Embroidery and textile narratives as community resilience in a group of women weavers in the village of San Miguel (Colombia)

By

Laura Sarmiento Salazar

Thesis Submitted to

Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of Master of Arts in Global Development Studies.

May 2024, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Approved: Dr. Andres Arteaga
Supervisor

Approved: Dr. Tatjana Takseva
Reader

Approved: Dr. Julie Hollenbach
External Examiner

Date: May 2024

Embroidery and textile narratives as community resilience in a group of women weavers in the village of San Miguel (Colombia)

By
Laura Sarmiento

Abstract

This study examines the impact of women-led initiatives on community resilience in San Miguel, Colombia, after the reported armed conflict that occurred between 1990 and 2004. I investigate the importance of embroidery and textile production in community resilience and the restoration of social fabric and its significance in preserving the historical memory of this community. I analyze the historical context of violence and conflict in the region, to later examine theoretical concepts such as trauma, collective trauma and community resilience as the central topics. By focusing on the interaction between individual, social, and cultural factors and symbolic analysis of embroidery, this study enriches our understanding of different processes of building community resilience in a community deeply affected by armed conflict. As a research methodology, I used thematic analysis, interviews, participant observation, and symbolic analysis of community-made artifacts.

Keywords: Community resilience, memory narratives, trauma, armed conflict, embroiders, Colombia

May, 2024

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all the victims of the Colombian armed conflict. No one should endure such painful circumstances, nor should anyone be involved in such a senseless conflict. Unfortunately, this has been the reality for many. However, this work serves as a light of hope, illustrating that change is possible. It is a hope that through reconciliation and peace, we can build a better nation, a place where women are empowered to express their opinions and actively participate in public decisions, and where each individual finds their rightful place to be heard. We can build a nation based not only on our differences but also on mutual assistance and support. As an African proverb wisely says: "seul, on va plus vite, ensemble on va plus loin!" I am confident that through community efforts, like those of Artesanas de Amor, we can achieve a better future for our country.

I will always love you Colombia and you will always be part of me.

Acknowledgement

In embarking on this journey of research and self-discovery, I have been privileged to find extraordinary individuals who have profoundly impacted my life. To the members of Artesanas de Amor, your warmth, generosity, and your belief in humanity have left a mark on my heart. Thank you for opening your hearts, sharing your stories, and embodying resilience and dedication amidst adversity. The memories we have forged together during this experience will forever hold a special place in my heart.

My gratitude extends to my supervisor, Dr. Andrés Arteaga, whose guidance and support have been invaluable. Your belief in my abilities and your encouragement have propelled me forward, shaping my academic growth in ways I never thought possible. Working alongside you has been both an honour and a privilege, and I am immensely grateful for your mentorship. I am also grateful to Dr. Tatjana Takševa for her invaluable insights and fresh perspectives, which have pushed me to refine my work to new heights. Furthermore, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Julie Hollenbach for her contributions and encouragement to explore new dimensions of my research. I must also express my gratitude to Professor Isabel Gonzalez Arango, who shared her knowledge and ideas with me, and whose invaluable contributions have greatly enriched this work.

To the professors of GDS, particularly Dr. Kate Ervine, Dr. Karen McAllister, and Dr. Gavin Fridell, I am deeply grateful for your support and guidance. Your dedication to academic excellence has been a source of inspiration throughout my studies, keeping me focused and motivated. Also, many thanks to the Writing Center, especially to Adrian Knapp, who always had the best disposition to help and correct me.

Finally, I must express my deepest gratitude to my family, especially to you, my friend, my beloved, my adventure partner, and my husband Sebastian Buitrago D. Without you, I would not have achieved this milestone, and without your support, the journey would have been much more challenging. Your love and encouragement have fueled my determination to succeed, both personally and professionally. Thanks also to my mother, whose words of encouragement and love have shaped me into the person I am today, and to my sister, who always provides the support I need and never let me feel alone. Despite the distance, I know you both will always be with me.

Table of Contents

Introduction

As of July 2023, according to Colombia's Single Registry of Victims, an astonishing 9,537,920 people have been registered as victims of the prolonged armed conflict that has plagued the nation. Alarmingly, over half of these victims—50.2%, to be exact—are women. This statistic serves as a reminder of how deeply Colombia's conflict has permeated its citizens' lives, affecting nearly 20% of the country's total population. The Colombian conflict, which can be described as having transformed but endured for over 50 years, has been characterized by its prolonged nature, evolving dynamics, and involvement of diverse actors. According to the Colombian Ministry of Health's data for the year 2020, several municipalities across Colombia were significantly affected by the conflict. Among these municipalities, Antioquia stands out, reporting a substantial 19.1% of the total registered victims. This places Antioquia in the top position with the most registered victims. Notably, the impact of the conflict has been predominantly felt in rural areas. However, it is essential to recognize that urban areas have also borne the brunt of the conflict in different ways.

The conflict has left a mark on the nation's history. Throughout its course, the government has undertaken numerous initiatives, including pursuing peace agreements with various insurgent groups, to mitigate the harm inflicted on civilian populations. These efforts also include the signing of the peace agreement in 2016 with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a pivotal moment when most of the group laid down their arms. This critical step marked the beginning of a period of reflection and reconstruction as the country faced the complex task of providing material and symbolic reparations to victims and transitioning to a post-conflict era. In this post-conflict landscape, communities affected by the conflict are engaged in multifaceted processes of memory and healing, both of which are integral components of the journey toward reconciliation and recovery. These processes, in essence, are the mechanisms through which these communities maintain and honour their collective memory, allowing victims to occupy a space where they can acknowledge their past and, ultimately, find the strength to heal and forge ahead.

Given the significant impact of the conflict and the community processes that have occurred after the peace agreements in rural areas, particularly in Antioquia, this study focuses on the San Miguel area within the municipality of La Unión, Antioquia. For this research, I collaborated with a collective known as Artesanas de Amor, made up of a group of women and two men who have first-hand experience with the consequences of the conflict. I conducted interviews with

them, listened carefully to their narratives, and actively participated in their activities. This group was established by the residents of the village as a community initiative. Despite facing difficult and conflict-ridden circumstances, they exhibited remarkable resilience. Although they were forced to leave their homes, they eventually returned and worked to rebuild the social ties that had been fractured during the conflict. They engaged in various social activities, including gardening, using medicinal plants, and embroidery, which they used as a means of empowering the community. These efforts led to increased participation not only from women but also from other community members in traditionally female tasks such as embroidery and weaving. By sharing their stories and experiences beyond their community, they created a movement and found a voice that allowed others to understand their journey of recovery and their resilience in the face of adversity. This group has become known for using embroidery to convey their narratives, foster unity within their collective, and display their creations in various regions. The art of weaving or embroidery has traditionally been closely associated with women, historically linked to domestic work and, in some cases, perceived as an act of submission. However, over the years, the feminization of this process has evolved, as women in many places have adopted these techniques as a form of resistance, expressing their pain and disagreement towards governments, armed entities or systems that marginalized them. Examples such as the Arpilleristas in Chile, who sought justice for their children who disappeared during the dictatorship, the Madres de la Candelaria in Colombia, a group of women victims of forced disappearance, kidnapping and murder of their children and husbands, or the Tejedoras de Mapujan, Colombia who used their textiles to convey their message are illustrative of this transformation.

While resilience has received increasing attention recently, a significant gap exists in understanding community resilience and its significance within communities affected by armed conflict, particularly in rural areas. Additionally, there is little information about how creative processes, specifically embroidery or weaving, serve in this construction of community resilience. This study investigates how the collective of Artesanas de Amor has built community resilience using different textile narratives and other social strategies in the post-peace agreement in Colombia. Colombia's armed conflict has led to the victimization of a substantial number of women, subjecting them to sexual violence, loss of loved ones, and forced recruitment of children. However, many of these women have demonstrated remarkable resilience in such adversity. While violence against women in Colombia has been studied extensively, limited attention has been given to understanding the community-driven resilience

efforts, often spearheaded by women, and the strategies they employ collectively to overcome trauma. This research project sought to investigate the interaction between community resilience and the traumatic experiences that women had to live through. The objectives of this study were 1) To investigate the mechanisms of community resilience employed by the collective Artesanas de Amor, and 2) to contribute to the study of community resilience and its connection to embroidery as a healing technique. To address these objectives, this thesis was guided by four questions 1) What have been the strategies and actions undertaken by the Artesanas de Amor Collective to build and cultivate community resilience after the armed conflict? 2) How are textile narratives related to historical memory in the context of the village of San Miguel? 3) How do embroidery and other historical memory narratives function as mechanisms for healing and resilience within communities affected by armed conflict? 4) Why is the discussion of community resilience significant within the context of post-conflict in the territory of San Miguel?

This master's thesis in Global Development Studies is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 deepens the understanding of the Colombian conflict, focusing on eastern Antioquia, specifically in the San Miguel village. Chapter 2 explores the concept of trauma, primarily within the context of armed conflict. Chapter 3 focuses on the topic of resilience, which serves as the focal point of this study. Chapter 4 details the methodology used in this research. Chapter 5 presents the analysis of the results obtained. A qualitative approach was adopted aimed at comprehending the perceptions and feelings of each member within the collective of Artesanas de Amor. I conducted research during two months in the summer of 2023 using various research methodologies including semi-structured interviews with individual participants and participant observation. This allowed me to gain insights into the group's dynamics and interactions. Another crucial methodology for this analysis involved symbolic analysis, explicitly examining the textile pieces created by the group to understand patterns and the symbolic meanings within their embroidery.

A thematic analysis methodology was applied to interpret the collected information, facilitating the identification of patterns or themes within the interviews and participant observations. This helped to improve the understanding of how community resilience has been constructed within the group. The analysis was structured into three parts to cover the research topics comprehensively. Initially, the discussion focuses on the perception of conflict in the area from the participants' standpoint, exploring how violence was experienced in the territory and the problems it left. The second topic delves into trauma, addressing individual and collective

experiences. The third topic explores community resilience through the lens of ecological resilience theory. It covers individual perspectives, microsystems or groups of influence, resources, and societal contexts. This study is important in recognizing the need to understand how communities affected by armed conflict have navigated these difficulties, rebuilt their social fabric and developed symbolic processes to narrate their story and heal. The findings of this research will enhance academic discussions on community resilience, embroidery, and historical memory narratives as mechanisms for healing in conflict settings.

Chapter 1: Through the Crossfire: Colombia's Path During the Conflict in Search of Peace

General Overview

This chapter aims to contextualize the Colombian armed conflict, focusing primarily on the Eastern Antioquia region and the municipality of La Union, Antioquia. The objective is to provide a comprehensive overview of the conflict, which, throughout its history, has been linked to issues surrounding land yet has been influenced by various other factors. These include the absence of state presence in specific regions and the exploitation of vulnerable populations, who have historically been the most affected by the conflict. This chapter is structured into five parts to facilitate a comprehensive exploration.

The first section explores the fundamental concept of conflict, setting the stage for a historical review of the Colombian conflict, its key actors, and causal factors. Subsequently, the chapter examines the impact of the conflict on the civilian population, culminating in a brief reflection on the contemporary national context. The second section narrows the focus to the Antioquia armed conflict, providing historical insight into the conflict's origins, the involved parties, and the ensuing complexities. The third section offers background crucial to understanding the specific context of Eastern Antioquia, the municipality of La Union Antioquia, and, ultimately, the village of San Miguel. This detailed historical context is crucial in comprehending the research group's dynamics. The group Artesanas de Amor Collective (AAC), situated in La Union Antioquia municipality's San Miguel village, collectively identifies as victims of the Colombian armed conflict.

Exploring the context in which the group operates is essential before delving into discussions about resilience and the group's experiences. This involves an in-depth exploration of their

collective history during the Colombian conflict, including instances of displacement and the challenges they faced. Their current residence in this territory is proof of their resilience and the importance of support networks, emphasizing that overcoming adversity requires more than individual strength.

History of the armed conflict in Colombia

To understand the Colombian armed conflict, it is important to explore the concept of social conflict. According to Parsons, as cited by Vargas and Rodríguez (2010), social conflict disrupts social systems, introducing disorder and impacting the roles of social agents. Despite dysfunction, Coser emphasizes that conflict can have latent functional consequences, serving as a mechanism for social transformation in well-integrated societies. It should not be equated with "war or civil war" but seen as a systemic adjustment process (Dahrendorf, 1966, as cited by Vargas & Rodríguez, 2010). Social conflict theory suggests that poverty, social exclusion and exploitation are not accidental or random outcomes but arise from systemic issues within a society. It is important to understand that under neoliberalism, these social problems resulting from the unequal distribution of resources and wealth are often considered unintended consequences. This perspective exempts both social and state actors from moral responsibility regarding these issues (Vargas & Rodríguez, 2010). When there are persistent social problems such as poverty, social inequality, or lack of opportunities, society generally strives to restore balance. This often involves challenging the power structures that restrict access to these opportunities. This tendency is reflected in manifestations such as social protests (Vargas & Rodríguez, 2010). This means that these problems are not simply accidental but are rooted in the very structures of society. In a context like Colombia, this is relevant due to the prolonged internal conflict that has deeply affected various communities in the country, which has had its origins in the deep roots of inequality and injustice in society.

The Colombian armed conflict is primarily categorized as an internal conflict, distinct from international disputes, meaning that it involves a conflict between agents of the Colombian State and various armed groups (Brown, cited by Trejos Rosero, 2013). Despite this classification, its impact transcends national borders, with a continued presence in guerrilla structures, illicit crops, and limited state control in border regions. Consequently, it is often described as an "armed conflict with significant external participation" (Lincoln and Leiss, 1990, cited by Trejos Rosero, 2013). The nature of the conflict involves a guerrilla war, which defies conventional classifications and is characterized by asymmetry and low-intensity conflict, with civilians often trapped as supporters or victims (Franco, cited by Trejos Rosero, 2013).

The origins of this conflict date back to the colonization of Colombia by the Spanish in the 16th century, marked by conflicts associated with conquest and exploitation. Centuries of internal fighting, political division, and social tensions have contributed to the nation's contemporary reality. Understanding Colombia's history is important, not limited to recent events but spanning centuries of pain and conflict. In the 19th century, Colombia witnessed numerous wars between the Conservative and Liberal parties, including the Thousand Days' War (1899-1902), marked by deep political tensions, electoral disputes, and religious influences. This conflict, resulting in over 100,000 deaths, contributed to the loss of Panama (Ríos-Sierra, 2017). Another crucial event occurred in the 1940s when Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a symbol of hope for the less privileged, was murdered, triggering widespread violence known as "El Bogotazo." This event escalated into "La Violencia," a period of prolonged conflict and political instability lasting until 1964, resulting in approximately 200,000 reported deaths and leaving a lasting legacy of suffering and displacement (Ríos-Sierra, 2017). Due to the government repression, several guerrilla movements emerged in Colombia. In the early 1950s, Colombia witnessed the emergence of various guerrilla movements such as MRL (Movimiento Revolucionario Liberal: Liberal Revolutionary Movement) among others, which aimed to challenge the government's repression collectively. They attempted to form alliances, with the first significant meeting, known as the Boyacá conference, signifying this effort (Ríos-Sierra, 2017).

Gustavo Rojas Pinilla became Colombia's president in 1953, intending to end violence. While he convinced over 6,500 individuals to disarm, his measures alienated groups like the Communist Party. Dissatisfaction with his limited reforms led liberal and communist factions to organize and contemplate armed actions, laying the foundation for the formation of new guerrilla groups, including the FARC (Ríos-Sierra, 2017). From 1964 to 2010, Colombia experienced a significant period of violence, characterized as the era of revolutionary violence. During this extended period, various insurgent organizations, notably including the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), and paramilitaries, assumed prominent roles in the Colombian conflict landscape (Trejos Rosero, 2013). Although more insurgent groups have been recognized in Colombia during its history, such as the EPL, M-19, PRT, MAQL, CRS, and MIR-Patria Libre, the groups that have had the most significant influence or degree of participation in peace processes with the government and the civilian population are the three groups mentioned previously: FARC, ELN and paramilitaries (Tawse-Smith, 2008).

The ELN, formed in the 1960s, arose due to political tensions and economic disparities in Colombia. It advocated armed struggle for national and social liberation. Financed through extortion and resource exploitation, including oil and gold, the ELN adapted to changing political contexts by integrating into social and trade union movements (Tawse-Smith, 2008). The relationship between the ELN and other actors like FARC was complex and characterized by ideological and tactical differences. The actions of both groups had a profound impact on Colombian society, generating high levels of violence and conflict in the regions where they were active. The ELN continues to operate in Colombia and seeks to gain power through clientelist alliances with candidates for mayoral and gubernatorial positions (Tawse-Smith, 2008).

