gives us the opportunity to research the preventive work against gender-based violence through their subjective experiences (Bryman 2018:)The reason why we selected six women is due to the fact that a certain *theoretical saturation* has been achieved, where six interviewees had been able to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the theory of violence (Bryman 2018). The interviewees in the research belong to a homogeneous group and these six women can provide a representative image for the organization MLPAZ. The purpose is not to make comparisons with other groups. Therefore, interviewing six women in this research will create opportunities to achieve data *saturation*.

Data collection: Semi-structured interviews

We chose to perform qualitative research interviews. The qualitative interview is based on interpersonal interaction and is advantageous for receiving detailed information on a topic (Kvale, Brinkmann 2014). In the semi-structured interview guide, the researcher starts from a list of questionnaires, but the order and new questions that are not included may be added (see appendix 1) (Bryman 2018). As language constitutes the interview, the language creates and collects the qualitative interview data. It is therefore crucial that the questions are designed and asked in a way that fulfils the purpose of the research and is understandable and possible for the interview-person to answer (David & Sutton 2016).

Considering the fact that some of our women were illiterate and had the highest educational level of elementary school, we found it difficult to design our questions in this way. Hence, we aimed to develop interview questions that were understandable without missing out on important concepts to our research (ibid.).

Presentation of respondents

Common to all interviewees is that they all lived in rural areas before being displaced to the neighbourhood Miraflores, which is a subnormal settlement. They have all been working in MLPAZ organization for 4-5 years. All names are changed below including the name of the organisation.

Maria is a 21 year old woman. She grew up in a rural area between the ages of 8-11 year. She lives in Miraflores since the age of 11 years old. *Sonia* is a 56 year old woman who lives in Miraflores since six years back. *Patricia* is a 47 year old woman who lives in Miraflores since 12 years back. Patricia is the leader of MLPAZ since 2016 and has been working in the organization since 2010.

Fernanda is 72 years old. She was displaced to Miraflores 5 years ago. *Yadi* is 30 years old. Yadi has lived in the neighbourhood Miraflores for one year. *Ana Lucía* is 59 years old. All of the women in our study were displaced, therefore needed to relocate to the neighbourhood Miraflores. All of them have also lived in a rural zone during a period of their lives. Two of the women in our study are illiterate.

Interview procedure

The interviews took place in the room of the organisation, which was in the house of the leader Patricia. Each interview was conducted in a determined time in a remote room with chairs and a table. The interviews were initiated through a so-called *orientation* where we defined the situation of the interviewee, briefly explained the purpose of the interview, the use of sound recording and asked whether the interviewee had any questions before the interview began (Kvale Brinkmann 2014). For the women who are illiterate, it became important to read the information letter a loud and clear to them, to confirm that they understood what was written, even though they had already read it with relatives. The participants had the option to decline or allow the interview to be recorded. We used our mobile phones to record. The women were encouraged and reminded not to answer questions that in any way felt uncomfortable.

Conducting semi-structured interviews means that the researcher has a list of specific topics to be covered in a so-called *interview guide*, where the interviewer has great freedom to design the answers in their own way (Bryman 2018). We chose to use this interview strategy to get results without placing them in specific compartments, which we believe was very helpful in cross-cultural interview contexts. Moreover, the initial *orientation* should be completed with a *follow-up* after the interview is done (ibid.). At the end of the interview, it became important to ask how the interview was experienced and the interviews were usually rounded off with the interviewer intercepting some of the most important lessons learned from the interview. The interview-people were also given the opportunity to address questions and concerns that had risen during the interview. As we read our transcribed material to the interviewees they stated that they were satisfied with the design of the interview.

Processing and analysis of empirical data

We chose to analyze our empiricism through thematic analysis method (Hayes 2000 In: Langemar 2008). The method involves structuring data based on themes.

To interpret the qualitative data, we first transcribed the material into text. Then we went through the text and searched for subthemes in our material connected to the purpose of the study. After meticulous reading several subthemes had been found which in turn was divided into three overall themes. These were gender-based violence, conflict-related violence and empowerment. We searched throughout all the transcribed material regarding keywords and quotes that could be linked to these overall themes (Langemar 2008). We continued to analyse these three themes more in detail with the help of theoretical framework and compared with the themes that were taken up by the previous research. This, in order to see what differences and similarities there are between our research and previous research. A part from this, other subthemes could also be found in the transcribed material, which was “seeking help”, “experiences of legal and emotional support” and “self-esteem”. However, we saw that these subthemes can be connected to how the women dealt with the conflict-related and gender-based violence through seeking help from state institutions, police, emotional and legal. Also, self-esteem can be understood as a way to achieve empowerment. Therefore, we chose to include these into our overall themes.

During the analysis process of the empirical material, a hermeneutic understanding was used of the interviewee’s understandings of reality as subjective. Hermeneutics assumes that humans interpret and understand the world in order to gain knowledge about it (Eriksson 2018). Since there are inevitably risks of interpretation that can result in bias and that when the transcript is transferred to writing, the interpretation is never made neutral or objective (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). Interviewers' statements can be ambiguous, which means that researchers must interpret their material (ibid.). The interviews have been transcribed in order to remember what has been said and to get a more thorough review of the interview (Bryman 2018). Thereby, the researcher interpret the respondents interpretations of a given story or phenomenon. The interview material has been read several times and transcribed verbatim with breaks and possible word repetitions. We have used the sign [...] when we have removed

words from quotes and used the sign [] for the purpose of clarifying certain quotes for the reader.

Division of work

The thesis has been prepared through collaborations and all elements have been carried out together. All elements have been discussed and written down together. The interviews were conducted by one of the researchers (SCD) who master the Spanish language and Latin-American culture adequately. The analysis and discussion of the transcribed material have been carried out together. Thus, both researchers are equally involved in this work.

Ethical considerations

This section deals with the ethical considerations that have risen during the work with this study. Doing an ethics review is fundamental because it plays a very important role in the quality of the research, the implementation and how results of the research can be used responsibly to develop the social phenomenon (Swedish Research Council 2017:2). Kvale & Brinkmann (2014) points out the importance of taking potential ethical positions into account in the beginning of the study. The ethical considerations that have permeated our work have mainly been obtained from the Swedish Research Council (2017).

Four important and useful concepts within ethical rules are anonymity, confidentiality, privacy and professional secrecy (Swedish Research Council 2017:40).

Professional secrecy refers to the fact that there is confidentiality for a particular information/task, meaning that the person handling the information/task has a duty of professional secrecy (ibid.) A quote by the Swedish Research Council (2017) emphasizes the importance of safeguarding the participant's privacy: "Every precaution must be taken to protect the privacy of the research subjects and the confidentiality of their personal information and to minimize the impact of the study on their physical, mental and social integrity" (2017:41).

It was imperative to maintain the identities as anonymous in order not to expose them to harm and to take into account the *professional secrecy* as an interviewer and *privacy* for the participants. By signing the informed consent, the participants do not repeal their right to privacy. However, in order to consider this ethical principle, we made it clear that the respondents had the opportunity to not answer questions if they had their own reasons for it. The reason why we wanted to respect their privacy is that we did not want our research to jeopardize their integrity, also because we know that they are a vulnerable group (Swedish Research Council 2017:22).

Anonymity requires that a particular task/information cannot be combined with the identity of an individual (ibid.). Anonymity can be achieved if the researcher does not record the participant's identity. Bryman (2018) discusses that it can be difficult to be vigilant that people and places are not identified in qualitative studies. In order to avoid the risk of identifying the interviewees and the locations, as researchers, we have chosen to use fingered names. However, we are aware that fingered names are a common technique, but that it does not completely eliminate the possibility of identification according to Bryman (2018). We have chosen to use a fingered name for the organization. The city of Florencia is not fingered, but we argue that the organization cannot be revealed because there are many women's rights organizations in the city as well as many urban zones. This was also done in order to keep the *confidentiality* of the research respondents.

Confidentiality is a more general obligation which explains not to disseminate information received in confidence, but also includes the protection against unauthorized access to the information (ibid.). This is according to (Bryman 2018) the "Nyttjandekravet" i.e. the claim of use. We were careful to note in the information letter that the collected material will only be used for our research project and the research will only be provided in our education at the University of Gothenburg and the University of Amazonia, as well as for participants in the interviews from MLPAZ. This was approved and signed by all interviewees.