On the other hand, the FARC emerged between 1950 and 1960 as an alternative self-defence force of peasant origin in response to armed resistance and communist agrarian struggle. Its communist ideology was consolidated in 1966. During the 1980s, the cocaine trade played a crucial role in its growth. This financial boom allowed the expansion of FARC fronts in regions such as Caquetá, Guaviare, and Meta. The group's financial strategy, centrally managed by the secretariat, provided them with substantial income. Unlike other guerrilla groups in Latin America that faced economic constraints, the FARC's financial prosperity was attributed to booms of legal and illegal goods, including oil, coca, poppy, charcoal, and banana production. Surprisingly, the Colombian state could not counter these financial strategies effectively, which allowed the FARC to maintain its economic strength for a long time (Tawse-Smith, 2008).

Regarding paramilitary groups, they emerged in response to escalating violence and perceived threats from guerrillas operating in regions near drug trafficking areas. These paramilitary groups, formed by drug traffickers, cattle ranchers, and some military members, aimed to protect themselves from guerrilla violence, leading to a prolonged period of conflict (Tawse-Smith, 2008). The Colombian army's covert associations with paramilitaries, though unofficial, highlight the complexity of the conflict. Under Álvaro Uribe Vélez's government (2003-2006), paramilitary factions demobilized but continued illegal activities under different aliases or names, such as criminal gangs or *Bactrim*, revealing the ongoing challenges with these groups (Rojas, 2016).

Other influential groups that have significantly contributed to the violence experienced in Colombia are the drug cartels, mainly due to their involvement in the illicit drug trade. These cartels, notably the Medellín Cartel in the 1970s and the Cali Cartel in the 1980s, played distinct

roles in shaping the country's violent landscape. The Medellín Cartel referred to as the "Aggressive Competitor," operated assertively, challenging state authority and accumulating substantial wealth. In contrast, the " Subtle Cooperator" phase, embodied by the Cali Cartel, adopted a decentralized structure, relying on corruption and covert methods. Another characterization of these cartels was the "Criminal State Successor," indicating their potential to challenge nation-states through corruption and collaborations with state entities. These cartels, ranging in size, have perpetuated violence and involved civilians in the drug trade, leading to social issues and damaging Colombia's international reputation. Despite limited progress, the country is still fighting the root causes of this problem and faces challenges in effectively addressing drug-related issues (Sullivan & Bunker, 2002).

After discussing the various actors involved, it is important to delve into the causes of this conflict. However, attributing these causes to a single factor oversimplifies the issue and limits our ability to comprehend the complexity of this conflict within the Colombian context. Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge that the conflict can be attributed to a multitude of factors that collectively explain its prolonged duration and the events that have unfolded throughout its history. One of the primary causes, as indicated by numerous reports and research studies, is the issue of land distribution. The National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH) in Colombia is a public institution tasked with investigating, documenting, and disseminating information on human rights violations and political violence that have occurred in the country. Their report "Basta ya, Memorias de Guerra y Dignidad: Memories of War and Dignity," as cited in Villamizar (2023), highlights these issues, emphasizing that the origins and perpetuation of the conflict are closely linked to land acquisition and ownership. Conflicting perspectives on land, whether seen as a source of profitability or essential for spiritual, physical, social, and cultural well-being, have intensified the conflict.

Examining the conflict reveals that unresolved land ownership disputes between the 20th and 21st centuries were a critical factor in the war. This problem has involved different actors such as landowners and large landowners, the Colombian State, armed and paramilitary groups, and peasant and indigenous communities. Historical events, including peasant struggles and agrarian movements, showcase the conflict's evolution. Displacement and land abandonment statistics from 1997 to 2007, estimating the loss of 1.2 to 10 million hectares, underscore the severity of the issue. Moreover, drug trafficking in the 1980s and 1990s exacerbated the conflict, acting as a financial resource for guerrillas. The Colombian state's historical weakness continues to play a role in this issue. Therefore, as highlighted in various studies, robust state

intervention and inclusive citizen participation policies are necessary to solve this problem (Villamizar, 2023; Tawse-Smith, 2008; Yaffe, 2011).

Another cause of the conflict is the abandonment of the state in rural or remote regions of Colombia. This abandonment has manifested itself in various ways, including deficits in basic infrastructure, absence of institutional presence, deficits in security, economic neglect, and inequality in access to justice. These conditions have allowed illegal groups to thrive, particularly in impoverished areas where the state is absent (Yaffe, 2011). Institutional corruption and lack of transparency further contribute to the state's weakness (Gaitán, 1995, cited in Yaffe, 2011). Despite Colombia's formal democracy, deep-seated corruption within local governments and persistent state neglect in various regions have led to limited opportunities, especially in remote areas. This situation has driven some young people to join illegal groups as they see no viable alternatives for their future. Despite efforts like the 2016 peace agreement with the FARC, challenges related to corruption, inadequate services, and limited opportunities remain, hindering lasting peace and development in Colombia (Villamizar, 2023).

When examining the Colombian conflict, it is crucial to consider its impact on the civilian population. In Colombia, the civilian population has tragically borne the brunt of the conflict, with over 9.5 million individuals registered as victims, according to the Single Registry of Victims (RUV) as of July 2023. This devastating toll includes over 220,000 lives lost, 5.7 million people displaced, and numerous cases of sexual violence and abuse, highlighting the severity of the situation (Obregón, 2014).

Rural regions, constituting 75.5% of Colombian municipalities, faced significant threats, leading to the displacement of rural inhabitants, mainly peasants and small-scale producers (Machado et al., 2011, as cited in Sierra-Puentes et al., 2019). Displaced victims migrated to urban areas, grappling with emotional distress, declining health, and disruptions in education (Sierra-Puentes et al., 2019). Disturbingly, 50.2% of the victims are women, who have historically suffered mistreatment, rape, and harassment as tools of war employed by armed groups (Atencio Gómez, 2020). This vulnerability was exacerbated by limited resources, lack of education, and illiteracy, making it challenging for affected populations, including displaced Afro-descendants, indigenous people, and peasant women, to advocate for their rights (Atencio Gómez, 2020). The horrors of the conflict are exemplified by massacres in communities like El Salado, underscoring the profound suffering endured by countless individuals (Sanchez, 2009, as cited in Botero, 2016). Despite government initiatives, the fact that more than 16% of the Colombian

population identifies as conflict victims underscores the profound societal impact of the conflict (Cerquera Córdoba et al., 2017).

To understand the role of the state in this context, it is essential to examine both the laws established as victim protection mechanisms and the peace processes that the country has carried out with these groups outside the legal framework. One key legislation, *la ley de verdad, justicia y repación* (the Law of Truth, Justice, and Reparation) introduced in 2005, aimed to facilitate the demobilization of paramilitary groups, emphasizing both material and symbolic reparations for victims (Botero, 2016). Despite some controversies, this law led to paramilitary demobilization and reduced violence, although legal loopholes hindered comprehensive reparations for all victims.

Another important legislation addressing forced displacement and protecting victims is Law 387, promulgated in 1997. This law addresses forced displacement caused by conflicts, violence, and disasters, aiming to assist and safeguard victims (Sierra-Puentes et al., 2019). Law 1448, known as the Victims Law since 2011, formally recognizes and supports victims of the Colombian conflict, focusing on reparations, including healthcare, education, housing, and land restitution for the displaced (Botero, 2016). Unlike the Law of Truth, Justice, and Reparation, the Victims Law provides material and symbolic reparations, preserving historical memory and promoting public acceptance of facts (Botero, 2016). Material reparations involve financial compensation and property return, with truth, justice, and participation integral to the process. The National System for Attention and Reparation to Victims (SNARIV), including entities like the Land Restitution Unit and the National Center for Historical Memory, oversees the implementation of victim support programs (Mayorga Coy, 2021).

Colombia has experienced a complex history of attempting peace agreements with armed groups. Notably, during Belisario Betancur's government in 1982, the Peace Commission was established, leading to dialogues with the FARC guerrilla in 1983 and subsequently with the M-19. A bilateral truce initiated with the FARC-EP on March 28, 1984, resulted in the emergence of the Patriotic Union (UP) (Villarraga Sarmiento, 2015, p. 21). Unfortunately, this peace process faced challenges such as a lack of guarantees, economic crises, and minimal results. The UP experienced threats and violence against its members, leading to its eventual disappearance. Simultaneously, the M-19's attempt to demand guarantees through the seizure of the Palace of Justice did not develop as expected, closing the door to peace under Betancur's government (Villarraga Sarmiento, 2015).

Subsequently, Virgilio Barco's government initiated peace talks with the M-19, culminating in the signing of the Political Pact for Peace and Democracy in November 1989. However, this process was disrupted by drug trafficking activities. On March 2, 1990, the demobilization and disarmament of the M-19 took place in Santo Domingo, Cauca, marking the onset of the reconciliation process (Villarraga Sarmiento, 2015). This significant step allowed the M-19 to transition into politics, even advocating for the referendum to reform Colombia's political constitution in 1991. Despite the risks, numerous former members of the M-19 actively engaged in politics. As a result, the current president of Colombia, who was part of this group, has played an active role in Colombian politics. His journey includes serving as a congressman, later becoming the mayor of the capital of Colombia, and currently holding the position of president of the republic.

As mentioned, the FARC made several attempts to achieve peace with different governments, but these were unsuccessful until the final one in 2016. In this agreement, the primary objective was to provide reparations to the victims from a perspective of human rights and truth. Within this framework, fundamental principles were established, including the recognition of victims as citizens with rights, the assumption of responsibility towards the victims of the conflict, the guarantee of their rights, the pursuit of truth, and the active participation of victims (Negotiation Table of the Government of Colombia and FARC, 2015). As part of this approach, victims participated directly in the National Victims' Roundtable, and some of their representatives were part of the boards of directors of entities such as the Land Restitution Unit, the Unit for Attention and Integral Reparation for Victims, the Territorial Transitional Justice Committees, and the National Center for Historical Memory. The National Victims' Roundtable has since become an institutionally recognized space for the active participation of victims (Mayorga Coy, 2021). Additionally, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) has made progress in prosecuting crimes against humanity, including charging former FARC commanders for hostage-taking and army officers for extrajudicial executions (Hassan, 2023).

Unfortunately, despite these efforts, post-agreement violence persists. Armed groups like the ELN, FARC "dissidents," and AUC paramilitaries continue to commit serious abuses, causing displacement and "confinement" in rural areas (Hassan, 2023). Colombia faces challenges, requiring state commitment to reach remote regions, disarmament of armed groups, accessible education, healthcare, and fundamental rights protection for all citizens. A transparent, people-centric government prevents future conflicts (Hassan, 2023). Colombia has experienced transformative changes; historically, with a right-wing political orientation, the country elected its

first left-wing president, Gustavo Petro, marking a shift in ideology. Petro aims to achieve total peace by negotiating with active groups such as the ELN and FARC dissidents, as well as with paramilitary factions formed after demobilization under the presidency of Álvaro Uribe Vélez. However, these efforts have yet to materialize, as ongoing clashes and the persistence of illegal activities indicate the lingering effects of the conflict.

Understanding the dynamics of social violence is crucial to understanding the complexities of the Colombian armed conflict and its implications for the post-conflict process. Social violence, deeply intertwined with historical injustices and systemic inequalities, has been a pervasive force that has shaped the conflict landscape in Colombia. By delving into the root causes of social violence, such as poverty, social exclusion, and political marginalization, we gain insights into the structural factors that have fueled armed conflict for decades. Furthermore, recognizing the role of social violence allows us to understand the diverse range of actors involved, including guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, drug cartels, and government forces, each with their motivations and agendas. This understanding is essential for developing effective strategies for peacebuilding and reconciliation in the post-conflict era. Addressing the social inequalities and grievances that have fueled the conflict is crucial to achieving sustainable peace and promoting social justice in Colombia. By recognizing the legacy of social violence and its impact on Colombian society, the country can take significant steps toward healing, reconciliation, and building a more inclusive and equitable future for all its citizens.

History of the armed conflict in Antioquia

Antioquia is a province located northwest of Colombia, known for its geographical diversity and cultural and economic wealth. It is located in the Andean region and borders several other provinces and territories of Colombia. The capital of Antioquia is Medellín, the second largest city in the country and an important economic and cultural center. This large and rich province is not immune to the violence that Colombia has experienced; on the contrary, it is one of the provinces most affected by armed conflict in the country's recent history.

The periods of violence in this province started at the same time as those in the rest of Colombia. During the period known as "La Violencia," as mentioned earlier, Antioquia ranked third in registered victims. The national registry recorded approximately 26,000 victims between 1946 and 1957. In 1951, nearly 14% of Colombia's population, totalling 11,500,000, resided in this region. Consequently, the area experienced a death rate of almost 1.7% during this period, signifying a significant loss of life in the region. However, given that other places had smaller

populations than Antioquia, the impact of violence may have been even more profound in those areas (Roldán, 2002). It is important to remember that the period known as "La Violencia" in Colombia was a partisan dispute between conservatives and liberals, the two dominant political parties of that time in Colombia. In the case of Antioquia, most of its population was conservative at that time. At the same time, this region was also characterized by the country's leading coffee and gold production and finance industry (Roldán, 2002).

Over time, as various guerrilla groups emerged in Colombia, these organizations also extended their presence into Antioquia. Armed groups such as the ELN and FARC established themselves in this region and commenced operations shortly after their creation in 1964 (López cited in Giraldo & Jaramillo, 2017). During the late 1970s, the province of Antioquia, including municipalities like Sonsón and a significant portion of the eastern Magdalena Medio region, began to witness the initial signs of paramilitary efforts against guerrilla forces. These early indications marked the early stage of what would eventually evolve into the modern paramilitary phenomenon in Colombia. Distinguished by its unique characteristics, Antioquia emerged as one of the earliest settings for establishing a localized paramilitary structure to eradicate the guerrilla presence. This transformative process gained momentum in the mid-1990s within the municipality of San Pedro de Urabá, Antioquia, when the FARC launched an operation to dismantle the paramilitary groups active at that time (Ríos, 2017).

Between 1993 and 1994, the Castaño brothers strengthened the Peasant Paramilitary Forces of Córdoba and Urabá (ACCU), later forming the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, AUC), which were supported by conservative ideologies and anti-communist groups. In Urabá, the FARC's 5th and 58th Fronts, along with the ELN's Manuel Hernández El Boche Front, operated amidst increasing paramilitary influence. The 1990s saw the rise of different paramilitary groups like the Elmer Cárdenas Bloc, Bananero Bloc, Metro Bloc, and Central Bolívar Bloc, comprising over 5,000 members, reshaping regional dynamics (Ríos, 2017).

The most severe escalation of the conflict in Antioquia transpired during the late 1980s and mid-1990s when paramilitary groups entered the region to seize territorial control and economic resources (Uribe, as cited in Giraldo & Jaramillo, 2017). Paramilitaries infiltrated the area to eliminate potential political competitors, consolidate support for their chosen candidate, and intimidate the local population into voting for their preferred candidate. Sometimes, they

manipulated electoral processes to ensure their candidate's victory (López, as cited in Giraldo & Jaramillo, 2017).

In Antioquia, the intensity of guerrilla activity varied. In Urabá, both the ELN and FARC coexisted, with the latter maintaining its presence even after demobilization. The Bananero Bloc (BB) lacked ELN presence, allowing the FARC to persist in the territory, but this did not produce a reduction in violence. In Tierralta, Córdoba, the AUC did not expel the guerrillas. The ELN diminished after 2002 in eastern Antioquia, contrasting with the consistent FARC territorial presence. The ELN vanished in northeast Antioquia and Bajo Cauca, with FARC gaining prominence (Ríos, 2017).

The province of Antioquia found itself in a unique and challenging situation, as it hosted the three most prominent and most historically significant armed groups in Colombia within its borders. This convergence created an atmosphere of anxiety and pervasive uncertainty among the civilian population. They were effectively caught in the crossfire of these groups, competing for control and pursuing their objectives at any cost, resulting in the civilian population being the most affected by the impact of the conflict. According to the Truth Commission's findings, as cited by Rivera in 2022, Antioquia emerges as a region with the highest number of victims in the armed conflict, with an astonishing 130,000 out of the 450,000 homicides recorded over 50 years of warfare occurring within its borders. Within the province itself, a significant 20 percent of all incidents of violence stemming from the armed conflict unfolded. Data from the *Registro Unico de Victims* reveals that between 1958 and 2019, Antioquia documented 2,261,383 acts of violence against its residents, in contrast to the national total of 11,275,329 incidents for the same period. The Commission's report further highlights that Antioquia leads in all categories of victimization, except in attacks on population centers (Rivera, 2022).

History of the armed conflict in the Eastern Region of Antioquia and San Miguel, La Union

Discussing the history of Antioquia, mainly focusing on eastern Antioquia, is crucial for this study as it enables us to understand the larger historical and social context that shapes the work of AAC, the participants in this research. This section of the chapter begins by providing a concise overview of the characteristics of eastern Antioquia. Subsequently, I delve into the historical context of violence endured by this region. Following this, the focus shifts to the municipality of La Unión Antioquia, where this research was conducted. After examining La Unión Antioquia, I specifically explore the region of San Miguel, a small village within the union

territory that holds significant importance for armed groups during the conflict. Understanding the unique aspects of this territory and the events that transpire during the conflict is essential. It provides context for this research and sheds light on the significance of AAC, allowing us to understand both the past events and the ongoing efforts in the area.

Eastern Antioquia, a region within the larger province of Antioquia, is characterized by its significant geographical and demographic attributes. Covering 23 municipalities between the Aburra Valley and the Magdalena Medio subregion, Eastern Antioquia covers 10.8% of the entire provincial area and boasts the second-largest population after the Aburra Valley. Positioned near Medellín, the second largest city in Colombia, this region serves as an industrial hub and a site for hydraulic projects (Giraldo & Jaramillo, 2017). The Eastern Antioquia region meets approximately 36% of the country's electricity demand, with an impressive output of 550 kWh. This substantial energy production is realized through a hydroelectric complex comprising five power plants: Guatapé, Jaguas, San Carlos, Playas, and Calderas (Sintraisa as cited in Ramirez, 2020).

The strategic location of this region presents geographical elements conducive to the establishment and consolidation of armed groups as it facilitates the creation of essential corridors for mobility between various regions (Sánchez & Hincapié, 2021). From the mid-1980s until 2007, the area hosted four guerrilla groups: FARC, ELN, EPL, and M-19. Of these, the last two were less permanent in their activities, while the two continued longer (Ramirez, 2020).

In the 1980s, in the Eastern Antioquia region, a form of conflict known as "guerra sucia: dirty war" emerged, reviving an old tactic from the era of partisan violence in the 1950s called "bolanteo," in which groups sent intimidating messages, threats, or political propaganda. This practice involved delivering death threats by placing them under doors, with the intention that those threatened would abandon their civic activities and leave town (Olaya, as cited by Ramirez, 2020). The first target of the civic movement was the physician Julián Conrado, who was murdered on October 23, 1983, in his office, located only half a block from the central park of San Carlos and the mayor's office building (Ramirez, 2020).

Three prominent insurgent groups, the ELN, the FARC, and the paramilitaries, significantly impacted Eastern Antioquia (Sánchez & Hincapié, 2021). The ELN focused on reservoir areas in the northeastern and peripheral subregions near Medellín, emphasizing community participation and engaging in illicit crop cultivation and attacks on infrastructure (García and

Aramburo, cited by Ramirez, 2020). The FARC's presence, stemming from Urabá in the 1970s, expanded to San Rafael, San Carlos, San Luis, Cocorná, Concepción, and Alejandría. The 47th Front, originating in northern Antioquia, intensified military efforts, shifting from Magdalena Medio to the Eastern Páramos area (Medina as cited in Ramirez, 2020). Paramilitaries, rooted in the Magdalena area, collaborated with the military, leading to the formation of paramilitary groups that committed atrocities, including massacres and forced displacement (Ramírez, 2020). The presence of multiple armed entities in the region, each competing for territorial control, contributed to an escalation of violence due to disputes among these groups (Giraldo & Jaramillo, 2017). Due to the dynamics surrounding the formation of these three groups (ELN, FARC, and Paramilitaries), each had different motivations and objectives. However, in general, within the context of the Colombian conflict, it can be stated that the primary goal of these groups in the region was controlling territory, resources, and influence. Both guerrillas and paramilitaries have aimed to establish a presence in the region to control areas rich in natural resources, defend economic interests, and protect crucial drug trafficking routes. The significance of the struggle for land and the redistribution of property throughout the conflict has been remarkable. Generally, it portrayed one side of the guerrillas advocating for land rights and the peasantry, while the paramilitaries defended the property of landowners, elites in Colombia, or even drug traffickers. Peasants in Colombia often lack ownership of their land due to a multitude of historical, social, political, and economic factors that have led to the consolidation of land ownership among a privileged few. A significant factor is the historical concentration of land in the hands of landowners and large owners, which has deprived peasants of access to land ownership. This concentration dates back to colonial times and has endured for centuries, fueled by practices such as latifundios and the dispossession of land from peasant and indigenous communities. Furthermore, unfavourable land policies have exacerbated the problem, further marginalizing peasants and hindering their ability to own land.

According to the Centro Nacional de Memoria Historica (National Center of Historical Memory, CNMH), the period from 1998 to 2004 is recognized as a period characterized by extensive transgressions against the civilian population, primarily driven by the intensification of armed conflict during this timeframe (Sánchez & Hincapié, 2021). Notably, one of the most prevalent forms of victimization during this era was forced displacement, which also significantly affected Eastern Antioquia. In 2010, data from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) revealed that between 2000 and 2005, 99,438 individuals were forcibly displaced from their homes within the Eastern Antioquia region. This phenomenon disproportionately affected

peasant communities, who were obliged to abandon their homelands due to direct threats or pervasive fear (Sánchez & Hincapié, 2021). The displacement problem was widespread in La Unión, Antioquia, where peasants were forced to migrate from rural to urban areas, including Union, and even to larger cities like Bogotá or Medellín due to conflict-induced displacement.

This study focuses on San Miguel, a village in La Union, Antioquia, where the collective "Artesanas de amor," who identifies as conflict victims, predominantly faced forced displacement, resulting in San Miguel's complete abandonment for several years. Before delving into the conflict specifics in San Miguel, understanding the broader context of La Union, Antioquia is essential. With 20,000 inhabitants, this region became a battleground during the Colombian armed conflict involving the ELN, FARC, paramilitary forces, and the Army. Tensions stemmed from megaprojects imposed in the initial conflict period (1983-1994), leading to social conflicts and infiltration by guerrilla and paramilitary groups. Civic movements challenging political elites intensified violence. In the subsequent period (1995-2003), the conflict escalated. The FARC and ELN encountered new paramilitary strategies, resulting in increased violence and mass displacements. The Incursion of the paramilitary structures such as the Metro Block and the José Luis Zuluaga Front in 1998 further deepened the crisis, leading to atrocities, including the infamous "La noche negra" (the black night) massacre in Mesopotamia on April 26, 2000. These events transformed the once-peaceful town of La Unión into a place of intense violence and displacement (Higuita Granada, 2018).

In the 1980s and 1990s, San Miguel Santa Cruz in La Unión saw the rise of several guerrilla groups. The ELN was the first, strategically positioning itself along the Medellín-Bogotá highway and later extending its influence on San Miguel Santa Cruz, controlling the La Unión-Sonsón route. During the same period, FARC established a limited presence near La Unión. Differences in their approaches were evident: the ELN forged closer ties with the population, while the FARC displayed a harsher attitude toward the civilian population. This era witnessed clashes with the Army, paramilitary incursions, and escalated violence. The ELN intensified activities, including dynamite attacks, while paramilitary groups further terrorized the populace. This period marked intense conflict and displacement in San Miguel Santa Cruz and La Unión (Higuita Granada, 2018).

Due to the presence of these three groups and their fight for control, forced displacement became a harsh reality in this area, reflecting the widespread pattern observed throughout Colombia. The paramilitaries, to assert their dominance, committed numerous atrocities against

the civilian population. For example, in La Honda, between 1996 and 2000, 10 community leaders were murdered, and ten houses were burned and dynamited. The towns of La Honda and San Miguel Santa Cruz suffered gradual depopulation, which finally led to total abandonment around 2000-2001 due to the actions of these armed groups (Higuita Granada, 2018). In San Miguel, residents were forced to leave, enduring not only displacement but also the heartbreaking loss of loved ones, such as husbands, brothers, or children. This tragedy caused deep pain within the community. Furthermore, the San Miguel region was stigmatized by the paramilitaries, who perceived it as a guerrilla zone. This stigmatization exacerbated the attacks, making them more frequent and brutal, generating a climate of constant threat and terror. Residents, frightened not only by direct threats but also by witnessing the atrocities perpetrated by these armed groups, were forced to leave their homes in search of safety and shelter to preserve their lives. The combination of constant threats, stigmatization, and fear of violence inflicted profound damage on the community, marking a dark chapter in the history of San Miguel.

Figure 1: Map to display the distance between La Honda and San Miguel villages and between these two villages with La Union town. Google. (n.d.). [Google San Migel and La Honda Village]. Retrieved January 3, 2024, from [1]

The current circumstances in this community do not similarly reflect the presence of any of these armed groups. There are numerous reasons behind this change. The peace agreement with the FARC in 2016 was crucial in demobilizing most of its members. Similarly, the

---

[1]

https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Vda.+La+Honda/San+Miguel,+La+Uni%C3%B3n,+Antioquia,+Colombia/@5.9484104,75.373362, 13z/data=!4m14!4m13!1m5!1m1!1s0x8e46bef19682303f:0xba62a6cd4591668e!2m2!1d75.2885566!2d5.9259862!1m5!1m1!1s0x8e 46be5ac1ae400b:0x31d9441da0801b2!2m2!1d-75.30455!2d5.92281!3e2?entry=ttu

demobilization of paramilitary groups during the government of Álvaro Uribe Vélez also contributed to a shift in dynamics. Although the ELN still exists, it operates with limited resources and forces compared to previous years. State measures, including efforts to combat illegal groups, may have weakened their influence. The overall changes in the conflict landscape, combined with the efforts of peace agreements, demobilization, and community empowerment, have contributed to a more stable environment in the region. Furthermore, the armed conflict in Colombia has transformed over time. Some groups have modified strategies, demobilized, or lost influence in specific areas. Equally important is the empowerment of communities in many conflict-affected regions, fostering resistance and deterring the resurgence of new groups. Although the challenges faced by these communities may have changed, the current population is not experiencing the extreme hardships witnessed during the conflict's peak.

In communities such as San Miguel, returning to their territory meant finding their roots and experiencing the happiness of returning home. The community faced some initial difficulties and mistrust among its members, but with the help of various actors, they rebuilt their social bonds. One of the initial actions taken by the community was to convene in 2013 for shared physical activities initially designed for older adults but later adapted to involve different generations. Over time, a significant festival emerged as a symbol of community identity—the Return Festival, which was inaugurated in 2017. This event invites the entire community to gather in the San Miguel Santa Cruz village, fostering community engagement and welcoming the return of those displaced to their lands. Their symbolic celebration of "return" reminds them of their challenges, emphasizing their resilience and determination to reclaim their land and fight for their rights. This chapter's next and final section delves into AAC, highlighting its role in this research.

Artesanas de Amor Collective, San Miguel, La Unión

At the heart of the San Miguel Santa Cruz village, a group of individuals came together to create something beautiful. Despite facing many challenges, this group used their creativity, and resilience and shared passion for craftsmanship to overcome adversity. This group is called Artesanas de Amor (AAC), and their story is one of transformation. It is a tale of a community returning to their homeland and expressing themselves through weaving and embroidery. The journey of AAC began with small gym sessions in 2013 and has since grown into an extraordinary collective of artisans, transcending generational boundaries and embracing

diverse talents. Their story unfolds through distinct phases, each one showcasing their remarkable journey:

Source: Photograph taken by Nicolas Steven, Nov 2021
Tejer rostros, Hilar historias Project

Source: Photograph taken by Andres Castro, Oct 2021
Tejer rostros, Hilar historias Project

Origins and Early Initiatives (2013-2016): The collective traces its roots back to the community's return to their territory after a conflict, driven by the need to reclaim their homes. In 2013, initial meetings were around gymnastics sessions in San Miguel village, organized by the local government to promote physical well-being. With support from the La Tulpa Comunitaria organization, the group began reconnecting with their space and historical memory, expanding their activities beyond gymnastics.

Community Engagement and Expansion (2017-2019): In 2017, the group collaborated with La Tulpa Comunitaria and the Adagio Corporation, executing the project "Rememorando nuestra historia: remembering our history," which promoted community initiatives and facilitated the return of displaced individuals. They initiated the Return Festival, which has become a significant community celebration. In 2018, the group and the village received psychosocial support. They commenced the art of weaving, while 2019 saw active participation in local events and the formal adoption of the name "Artesanas de Amor."

Challenges and Artistic Development (2020-2021): 2020 presented difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite limitations, the group organized workshops on emotional management and provided materials for members to continue their crafts at home. In 2021, their focus shifted to artistic development, embarking on a comprehensive training process in embroidery and weaving, culminating in creating artworks for the exhibition "Rostros de la

Resiliencia: Bordando y Tejiendo la Memoria: Faces of Resilience: Embroidery and Weaving memory."

Expanding Horizons and Recognition (2022-2023): In 2022, the group's activities expanded significantly. They actively participated in the rural cultural agenda, Huellas Rurales, launched the project "Rostros de la resiliencia," and were honoured with the Arte para el Alma grant, enabling outreach to neighbouring municipalities. Diverse activities were organized, including exhibitions, knowledge exchanges, and training sessions. In 2023, the group showcased their work at the La Unión Museum, received international visits, and collaborated actively in research efforts, showcasing their commitment to preserving their heritage.

Continued Growth and Recognition: Since its beginnings, AAC has evolved from a gymnastics-focused initiative for older people to a diverse community of artisans. Through the

art of storytelling via embroidery, the group has created a platform for individuals of all ages to connect, share experiences, and celebrate their cultural heritage. Their regular meetings and recognition at local and international levels have reinforced their commitment to their craft and community, ensuring continuous growth and consolidation.

The collective has 14 active members, which has evolved significantly since its origins. Initially consisting exclusively of women, the group now includes two male members, while the remaining participants identify as women. The age range of the members extends from 22 to 73 years old, reflecting the diverse generational representation within the group. This varied age composition stems from the group's origins as a gathering of senior citizens engaged in gymnastics. Over time, the group's activities expanded, attracting individuals of different ages, particularly those intrigued by embroidery and eager to delve into their community's history through the narratives shared by this group.

In addition to the diverse age range, the group exhibits a spectrum of academic backgrounds. Some members have completed only primary education, while others hold high school diplomas, and even university students are among them. Most group members identify as peasants, aligning their craft with rural lifestyles. Furthermore, a significant portion of the group identifies as victims of the conflict, emphasizing the group's resilience and determination in the face of adversity.

The group's consolidation resulted from various efforts. Initially supported by local initiatives from the mayor's office, since 2018, they have actively searched for benefactors' actions, maintaining processes of psychosocial support, physical conditioning, and collaboration with institutions such as the municipal administration and social organizations. These efforts enabled them to reclaim their territory and heal themselves and others through gatherings, crafts, knitting, and embroidery. Their visibility and sustainability significantly expanded when pivotal organizations like La Tulpa and the Adagio Corporation intervened. These entities played a crucial role as mediators, elevating the group's visibility and supporting their ongoing endeavours.

Additionally, the group's consolidation was aided by the help and cooperation of different individuals. For instance, Zafron, an Australian teacher who fell in love with San Miguel village and purchased land there, became an integral part of the group and the community. Although not a formal member, she made a substantial impact by introducing embroidery techniques in

2018 and even established a community school teaching English to local children. Luz Dary, an active member since 2020, emerged as a driving force in showcasing the group's work. Her leadership, bolstered by her position on the municipal council, attracted valuable resources, ensuring the continuation of their storytelling through embroidery. Beatriz, Luz Dary's mother, stands as the group's backbone, hosting weekly meetings at her home and embodying the spirit of generosity and social activism.

The group's founders are Ebanjelina, Angela, Eduviges, Rosalba, and Oliva. Ebanjelina, though not directly involved in knitting or embroidery, contributes through activities like gardening and communication, highlighting the diversity of roles within the group. Angela, a member since the beginning of the group, is not only a skilled artisan but has also encouraged her family to join the group. Eduviges embodies the group's spirit with her warm smile and embroidery expertise. Rosalba, another founding member, actively participates in the group's activities, finding joy and purpose in belonging. She also encouraged her husband, Arjemiro, to join the group in 2018. Despite coming from a generation where weaving was traditionally considered a women's task, he expressed a keen interest in learning these techniques and actively participating in the activities. Oliva, known for her artistic talents, generously shares her knowledge and motivates others. Her grandson, Sebastian, joined the group in 2022, bringing creativity and fresh perspectives from his graphic design background. Additionally, some new members have joined the group in recent years. Dioni, introduced to the group by her friend Angela, contributes with her embroidery expertise and active engagement. Although residing in a neighbouring village, Miriam travels regularly to participate in the group, emphasizing the inclusive and welcoming environment cultivated within Artesanas de Amor. This diverse group of members not only reflects the richness of the community but also shows the strength that comes from unity and shared passion. The group's continued growth and resilience exemplify the power of community bonds and creativity in the face of challenges.