Bryman (2018) describes basic ethical principles that researchers should consider in research. The first area of ethical concern relates to the *informed consent* given to the researcher participant. The information requirement means that researchers must inform interested persons about the overall purpose of the research and the main features of the design. We made sure that the participants should know that their participation is voluntary and that they have the right to cancel their participation whenever they wish (Bryman 2018). We wrote this down in a *consent form* to ensure that participants are informed of their terms of participation. The *consent requirement* means that the participants in a research have the right to decide for themselves about their participation (Bryman, 2018:170). Therefore, the researchers in the study have chosen to design both an *information sheet* and a *consent form* based on Bryman's (2018:179) template. According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2014) it is important in qualitative interview to obtain the informed consent to participate and as researchers, consider the personal consequences for the interviewee. To fulfil this, we want to secure *the confidentiality* which entails making an agreement on *anonymity* and *private* information (ibid.). Hence, we handed out the informed consent to the interview-people in good time so that they could have time to think about their participation. When the interviews took place, the participants were asked to sign the form of consent before starting. Bryman (2018) points out that there is a risk that this signature may cause concern for the participants and result in them not wanting to participate. This concern may be linked to women's experience of having been in a situation of violence and conflict. Through the guidance of our local supervisor professor Franco Rojas, who is an expert in men's violence against women, we were able to find an organization with women who have been subjected to violence. Thus, Franco Rojas confirmed the suitability for the women we interviewed based on their actual life situation. After a meeting with the leader of the organization, we also emphasized the importance of interviewing only women who are no longer in an actual conflict/violent setting. In this case, it became relevant to obtain consent as a way to guarantee the rights of the interview

participants. In our case, we used the consent form because we, as researchers, were aware that there may be a risk of women suffering of their participation, by talking about their experiences of violence. Because of this, it becomes important to obtain consent so that both we and the participants understand the risks, so that criticism is not directed at our research afterwards (Bryman 2018). On the other hand, our goal in our interviews has been to ensure that our participants will not suffer from participating in our research. Therefore, we also referred the women to our supervisor Franco Rojas if they needed support. In addition, the consent form can also be considered as an explanation for what rights they have, that the participants can always cancel their participation if, for example, the participation in the interview resulted in personal consequences.

What is important to note is that some of our interviewees were illiterate. In this context, we had to be extra careful that the information has reached them in the best way. The women who were illiterate were allowed to take home the information letter and read with their relatives who helped them to understand the contents of the letter before the interview took place. We did not obtain a signature for consent for these women because there is an ethical problem regarding that they cannot write or read. However we made sure that before starting the interviews we received verbal consent.

Although we argue that we disclosed information it is impossible to guarantee that the interviewed women fully understood the reason for why we conducted our thesis. We took under consideration that the women in our study might have felt compelled to participate in order to please the leader of the organisation. Some participants might also have given their consent to participate in the study as a result of them believing that they would benefit from it as individuals or for the community (O'Reilly, 2012). The use of a snowball sampling can result in a difficulty to predict and be conscious of the relations between the leader and the participants (Bryman 2018). That is why we emphasize that using both an informed consent as well as a form of consent underlines that their participation was voluntary since they could withdraw their participation at any time.

Another ethical consideration refers to the *potential harm* of the research participant. A research that may cause harm to the participants is considered as unacceptable (Bryman 2018). For ethical reasons the requirements for the female interviewers is that they are not directly (see Galtung's theory of violence) exposed to violence in the period that the interviews took place. Studies that concentrate on a target group that is vulnerable will immediately involve some ethical *risk factors* (Nygren 2012). As researchers, we are well aware that the participants in our research can be categorized as a socially vulnerable group. For these groups, it poses a special challenge for researchers to defend their *privacy* during the research process and how they are presented (Kalman & Lövgren 2012). In qualitative interviews, sensitive and difficult topics are often dealt with, and the interviewer may appear seductive (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). As researchers, we wanted to justify that the research will be of greater benefit than the interview is to the detriment of the interview-person (Nygren 2012). The ethical principle of *beneficence* refers to that the harm of the respondent must be as little as possible which we have strived for. Our goal in our interviews has been to ensure that our participants will not suffer by participating in our research. Our most important approach to strive for this has been to obtain consultation from our supervisors and from the leader Patricia of MLPAZ. We have chosen to design our interview questions in the most favourable way for our participants in order to minimize the risk. We have strived to create questions of such nature that the interview will not cause them any harm. We also wanted to emphasize that our hope with the study will benefit the organization MLPAZ and Miraflores in itself, because we can highlight the violence to understand the improvement work in the future. We also wrote a paper in Spanish about our study that we handed over to the participants in the study. Our paper is also published in the University of Amazonia in Florencia. That we have done this is also an ethical consideration because our participants can confirm that what we have written is true.

Reliability

Bryman (2018) describes that the *reliability* in quantitative and qualitative studies aims to insure that the studies are trustworthy and reproducible by others.

Qualitative research can be analysed based on the concepts ‘*trustworthiness*’ and ‘*authenticity*’ to be able to assess reliability and validity. For a high reliability, another researcher should be able to remake the study using the same methodological approach in order to achieve the same results. In qualitative studies this can be a hard criteria to meet since social environments and the social conditions within doesn’t “freeze”, which is why they are hard to replicate. By measuring the study's *external reliability*, you can find out to what extent the result can be repeated at another time and by other researchers. Since the study has been conducted in a highly mobile and unrestricted social context, it may be difficult to obtain the same results as we produce, in future research. Thus, the conditions that exist today in Miraflores may change over time (Bryman 2018).

Since we are two people conducting this thesis it is of great importance to consider the *internal reliability*, meaning that we have to agree on how we interpret what we see and hear. In our study, there have been difficulties in concluding that the researchers have had the same interpretations of our results, which may have affected external reliability. Since only one of the researchers is fluent in the Spanish language, it has been difficult, to some extent, to cooperate in the transcription and treatment of the empiricism. If both researchers had been able to interpret the interviews, this would have meant higher *internal reliability*. However, this has not been possible due to different language skills and conditions. This, in turn, may have adversely affected our reliability because it was not possible to achieve an *inter-judge reliability* (internal reliability) between the researchers, which means that the researchers have an agreement on one's interpretations of what has been seen and heard. On the other hand, both researchers have discussed their interpretations together to confirm and to draw similar conclusions. Since no transcribed text entirely can reflect the oral language, the transcription affects the content of the interview to a certain extent

(Bryman 2018). During the transcribing process, to avoid errors and distortions, we were sure to pause and pause after each recorded interview to transcribe correctly and avoid auditory or misunderstanding. This has enabled *reliable results* from our interviews. It is also important to note that the researcher who translated and held the interviews has made good and valid interpretations, which we will discuss in the validity section.

Validity

Kvale & Brinkmann (2014) describes validity. Measuring validity means examining whether a research intends to measure what it claims to measure / investigate (Validation rests on the researcher's *crafting skills* during an investigation. It is necessary to *verify, questionize* and *theoretically interpret the results* to achieve high validity. In the following text we will describe how the researchers strived for this.

Validation depends on *how well-founded theoretical assumptions* one has and how to link theory to research issues (Kvale, Brinkmann 2014). An *abductive approach* has been used which means that abductive is generally inductive, but abduction allows the theory to rely on the explanation and understanding of participants' views and perspectives (Bryman 2018). In this research, the abductive approach has meant that, as a researcher, the theoretical understanding of the context and people you study is founded. After describing and understanding the social reality of the interviewees, the theory can be formed (Bryman 2018). The fact that the theory formation was created during the course of the study has been positive for the validity, since it has created good opportunities to be able to firmly anchor theory with purpose / issues. In addition, the abductive approach has enabled us to shape the theory of violence based on the results we have obtained. Thus, the various forms of violence that we have described in theory are very relevant and are based on the interviews and the results we have produced. In addition, we want to emphasize that we *theoretically interpreted our results* in the analysis section, since we made a clear anchor between interview results and theory /

previous research (Kvale, Brinkmann 2014). Therefore, we would like to note that we have achieved a *high level of validation*.

Kvale & Brinkmann (2014) describes that *cross-cultural interviews* means that you conduct interviews in a culture other than the one you live in. As two Swedish researchers in a Latin American context, it has been important to take into account the cultural and linguistic differences. The difficulties that can arise is that it can be difficult to gain knowledge about the variety of cultural factors (habits, practices, languages, narrative resources, etc.), which in turn affect the relationship between the interviewer and the interview-person. There is a risk that there are differences in language usage, gestures and cultural norms (Kvale, Brinkmann 2014). As a researcher, it is important to find out and discover the intercultural variations by asking questions to obtain information about the differences. Since we spent two months conducting our study, both researchers gained good knowledge of the social context in Florencia, Colombia. As an interviewer, it was possible to maintain a good ability to be responsive to the interviewer's linguistic style because we have a good insight into the cultural and linguistic context. Since both master the language and that one of the researchers has a provenance from Latin America, it became easier to assimilate into the social context. This, together with our understanding and great interest in learning more, created good conditions for conducting cross-cultural interviews.