Despite the government's involvement in the group's activities, mainly through the promotion of gymnastics sessions and occasional material contributions, most of the group does not perceive state support as ideal. Although the national government, after the peace agreements signed in 2016, has supported several communities affected by violence and has addressed issues such as historical memory, it has provided monetary resources that can reach the regions where these groups settle. However, this allocation of resources can be perceived as unequal, with some communities or groups receiving a disproportionate share. For AAC, assistance received directly from the state has been limited and the group has relied on other agencies or individuals

for financial or other support. However, the group expresses a desire for greater state involvement, hoping that the government will recognize their needs and provide more substantial support, given the importance of their work. For the group, engaging in debates about historical memory, addressing conflict, and addressing issues such as land abandonment are crucial steps in acknowledging the past and progressing as a country.

Talking about AAC means delving into the significant impact the group members have made through their embroidery. This technique has given them a profound sense of belonging to the group, as they aim to identify as weavers of their history. This aspect is crucial in understanding the depth of their embroidery work. This community spirit changed the group members' perspectives about their work or productions. Initially, embroidery was viewed as a personal endeavour. They would gather and work on their pieces, and each participant would take their creations home. However, they now perceive their productions as a collective art creation owned by the person who embroidered the piece. During exhibitions, they utilize the group's embroidery, showcasing everyone's work collectively.

Chapter 2: Trauma and Narratives of Memory

Overview

This chapter explores how communities collectively navigate trauma, particularly emphasizing the pivotal role historical memory plays in shaping their responses. Additionally, it examines diverse community mechanisms, such as embroidery and fabrics, for coping and healing. Consequently, the primary objective of this chapter is to comprehend trauma, its interconnection with historical memory, and the utilization of artistic productions in the healing process. To achieve this, the chapter is organized into three main parts. The first section aims to comprehend the concept of trauma through the lens of psychoanalysis. It not only delves into psychoanalytic theories but also defines various trauma concepts developed in conflict contexts, encompassing psychological, social, and physical dimensions. The subsequent section explores the concepts of collective trauma and historical trauma. This exploration seeks clarity on the impact of events, such as conflicts, on an entire community. The objective is to establish a foundation for connecting this understanding with community resilience, which forms the central focus of this research. The final section centers on textile production and healing mechanisms employed by communities affected by conflicts. The transformative role of textile activism, mainly through embroidery, is examined as a profound healing process within the context of memory and resilience. The section explores both global and Colombian contexts of textile

activism, emphasizing its role as a form of resistance and an alternative means of storytelling, denouncing injustices, mourning losses, and seeking redress. By interlinking these three key topics, the chapter aims to provide insights into individual and collective post-conflict experiences, the mechanisms employed for healing by affected groups, and historical memory's crucial role in this process.

Trauma dynamics in Conflict-Affected Communities

Exploring the resilience of conflict-affected communities requires a deep understanding of the relationship between trauma and community dynamics. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines trauma as "an emotional response to a terrible event such as an accident, rape, or natural disaster. Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer-term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships, and even physical symptoms such as headaches or nausea" (APA, 2023). This definition aligns closely with the themes discussed in the previous chapter, particularly those related to conflict situations. As it was highlighted, such conflict contexts give rise to issues directly impacting the civilian population, encompassing displacement, loss of loved ones, physical injuries, and other significant challenges. The formal conceptualization of trauma began to take shape, notably with the contributions of Freud and Pierre Janet. Both pioneers explored the clinical implications of traumatic events. They developed parallel theories concerning the etiology of hysteria, emphasizing experiences of psychological trauma, including instances of sexual trauma (Herman, 1992a, as cited in Jones & Cureton, 2014).

Freud (1920) In his work "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," defines trauma as a disturbance that arises after serious mechanical shocks, such as accidents or situations in which there is a danger of death, this disturbance is known as "traumatic neurosis". The main factor that motivates this neurosis seems to be the surprise or shock experienced during the traumatic event. The study of dreams in people with traumatic neurosis reveals a constant return to the situation of the accident, suggesting a psychic fixation on the trauma. In Freud's later works, particularly in "Moses and Monotheism," he introduced the concept of latency, suggesting that in traumatic experiences, latency does not simply imply the forgetting of an incomprehensible reality but is inherent to the experience itself. This implies that the impact of trauma resides not only in the original event but also in the interval before its reappearance in an individual's life, often through hallucinations, flashbacks, dreams, and fantasies, without apparent temporal or spatial connections (Arteaga, 2016). This perspective challenges the notion that trauma can be easily contained or erased from memory, emphasizing its lasting influence on the psyche.

Understanding that trauma can continue to affect an individual, even without active memory of the event, underscores the complexity of its effects and the need for comprehensive approaches to treatment and management. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of addressing not only the initial traumatic incident but also the lasting psychological repercussions, which can manifest in various ways over time.

The other pioneer of this concept, Pierre Janet, defines psychological trauma as "the result of exposure to an overwhelming, inevitable stressful event. This experience leads to fear, aversion to memory, and difficulties assimilating the traumatic event. The memories fragment and distance themselves from ordinary consciousness, manifesting through visual perceptions, somatic concerns, and behavioral responses" (Salvador, 2009, p.5). This definition encapsulates how individuals confront abnormal and stressful situations for which they often lack the necessary resources. Such conditions may trigger physical manifestations, indicating the presence of biological defense mechanisms in humans. Depending on the individual, these defense mechanisms could manifest as paralysis or a fight response. In traumatic situations, these responses may impact memory and accelerate the nervous system (Prince, 1998, as cited by Alexander, 2004).

In contexts of violence, people can suffer trauma derived from various experiences, including exposure to physical, emotional or sexual violence, as well as the loss of loved ones or forced displacement. These traumatic events often result in psychological, social, and physical trauma after a conflict, affecting not only soldiers but also civilians in violent contexts (Jones and Cureton, 2014). Trauma disorders identified by the DSM-5 include acute stress disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, reactive attachment disorder, disinhibited social participation disorder, and adjustment disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). These disorders exacerbate post-conflict challenges, hindering survivors' ability to form and maintain relationships due to emotional detachment and trust issues. Post-traumatic stress disorder, characterized by symptoms such as trauma reliving, hypervigilance, and trigger avoidance, affects approximately 10% of people exposed to trauma, with a higher prevalence among direct victims (Widom, 2012). However, many people may not develop PTSD but still suffer emotional and psychological distress after traumatic events, emphasizing the broader spectrum of responses to trauma beyond clinical manifestations.

Physical trauma, for instance, experienced in conflict zones, marks a significant turning point in an individual's life (Richmond et al., 2000). In Colombia, physical injuries were common during

the conflict, particularly due to the widespread use of antipersonnel mines by insurgent groups and the army (CNMH, 2017). Despite Colombia's accession to the Ottawa Convention on Antipersonnel Mines, the use of these weapons persisted, causing injuries and disabilities rather than deaths (CNMH, 2017). Civilians, including children, were often victims of these mines, causing physical trauma and disabilities that disrupted their daily lives and work activities. Landmine victims experience overwhelming emotions such as sadness and fear, which can lead to psychological disorders (Rosero et al., 2013). This emotional overflow exacerbates post-traumatic loneliness, complicating the recovery process. However, defense mechanisms such as joy and hope arise to reconstruct the meaning of life and often require support networks to confront these challenges effectively.

Addressing exclusively the individual dimension of trauma overlooks the broader impact on both the individual and the community during periods of violence. According to Rajiva and Takseva (2021), trauma studies persist in differentiating between the individual (subjective) and the collective (objective, historical). Such distinctions align with Cvetkovich's observation of a gender division between the public and private spheres, allowing for the cancellation of sexual trauma (Rajiva and Takseva, 2021). While this study does not directly address sexual trauma, typically associated with the private sphere, it aims to take a holistic perspective, recognizing the impacts of both individual and collective trauma. This point of view allows us to recognize that individuals were affected individually when considering their community context, in which the community also suffered collectively.

Having a collective perspective is essential to understanding how individuals are affected differently in contexts of violence. For example, in Colombia during the conflict, women suffered both sexual violence and the loss of loved ones. The direct violence of the conflict caused women to lose family, friends and community ties, deeply affecting them and their families and causing emotional and economic trauma. Additionally, many women were left as heads of households or displaced, exposing them to greater risks during displacement. A comprehensive understanding of the Colombian conflict can be achieved by examining it through the lens of collective trauma, which denotes a traumatic event that impacts a group or community, shaping collective memory and sociocultural consciousness (Neal, 1998, cited in Alexander, 2004). This recognition is important since the conflict in Colombia involved widespread events rather than isolated incidents. The presence of multiple illegal groups in a singular location often had widespread ramifications for most of the population, resulting in massacres, disappearances, and mass displacements in various regions of the country. Consequently, many people were

forced to leave rural areas and move to urban centers or even larger cities in Colombia. According to Borda Bohigas et al. (2015), collective trauma is defined as "a trauma that affects a group of people who share a common identity, such as ethnicity, nationality, or religion. It is characterized by the transgenerational legacy of traumatic events and manifests through various forms of psychological and social responses, particularly in situations of political and social violence" (p. 42). Understanding this distinction is critical, as it underscores that trauma transcends individual experiences and denotes the impact on an entire community, which carries important implications for future generations.

The traumatic experiences that can generate historical trauma (HT) share four common characteristics: a) the suffering of the majority of the community; b) the production of high levels of tension or collective stress; c) the occurrence of mass mourning for the loss of individuals in the community or for the loss of cultural traditions, and d) perpetuation by individuals outside the community with destructive intentions (Borda Bohigas et al., 2015). As seen in Chapter One, these conditions are met in the case of the Colombian conflict, particularly in the village of San Miguel. The community experienced shared suffering due to the loss of loved ones, abandonment of the land, or material losses, resulting in heightened tensions and stress. These stressors were exacerbated by external agents; armed groups entered the population, leaving the community with no choice but to accept them and attempt to adapt to "living" with them. This type of traumatic experience can have consequences at various levels: individual, family, and social, and may manifest in anxiety, depression, and PTSD, among other issues, at the individual level. Historical trauma (HT) can impact communication and lead to parenting models that are stressful or inadequate at the family level. At the social level, a disconnection from cultural traditions can be observed, along with a high prevalence of chronic diseases (Borda Bohigas et al., 2015). This means that communities affected by conflict experience its impact on various aspects of their lives and social groups, such as family, community, school, or any group the person interacts with. When historical or collective trauma occurs, all these systems can be affected. Although collective trauma and historical trauma are often used interchangeably in many contexts due to their close relationship, the choice between the two may depend on the context. It is important to note that there are differences between them. For instance, historical trauma refers explicitly to past events, while collective trauma can encompass both past and present experiences depending on the context. This distinction leads to different approaches. When discussing historical trauma, the emphasis is typically on transgenerational trauma and the psychological and social consequences of those past

traumatic events. Collective trauma focuses more on the group's response – how the community comes together to cope with the situation and how these experiences impact the dynamics and relationships within the group. However, as mentioned, in historical trauma, there is also an individual trauma that has consequences at a personal level for people. This is the same case with collective trauma. Although everyone identifies with the pain, there can be individual consequences.

From the perspective of modern psychoanalysis, there is a strong emphasis on recognizing that the importance of traumatic events lies not only in their occurrence but also in how they are subsequently recorded and processed. This approach underscores the importance of understanding crises caused by trauma and how individuals and societies navigate them (Arteaga, 2016). Recognizing the complexity of trauma and addressing its individual and collective dimensions are essential steps to facilitate recovery and healing. The emphasis on recording and processing trauma highlights the lasting emotional and psychological impacts that often persist long after the traumatic event has passed. As Arteaga (2016) articulates, "the historical documentation of traumatic events must be rooted in the collective memory of societies that have suffered significant catastrophes" (p. 20). In essence, the essential to collectively elaborate and process traumatic events serves as a foundation for symbolic restoration and the construction of collective memory, allowing communities to reconcile with their past. While this process may not unfold immediately after the events, it is still crucial to rebuild the social fabric. Therefore, the search for the recovery of historical memory is intertwined with the establishment of a collective identity. This is essential for communities affected by the conflict who want to seek reparations and move toward reconciliation.

Memory and recovering process.

If we talk about Colombia "It is often said that Colombia is a country without memory. This statement is correct if it is intended to show the lack of knowledge that Colombians have about our past, which is why we tirelessly repeat the same mistakes. However, it is an imprecise statement. Our memory is selective" (Arrieta Burgos, 2016 p. 6). The Colombian armed conflict has had a long-lasting impact on most of the population, especially those who have experienced the horrors of war. This has resulted in a collective and historical trauma within the Colombian population. As a result, recovery, and the role of historical memory in this process have become essential topics to explore. The analysis of recovery processes has highlighted the importance of collective memory. It emphasizes the significance of addressing past events through the symbolic residues left in contemporary memory (Alexander et al., 2004).

Colombia has made significant progress in collective memory, as demonstrated by formulating laws and negotiating peace agreements with various armed groups, as analyzed in the previous chapter. The National Museum of Memory has been established as a fundamental space dedicated to preserving and elucidating the events that occurred during the conflict, housing testimonies and diverse perspectives on the armed conflict. Additionally, Colombia has built monuments in different regions that serve as poignant reminders of the victims and raise awareness about the far-reaching impacts of the armed conflict. National and localized efforts have addressed historical and collective trauma and emphasized the importance of collective healing and preserving historical memory. By taking a comprehensive approach, we can better understand how communities can recover from trauma and engage in processes that promote resilience and reconciliation.

As per Torres-Ávila (2013), memory refers to recalling our or others' actions. Truth, conversely, is the correspondence between what we remember and what occurred at a specific time and place. Nevertheless, both memory and truth are often subjective, as they rely on the narrator's personal experience of the events. This subjectivity influences one's perspective, as memory is closely linked to feelings and experiences. It shapes individuals' identities, fosters empathy, and plays a crucial role in facilitating social and communicative functions. Truth can be subjective because it is linked to each person and their story. However, in conflict or post-conflict situations where the truth needs to be discovered, objectivity is crucial and must be validated through consensus and without misunderstanding. This process can be challenging, especially in traumatic situations where denial or forgetting are used as defense mechanisms (Torres-Ávila, 2013). Accepting harsh realities can be difficult because it is easy to ignore them. Some people find it simpler to move forward after experiencing such events. However, individual memory is crucial in reconstructing the truth. Despite the subjective nature of truth, individual memory provides a valuable perspective to the process by enriching the narrative with personal and emotional details. This memory not only preserves historical truth but also acts as resistance. In this context, resistance refers to the perseverance and strength to keep the truth alive during adverse circumstances. This, in turn, facilitates the reconstruction of the collective narrative often worn down by violence.

Individual memory is inherently subjective and susceptible to distortions and misinterpretations. Caruth (1995) provides a framework for understanding this complexity by outlining three modes of witnessing: direct experience of the event, listening to the testimonies of others, and witnessing the process of witnessing itself, which involves the construction of the event.

However, even direct experience does not guarantee accurate memory; Individuals may reconstruct events incorrectly. This distortion may occur due to the overwhelming and traumatic nature of the experience. Therefore, memory plays a fundamental role in the reconstruction of trauma. Victims of traumatic events often struggle to fully process the events when they occur due to their distressing nature. Memory, however, serves as an important tool for gradual understanding and comprehension of experience. Furthermore, the presence of other witnesses, as Caruth illustrates, contributes to the preservation of memory. For example, Caruth mentions Jews who, although they did not directly experience the Holocaust but resided elsewhere served as secondary witnesses. Their testimonies are vital to sustain an active collective memory of the event. Therefore, both individual and collective memories, along with various modes of witnessing, are crucial to understanding traumatic events.

Within the process of being a witness there is also the importance of testimony, which is "The process by which the narrator (the survivor) reclaims his position as a witness: reconstitutes the internal "thou" and thus the possibility of a witness or a listener inside himself" (Caruth, 1995, p 70). By sharing their experiences with others, people affected by trauma can feel recognized and understood, which can help them process and make sense of what they have experienced. The act of bearing witness can be therapeutic for people affected by trauma. By verbalizing their experiences, they can begin to emotionally process what they have experienced and work toward recovery. Perhaps the most important role of narrating is that testimony also serves as a means of preserving the collective memory of traumatic events. By sharing their experiences with others and documenting them, affected people help keep the memory of what happened alive, which is crucial to understanding and preventing future trauma.

In Colombia, victims have sought the truth and clarification of events. Addressing this need, the government established mechanisms such as the Truth Commission, one of the institutions created after signing peace agreements with the FARC. The process involved the active participation of victims and victim organizations, communities, groups, public institutions, social and private organizations, ethnic-territorial authorities, the international community, and individuals from different sectors, professions, and locations (RUV, 2023). This comprehensive approach provided victims with a platform and an opportunity to share their experiences and the challenges they had been through. Furthermore, it allowed them to articulate and show what happened to the nation and the global community.

Colombia has implemented several mechanisms to address the consequences of widespread human rights violations during conflicts and promote peace, reconciliation, and democratic consolidation. A crucial established process is transitional justice, which aims to uncover the truth by reconstructing and narrating events. The transitional justice process in Colombia involves different entities and mechanisms intended to address crimes committed during the armed conflict and promote reconciliation and reparation for victims. These include the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), the Truth Commission and the Search Unit for Missing Persons (UBPD). These entities collaborate to compile the collective memory to understand the events during the conflict. Their shared goal is to identify mechanisms to prevent the repetition of past wrongs and promote historical memory. Victims have the right to receive material and symbolic reparations, such as monuments and memorials, commemorative days, ceremonies, and acts of reconciliation. These actions also form a collective identity and unite the community through a shared history.

Collective memory, as defined by Torres-Avila (2013), is a "social construction that involves a group activity to remember and narrate, which, of course, also implies a collective vision" (p. 152). This process is vital since, as seen in the process of individual memory, forgetting can be used as a defense mechanism. However, in collective memory, remembering among all the group members can even unravel repressed entirely memories. This process not only allows remembering together but also contributes to the creation of a collective identity. In addition, the concept of the public begins to gain relevance, where grief or mourning ceases to be a solitary process carried out at home and becomes part of a collective narrative. Here, everyone tells their stories, supports each other, and builds a social fabric that reflects the group's shared experience of the conflict. This collective approach to memory fosters solidarity and mutual understanding and contributes to preserving historical truth in the larger social narrative.

Social memory in human systems, particularly in local communities, is shaped by past experiences and can lead to learning and adaptation phases (Norris et al., 2008). In other words, communities can efficiently adapt to various situations by drawing lessons from their experiences. Given that it is the collective knowledge, it facilitates learning, listening, and fostering empathy among community members, contributing to a shared sense of identity. These elements enhance community resilience by enabling communities to overcome challenges, learn from them, and transform their circumstances through projects or activities. These efforts often improve economic and emotional states compared to their pre-conflict situations. Projects like the Artesanas de Amor collective (AAC) exemplify how communities

form collective identities by taking ownership of their history, sharing their stories, reclaiming their territories, and rebuilding a sense of community lost at some point.

Many groups around the world prioritize preserving and connecting with their stories. However, finding the right words can be challenging. Art has proven to be an effective tool for storytelling. Textile production and embroidery have been used as malleable and subjective tools, allowing people to convey unique stories. In various studies, the analysis of textile pieces has been considered as "testimonies framed in a particular form of textile activism have been linked to the memory and healing processes of groups of women victimized during the armed conflict, who through the making of textiles narrate, resist, and demand justice." (González-Arango et al., 2022, pp. 127). These creations serve as tangible testimonies of experiences and suffering, encapsulating individual and collective narratives of those affected. This form of textile activism preserves the memory of injustices suffered and is a powerful tool for communities to reclaim their identity and dignity through artistic expression. Consequently, these groups use textiles to strengthen the social fabric and solidarity fractured during the conflict. This practice serves as a therapeutic and collective healing process, providing a safe and creative space and transforming pain into something artistic and beautiful. In the next section, I delve into textile production as a tool of healing and resistance, highlighting its impact within communities as an expressive art form and a powerful medium for storytelling and resilience.

Textiles and embroidering as healing practices.

Before exploring the concept of textile activism, it is important to explore how textiles and embroidery have been part of Colombia´s national identity and how the textile industry was developed. This clarification is necessary to understand the complexities of the industry, its meaning as cultural pieces and its importance within the Colombian context. In Colombia and across Latin America, weaving holds profound historical significance, serving as a unifying thread among diverse indigenous communities through trade and tradition. The quality of Andean textiles was so valued that the Spanish conquerors admired them (Tavera De Téllez, 1994), indicating that indigenous communities had developed sophisticated weaving techniques long before European arrival. Today, this legacy continues, particularly evident among indigenous groups like the Wayu, a matriarchal community where women are highly admired for their weaving skills. Within the Wayu community, there is also a deliberate effort to preserve cultural heritage by passing down these techniques from one generation to the next.

Traditional weaving encompasses a wide range of items, primarily categorized into three groups. The first group includes clothing items such as hats, ruanas, pants, and sashes. The second group comprises household articles like hammocks, blankets, rugs, and mats. Lastly, tools such as fishing nets also fall under this tradition. Materials used for weaving vary from cotton to alpaca fibres and even spun human hair, reflecting the rich diversity of resources available. This enduring tradition underscores the cultural significance of weaving in the region (Tavera De Téllez, 1994) and highlights the variety of options within textile production. When examining the Spanish influence on weaving in the region, it becomes visible that their contribution extends to clothing construction techniques. Spanish settlers introduced sewing and edging methods, which became essential in the manufacturing of clothing items. European women imposed domestic tasks and crafts, such as sewing and embroidery, on indigenous and mestizo young women, thereby shaping their roles within domestic life (Rey Alvarez, 1994).

The textile tradition of Colombia has been and is a very important tradition that has remained to this day. During the Conquest, Andean indigenous communities primarily focused on agriculture, while women spun cotton and "cabuya." However, the sheep and wool brought by the Spanish gradually supplanted cotton. The adoption of the horizontal loom by blanket weavers increased efficiency with the integration of more male labour. Women took on the responsibility of crafting hats, backpacks, and other items, as well as finishing smaller pieces like ruanas and scarves (Tavera De Téllez, 1994). This perspective shows the cultural tradition among indigenous peoples in creating their craftwork. However, it also demonstrates how this tradition evolved and adapted to meet the demands of the Spanish colonial era. On one hand, it reflects a process of domestication, as indigenous artisans integrated Spanish techniques and materials into their practices. On the other hand, it underscores a shift towards production-oriented work, where indigenous crafts began to serve not only domestic needs but also broader economic purposes within the colonial system.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the artisans of New Granada flourished with the establishment of workshops run by predominantly Spanish masters. However, the local industry experienced a slowdown due to the increased import of European goods and economic liberalization (Tavera De Téllez, 1994). This occurred due to the promotion of Bourbon policies that had a significant impact on textile production in the New Kingdom of Granada. Where Catalan merchants, to safeguard their industry, urged the Crown to dismantle the weaving factories in the colonies. The governors began to implement these decrees, arguing that the colonies should mainly provide raw materials to Spain (Rey Álvarez, 1994).

By the late 19th century, a movement towards modernizing textile art had gained momentum, extending its influence beyond traditional domestic and rural contexts. This transition facilitated the growth of a robust textile industry (Tavera De Téllez, 1994). Notably, certain companies embraced capitalist practices, establishing wage systems between owners and workers, predominantly comprised of women and children. These companies, structured as joint-stock enterprises, attracted considerable investments, although procuring raw materials like cotton presented challenges in regions such as Bogotá and Antioquia (Montenegro-Trujillo, 2002). Specifically focusing on Antioquia, textile production began to take shape towards the end of the colonial era. Despite initial efforts by priests in Envigado and Marinilla to stimulate this industry, they met with little success. Subsequently, with backing from the State, Antioquia textile ventures were established in the region, including the Tejidos del País factory in Medellín. However, during the 19th century, the development of the textile sector encountered obstacles, such as difficulties in sourcing raw materials and facing competition from European imports.

A crucial moment in Colombian textile history occurred in 1877 with the beginning of the production of wool fabrics by Indalecio Uribe. This milestone not only showcased the latent potential of local textile manufacturing amidst its inherent challenges but also marked a crucial step toward the subsequent growth and maturation of the industry (Montenegro-Trujillo, 2002). After this milestone, a wave of textile companies emerged that significantly shaped the trajectory of the sector. Among these influential entities were the Bello Weaving Company (1902), the Samacá Weaving Company (1904), and the Colombian Weaving Company (1907). Throughout this era, textile companies not only strengthened their production capabilities but also adopted modernization, exemplified by the adoption of imported spinning machinery (Montenegro, 1982). The financing of this industry was based primarily on the capital of people associated with commerce, who diversified into manufacturing as a complementary activity. In Antioquia in particular, the textile sector had a strong family imprint, with businesses often emerging from collaborative efforts between business entities, many of which shared family ties (Montenegro, 1982). This has allowed industrial development in the region of Antioquia, particularly in the textile sector, to be characterized by its family-oriented nature, with companies established through the pooling of capital among siblings and extended families. For instance, two major companies that continue to play a significant role in this industry in Colombia, namely Coltejer and Fabricato, are closely associated with family financial groups

The Colombian textile industry, much like its homologs in other manufacturing sectors, was built on the labour of young women and children, marking them as a crucial demographic from the

onset of the 20th century. By 1916, women constituted the predominant workforce in textile factories, particularly prominent in industrial hubs such as Medellín. While female participation remained robust until the 1980s, a gradual decline in their proportion began to emerge from 1926, coinciding with a noticeable rise in male participation rates (Montenegro, 1982). These shifts mirror the evolving socio-economic dynamics and changing gender roles within Colombian society, profoundly shaping the trajectory of industrial labour throughout the 20th century.

in Antioquia, the epicentre of textile industrial activity, women demonstrated higher rates of unionization compared to men. This phenomenon underscores the inherent challenges in organizing female labour, especially within Colombia's conservative cultural and religious contexts. However, despite these obstacles, women workers in Antioquia played crucial roles in leading influential union movements, exemplified by the textile strike at Fabricato in 1920. During this pivotal event, women emerged as central figures, spearheading efforts that resulted in wage increases and improvements in working conditions (Montenegro, 1982). This narrative reveals several key elements. Initially, women entered the textile industry due to cheaper labour costs compared to men, indicating that they faced unfavourable conditions from the beginning. Nevertheless, they became integral to the economic development of the country. Moreover, their empowerment within the unions despite repression and conservative elements such as culture and religion illustrates their determination to fight for labour equality rights. The story of the Colombian textile industry provides insight from an urban and industrial perspective, yet a closer examination reveals how elements like embroidery and weaving have been utilized also in rural or peasant contexts to symbolize women's struggles. Therefore, it is pertinent to discuss how these dynamics transcend borders, as textile activism has been embraced by various groups in Colombia, including urban and rural areas, as in the case of Artesanas de Amor.

If we shift our focus now to the evolution and transformation of crafts such as embroidery throughout history, we observe significant changes around the world and in Colombia. For example, during the Victorian era, embroidery emerged as an important activity, especially among women who embraced the ideal feminine notion of sensitivity. Victorian women openly engaged in embroidery, often seeking validation within a social structure characterized by rigid gender roles (Parker, 2010). After the Industrial Revolution, tasks such as embroidery also came to mean feminine obedience and opulence (Pérez-Bustos & Chocontá Piraquive, 2018). This association with femininity and domesticity persisted, reinforcing traditional gender norms.

However, the trajectory of embroidery suffered alterations over time, influenced by various movements and contexts.

During World War I, the emergence of the dualistic artistic medium showed a significant transformation. Dada artists rejected conventional aesthetics, marking a departure from traditional artistic expressions. While Dadaism was not directly related to embroidery, its experimental nature likely influenced later movements that adopted unconventional techniques (Parker, 2010). Consequently, embroidery underwent a parallel evolution in its role and perception alongside broader changes in artistic expression and social values, underscoring its adaptability and enduring cultural relevance beyond conventional gender roles. This highlights embroidery's ability to transcend its historical associations solely as a tool of submission. Over time, women have used embroidery as a vehicle to express their political and social concerns, often employing subtle or overt means of expression. Given its accessibility to a broad spectrum of women, embroidery has functioned as a powerful mode of communication and self-expression, even within the confines of domestic life (Parker, 2010).

In recent years, textile activism has gained traction as a significant avenue for artistic expression, particularly within communities aiming to voice their experiences amidst armed conflicts. This approach harnesses fabrics and embroidery to both raise awareness and articulate dissent against prevailing injustices. Although similar forms of protest and testimonies are evident globally, they have also emerged in Colombia, especially in the aftermath of the peace agreement. Various groups have embraced textile activism to document and preserve their memories, share narratives, and facilitate healing processes. Embroidery, conventionally associated with femininity, is undergoing a contextual shift, no longer confined to traditional domestic roles. Despite this evolution, barriers to male participation in embroidery persist, and some young women may shy away from it due to its historical domestic connotations. Nevertheless, concerted efforts are being made to dismantle these gender-related obstacles and transform embroidery and textile work into inclusive and empowering tools for all. Numerous women's groups advocate for embroidery as a means of empowerment and storytelling, reshaping it from a symbol of control or submission into a vehicle for expressing experiences, identities, and resistance against violence. This redefinition imbues embroidery with not only aesthetic appeal but also profound significance.

Embroiderers are now transmitting its message, turning it into a testament of past events. The act of bearing witness simultaneously signifies a promise: the assurance that the testimony will

carry the truth. Testimony represents truth as the restoration of a coherent and connected world (Caruth, 1995). Thus, the use of symbolic elements such as embroidery can serve as a means of bearing witness, recounting historical events, and attributing significance to the experiences of the victims. The use of embroidery and textiles for textile activism is notable for its combination of art and its role as a means of expression for diverse communities around the world. This approach allows groups to convey their messages effectively, especially in situations where verbal communication can be difficult. Various groups globally have utilized this form of expression, including the "Arpilleristas" in Chile during the Pinochet dictatorship (Pérez-Bustos & Chocontá Piraquive, 2018), " La Madres de la Plaza de Mayo" in Argentina, who embroidered handkerchiefs as symbols of their quest for justice, and in Mexico, where handkerchiefs have been embroidered bearing witness to disappearances and murders resulting from the war on drug trafficking (Bello et al., 2020). Colombia, too, has witnessed the emergence of significant groups, including the "Women Weavers of Dreams and Flavors of Peace of Mampuján (Bolívar)," who document massacres and displacements in their hangings, as well as the " Network of Weavers for Memory and Life", a network comprising various groups from across the country (Arias López, 2017). What propels these movements globally, including those in Colombia, is the promotion of alternative means of narrating, denouncing, grieving, and seeking reparation (González-Arango et al., 2022).

Throughout history, embroidery has served as a tool of resistance. This practice probably originated in the 19th century, when certain women sought to challenge traditional gender roles and social expectations. They used embroidery as a means to express their creativity, assert their agency, and subtly subvert dominant narratives. For example, during the women's suffrage movement, embroidery frequently adorned banners, sashes, and other protest materials, thus enriching the visual and symbolic language of the movement (Parker, 2010). Another notable example occurred during World War I, when embroidery played an espionage role, with coded messages hidden within knitting and embroidery projects (Zarrelli, 2022). This allowed for covert communication, primarily orchestrated by women who discreetly shared information using symbols. This highlights the fabric's role extending beyond mere clothing in the context of war, emerging as a prominent element in the communication dynamics among involved agents. This practice of utilizing weaving and embroidery as a form of expression has persisted. However, in the 1970s in the United States, many women rejected embroidery and knitting because they believed these activities perpetuated gender roles they sought to reject—roles associated with submission and the ideal of perfect housewives (Pérez-Bustos & Chocontá-Piraquive, 2018).

Despite these sentiments, it was not a compelling reason for the practice to cease; on the contrary, it has endured over time. Moving to more recent times and focusing on Colombia, the main subject of this work, various groups have widely adopted such practices, using them to document the conflict (González Arango cited in Pérez-Bustos et al., 2019). In Colombia, textile activism has played a crucial role in addressing the immense suffering experienced by individuals and communities. By utilizing textile pedagogies, initiatives led by weavers, sewists, and artisans have provided avenues for healing, storytelling, and denunciation.

Textiles hold significant value due to their ability to communicate pain and emotions non-verbally. They can narrate a story in and of themselves, according to Appadurai, and cited by González-Arango et al. (2022): The value of each textile piece is not only given by those who make it but also by the experiences and stories that it traces. In other words, the value is expanded and significantly enriched by the experiences and stories incorporated in the textile piece. Ultimately, it evolves independently into a narrative, even without the person's direct intervention. This quality transforms it into a symbolic element infused with emotions and meanings from individuals or groups involved in its creation. Furthermore, it marks a change between the spheres of public and private life. Weaving has long been used as a metaphor to bridge the gap between the intimate and public spheres throughout history (Arias López, 2017). Consequently, the textile piece transcends its initial role within the confines of the home or as a mere individual creation, transforming into a narrative intended for public consumption. As mentioned earlier, this transition does not necessarily require verbal expression for comprehension by others. It aids in sustaining or fostering textile pedagogies which hold significant transformative potential in contexts of conflict and transition (González-Arango et al., 2022). This approach goes beyond mere denunciation, providing spaces for the reinterpretation and teaching concepts related to the causes and effects of war, thus allowing for a deeper understanding of the conflictive contexts, and encouraging critical reflection on the complexities involved.