Evaluating the study's *respondent-validation* is relevant to ensure that there is a good conformity between the results and the experiences/perceptions of the research subjects (Bryman 2018). In order to analyze whether we have achieved a high level of validation in this context, it is important to *questionize* whether we as researchers have understood the interviews in the most optimal way. Hence, in cross-cultural interviews, to collect data in one language and present the findings in another can have a direct impact on the validity of the study, since the researcher has to make the decision of the translation during the research process. To minimize the risk of misinterpreting the Spanish language, we have chosen to

receive feedback from our interviewees about our interpretations and conclusions. We choose to contact them after we finished our transcripts. The women who were illiterate heard our interpretations and then gave oral feedback. This has enabled us to counter selective perception and distorted interpretation which enabled us to gain *valid knowledge* (Kvale, Brinkmann, 2014). This is also according to Bryman (2018) a criterion for *credibility* in our research, which corresponds to achieving *internal validity*.

The feedback we received from our interview-people were very relevant in order to achieve a high level of *respondent-validation* because we can determine that the interpretive material is consistent with reality. The conclusion that can be drawn is that consciously interpreting the interviews from a subjective perspective does not need to be negative for the validity, because the interviewer's personal perspective and preunderstanding offers a specific and receptive understanding of the interview-person's everyday life (Kvale, Brinkmann, 2014). In this regard, an interview method, specifically cross-cultural interviews, becomes a relevant method to use because it provides exploratory possibilities and new descriptions of the phenomenons of the study (i.e. gender-based violence).

Generalization

The ability to generalize to a wider population depends on the type of selection you select as a researcher (Bryman 2018). A probability sample, where the individual in the population has an equal chance of being selected at random, can provide a high degree of generalizability compared to other choice of sample. Since we used *a snowball selection*, it is more difficult to generalize that the women in the population in Miraflores are experiencing the same violence (Bryman 2018). Therefore, it can be difficult to generalize the results because there are too few interviewees (Kvale, Brinkmann 2014). However, our main idea is not to generalize, it is rather to use qualitative interviews to create a greater understanding of the phenomena being investigated (ibid.)

Results and Analysis

In this section, we present the results of the six interviews we have conducted. We will present the results in the form of different themes as well as our theoretical approaches and literature review that represents the main content that has been illustrated in our material.

The women's experiences of gender-based violence

It is consistently stated in the interview participant's stories that they have been subjected to different forms of gender-based violence. Gender-based violence includes every act of violence committed against an individual based on gender norms and power inequalities (UNHCR 2014). Throughout the interviews it is apparent that the women at the time of the abuse taking place were not always aware of it since they expressed a lack of knowledge in this subject. Many of them had also grown accustomed to the violence as illustrated by Maria:

As for a woman, there is the stereotype that you as a mother can't do certain things. You are violated as a woman [...] maybe it is because of the culture, that we have gotten so accustomed to it. You don't get that affected by it, it has become so natural. For example, they have told me many times "you are a mom now, you have to behave, you can't be with different guys that aren't the dad of your child because the kid is going to have a bad upbringing". There are so many myths they put on you.

The above quote emphasizes what Galtung (1996) refers to as *cultural violence*, which implies that violence is legitimized by a culture. Since the violence is imbedded as a part of a culture it also makes it invisible and can therefore normalize both direct and structural violence. As Maria illustrates by this quote, the violence she has been exposed to has become natural for her, which is also frequently heard in the other women's stories.

Domestic violence

To summarize our interviews four out of six interview-people have experienced domestic violence. Throughout the women's stories the most common violence they were exposed to was physical violence that is characterized by any type of violent behaviour inflicted on the victim such as hitting, kicking, slapping and punching. Maria explains the domestic violence she has been exposed to in the following quote:

[...] Then he comes at me, threatens me and said that he was going to kill me. If I didn't want to be with him he was going to kill me. He took away my phone. And he obviously was stronger than me. And the more I tried to yell, the more he told me that if I yelled he would hit me. (Maria)

In Maria's case, the domestic violence expresses itself as *controlling* behaviour, due to the fact that her ex husband wants to monitor her life by threatening to kill her if she stays with another man (WHO 2012). Also, when her ex husband takes her phone, it can be seen as *patrimonial violence*, which occurs according to (Asudelma 2019) when a man takes away a woman's personal item. The above quote can be seen as *psychological violence* since Maria's ex husband invokes fear through threats if she yells. The *psychological violence* can also be seen in this case because he wants to prohibit her to be with another man.

During the interviews, many cases of physical abuse were mentioned. The majority of the women expressed a type of violence that we analyse as *direct violence* according to Galtung's theory of violence. This form of violence is expressed as a visible act with a perpetrator actively doing harm against someone. Since these acts were committed against women, we interpret our findings also being gender-based violence considering the definition of the concept is any violent act positioned on the female gender (WHO 2014). Yadi describes her experiences with physical abuse

We had many different ways of thinking, he used to hit me and he was older, he used to manipulate me but I began to realize it little by little and when I was 17 years old I left him with my daughter.

From a *feminist analysis*, it can be explained how the woman's age and gender, two categories, constitute and influence the power relationship between them and their husbands (Sosa 2015;MIMP 2016). Because of their young age, compared to their husbands, they are considered as *powerless* compared to the man (Sosa 2015). This can be understood in Yadis quote above.

This manipulation is a form of *psychological violence* (Asudelma 2019). The reason why men in this context feel entitled to hit women is not only because of the fact that they are physically stronger and can manipulate the women, it is also due to *patriarchal structures* that enable them to exercise violence. Violence in these cases is a form of exercising power that facilitates the domination, oppression or supremacy of the husbands, and a position of submission or subjection of the women (Pence & Paymar 1993). An analysis of this is that different forms of violence, such as psychological and physical, will be manifested, enabled and reinforced by *patriarchal structures*.

Moreover, our analysis of the above quote is that Yadi is more vulnerable to domestic violence since she is young and has several kids. According to MIMP (2016), reports indicate that it is not possible to understand gender-based violence without analysing the intersections between gender, race, class, age or culture. Thus, studies made by the United Nations demonstrate that some groups of women are more liable to gender-based violence and domestic violence than others, i.e. women between the age of 25 and 44 with two or more children.

Furthermore, Ana Lucía continues describing her experience of domestic violence

My ex-husband was violent too; I couldn't say or demand anything. I was mistreated during all of that time [we were together] [...] I was dumb, I

don't know... why else stay when he used to beat me and I was still there with him.

Men's violence against women in this case is an expression of male dominance and a way for men to maintain this order (Jasinski 2001). Violence is a way of constituting masculinity and is seen as an expression and prerequisite for the unequal power relationship between the sexes, as in the cases of Yadi and Ana Lucía (Wendt Höjer 2002). Noelle (2016) describes the machismo culture as a partial answer to the gender-based violence taking place towards Colombian women. As a result of this culture, that encompasses a form of male domination over the female, Noelle describes that women tend to be intimidated to report domestic violence due to fear of retaliation. This phenomenon is visible in the following quote by

Patricia:

Another thing that should exist here for protection is a women's shelter... since many women doesn't make complaints because they have to go back home after making them. [Which means that] they are going to be beaten up again [...]. And there are also women that don't make complaints out of fear or lack of knowledge.

This can be combined with WHO's (2012) explanation for why women remain in violent relationships, which in these women's cases, is due to fear of retaliation, lack of alternative, and concern for their children, stigma and fear.

Economical violence

In terms of *economical abuse* the following quote by Maria highlights this

He said this is my money, if you want it you work because you don't work. I always told him but who will take care of the boy? Why don't you take care of him?

In this context, the gender-based violence is confirmed, where the man, because of his economic capital, has power over the woman and in this way can *control* and threaten the woman. Men's violence against women is an expression of male dominance and a way for men to maintain this order (Jasinski 2001). Also, the fact that men in general in our women's interview stories, have a financial capital in comparison to them, confirms that women live in a *patriarchal society*. Okun (1986) describes precisely that male possesses superior power and economic privilege in patriarchal societies.

Yadi also has experiences of *economical* and *physical abuse* as domestic violence. Her ex husband provided for the family, but usually spent all his money on alcohol, and when Yadi got angry for this he felt entitled to hit her. Yadi illustrates this in the following quote:

[...] My husband went to the center [which was far since they were living on the countryside] to drink alcohol and spend all the money, then he arrived at home with nothing and of course I got angry because we had a kid to support, so he felt entitled to hit me. He said that I gave him reasons to hit me but nowadays I know that this is not correct and that nobody has the right to mistreat you, neither physically nor morally. (Yadi)

The fact that Yadi's ex husband determined that he had the right to hit her if she questioned their financial decisions, resulted in her being beaten. This can illustrate how Yadi, as a woman, is exposed to violence. This phrase by Yadi confirms that gender is linked to violence, something the feminist theory of violence claims. Violence is seen as a way to manifest the masculinity of the man and to maintain his dominance in the relationship, by oppressing and positioning Yadi as *subordinate* to him (Wendt Höjer 2002). In this power relationship, Yadi does not have the opportunity to confront him, partly due to her young age but also because of her female gender which indicates that this is gender-based violence (MIMP 2016). It is clear that Yadi's ex husband has greater power than her. Because of the patriarchal structures, where men are the norm, Yadi's ex husband's violence becomes a normalized act that is allowed to be used against

her, who questioned and threatens his power (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Steinmetz, 1987; Yllo & Straus, 1990).