Threads and embroidery have served as narratives, providing a platform to express the aftermath of violence, challenge established male narratives, and empower women as storytellers. By "established male narratives" I mean the dominant perspectives or narratives of the armed conflict historically shaped and disseminated by male actors or institutions, which have often silenced other voices. But what has been changing in the history of the country, since it is even crucial to note that during the peace agreement signed with the FARC, the voices of many women were finally heard, granting them decision-making roles and

opportunities to shape the process of peace according to their perspectives and needs. The artistic medium of embroidering not only facilitates the release of repressed emotions but also encourages introspection, potentially reshaping perspectives on life and social justice, thus showing the transformative potential of art (Choudhury, 2022). These textile creations have managed to transcend individual expressions; and turn them into powerful messages to the world, functioning as political statements or protests that demand attention and action to prevent future atrocities. The embroider or textiles also function to preserve historical memory, enabling the establishment of a shared memory within a community. This collective memory can be integrated into larger reconciliation efforts and utilized as part of transitional justice mechanisms (Barsalou and Baxter, 2007; Fox, 2021 cited by Fox, 2023).

The profound impact of textile narratives in facilitating personal healing and advocating for social change underscores the effectiveness of weaving together trauma, memory, and textile practices as integral components of the healing journey, especially for women. By focusing on textile narratives in the context of women's experiences, we can better understand how trauma, memory, and textile practices are interconnected to foster healing and promote social change. This change can even manifest itself in a change in mentality regarding gender activities, as exemplified by Ramiro, one of two male participants in the Artesanas de Amor collective. Despite belonging to a generation and a culture where these types of activities were traditionally considered unthinkable for men, Ramiro now participates, enjoys and feels empowered within the group. This collective effort also allows groups to articulate and share their emotions through embroidery, transcending the roles of victims to become agents of change committed to their narratives. This broader perspective expands the discourse to become a tool of memory and historical repair. This is relevant in transitional justice because collectives can use embroidery or textiles as a tool to amplify their voices and experiences since they provide a tangible form of evidence that highlights the human cost of violence and oppression, making injustices more visible to society at large. By displaying these works of art in public spaces or exhibitions, survivors can demand recognition and accountability for past atrocities. Additionally, community embroidery fosters social cohesion and mutual support between survivors and affected communities, ultimately contributing to reconciliation and collective healing by providing space for reflection, dialogue, and political engagement.

Textiles provide people with a therapeutic outlet to express their experiences, transforming pain into tangible expressions. Furthermore, these textile creations transcend individual spheres and become powerful instruments for social change. The weaving of personal narratives generates

a collective voice that resonates with broader audiences, provoking reflection on shared experiences. This connection of trauma, memory, and textile practices not only facilitates individual healing but also generates discourse on the importance of social awareness, empathy, and preventative measures against recurring injustices. As these narratives weave into the fabric of society, they enrich understanding, foster resilience, and unity, and cultivate a collective commitment to positive change.

Chapter 3: Resilience Across Disciplines and Contexts

Overview

This chapter is divided into three parts that comprehensively explore the concept of resilience. The first section delves into resilience in psychology and social and ecological contexts. It examines the work of several researchers and emphasizes the importance of viewing resilience as a multidisciplinary concept rather than a singular discipline. In the second part of the chapter, the distinction between community resilience and collective resilience is discussed. Despite their similar terms, it is essential to understand their differences. This study focuses on community resilience processes, exploring the factors that enable a group, such as a community of weavers affected by conflict, to overcome challenges and embark on projects that amplify their visibility, narrate their experiences, and participate in collective healing. The last section of the chapter focuses on the transitional justice process, emphasizing the fundamental role of community resilience, particularly in the current post-conflict phase in Colombia. The narrative highlights that choices made during this period are critical for the nation's future trajectory and underscores the importance of collective resilience in shaping the course of Colombia's post-conflict journey.

Definition of resilience

Resilience, originating from the Latin word 'resilio, resilire,' meaning rebound, leap, or spring back, has garnered significant attention across various fields due to its adaptability and applicability in research (Piña López, 2015). This term is essential and relevant in fields such as medicine or engineering, where it describes materials that can withstand stress without cracking or breaking and return to their original shape after deformation (Masten, 2014). The American Psychological Association defines resilience as "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress" (Southwick et al., 2014, p. 2). This chapter draws on the theories of Michael Ungar and Urie Bronfenbrenner to explore the multidimensional nature of resilience, as each offers unique and complementary

perspectives. Ungar's theory challenges traditional individual-centred approaches by emphasizing dynamic interactions between individuals and their environments. Similarly, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model provides a conceptual framework to understand resilience ecologically and socially. The research focuses on how communities can overcome adversity after armed conflict. Therefore, it is essential to examine resilience from a psychological, social, and ecological perspective to understand how communities can endure and thrive in challenging circumstances.

In adversity, resilience manifests as an individual and collective ability to navigate and negotiate toward psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources supporting well-being. This highlights resilience as a shared quality between the individual and their social ecology (Ungar, 2012). Viewing resilience as a holistic concept encompassing the social, individual, and ecological spheres reveals that these concepts are not mutually exclusive but provide a comprehensive understanding of resilience. It emerges when individuals (psychological resilience), communities (social resilience), and ecological systems (ecological resilience) collaboratively contribute to building a capacity to confront and overcome challenges. Exploring resilience has been a fundamental psychological effort, leading to numerous studies to deepen our understanding of this complex term. From the perspective commonly shared among psychologists, resilience is conceptualized as an adaptive response that surfaces when individuals confront adverse or precarious circumstances (Piña López, 2015). However, the precise characterization of resilience remains unclear within the psychological discourse, leaving questions unanswered regarding whether it represents a process, an outcome, or an inherent attribute of individuals.

Numerous theories and researchers in the field of psychology, such as Ann Masten, Norman Garmezy, and Michael Rutter, have played a significant role in shaping the concept of resilience. Their works have helped establish this field and provided valuable insights into how individuals and communities can overcome adversity. By examining their research, we can better understand what resilience truly means. It is not just a personality trait or individual capacity but a complex concept involving biological, social, and environmental factors. Some researchers suggest that resilience is inherent in individuals and can be activated by internal or external influences. In contrast, others argue that it emerges through dynamic interactions between individuals and their complex environmental contexts (Piña López, 2015).

To discuss the interaction or adaptation within systems, Ann Masten, a researcher affiliated with the University of Minnesota in the United States, defines resilience as "the ability of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten system function, viability, or development" (Masten, 2014, p. 10). This expansive definition is applicable universally, encompassing a range of living and non-living entities, from microorganisms to families, economies, and even Earth's global climate (Ungar, 2018). Masten's theory underlines the inherent adaptive capabilities of human beings, moulded by biological and cultural evolution, allowing for continual interaction with their environment. For instance, young children exhibit adaptability, which is closely linked to their relationships with caregivers. Their enthusiasm for learning and active engagement with their environment signifies the mastery motivation system, a fundamental aspect of resilience that propels learning and adaptation (Southwick et al., 2014).

Resilience, emphasized by Masten, arises from innate potential and acquired knowledge. The human brain's learning, adaptability, and self-regulation skills are key factors. Close relationships are vital, providing emotional security and support. Spiritual relationships and friendships strengthen resilience, while cultural elements like language, learning, and memory enhance adaptation by transmitting coping strategies and contributing significantly to resilience (Southwick et al., 2014). This perspective highlights humans' intrinsic adaptive capacities, grounded in biological evolution and cultural heritage. These insights underscore the importance of close relationships, encompassing emotional security, spiritual bonds, and friendships, significantly contributing to an individual's resilience. Masten's theory offers a holistic understanding of resilience, emphasizing individual abilities and the social and cultural contexts shaping and amplifying these capabilities. Consequently, her insights are invaluable in comprehending and promoting resilience across diverse settings and populations.

In continuation of exploring resilience from a psychological perspective, another influential figure who delved into this concept, recognizing its complexity in both individual and social contexts, was Norman Garmezy. Renowned as a pioneering researcher in the field, Garmezy conducted groundbreaking studies focusing on children with schizophrenic parents. His objective was to pinpoint protective factors in challenging circumstances. Collaborating with Ann Masten, Garmezy established the Risk and Resilience Competencies Research Project at the University of Minnesota. This initiative sought to comprehend how children, despite confronting multifaceted challenges such as poverty, family mental health issues, disabilities, or homelessness, managed to achieve "normal or higher" levels of functioning (Rolnick, 2018). He also introduced the term "stress-resistant children" to represent individuals displaying

remarkable resilience in the face of significant stressors (Rolnick, 2018). These approaches to resilience have enabled researchers to delve deeper into understanding how adaptation strategies can be effective in adverse contexts. This, in turn, provides greater clarity on support strategies that may be useful in adversity. The significance lies in considering the individual and their abilities and recognizing the crucial role of their interaction with the environment. Although this study focused on children with schizophrenia, it considered additional social variables, such as poverty. This broader perspective has contributed valuable insights that extend beyond the specific context of the study, shedding light on the concept of resilience in diverse situations.

Garmezy's research also underscores the vital role of protective factors within an individual's environment, including supportive relationships, stable family structures, and positive social interactions. These factors are essential in fomenting resilience among individuals, highlighting the recognition that resilience is not solely an internal trait but can be cultivated through external support (Garmezy et al., 1984). Understanding these protective factors reveals that resilience is not just an individual capacity; instead, the person's environment plays a crucial role in the presence of these factors. For instance, supportive relationships in various contexts, like family or peer groups, are highly relevant as they foster emotional support, stability, and a sense of belonging. While Garmezy primarily focused on children when discussing these protective factors, their recognition applies universally to all individuals. In other words, these factors are not exclusive to childhood but remain essential throughout a person's life. Recognizing the enduring significance of these protective factors emphasizes the lifelong impact of environmental support on promoting resilience.

The relationship between children and protective factors was also interesting to Michael Rutter, a prominent British psychiatrist and psychologist renowned for his resilience research. He highlighted the effectiveness of programs that strengthen resilience by ensuring children access essential processes and protective factors. Rutter highlighted individual characteristics such as self-esteem, coping skills, and realistic goals, which interact with family components like caring relationships and emotional support. Acting as filters between risks and outcomes, these factors include cultivating relationships, self-esteem, and a sense of control. Moreover, he emphasized the importance of providing opportunities for children to cultivate talents and access crucial resources like education and medical care, which are essential for resilience. Rutter argued that these resources are pivotal for navigating or escaping harmful situations for young people, families, and communities (Rutter, 1987).

According to Masten, resilience in Rutter's multidimensional perspective is not a fixed attribute but a dynamic process that develops over time, involving the interaction between individual characteristics and the social environment (Masten, 2014). This dynamic interaction enhances people's capacity to adapt and recover from adverse situations, forming a robust conceptual basis for understanding and promoting resilience in various contexts (Rutter, 2007). Rutter's extensive research on resilience is a foundation for understanding human adaptability, particularly in adversity. His multidimensional perspective highlights the complexity of resilience, emphasizing its evolution as a process shaped by individual skills and social interactions. Recognizing resilience as dynamic, Rutter's work offers invaluable guidance for targeted interventions and support systems rooted in understanding personal strengths and environmental factors. This approach provides a comprehensive framework for promoting resilience not only in children but also in diverse contexts. Additionally, it sheds light on the resources emphasized by Ungar, as Rutter illustrates the relevance of education and medical care for communities or children to navigate challenging situations. This insight can be applied to post-conflict contexts, emphasizing the importance of educational tools to explain conflict triggers and prevent recurrence. However, the effectiveness of these efforts is in providing necessary support and resources; without them, positive outcomes cannot be expected. Failure to offer adequate support may lead to recurring conflict and perpetuate cycles of violence.

Resilience is a multifaceted psychological concept encompassing adaptive responses to adverse circumstances. Scholars such as Ann Masten, Norman Garmezy, and Michael Rutter have conducted extensive research that has revealed that resilience is a dynamic process inherent in human nature. Essentially, resilience reflects the ability of humans to adapt effectively to disruptions that challenge the functionality and progress of a system. It is perceived as an individual capacity and a dynamic and continuous process intertwined with human relationships and the environment. People demonstrate an extraordinary ability to grow, adapt, and thrive during significant challenges. Internal and external support systems, including protective factors such as strong support networks, strengthen resilience and enable people to cope with adversity more effectively. The field of resilience studies in social sciences has also explored the concept of protective factors. These factors encompass personal attributes and supportive environmental systems that contribute significantly to positive outcomes. They play a crucial role in helping children overcome challenges and enable them to succeed in the face of adversities encountered during their adolescence (Rolnick, 2018).

The discourse around the concept of resilience has expanded to encompass group dynamics in contexts of adversity. Daniel P. Aldrich's significant contributions have advanced the study of resilience, particularly in disaster contexts, highlighting the critical role of social networks, community ties, and effective governance in facilitating community recovery. Aldrich defines community resilience as the collective ability of a group to meet challenges and quickly return to normality through cooperative efforts (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014). His theory introduces the notion of social capital, elucidating three fundamental bridges (linking, bridging, and bonding) that clarify how informal connections, especially during crises, are vital to immediate response and the foundation of community resilience (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014). Linking involves connections between a community and external entities, such as government or NGOs, while bridging fosters trust between various social, cultural, or economic statuses. Finally, bonding refers to strong ties within the group, such as close relationships between family, friends, and neighbours.

For the current study, Aldrich's community resilience theory is adopted since this concept examines the resilience dynamics within communities affected by various adversities, offering valuable insights into the role of social networks, community ties, and effective governance structures in facilitating recovery and adaptation. The study explores social factors contributing to the group's development, comprehends the internal dynamics, and understands individual conditions. Although Aldrich's theory is a foundational framework for analysis, the main theoretical framework is Ungar and Bronfenbrenner's. These theories allow for a more comprehensive analysis of the study group, explaining how community resilience has been built within the group.

To understand the individual and group dynamics, this research uses the theory of Michael Ungar because his study contributed the insight that resilience is far beyond an individual capacity, and it is more a construction that humans can create when they learn how to navigate through resources like social support. Ungar, who serves as the founder and Director of the Resilience Research Centre at Dalhousie University, was globally recognized in 2022 as the top scholar in Social Work due to his pioneering research in the field of resilience (Rolnick, 2018). Ungar criticizes the restrictive definition of resilience in psychology, which focuses excessively on the child's innate characteristics. He argues that positive outcomes in children are primarily influenced by environments that provide them opportunities to thrive. Instead, Ungar proposes a broader definition of resilience, which includes the ability of people to access resources that

promote their well-being and the ability of the individual's family, community, and culture to provide these resources in culturally meaningful ways (Rolnick, 2018).

As mentioned, Ungar's concept of resilience extends far beyond individual capacity or mindset. It encompasses the ability of a system, such as individuals, families, or communities, to identify and utilize necessary resources, implying that these resources must be both available and accessible. In other words, people can navigate essential resources and actively seek out additional ones (Ungar, 2018). Ungar's perspective incorporates three key concepts. Firstly, "recovery" denotes a system, whether an individual, community, or natural environment, returning to its previous level of functioning after encountering a problem. The second concept is "adaptation," involving system changes to survive or thrive amid disturbances. Lastly, "transformation" refers to environmental alterations that facilitate a stressed system's functioning (Ungar, 2018). These concepts are vital for this study because, as mentioned at the beginning, the concept of resilience was very focused on adaptation. However, Ungar's perspective provides a much broader vision of what a person or a community can do after going through a situation of adversity. For example, in the case of "recovery," processes of psychological healing are essential for individuals and communities to heal psychologically and emotionally after experiencing trauma. Another aspect is the restoration of social networks, which is part of overcoming trauma and is even more critical from the community resilience perspective. Concerning "adaptation," factors such as coping mechanisms are crucial to understanding how to overcome adversity. Furthermore, from the concept of "transformation," we can explore social and cultural changes within the community, such as gender roles, community dynamics, cultural norms, and even the craftsmanship involved in embroidery.

Ungar's theory highlights the complexity of resilience, emphasizing systemic processes over individual traits. In this context, resilience entails both the capacity for individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that build and sustain their well-being and their individual and collective capacity to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways (Ungar, 2012, p. 17). This perspective expands our understanding of resilience by highlighting that overcoming challenging situations is not solely an individual responsibility. While there is an individual factor, namely the ability to navigate resources, the availability of these resources is equally crucial for effective coping. Without accessible resources, the process of overcoming such situations can become significantly more difficult, and in some cases, impossible. This perspective also makes me wonder why recovery from disasters and conflicts often takes time in vulnerable populations. It

attributes this delay to a lack of resources beyond economic means, including emotional, social, psychological, and governmental support, thereby complicating the ability of individuals or systems to effectively overcome adversity.