Intrafamily violence

One of the most salient descriptions of violence was the report of intrafamily violence. Our interviewees Maria, Yadi, Fernanda and Ana Lucía have been subjected to violence by their partners, which in turn have also affected their children. Fernanda and Ana Lucía's children have been *directly* affected by the violence and have themselves been subjected to mistreatment and violence by their fathers. Maria's and Yadi's children have been *indirectly* affected by their husbands' *domestic* violence against the women. Maria explains:

After this the kid got like aggressive. He got unbearable. He is not in a psychological process because the doctors thought he was too young. He was acting out in the kindergarden also so the psychologist there was informed and talk to him and after that he has changed a lot. (Maria)

The *physical* abuse and aggression has caused *psychological* harm to Maria's son and damaged the families' stability (Machado et. al 2014:94).

Yadi illustrates the intrafamily violence in her family situation:

Yes, we are in touch. It was until my daughter was five or six years old, but then it was difficult because I started a new relationship. We shared custody of our children, they were with him for a week, then with me and so on...but he started saying negative things to my daughter: "that he (the stepfather) was not her father, that she shouldn't respect him [...]" so the relationship between us ended up deteriorating. Nowadays my oldest son says that I'm not his mother. (Yadi)

An analysis of this can be that Yadi's ex-husband *manipulated* their children into thinking that Yadi is not a good mother by making her children believe "negative things" about her. This manipulation is a form of *psychological violence*, mainly

aimed at the son (Asudelma 2019). Also, Yadis experiences can be seen as a form of *domestic violence*, more specifically as *emotional abuse*. Emotional abuse can be expressed when the abuser threatens to take away the victim's children or injures the relationship with her children, which Yadis husband did and succeed with when manipulating him (WHO 2012). Because of the reason that Yadis son is taken away from her, intrafamily violence can be illustrated (Machado et. al 2014:94). This is also a form of *gender based-violence* based on *structural* and *cultural* factors. The fact that Yadi marries another man is deviant behaviour in her cultural context, and she is therefore categorized as a "bad mother" by her ex husband and patriarchal structures. *Cultural violence* means that the perpetrator, in this case Yadi's ex-husband, gets away with his violence precisely because this is normalized by cultural values and norms, and instead it is Yadi who deviates, and not the violence itself that she is exposed to (Galtung 2016).

Sexual violence

When it comes to sexual abuse Sonia describes how one of her daughter's experiences of this affected her indirectly. In the following quote Sonia says

She was going to turn 14 years old when she was groped by a professor. We filed a complaint. He [the professor] had more complaints against him, so yes they took him. There was no penetration but he groped her [...] He had raped many girls. When they were about to condemn him his wife came in two occasions to beg my husband to remove the complaints.

The professor in this case got away with his crimes without being convicted and this was a huge betrayal for Sonia and her daughter. Our previous researches confirm that in the case of sexual violence it is common for men not to be punished (Noelle 2016 & Pinzón Paz 2009). The victims are subjected to violence because the authorities have an inability to protect women. The extent of impunity, the fact that the men who cause violence are not punished, lack of protection policy and preventive work has resulted in women not daring to report their vulnerability, which is also illuminated by Pinzón Paz (2009: 389). The fact

that the professor did not get condemned indicates that violence against women has become "normalized" to the point that it is invisible to authorities and society in general according to (Santiago de Cali 2017; Sisma Mujer 2016:9). The consequences of this could be that women become revictimized by the state institutions, which happened to Sonia and her daughter after losing the case in the trial (ibid.).

Sense of betrayal from state institutions

Many of the women indicated that even if they reported a violent act against them they wouldn't be paid attention to. The following quote by Sonia illustrates this in the context when she explains her daughter's case.

Because many times you make a complaint and it stays there [...] you are not being paid attention to. There is no fast solution.

Maria has a similar experience when her husband *physically* abused her. The policemen, who were working during the night of the incident, kept giving their support to her ex husband telling him things in line with "there are plenty of women out there". Maria describes not feeling the policemen's support directed towards her, but rather that they diminished the incident as they kept telling her to calm down. Wirtz et al (2014) discuss in their study the under-reporting of gender-based violence due to factors such as poor knowledge, shame, stigma and impunity. According to the authors, this leads to an under-utilization of the services available for survivors of gender-based violence. All of the interviewed women expressed having lack of knowledge of how to report the violence they had been exposed to in combination with expressing experiences of impunity. This can be understood in

Fernanda's quote:

I was abused by my late husband but I didn't go to the police when he beat me because I didn't know anything. I didn't tell my family about the abuse, but after a while I told my brother. He [late husband] used to hit me

all the time for any reason. I was rebellious sometimes so he could beat me because he didn't like the way that I acted. I couldn't complain or tell anyone about the way he was treating me.

The above quotes by the women can be explained as a way of normalizing men's violence against women. For example, in Maria's case, the policemen's behaviour can be seen as a way of stigmatizing and revictimizing Maria when diminishing her exposure to violence. This is according to Sisma Mujer (2016) the reason for why women prefer not to report *domestic violence* because authorities and state institutions failed to support women by approaching the violence as "invisible" (Santiago de Cali 2017; *ibid.*). When Maria described that she tried to report the situation where her former husband threatened her with a knife, she explains meeting difficulties from different authorities. This resulted in what Maria describes in the following quote:

First of all I wanted an orientation and asked over what I should make the complaint about. Over domestic violence or another? [...] They told me intrafamiliar violence means that the violence is directed towards the kids, that the kids are affected. I told them he wasn't acting out against the kid, but it was all in the presence of the kid. So it will always affect him... That is why I was juggled back and forth. I got tired of going to different places. I could come one day and they told me to go to this place and then over here and over there [...] at last, I didn't go anymore. (Maria)

The situation illustrated above can be analysed as a form of *structural violence* as it is imbedded in the *political* and *social structures* where Maria faced discrimination when she sought help after experiencing threat to her life.

According to Galtung (1996) this type of violence and the effects it has, impacts the victim in their everyday lives even though the violence itself is hidden in the social structures. The way in which Maria and the majority of the women we interviewed, describes not having knowledge about the care route for victims of *gender-based violence* emphasizes the *structural violence* that Galtung mean can

be seen in the unequal and discriminatory ways of the structures of society. Not only did our interviewees describe not having knowledge of where to report a violent act committed against them, they described the authorities and agencies as ignorant and unaware of how to deal with gender-based violence. This can be an explanation to the high statistics presented by National Survey on Demographics and Health (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2017) that indicates that 76.4 percent of women never seek help in cases of violence committed against them.

Conflict-related violence

Common to all our interviewees is that they and their families have been affected by the conflict. All of our interviewees have lived or been in different places where the conflict between the FARC guerrilla and the military has been evident and visible in the streets. The most common effects that women and their families have experienced are threats, persecution, intimidation, murders and violence. The women's stories indicate that they and their families have been displaced, dispossessed of their land and some of them have been displaced multiple times in urban and rural areas. Common to all of our interviewees is that they have been displaced to Miraflores, which was a very common form of violence in the armed conflict according to Wirtz (et al. 2014). This can be seen as a type of *patrimonial violence*, as women are deprived of their property rights. Examples of patrimonial violence against women are when men takes away women's real estates, which in this case is the reason why women are forced to be displaced (Asudelma 2019).

Yadi, Sonia and Patricia recounted their experiences of having limited freedom in doing what they wanted. Yadi expressed being controlled as she could not talk to men when she went to visit relatives in the army.