With Ungar's theory and various approaches, resilience is no longer viewed solely as an individual capacity but rather as the interaction between the individual and their environment in a dynamic process. This perspective becomes particularly relevant in the context of the ecological systems theory, also known as the Bronfenbrenner model, which seeks to explain how individuals engage with their surroundings. In his model, Bronfenbrenner described the macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem, and microsystem to provide explanations for these interactions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, cited in Ungar et al., 2011). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory understands several interconnected levels. The microsystem involves immediate relationships, such as family, peers, and close groups, pivotal in providing essential resources for individual development. The mesosystem focuses on interactions between different microsystems, while exosystems involve institutional environments that indirectly influence microsystems through services and policies. This level considers broader community factors, social organizations, and policies impacting microsystems. Lastly, the macrosystem encompasses the wider cultural context, including laws, customs, and cultural practices shaping individuals' values and beliefs. These artistic influences lay the groundwork for adaptive coping strategies, enhancing overall resilience in individuals facing stress (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, cited in Ungar et al., 2011).

The models used by Bronfenbrenner and Ungar are primarily based on knowledge from various disciplines, including ecology. As previously mentioned, the concept of resilience transformed, evolving from an individualistic perspective to emphasizing the dynamic relationship between an organism and its broader system. In psychology, the organism is typically a human being. In contrast, in other disciplines, the nature of this organism may vary, as indicated by the term "resilience ecosystems" explored by influential scholars such as C.S. Holling, Brian Walker, and David Salt, among others.

One of the pioneers of the concept of resilience was Crawford Stanley Holling; his work introduced the term resilience to describe a system's ability to resist and adapt to change. Holling identified three key dimensions: adaptive capacity, highlighting a system's ability to absorb changes while maintaining its structure; multiple equilibria, challenging the idea of a single stable state in ecosystems and recognizing their capacity for various configurations; and

surprising change, emphasizing the nonlinear nature of some systems where small changes can lead to significant impacts (Gunderson et al., 2012). This information and theory are essential for this research because they focus on ecological systems, but these principles can also be adapted to people or groups. In other words, this information could be complementary when understanding systems and their dynamics, especially in communities.

In exploring resilience, Brian Walker and David Salt also made significant contributions, particularly from an ecological standpoint. They emphasized ecosystems as dynamic and complex adaptive systems continuously evolving and responding to disturbances. In this context, resilience is defined as a system's ability to absorb impacts, adapt, and reorganize while preserving its essential functions and structures. Recognizing the interconnections between human societies and natural ecosystems, it is crucial to shift from traditional linear thinking to a holistic approach (Walker & Salt, 2006).

Interweaving the concepts of trauma and resilience is relevant due to after a conflict, it is the civilian population that bears the brunt and experiences trauma both individually and collectively. Understanding how individual and collective trauma is intertwined with community resilience and recovery provides a comprehensive understanding of how communities cope with and overcome adversity. Trauma can disproportionately affect various groups within a community, including women. For example, in the community of San Miguel, where this study was conducted, the loss of loved ones, predominantly men, resulted in women assuming full monetary responsibility and facing displacement from their homes, among other challenges. Recognizing the interconnection between individual and collective trauma, resilience and recovery allows for the design of more effective and holistic interventions that promote healing at both the individual and community levels. By addressing both individual and collective aspects, interventions can facilitate a more holistic healing process, empowering communities to overcome adversity and foster positive transformation.

In analyzing the diverse definitions and areas where the concept of resilience has been examined, it becomes evident that resilience spans various disciplines, offering an understanding that surpasses individual traits. This multifaceted nature of resilience transcends disciplinary boundaries, providing profound insights into the adaptive capacities of individuals, communities, and ecosystems. The multidimensional and context-dependent aspects of resilience underscore the necessity for comprehensive approaches. It urges us to recognize the interplay between internal capabilities and external support systems.

This holistic understanding enriches our academic discourse and guides the development of practical strategies to build resilience and promote prosperous communities. In this literature review, the focus is on resilience and community resilience. One unexplored area remains how groups recover after enduring long-term adversity, be it internal or external conflicts, as most research on collective resilience concentrates on recovery after disasters or adversities. Moreover, understanding how these experiences help individuals integrate into a community following such challenges is crucial. To understand the concept of community resilience, this study examines and analyzes the data collected during the interviews and participant observation using three theories: Urie Bronfenbrenner, Michael Ungar and Daniel Aldrich.
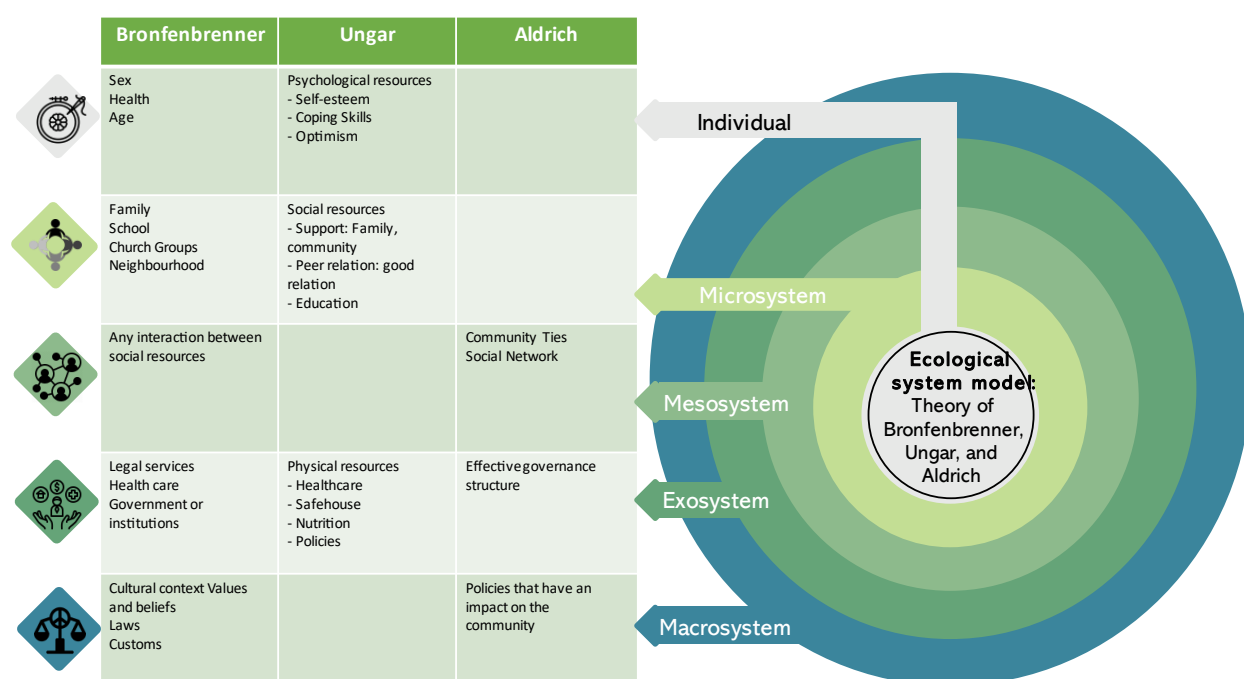

Bronfenbrenner	Ungar	Aldrich
Sex\nHealth\nAge	Psychological resources\n- Self-esteem\n- Coping Skills\n- Optimism	
Family\nSchool\nChurch Groups\nNeighbourhood	Social resources\n- Support: Family, community\n- Peer relation: good relation\n- Education	
Any interaction between social resources		Community Ties\nSocial Network
Legal services\nHealth care\nGovernment or institutions	Physical resources\n- Healthcare\n- Safehouse\n- Nutrition\n- Policies	Effective governance structure
Cultural context Values and beliefs\nLaws\nCustoms		Policies that have an impact on the community

Figure 2: Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (From sociocultural risk: dangers to competition, by J. Garbarino. In C. B. Kopp & J. B. Krakow (Eds.), The child: Development in a social context, pp. 630-685. Copyright (Ungar, 2021))
Modified with the interaction of three theories.

This study is based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and integrates aspects of Ungar and Aldrich's theories within each system (Figure 2). The macrosystem analysis includes cultural and contextual factors such as values and beliefs. The Exosystem encompasses resources from local or municipal institutions and NGOs that have helped the group while also considering Aldrich's theory on the effectiveness of government structures and Ungar's perspective on policies that have impacted the group. In the mesosystem analysis, interactions between groups are recognized but not analyzed in detail, as the study focuses on other systems. The microsystems analysis includes the closest systems described in Bronfenbrenner's theory, such as the family and the nearby town or village within the municipality of La Unión, and special attention to the AAC. Ungar's theory of social resources is considered in close systems such as family, community support and peer relationships. At the individual level, the study maintains Bronfenbrenner's original elements, such as age or gender. It integrates the individual resources Ungar mentioned, including psychological factors such as self-esteem, coping skills, optimism, and other personal skills identified in the interview.

Collective/ community resilience

In the previous discussion, resilience emerged as a multidisciplinary perspective that transcends various fields, showing connections between diverse areas to improve our comprehension. Within this perspective of exploring different places and recognizing that this research focuses on community processes, it is crucial to examine the concepts of collective and community resilience. Although often perceived as synonyms, these terms differ in their definitions. This section delves into these definitions, concentrating specifically on community resilience within a geographically and culturally cohesive group. Here, community resilience signifies more than individual strengths; it encompasses the collective spirit, mutual support, and adaptive strategies of a community facing adversity. This study delves deeply into coping mechanisms, social dynamics, and cultural norms to understand the factors that enable this community to continue and flourish amid conflict challenges. This exploration can assist in visualizing elements that contribute to sustainable recovery and provide crucial insights to promote resilience in post-conflict communities globally.

The exploration of community resilience, as resilience itself, spans diverse academic disciplines such as psychology, sociology, disaster management, and emergency planning, among others. However, despite its significance, the literature reveals that community resilience has obtained comparatively less attention than the broader concept of resilience. Various scholars have proposed definitions to encapsulate the essence of community resilience. For example, Paton

(2000), as cited by Norris et al. (2008), defines it as "the ability to recover and use physical and economic resources effectively to assist recovery after exposure to hazards" (p. 129). Another perspective defines community resilience as "linking a set of networked adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation in constituent populations after a disturbance" (Norris et al., 2008, p. 131). This study examines various approaches to defining community resilience, emphasizing its significance in understanding and enhancing the adaptive capacities of communities that face challenges.

The community resilience theory, similar to Ungar's theory, highlights the significant role of resources. A community must have access to resources to exhibit resilience. As Norris et al. (2008) pointed out, "Resilience can fail when resilience resources are damaged or disrupted by stressors" (p. 135). In natural disasters, the loss of resources can be seen, affecting homes, personal stability, security, and social or monetary resources. This risk complicates, prolongs, or makes the recovery process more challenging. Norris et al. (2008) and Bruneau et al. (2003) emphasized the same point and identified four essential dynamic attributes for resources to foster resilience: robustness, redundancy, speed, and resourcefulness. "Robustness" refers to the ability to withstand stress without degradation. The second attribute, "redundancy," refers to the ability of elements to substitute for one another when altered or degraded. The third attribute, "speed," underscores the importance of quickly achieving objectives to minimize losses and prevent disruptions. Finally, "resourcefulness" signifies the ability to quickly identify problems and mobilize resources when the system is threatened (Norris et al., 2008). Although these attributes are typically discussed in the context of disasters, where individuals are frequently under stress and tend to mobilize quickly and collectively to respond, it is crucial to recognize that these dynamics are not limited to disaster scenarios. They are relevant in various community contexts. For instance, in situations of violence where civilian populations find themselves caught during conflict, these attributes become evident. In places like Colombia, victims of the conflict have had to develop strategies to adapt to the danger and mobilize resources to recover as a community. Importantly, these efforts are often organized to achieve the desired outcomes. Therefore, these community attributes are not exclusive to times of disasters but are applicable in any situation where communities face risks.

Within community resilience, various approaches exist, among which the social-ecological model of resilience has been extensively studied. This model examines resilience across different levels, emphasizing the interconnectedness of individuals and social systems. It suggests that resilience is not solely determined by individual traits but is significantly shaped by the interactions between these levels. One of the prominent researchers in this field is Michel Ungar, mentioned above. His work has demonstrated that people's resilience in the face of significant challenges depends significantly on the quality of the social and physical environments surrounding them and not just because of their personality traits or talents (Ungar et al., 2011).

While this study focuses primarily on community resilience, it is essential to understand the concept of collective resilience. Often used interchangeably, these terms are closely related but not synonymous. The concept of collective resilience also addresses how groups can overcome challenging situations. This concept is spontaneous evidence of social support and coordination with strangers. It suggests that a shared sense of common destiny arising from the threat posed by disasters leads people to see themselves as part of a unified group facing an emergency (Elcheroth et al., 2021). This emerging social identity extends concern beyond personal boundaries, motivating supportive behaviours such as support and cooperation towards others affected by the emergency.

The concept of collective resilience indicates that being physically or permanently part of a group is unnecessary to feel connected to. Having a shared belief or identifying with the group is sufficient to encourage supportive behaviours during emergencies. Shared social identity encourages support among group members and generates expectations of assistance within the group. This has several outcomes: it enhances feelings of efficacy and empowerment, facilitates collaborative actions, and enables the regulation of collective behaviour. However, these communities of support tend to decline over time due to declining resources and re-emerging social divisions, especially following secondary stressful post-disaster events. During these periods, the need for support through a shared social identity may remain high, even when the circumstances initially formed that shared identity have weakened (Elcheroth et al., 2021).

The terms "collective resilience" and "community resilience" are closely related, primarily as their studies have predominantly focused on situations following natural disasters. However, a

significant distinction lies in how these terms are conceptualized. In collective resilience, group cohesion is not bound by physical proximity or shared physical spaces. Instead, it encompasses elements that are not necessarily tangible, such as faith. Individuals can identify as part of a group without direct physical interaction; their connection is based on shared beliefs or values. On the other hand, community resilience implies a shared physical space, geography, and often a common culture, where individuals feel a sense of belonging. Community resilience involves a tangible interaction within a defined geographical area, fostering a collective identity and mutual support among its members.

In both cases, whether collective or community resilience, the critical aspect is the mobilization of groups and their interactions to adapt and utilize available resources during recovery following stressful situations like natural disasters or wars. The distinction lies in the connection: while collective resilience can be based on intangible elements, community resilience is grounded in physical interaction within a shared space and culture. In this study, the primary focus is on community resilience. Specifically, the research centers around a community in the municipality of La Unión in Antioquia, Colombia. This community in the San Miguel village shares a physical territory, customs, beliefs, and a common culture. Additionally, most of its members identify themselves as victims of the Colombian armed conflict. The study delves into community resilience to comprehensively understand this group and its unique conditions.

Community resilience in transitional justice

Transitional justice refers to legal and non-legal processes that seek to address serious human rights violations that occurred in the past, especially during armed conflicts or authoritarian regimes. These processes include trials, truth and reconciliation commissions, reparations to victims, and institutional reforms. Transitional justice aims to balance accountability for past crimes and construct peace and reconciliation in society (Teitel, 2000). In the case of Colombia, this transition process developed after the signing of the 2016 peace agreement, which led to the establishment of important institutions such as the JEP (Special Jurisdiction for Peace), the Truth Commission, reparations to victims and measures aimed at preventing the recurrence of crimes. However, this transitional process sometimes inadvertently leaves out the voices of individual victims, making it difficult for them to share their experiences directly. As a result, international or local agencies often act as intermediaries in interactions with victims. This narrow focus overlooks the resilience and collective agency that communities affected by violence often demonstrate as they face challenges (Elcheroth et al., 2021). The primary objective of transitional justice is to address grave human rights violations that occurred in the

past while striving to strike a balance between holding individuals accountable for their past crimes and fostering the construction of peace and reconciliation in society. The aim is to ensure that individuals are heard both individually and collectively. It can be argued that they are more effectively heard when organized collectively, facilitating greater visibility than when they act as isolated individuals. This phenomenon may be attributed to how processes are conducted, or the administrative procedures involved.

Community resilience refers to the ability of communities to overcome and positively adapt to adverse situations, often evident in communities affected by violence. By acknowledging and fostering these resilient dynamics, transitional justice can strengthen communities' capacity to confront challenges and progress toward social reconstruction and sustainable peace. It is essential to recognize that entire communities are affected by most conflicts, and isolated cases are rare. For instance, in Colombia, fear forced the inhabitants to abandon various territories, seeking protection for their lives. Significant concepts emerge within the community resilience framework, including the Social Identity Model of Collective Psychosocial Resilience developed by Drury. This model postulates that individuals spontaneously provide social support and collaborate with strangers, driven by a shared sense of meaning during emergencies like natural disasters or conflicts. This shared understanding leads people to perceive themselves as part of a collective identity, fostering solidarity and cooperation within the group (Drury et al., 2019). This shared identity not only motivates supportive behaviors but also enhances the efficacy and empowerment of individuals within the group. Fosters a cohesive environment where collaborative actions are encouraged, ensuring that collective responses align with shared norms and values. As individuals perceive themselves as part of a collective identity, they become more likely to engage in supportive behaviors toward other group members. This sense of shared identity fosters solidarity and cooperation, motivating individuals to actively contribute to the well-being and success of the collective. Ultimately, supportive behaviors serve to strengthen social bonds, promote collaboration, and improve the overall effectiveness and empowerment of individuals within the community.