Yadi describes:

It was hard to see how the guerrillas tried to change people: they said many things to convince you. Women tried to keep their children away from them but it was difficult. When you went to the army to visit a relative, you were not able to talk with anyone else besides the person you visited. If any other human being asked for a favour ... you could not help them. You had to say no and not get involved, otherwise you could end up dead. It was a hard time. (Yadi)

Sonia continues to explain the following:

What can you do from the countryside? You are trapped between two bands: the guerrilla and the military. And that is why you avoid contacting the police or any help because you have learned to avoid any type of confrontation between the guerrilla and military. If the guerrilla or military asks you to give them a plate of food or water you cannot deny them, Why? Because if I deny them, I don't know what they will do to me. That is the life of the countryside. (Sonia)

In both Yadi's and Sonia's situation, it became clear that gender-based violence was happening both in their homes, in the military headquarters and in the streets in general which is very common in conflict setting according to Pínon Paz (2009:387). Because of the armed group's power, the gender-based violence has been normalized in the environment and is the reason why women are expected to be silent which the women explained in the interviews. This is also confirmed by Noelle's research (2016:380). Seeking the women to cook for the military became a way to achieve military goals in this context. This can be seen as a type of gender-based violence, since the women did not have the power to deny the armed groups demands and threats. These threats and deprivation of liberty that the women endured is a type of gender-based violence (UN 2005).

Based on the above quote by Sonia, we can analyze her vulnerability situated as the way she is positioned in society. The fact that Sonia is powerless is in a way invisible in the social structures in their environment. The subordinate role of women in comparison to the armed group can be seen as discrimination in its many forms, for example through class, ethnicity and gender (Sosa 2015). This can be seen as *structural violence*. The fact that she is a woman renders her powerless in the context that she cannot deny the male soldiers' request for food/water. Furthermore, that she lives in what she herself defines as "countryside" will also mean that she is positioned as a vulnerable individual. Thinking in terms of multiple systems of oppression connected to each other becomes an appealing approach to discuss the discrimination towards the women. This is described by the *feminist theory of violence* (Sosa 2015:64-65). The fact that these *displaced* women are subjected to violence can therefore be understood as reinforcing cultural violence against women belonging to a minority group, as they were when they lived in a rural zone (ibid.). The women in this context live in a male-dominated society where an armed conflict, with male soldiers, helps to maintain patriarchal structures, which are a type of *structural violence* per se (Galtung 2016). The consequences of this structural violence are the imbalance of *power relations* between men and women (Franco Rojas 2019:51). Sonia, along with the other women, is in relation to the men, subordinated due to their gender and displacement. Thus, this analyse highlights that gender-based violence and power perspective is key explanatory factors for violence against women (Renzetti, Edleson, Bergen 2011).

Throughout the women's stories, it can be depicted that they experience a great powerlessness in influencing their lives. The women did not have the power to protect themselves or their children from the guerrilla and the military. In connection with this, it became clear how, as a woman, they could not seek help from society because of the fear over their lives and that the system failed to protect them, also something that Pínton Paz (2009:389) stated in her study with the women she interviewed. Wirtz (et. al, 2014:2) explains that survivors of the armed conflict, the women who has experienced gender-based violence and who

were displaced struggled to seek help from healthcare, justice department and protection services. Wirtz et al. explains that the survivors, who suffered from the violence in the conflict, did not report their experiences due to shame, stigma, poor knowledge and indemnity. Pínzon Paz (2009:389) explains that this is the reason for the high impunity. It is clear how the women in our study, were in vulnerable situation, growing up with lack of knowledge of what they can do to change their exposure. Most of the women in our study lack both jobs and education. This, in connection with the powerlessness they live within the armed conflict, resulted in them not reporting the perceived violence. Due to this, the women are left with no authority to which they can turn for justice, and also, because they are captured in the patriarchal structures, they search for freedom from their father by running away with their male partners. This was the case for the majority of our interviewees, often between the ages of 14-17. The fact that women do not report their perceived violence as described confirms that difficult measure the extent, size and distribution of gender-based violence (Pínzón Paz 2009).

Common for our interview-people is that they described that the violence from the armed conflict has affected their children in a high extent. Fernanda lost two of her children in the armed conflict. Ana Lucía also describes:

The guerrillas killed people in front of you, you couldn't move or do something otherwise you were in danger. After the killings an army helicopter started to bomb and the guerrillas escaped in cars, and my children saw everything. I was afraid to find a bomb in the farm every time I and my children were going to pick up some bananas or anything we needed. (Ana Lucía)

The fact that the women in our study have seen and experienced shootings, bombs, murders and threats to their children can be seen as *direct violence* because it has a perpetrator who actively harm with his action. As can be read in

Galtung's triangle, *direct violence* is visible (1981). The following quote by Patricia illustrates how psychological and direct violence affected her:

It has affected me much. Psychologically, it affected me... I was thinking when my kids grow up how will it be or what if they kill him [my son].. I had like, that weight over my heart. I was worried...It has affected me, in one or another way; in spite of being young you lived with fear when you saw these things... I was very afraid. (Patricia)

The fear of being deprived of their children, as they express, can be seen as *psychological* and *gender-based violence*, which is a common way of threatening, humiliating and controlling women in conflict and wars according to Pinzón Paz (2009: 387). Patricia's description can also be understood on the basis of WHO: s explanation of how violence against women results in negative consequences for women's mental health. She suffers from this anxiety and stress that something will happen to her children, which is common affect according to (WHO 2013: 7-8).

The communitarian work in MLPAZ

MLPAZ strives to help not only the women in the organisation, but also the community in Miraflores as well. They work in groups to help “whoever needs it”, and the work is not limited by their economical resources. They share a sense of solidarity that goes beyond the organization that includes the victims of the conflict as well, which Ana Lucía exemplifies:

It is something beautiful, something very solidary, you become helpful even if you don't have the resources. The simple fact that you listen to the person and let the person vent. You feel like you understand them, sometimes you hug them and calm them down. When you start learning, you understand many things. (Ana Lucía)

To summarize the women's stories regarding the work of MLPAZ, it is recounted that the organization has contributed to the repair of the social fabric that war and the multiple forms of violence have broken. They have contributed to the recognition of women's rights and their status as citizens has long worked with the help of international cooperation's. In order to solve structural needs, such as access roads, public services, the legalization of the neighbourhood, and the construction of a community infrastructure such as the communal booth, the court and the park. Due to the fact that the organization has contributed into developed knowledge about society, rights and laws, they can forward their knowledge and guidance that other victim in Miraflores needs in various situations.

The organisations effects on women's opportunities to achieve empowerment

Empowerment was a dominant experience in the MLPAZ's comminatory work. The work becomes a way to achieve empowerment for the women. Welding the women together and working collectively in this manner becomes a way to solve and manage the women's individual problems together. This can be connected to the principle of empowerment is that groups need empowerment to overcome social barriers (Payne 2008) and to reduce marginalization (Maton2008; Rappaport1981 In: Peterson 2014). Since women are initially marginalized, i.e. in a way that they cannot change their vulnerable situation in Miraflores, several women noted that it becomes especially important to join an organization such as MLPAZ to receive help from women with similar experiences. Pervasive in the women's interview stories, it appears that the organisation MLPAZ offers knowledge in order to make it possible for the woman to take control of their life and act for a change in their violent situation. Women can achieve empowerment by participating in MLPAZ because they can, through the knowledge and guidance, gain self-determination and power over their problems. This confirms that through empowerment individuals and groups gain considerable control over

their lives, gain rights and reduce marginalization (Maton2008; Rappaport1981 In: Peterson 2014).

Sonia and Patricia describe how the organisation has changed their life and that the work of the organisation has resulted in the women gaining knowledge. They explain achieving more authority and becoming more independent since the organisation provided more awareness. Two women illustrate this in the following quotes:

Yes, of course I have seen a change. [I am] more independent now. Before I asked if I was going to this place or that. Now it's more like I inform (Patricia)

Well, there are many things we are unaware of, things like our rights. There are many things we didn't know and this is something we have advanced our knowledge in. For example, there are times when you have to ask for you husbands permission to go. And no more, we decide if we are going to a meeting or going out. You getting more authority since it are your rights. You realize you don't have to ask for permission (Sonia)

Järvinen (2013) describes that individuals feel that they do not have any power or resources to change their lives. Our analysis is that MLP AZ provides resources to the women in order for them to be able to take control of their own life, which is a way of pursuing empowerment. The women's stories describe how their participation in MLP AZ has helped them to be more resistant to their husband's demands. The fact that they have gained more authority can be seen as a result of them achieving empowerment. The conclusion is that women have gained more knowledge about their rights, thus gained a higher degree of self-determination by actively opposing patriarchal structures and gender stereotypical norms.

Maria and Patricia claims that the awareness of women's rights has resulted in more women making complaints about the violence they have experienced, even

though many of them, including Maria, have experiences of the process being very slow and problematic. In the quote below, Maria illustrates this

[...] The participation of women has increased. Women don't allow themselves to be controlled by men. Women, despite of the long process, make complaints to the prosecutor's office.

In combination with having more knowledge in how to report, Patricia states that

[...] the organisation also accompanies the women to the prosecutor's office if they wish, as support.

The fact that the women take stand against their husbands, make complaints and accompanies other women's in the fight for justice, is a way of depicting *empowerment*. Educating the women within the organization in how to proceed when reporting a violent crime is a step in making women independent and resisting the violence. This confirms the fact that organizations contribute to women's opportunities to achieve empowerment as Domingo, Menocal and Hinestrozas (2015:2) states, and that without this participation, empowerment would have been difficult to achieve. For example, without women's accompanying, independence and power to change their situation would have been difficult to accomplish. Some of the interview-women are unemployed and economically disadvantaged, and this is a consequence of the unfair organized society which is a type of structural violence (Franco Rojas 2019:51). This indicates that women's opportunities to achieve *empowerment* can be affected by the *structural violence* they are experiencing. Since the women are already in a marginalized position, the structural violence in this context can be seen as the imbalance of power relations between the woman and their husbands (also men in general), the exclusion and unequal access to resources and development opportunities i.e. economic growth and employment (ibid.).

The difficulties encountered in achieving empowerment

Fernanda and Maria emphasises the organisations strive for a property in order to be better organised since they currently are meeting in the residence of President Patricia. This is illustrated by Fernanda:

Or something with our rights like a house for women because there isn't one in Florencia [...] In the meetings with other women's rights organisations, we have always comment that we have wanted a house for women or a shelter where all help is united. To not be sent to different places. Where we can have the support from psychologists and lawyers. That everything could be in the same place. And also serve as a place where women who don't have a place to sleep could stay [shelter].

Something that is depicted in our interviewees' stories is that MLPAZ face different forms of obstacles in order to work with their community work. This can be analyzed using Domingo, Menocal and Hinestroza's (2015) report which states that displaced Colombian women living in rural communities continue to face major challenges to their more substantial empowerment, which is something depicted in the women's stories. The fact that they are displaced will mean patterns of exclusion and discrimination, which can hamper women's opportunity for empowerment. The interviewees live in subnormal settlements which will create a double oppression against their opportunities to develop MLPAZ, to work with preventive work and to achieve empowerment. The fact that they can not have a property nor be legalized as an organization is due to the structural violence according to Franco Rojas (2019:51) meaning that MLPAZ have unequal access to resources and development opportunities, and this is a consequence of the unfair organized society

Thus, facing obstacles when achieving empowerment is current for the women because of their marginalized position in Miraflores. The consequences for this is that they can not be an legitimized organisation, nor have their own property, This can be confirmed by Domingo Menocal and Hinestrozas (2015:5) that explains

that displaced women living in rural areas face more difficulties, compared to urban-areas, in employment, education, skills and even basic inclination to enter the formal political and policy-making arena. Moreover, their displacement and discrimination towards them will expose them to the risk of gender-based violence which will in turn affect their opportunities to achieve empowerment (ibid.). Although, it is important to mention that despite these obstacles, their solidarity and community help them achieve empowerment. Thus, we believe that the organisation has contributed what Payne (2008) emphasizes as empowerment. By giving the individual women tools in the community work, to be able to face their difficulties, in this case not having a property, has strengthened their capabilities to confront discrimination, vulnerability and inequalities.

From powerlessness to empowerment

Recurrent in our interviews is that empowerment will lead to women's autonomy and opportunities to change their subjective experiences of violence now and in the future. Ana Lucía and Fernanda describes that their participation has contributed to a more peaceful life, filled with more knowledge and advises that prepares them against violence. Furthermore, two women highlight the effects from their participation in MLPAZ:

Before I was part of the organization I had a low self-esteem but through the talks you become self-aware of how much you value as a woman and as a person. (Yadi)

Yes of course I have changed, like before I didn't want to get all dressed up, because for what, I had very low esteem. And now I feel like another. (Sonia).

According to Restrepo's (2016) research, women who have been victims of conflict, overcome their own victimization by helping others when joining women's rights organisations. The author means that this is part of their own healing process. This becomes visible in the women's stories, where they explain that women in the organisation ventilate their emotions together. Restrepo also describes that these women's dual role as both leader and victim enable them to empower other victims due to the fact that they have overcome their own experiences as victims. Therefore, our analysis is that women in MLPAZ empowers and becomes empowered by their participation in the organisation. This confirms, Domingo, Menocal and Hinestrozas (2015:5) statement that women's movements and feminist groups have been central in contesting gender-based inequality and in pushing for change, which is possible when achieving empowerment, as the women in our study have. Referring to the quotes by Yadi and Sonia, it can be understood that their participation in MLPAZ has contributed to increased self esteem and independence when valuing themselves more. Furthermore, we interpret the women's increased self-esteem as a result of a strengthened sense of empowerment due to them being able to use their abilities and influence what is important for them. In this way, it can be stated that these women have achieved empowerment through the organization at both individual and group level. They get support at a individual level and through the work of MLPAZ, women's rights advocates has enabled women victims to move from being perceived – and perceiving themselves – as passive victims to being agents of change (Domingo, Menocal & Hinestrozas 2015:5).

Concluding discussion

In this section the results presented together with the theories will be used in analysis. The chapter also entails connections of the research findings to literature review. As an end of discussion, gender-based violence prevention efforts will be presented. This is followed by the studies relevance for Social Work in a Global

and a Swedish context. After completing our work, we feel that we have answered the following questions:

Women's experience of gender-based violence in the organization MLPAZ

A dominating theme emerging from our research are the high levels of gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence, that are depicted in the women's stories, which appears to be exacerbated by the conflict and women's displacement. Our findings reveal that gender-based violence can be expressed in different forms. The conclusion that can be drawn of our first research question is that four out of six interview-people have experienced domestic violence. Throughout the women's stories the most common violence they were exposed to was physical violence that is characterized by any type of violent behaviour inflicted on the victim such as hitting, kicking, slapping and punching. Our findings reveals that four out of six women in our study were physically abused by their ex husbands and that they during the time of the abuse taking place, had normalized this type of violence. The patrimonial violence occurred when the women were displaced and when one of the women was taken away her phone by her ex husband. The psychological violence can be seen as controlling behaviours, emotional abuse, manipulation and when the ex husbands evoked fear by threats. The conclusions about intrafamily violence were that the women's children were affected by their ex husbands direct violence towards the women, both by manipulation and by being psychological harmed. The economical violence in the women's stories took place when their ex husbands maintained control over the family's financial resources leading them to be financially reliant. Findings also revealed that the sexual violence was illustrated in one of the women's stories when her daughter was raped.

Oppression leading to vulnerability to gender-based violence

In addition to this, Colombia's macho culture serves as a partial explanation to the gender-based violence taking place in Caquetá (Noelle 2016:377). Thinking in terms of multiple systems of oppression connected to each other becomes an appealing approach to discuss the discrimination towards these women. This is something that the *feminist theory of violence* describes (Sosa 2015:64-65). While the primary intersections that we explore here are between gender and age, the concept can and should be expanded by factoring in issues such as class and culture. The fact that these displaced women are subjected to violence can therefore be understood as reinforcing cultural violence against women belonging to a minority group and a socio-economically vulnerable group. The women live in a male-dominated society where the armed conflict, with male soldiers, helps to maintain patriarchal structures, which are a type of structural violence per se. The consequences of this structural violence are the imbalance of power relations between men and women (Franco Rojas 2019:51).

Displaced women's experiences of violence from the armed conflict

To summarise the interviewee's experiences it is clear that the women are affected by the conflict in multiple ways including physical violence and threats, separation from and the loss of loved ones, fiscal and economic insecurity and higher risks of sexual violence. One of the most salient descriptions of violence in the conflict setting were reports of threats to life and safety, restricted movement, and threats to well-being of women and their families. Often, the women received serial threats by one armed group after another, each accusing them of collaborating with other armed groups. In the conflict setting, the women were subjected to displacements, and some of them multiple displacements, perpetrated by armed actors.

The normalized conflict-related violence

A repetitive pattern that can be illustrated through our interviews stories is that they could not seek help from the authorities (police) in cases of violence. They could not get help from the society because there was no established help

provided for them which also explains the underreporting of violence that took place. As a result of this, the violence they were exposed to had been normalized for them. This can be discussed through the previous research that describes that women encounter major obstacles to accessing the justice system including extremely high levels of impunity (Pinzón Paz, 2009: 389; Noelle 2016). These attitudes have been ingrained through a patriarchal system and often result in the victim remaining silent about the violence she has experienced (ABColumbia, 2013:13), which is the case for the women. Consequently, there is a great number of unrecorded cases about gender-based and conflict-related violence. The consequences in this matter is that the women can not always get the adequate help and support from the state and society (Pinzón Paz 2009:389).

The interlink between gender-based and conflict-related violence

The conclusion that can be drawn from the first and second research questions in this study is that displacement and experiencing gender-based violence is interconnected. It is clear that displacement will increase the risk of experiencing gender-based violence due to the fact that their vulnerability as a woman in subnormal settlements will result in an increased powerlessness. The conclusion is that in order to understand the discriminations towards these women, it is essential to look at how gender-based inequality and vulnerability to conflict-related violence intersects with other inequalities based on class, ethnicity and the urban-rural division (Domingo, Menocal, Hinestroza 2015).

MLPAZ effects on member's opportunities to achieve empowerment

Our findings reveal that the women's participation in MLPAZ will create opportunities for the women to stand against their subordinate and oppressed role in society. What is important to mention, however, from a *feminist analysis* is that despite women's empowerment, direct and structural violence against women is not eliminated because these structural roots create a permissive context for the use of violence against women (ABColumbia 2013:7). The violence is reinforced by the patriarchal structures in their society (Wendt Höjer 2002). Based on the feminist theory of violence, patriarchal structures will maintain gender inequality.

On the other side, the women's empowerment and participation in women's rights organization will challenge these pre-existing norms and patterns of discrimination against women (ABColumbia 2013:7). The conclusions that can be drawn from our interviews are that empowerment will lead to women's autonomy and opportunities to change their subjective experiences of violence now and in the future.

Power, increased self-esteem and independence as a form of empowerment

The conclusion is that by helping others when joining MLPAZ, the women who have been victims of the conflict can overcome their own victimization and traumas. This can be seen as part of their own complex healing process (Restrepos 2016:7). Furthermore, the women can achieve empowerment by participating in the organisation because they can, through the knowledge and guidance, gain self-determination and power over their problems. This confirms that through empowerment individuals and groups gain considerable control over their lives, gain rights and reduce marginalization (Maton2008; Rappaport 1981). In addition to this, this study also revealed that the women's increased self-esteem is a result of the information and skills acquired through the organisations many workshops, trainings and exchanges. The women's stories also depicts that through their participation they have been motivated to help others. Therefore, we come to the conclusion that the women in our study become empowered and empower others by their participation in the organisation MLPAZ.

End of discussion

Key explanatory factors for violence against women must be understood through a power and gender-based perspective (Renzetti, Edleson, Bergen 2011). The evidences in this report highlight the need to address the economic and sociocultural factors that foster a culture of violence against women. By taking into consideration that violence against women is the result of unequal relations of power and structural gender discrimination, reparations need to aim at

‘transformation’ and ‘rectification’ of the unjust pre-existing situation (Sosa, 2015:61).

The conclusion we draw is that the women encounter major obstacles to accessing the justice system as well as dealing with impunity in benefit of the perpetrators. This confirms that there are norms and social institutions within the culture that uphold and legitimize violence against women. The Colombian state is responsible for the breach of their human rights obligations in relation to violence against women. Their responsibility is not limited to the acts of public actors, but also covers the acts of private individuals when states and institutions fail to prevent, investigate and punish the violence. All of these generate mistrust of the judicial system and diminish the possibility of effective judicial remedy or protection, which in turn weakens the Rule of Law in Colombia (ABColumbia, 2013:13). Women victims of violence have the right to receive medical, psychological, legal assistance free of charge, from the moment the act of violence is disclosed to the authorities (Law 1257 of 2008). It is important to guarantee the right of women victims of the conflict to truth, justice and guarantees of non-repetition, and a commission of truth that guarantees women's voices and stories.

Relevance for Social Work in a Global and a Swedish context

The topics of this study, gender-based and conflict-related violence, has strong connections to both social work and human rights. The work of social work is about protecting human rights, also about developing efforts for socially vulnerable groups through protection, treatment and work at policy level and opinion formation (IASSW 2014).

This paper exposes the major challenges to gender-based and conflict-related violence. As shown, this type of violence against women is a violation of human rights. The results of this study indicate that displaced women are discriminated, vulnerable and oppressed. Social work as a practice professional recognises these types of structural barriers, in this case primarily the inequality between men and women. This violence has been studied through a power analysis of how different

forms of inequality cooperate together in a Colombian context. From a gender perspective, we have discussed how women's exposure to violence is linked to men's structural superiority in society. This can be connected to an important part of social work, which is to critically reflect on these social structures that contribute to women's vulnerability. Our hope is that the present study will contribute to an understanding of women's oppression based on their gender, as well as their need for efforts and support. In addition, the most important understanding is that the power relationship between women and men looks different in various social contexts. Internally displaced women in subnormal settlements will suffer different forms of violence, compared to women from urban areas in Colombia, as well as compared to women living in Sweden. We want to highlight that there is a socio-economic injustice and women in the world are experiencing different types of violence and will therefore have different and complex needs. Our firm belief is that by conducting this study in Colombia, we enlighten the complexity that exists regarding men's violence against women and the importance of clarifying it in order to develop social work through an international perspective.

The organisation MLPAZ itself belongs to social work because it promotes women's rights and empowerment according to our findings. It is an organisation that interprets, renegotiates and adapts women needs to the extent of their resources and room for manoeuvre and the results of this study also indicate a need for strong actions against men's violence against women. This requires strengthening support for victims and women at risk in legislation, together with national and municipal policy work, both to ensure women's rights and to strive for the liberation from violence and no-repetition of the armed conflict.

Suggestion for future research

During the work with this study many interesting and relevant perspectives on gender-based violence have been rejected due to lack of time and space. To further develop our reasoning that patriarchal structures result in women's vulnerability and violence, it becomes relevant to take responsibility for men and

illustrate what responsibilities they have for acting and making change in men's violence against women. An alternative would have been to research the men's violent acts against women in such a context as Florencia, Caquetá. This could have contributed to a more nuanced and clearer understanding of how the state, laws, policies and cultural violence can change in order for women in Colombia to live a life free of violence.

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Appendix I

Interview guide: Women in a subnormal settlement in Florencia

Interviews conducted in Caquetá October 2019

Introduction

Presentation of the aim with this study

Share the information letter

Inform where and how to contact us in Colombia and Sweden

Background information

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where were you born?
4. Where did you grow up?
5. In a rural or urban area?
6. What is your ethnicity and language?
7. What is your highest educational level?
8. What is your profession?
9. How does your current family look like?
10. What was your family like during your childhood?
11. How many people belong to your household?

About the violence they have experienced

1. How have you been affected by the armed conflict?
2. What does your experience look like with violence?
3. How have you been affected?
4. Can you describe what happened to you or your family?
5. Can you describe where it happened?
6. Were the police informed?
7. If so, are you satisfied with the actions of the police?

8. How is your experience with the help you received/ did not receive? (for example, legal, emotional or other)
9. Can you tell me what motivated you to seek help?
10. Is there anything else regarding this you have thought about or want to clarify?

The organization MLPAZ

1. How long have you worked in the organization Women fighting for peace (MLPAZ)?
2. How did you get in touch with the organization?
3. Can you tell me why you are working in the organization MLPAZ?
4. What was your knowledge about MLPAZ before your participation?
5. How do you work in MLPAZ?
6. Can you describe the aim of the organization MLPAZ?
7. How were the women in the organization MLPAZ organized to address gender-based violence?
8. What did you think about women's rights organizations before?
9. How has your participation in MLPAZ helped to change your and your family's life (and your human rights)?
10. How do you think your life would have looked like if you hadn't participated in the organization?
11. Could you say anything about your self-esteem now and when you started the organization?
12. How do you feel about the support you have had during your time in the organization?
13. If so, how were your needs met?
14. What could the organization do for you and for the community that they don't do today?
15. Is there anything else regarding this you have thought about or want to clarify?

Gender-based Violence

1. What is your knowledge about gender-based violence?
2. How is gender-based violence expressed in Florencia and the neighbourhood Miraflores?
3. How does gender-based violence affect Florencia and the neighbourhood Miraflores?
4. Can you explain why you think this type of violence persists?
5. Can you describe what changes you would like to see happen regarding the judicial system?
6. How is the work in MLPAZ organized in order to prevent gender-based violence?
7. What actions does MLPAZ offer victims of gender-based violence?
8. Can you describe how it has been working with other people who also have experienced gender-based violence?
9. How has your relationship with them been?
10. Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix II

Guía de entrevista: Mujeres en un barrio en Florencia

Introducción

Presentación del objetivo de nuestro tesis

Comparte la carta de información

Informar dónde y cómo conectarnos en Colombia y Suecia

Informacion de antecedentes

1. Cómo se llama usted?

2. ¿Que edad tiene?
3. ¿Dónde nació usted?
4. ¿Dónde creciste?
5. ¿Es una zona rural o urbana?
6. ¿Pertenece una etnia e idioma?
7. ¿Cual es su nivel mas alto de educacion?
8. ¿Cual es su profesion?
9. ¿Cómo es su familia acutal?
10. ¿Cómo te criaste con tu familia?
11. ¿Cuántas personas pertenecen a su hogar?

Sobre las violencias que ha vivido

1. ¿Cómo le ha afectado el conflicto armado?
2. ¿Cómo es su experiencia con la violencia?
3. ¿Cómo ha sido afectada?
4. ¿Puede describir lo que le pasó a usted o a su familia?
5. ¿Puede describir dónde ocurrió?
6. ¿Fueron informados la policia?
7. Si es asi, ¿está satisfecha con las acciones de la policia?
8. ¿Cómo es su experiencia con la ayuda que recibió/no recibió? (por ejemplo, legal, emocional u otro)
9. ¿Que ayuda huberias querido?
10. ¿Puede contar sobre que le motivó a buscar ayuda?
11. ¿Hay algo más sobre esto que haya pensado o queria aclarar?

La organizacion MLPAZ

1. ¿ Por cuanto tiempo ha trabajado en la organización Mujeres en lucha por la paz (MLPAZ)?

2. ¿ Como se puso/formo en contacto con la organizacion?
3. ¿Puede contarme sobre la razon por la cual usted esta trabajando en la organizacion MLPAZ?
4. ¿Cuál era su conocimiento sobre MLPAZ antes de su participation?
5. ¿Cómo se trabaja en MLPAZ?
6. ¿Puede describir el objetivo de la organización MLPAZ?
7. ¿Como se organizaron las mujeres de MLPAZ para atender la violencia basada en género?
8. ¿ Que pensaba usted antes sobre las organizacionens de los derechos de las mujeres antes?
9. ¿Como ha ayudado su participacion en MLPAZ a cambiar su vida, la vida de su familia y sus derechos humanos?
10. ¿ Cómo cree usted que se veria su vida si no huberias participado en la organizacion?
11. ¿Podrías decir algo sobre tu autoestima ahora y cuando usted empezo en MLPAZ?
12. ¿Ha sentido la necesidad de algún apoyo durante su tiempo en la organizacion?
13. Si es así, ¿cómo se cumplieron sus necesidades?
14. ¿Qué podría hacer la organizacion por usted y por la comunidad que no hace hoy?
15. ¿Hay algo más sobre esto que haya pensado o querie aclarar?

Violencia Basada en Género

1. ¿Cual es su conocimiento sobre la violencia basade en género?
2. ¿Cómo se expresa la violencia basada en género en Florencia y en el barrio Miraflores?
3. ¿Cómo afecta la violencia basada en género Florencia y en el barrio Miraflores?
4. ¿Puede explicar por que cree usted que este tipo de violencia persiste?

5. ¿Puede describir sobre que cambios deben suceder con respecto al sistema judicial?
6. ¿Cómo se organiza el trabajo para prevenir la violencia basada en género en MLPAZ?
7. ¿Cuales acciones ofrecen a las victimas de la violencia basada en género en la organizacion MLPAZ?
8. ¿Cómo ha sido trabajar con otras personas cuales también son victimas de violencia de genero?
9. ¿Cómo ha sido su relación con ellas?
10. ¿Hay algo que usted le gustaria añadir?

Appendix III

Informed Consent

We, Sofia Calles Duarte and Adelina Fekaj are conducting a Bachelor thesis as part of our educational program of Science in Social Work at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The purpose of our study is *to examine the women's experiences of violence as well as their opportunities to achieve empowerment through their participation in the organisation Mujeres en lucha por la paz*. To collect the data, we will conduct a series of interviews. In order to ensure that this project meets the ethical requirements for good research this information sheet explains what our thesis is about and in what way we want you to participate in it.

We want to inform you that the participation in the study means that the interviews will be recorded and are estimated to take about 45-60 minutes. Respondents have the right to decide whether to participate in the project, even after the interview has taken place since the participation is voluntary. We will treat the data collected from the interviews confidentially, which means that no personal information will be disclosed. Our thesis will only be used for research purposes and after the thesis is complete all recorded and transcribed material will

be deleted. The thesis will be published in the University of Gothenburg web directory website www.gu.se. We will also publish a full paper in Spanish that will be published in the University of Amazonia, Colombia. All the participants will receive a copy.

To ensure that respondents are not recognized some data will be changed in our analysis. The respondents have the right to refuse to answer any questions during the interview or even end the interview without explanation.

Our hope with our interviews is to be able to contribute to a greater knowledge of your situation. We want to inform about gender violence and hope this benefits the organization in the future. We understand that this interview can touch on heavy issues and that is why we want to refer to Patricia Franco Rojas, our supervisor who works with the gender issue at the University of Amazonia. We want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this thesis and invite you to contact us any time if you have any questions.

Student

Student

Sofia Calles Duarte

Adelina Fekaj

University of Gothenburg

University of Gothenburg

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Appendix IV

Consentimiento informado

Nosotras, Sofia Calles Duarte y Adelina Fekaj estamos realizando un proyecto de investigación como parte de nuestro programa educativo de Ciencia en Trabajo Social en la Universidad de Gotemburgo, Suecia. El propósito de nuestro estudio es *examinar las experiencias de violencia de las mujeres, así como sus oportunidades para lograr el empoderamiento a través de su participación en la organización Mujeres en lucha por la paz. en género.* Para recopliar los datos, realizaremos una serie de enrevistas. Para garantizar que este proyecto cumpla con

los requisitos éticos para una buena investigación, esta hoja informativa explica de qué se trata nuestro estudio y de qué manera queremos que participe en ella.

Queremos informarle que la participación en el estudio significa que las entrevistas se grabarán y se estima que demorarán entre 30 y 45 minutos. Los entrevistados tienen derecho a decidir si participar en el proyecto, incluso después de que se haya realizado la entrevista, ya que la participación es voluntaria. Trataremos los datos recopilados de las entrevistas de manera confidencial, lo que significa que no se divulgará información personal. Nuestro estudio solo se utilizará con fines de investigación y, una vez completada, se eliminará todo el material grabado y transcrito. El estudio se publicará en la Universidad de Gotemburgo directorio web en el sitio web www.gu.se. También publicaremos un artículo completo en Español que se publicará en la Universidad de la Amazonia, Colombia. Todos los participantes recibirán una copia.

Para garantizar que los entrevistados no sean reconocidos, algunos datos se cambiarán en nuestro análisis. Los entrevistados tienen derecho a contestar o negarse a responder cualquier pregunta durante la entrevista e incluso finalizar la entrevista sin dar explicación.

Nuestra esperanza con las entrevistas es poder contribuir a un mayor conocimiento de su situación. Queremos informar sobre la violencia de género. Esperamos que esto le beneficie a la organización en el futuro. Entendemos que esta entrevista puede tocar temas pesados y es por eso que queremos referirnos a Patricia, nuestra asesora que trabaja con el tema de género en la Universidad de la Amazonia. Queremos agradecerle por aceptar participar en nuestro estudio e invitarle a contactarnos en cualquier momento si tiene alguna pregunta.

Estudiante

Estudiante

Sofia Calles Duarte

Adelina Fekaj

La Universidad de Gotemburgo

La Universidad de Gotemburgo

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Appendix V

Form of Consent

- I have read and signed the information about the research that I have received.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research.
- I am aware that as a participant in the research, I will be interviewed and that this will be recorded.
- I have been given enough time to think through the situation, and I agree to participate in the survey.
- I am aware that personal information such as my name and the name of my "employer" will not be known to anyone outside this projekt.
- I am aware that my words can be quoted in the project.
- I hand over the copyright to what I say to the researchers Adelina Fekaj and Sofia Calles Duarte.
- I am aware that when I want to, I can end my involvement in the research and that I do not have to explain my reasons for it.
- If I choose not to participate in the survey anymore, the information I provided will not be used.

Place and date

Signature (participant)

Signature (researchers)

Appendix VI

Formulario de consentimiento

- He leído y firmado la información sobre la investigación que he recibido.
- He tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas sobre la investigación.
- Soy consciente de que, como participante en la investigación, seré entrevistada y esto se grabará.
- Se me ha dado suficiente tiempo para pensar en la situación y acepto participar en la encuesta.
- Sé que la información personal como mi nombre y el nombre de mi "empleador" no será conocida por nadie fuera de este proyecto.
- Soy consciente de que mis palabras se pueden citar en el proyecto.
- Entrego los derechos de autor a lo que les digo a los investigadores Adelina Fekaj y Sofía Calles Duarte.
- Soy consciente de que cuando quiera, puedo finalizar mi participación en la investigación y que no tengo que explicar mis razones.
- Si elijo no participar más en la encuesta, la información que proporcioné no será utilizada.

Fecha y lugar

Firma (participante)

Firma (investigadoras)

Firma (investigadoras)