This understanding illustrates how community resilience can be developed even during adversity, such as conflicts. It places importance on forming strong support networks, the active participation of community members, and the cohesive unity within groups. In many cases, these factors can serve as healing processes, as all members share a common experience of pain, strengthening empathy among them. Several studies on conflict-affected societies have demonstrated that civilians in armed conflict are not merely passive victims; they exhibit

remarkable resilience by developing social resources to cope with adversity and challenge the divisive nature of violence through a shared sense of identity (Elcheroth et al., 2021). This group's empathy fosters a collective identity, encouraging selfless assistance among members and the expectation of reciprocal support within the group. This shift from individuality to unity translates into solidarity behaviors. Additionally, investigating the long-term effects after a disaster or violent situation is crucial to understanding how group dynamics evolve. This research aims to explore post-adversity scenarios to determine whether groups can sustain their unity or transform to foster continued growth.

To conclude this chapter, it is essential to note that although many of the theories and research discussed here were initially focused on children, these concepts apply to any population. The key is to understand how resilience can be fostered. The theories proposed by Michael Ungar, which were initially centred on children, have been successfully applied in various contexts, including families or groups. It is crucial to consider not only individual aspects but also the social factors that impact a person's resilience. This approach facilitates the identification of both personal and social resources utilized by members of the AAC to confront challenges. These resources may encompass social support, supportive networks, coping skills, self-esteem, and the ability to find meaning and purpose in life.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Research design.

For this study, a qualitative approach was employed. The primary objective was to gain insight into the strategies that have assisted the Artesanas de Amor Collective (AAC) in overcoming challenges during the conflict. Furthermore, the study aimed to explore how these experiences have shaped the development of their embroidery project and contributed to their healing process. As Guba (1985, as cited in Jackson et al., 2007) advocates, qualitative research centers on comprehending human experiences and generating profound reflections. This resonates with the goals of this study, where we collaborate with individuals to delve into their feelings, perceptions, values, and behaviours, all while considering the dynamics within their group. The study emphasizes understanding participants subjectively, recognizing that individuals actively influence their realities, particularly in trauma and recovery (Junjie & Yingxin, 2022).

Given the nature of this research objectives, qualitative research emerges as the most appropriate approach for this study. I investigated the interaction between community resilience and the traumatic experiences suffered by women after the armed conflict in Colombia. The qualitative paradigm is very suitable for exploring these issues, as it allows for an exhaustive examination of the mechanisms used within communities and the perceptions or interpretations of these issues individually. The first objective is to understand community resilience mechanisms, which requires a qualitative approach to capture the context of the experiences. Similarly, identifying the contributions of resources such as financial support or education to community-driven resilience requires an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of individuals and communities. This research aimed to comprehend how embroidery has evolved into a form of resilience, particularly among women who have experienced trauma, requiring a qualitative exploration of individual stories and community dynamics.

The research questions further underscore the need for a qualitative approach. They investigate the strategies and actions undertaken by women's groups or communities, the role of memory narratives and cultural artifacts such as embroidery, and the importance of resilience within the unique context of post-conflict Colombia. The research questions to answer in this study were: What have been the strategies and actions undertaken by the Artesanas de Amor Collective to build and cultivate community resilience after an armed conflict? How do memory narratives and cultural artifacts, such as embroidery, function as mechanisms for healing and resilience within communities affected by armed conflict? Why is the discussion of resilience especially significant within the context of post-conflict in Colombia, especially in the territory of San Miguel? Qualitative methods provide the depth and flexibility necessary to capture the richness of experiences and connections between resilience, trauma, and cultural expressions after an armed conflict. Therefore, by adopting a qualitative research approach, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding that goes beyond superficial knowledge and ultimately contributes to developing more specific and practical strategies to support the resilience and recovery of women in post-conflict rural areas in Colombia.

To analyze the data, I employed Thematic Analysis, defined as the process of "identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It is described as a descriptive method that reduces the data in a flexible way that fits with other data analysis methods" (Castleberry & Nolen,2018, p.808). This would involve systematically and comprehensively exploring patterns or themes within the collected data to derive meaningful insights. It is a flexible yet rigorous approach that helps interpret and report on recurring ideas, concepts, or

phenomena incorporated in the dataset. This method goes beyond mere data reduction; it facilitates understanding the complexities inherent in the research context.

The selection of Thematic Analysis for this study aligns with the primary theoretical framework of Ungar, Bronfenbrenner and Aldrich. By drawing on existing theories and topics within the field of resilience, where common themes have previously been identified, Thematic Analysis serves as an essential tool to explore the construction of resilience within a community context. This approach enables me to capture the richness of experiences, perceptions, and expressions related to resilience, providing a holistic and in-depth understanding of how resilience unfolds within the studied community. In essence, Thematic Analysis serves as a methodology through which the concept of resilience within the community can be exhaustively examined through the participants' responses in the interviews and through the observations made to the group in their group meetings.

The approach to information analysis was hybrid. On the one hand, a deductive method was applied, incorporating pre-established categories or themes derived from the foundational theories of Ungar, Bronfenbrenner and Aldrich. This deductive approach provides a structured foundation based on existing knowledge. On the other hand, inductive methods were employed during data analysis, allowing new categories or themes to emerge. This inductive approach acknowledges the potential for unexpected insights during the analysis process, enriching the understanding of resilience in the studied community. The combination of deductive and inductive strategies aimed to comprehensively explore the data while maintaining a connection to established theoretical frameworks.

Participants

As mentioned in Chapter One, the selected group for this research is "Artesanas de Amor," a collective that started working as a community project in 2013. This group has embraced techniques like embroidery to narrate their stories and express how these methods aided them in navigating challenging situations linked to conflict. The age range within the group spans from 22 to 73 years, with the majority identifying as peasants and many also identifying as victims of the Colombian armed conflict. Educational backgrounds within the group vary, with some members completing primary school, others secondary school, and some having attained a university level of education. The information about the group can be seen in this chart:

Name	Age	Identification	Educational level	Occupation	Date of Joining
Angela Garcia Valencia	46	Peasant - Victims of the armed conflict in Colombia	fifth grade	Housewife and works in crops	2013
Arjemiro Garcia	69	Peasant - Victim of the armed conflict in Colombia	first grade	Retired	2018
Beatriz Gomez	70	Peasant	high school	Housewife	2018
Dioni Milena Florez	43	Peasant	high school	Housewife	2023
Dora Orozco	51	Peasant	high school	Employee	2018
Evangelina Rendon	73	Peasant - Victim of the armed conflict in Colombia	second grade	Housewife	2013
Lorena Ciro	28	Peasant	College	Employee – self-employed	2017
Luz Dary Valencia	53	Peasant	high school	Work with the government	2020
Maria Eduviges Garcia	70	Peasant - Victim of the armed conflict in Colombia	second grade	Housewife	2015
Mary Cruz	28		Bachelor	Employee- Student	2022
Miriam Perez	51	Peasant	fifth grade	Housewife – Casual work	2020
Oliva Valencia	61	Peasant	third grade	Housewife - Chicken keeper	2015
Rosalba Grisales	61	Peasant - Victim of the armed conflict in Colombia	first grade	Housewife - Casual work	2016
Sebastian Duque	22	Peasant	Bachelor	Student	2022

Table 1: Data collected from semi-structured interviews conducted in 2023.

Given the qualitative nature of this research and the study's scope, non-probability sampling was considered the most appropriate. Considering the potentially significant number of victims throughout Colombia engaged in textile work and the inherent difficulty in accessing such groups, two non-probability sampling techniques were employed. First, convenience sampling was used to select the nearest and most accessible individuals for the researcher (Said Pace, 2021). Secondly, snowball sampling was employed, where participants were actively encouraged to assist in recruiting other individuals for the study. Given the exclusive focus on the Artesanas de Amor Collective (AAC), the group leaders were briefed on the research's purpose. After they agreed to participate, they assumed the role of promoters, spreading the information to the rest of the group and motivating them to engage in the study. It is important to

emphasize that although they actively promoted the study, the participation of all members was entirely voluntary. Participants were provided with a thorough explanation of the study's risks and benefits. The total number of participants was 14, corresponding to the number of interviews conducted and encompassing the entire participant base of "Artesanas de Amor."

Data Collection Methods

Two data collection methods were employed in this research. Firstly, semi-structured interviews were chosen for their flexibility and versatility, as advocated by DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006, as cited by Kallio et al., 2016). This approach used guiding questions to direct the interview, allowing room for response variation. Follow-up questions fostered a dynamic conversation, facilitating the collection of comprehensive information from the interviewees. This method promoted harmony and active engagement during the interview process.

Recognizing that many participants had undergone different research studies done by the government and other researchers, I aimed to avoid re-victimizing any participants in this study. Therefore, the questions primarily focused on the healing process and the collective actions taken by the group rather than insisting on the events during the war. While some interviews did involve recounting specific war-related events, I consistently sought to create an atmosphere of trust and tranquillity. To achieve this, participants were explicitly informed that they could skip any question or choose not to answer, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a respectful and supportive environment throughout the research.

The second method used was participant observation. I had the opportunity to attend their meetings, gaining insights into their dynamics, interactions, and, notably, their weaving processes. This method aimed to obtain more immersive data, providing a means to cross-reference and validate the information gathered through interviews. This, in turn, offered a deeper perspective on the group, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of their dynamics. A significant advantage of participant observation was the ability to interpret non-verbal signs, such as gestures, facial expressions, and behaviours. This approach enriched the dataset and allowed a more profound interpretation of the participants' experiences. The participant observation process also played a crucial role in establishing trust with the participants. Before the interview phase, participants were familiarized with the researcher, showing confidence that positively impacted the openness and depth of responses during the interviews. This approach facilitated a more transparent and authentic exchange of information.

The third methodology involved analyzing the embroideries produced by AAC. This approach was chosen because the practice is associated with a reflective process. Symbolically, each stitch requires a backward movement to propel itself forward, representing the recovery of a lost origin, as articulated in Pajaczkowska's concept of weaving as a passive-active reflection (Bello et al., 2020).

This approach aimed to unravel different layers of meaning in their artistic creations, showing how symbols and images represent pertinent aspects of the group's collective experience and memory. This analysis contributed to understanding the symbolic and narrative richness inherent in the embroidery, enriching the interpretation of its meaning within the broader framework of the collective's shared story. The triangulation methodology facilitated a comprehensive analysis by drawing from multiple sources, strengthening the study's findings.

Procedure

This research started in 2022 when the theme was selected. Initially, an extensive literature review was conducted, delving into subjects related to the armed conflict in Colombia, collective and community resilience, trauma, and textiles. Subsequently, the research commenced, progressing through the following phases:

1. REB Approval: The research received approval from Saint Mary's University's Research Ethics Board (REB) in May 2023. The REB ensures adherence to The TCPS (Tri-Council Policy Statement), a comprehensive set of ethical guidelines for research involving human participants in Canada. Voluntary informed consent, an essential TCPS requirement, was obtained from all participants in various methodologies through a consent form.

2. Access to the Artesanas de Amor Collective: Initial contact with the group started in December 2022, with the researcher reaching out to one of the group leaders. Subsequent video calls involved discussions about the study's purpose, the needed participation of group members, and logistical details.

3. Recruitment of Participants: Group leaders, initially approached and supportive of the research, diffused a flyer containing research information to the rest of the group. This led to unanimous agreement among group members to participate in the investigation.

4. Informed Consent: During the first meeting with the group, the nature of the research was clarified, concerns were addressed, and active discussions took place. Subsequently, all participants willingly signed the informed consent form, marking the formal initiation of the research.

5. Data collection occurred from May to July 2023 during the researcher's fieldwork in Colombia. Group activities preceded the interview process, culminating in a final meeting on July 27, before the researcher's departure.

6. Semi-Structured Interviews: With participants expressing interest, appointments were scheduled for home visits. The researcher conducted interviews following a questions guide, adapting as needed based on individual responses—the interviews aimed to maintain a conversational flow while accommodating the unique perspectives of each participant.

7. Participant Observation: The researcher actively participated in all group meetings from arrival until departure, gaining insights into the group's dynamics and engaging in various activities. As a gesture of appreciation, the researcher and supervisor organized an activity with an anthropologist and activist specializing in textile activism in Colombia, Isabel González, from the University of Antioquia. Isabel delivered a lecture, shared techniques used by other groups, and presented various textile productions from across Colombia. This interactive session prompted reflection, sparked new ideas within the group, and served as a symbol of gratitude from the researcher for the warm reception throughout the research process.

    The photos below reflect part of the activity where Professor Isabel Gonzales interacts with the group. In addition, it is possible to see some of the artistic pieces she brought to spread her knowledge about her work with other groups in Colombia and Latin American countries.

Data Analysis

This research used the Thematic Analysis methodology using the QDA Minor application. The methodology encompassed both deductive and inductive components. The deductive facet involved applying pre-established categories or themes derived from foundational theories, explicitly drawing on the work of Ungar, Bronfenbrenner and Aldrich. This method provides a structured framework based on established theories related to community resilience. Concurrently, inductive methods were employed during data analysis, enabling the emergence of new categories or themes directly from the data. This open-minded exploration captures perspectives that pre-established categories may not fully explain.

The coding process employed utilizes In Vivo and line-by-line techniques. In In Vivo Coding, participants' own words or phrases are used to label codes, ensuring a nuanced understanding of their experiences and enhancing the authenticity of the analysis. On the other hand, line-by-line coding involves systematically coding each line or segment of data, facilitating a thorough examination of the dataset, and capturing subtle variations, which is especially beneficial for dealing with complex, multifaceted narratives.

The data analysis was an iterative process involving multiple rounds of coding and constant comparison to refine themes. This iterative approach allows for a deeper data exploration and ensures that emerging themes are thoroughly examined and validated. A triangulation approach was applied to enhance the credibility and validity of the findings, involving comparing and contrasting data from different sources, such as semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and the symbolic analysis of the embroiders created in the group.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations for this research were meticulously addressed, starting with approval obtained from the Research Ethics Board (REB) of Saint Mary's University, which adheres to the TCPS2 statement, following the Tri-Council Policy Statement as a Canadian national framework. The data collection took place in Colombia, and adherence to international and national ethical standards was deemed crucial to safeguard the well-being and rights of participants. Global standards, including the Nuremberg Code (1945), Declaration of Helsinki (1964), Belmont Report (1976-79), and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, were considered. National regulations such as the Political Constitution (CP) of 1991, Law 10 (Decree 2164 of 1992), Law 1374, and Resolution 008430 of 1993 on Research Ethics were also integral to the ethical framework, mainly focusing on research involving human subjects. The resolution emphasized essential ethical principles such as autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. Ensuring compliance with these principles was reinforced by the requirement for research ethics committees responsible for evaluating and approving research protocols. The significance of informed consent was underscored, with participants being thoroughly informed about the research objectives, risks, and benefits before providing consent. Additionally, measures were in place to protect confidentiality and privacy, manage conflicts of interest, and promptly report and address any adverse events during the research process.

Before commencing the research project, a comprehensive meeting with participants explained the study's intent and potential risks. Informed consent was provided, allowing participants to review, question, and comprehend the implications of their involvement. Emotional risks, particularly while recounting past experiences, were acknowledged, and strategies were employed to mitigate discomfort, such as establishing a safe environment and adapting questions based on each participant's comfort level. Participants were equipped with contact information for support services. The researcher also had access to this information during the interview in case of unexpected circumstances.

Participants were given the option to keep their names and personal information confidential, but none opted for anonymity. Real names were used in the analysis process. However, to uphold interview content confidentiality, recordings were stored securely on the OneDrive of Saint Mary's University and the researcher's computer, protected by a data security system requiring password and fingerprint access. These measures reflect a comprehensive commitment to ethical research practices throughout the study.

Chapter 5: Results and Discussions

General Overview

This qualitative research applied thematic analysis methodology using the QDA Minor application to analyze the data and examine the 14 interviews and data collected from the participant observation during the fieldwork in Colombia with the Artesanas de Amor Collective (AAC). The data was analyzed, and three principal codes emerged, further divided into subthemes.

The first theme addressed the armed conflict in San Miguel village and its challenges during and after it. This theme included two categories for analysis: violence and its aftermath on the territory, encompassing issues like mass displacement, community distrust, and economic struggles such as unemployment. The second theme identified was trauma, divided into individual and collective subthemes. Individual trauma related to experiences of uncertainty resulting from the conflict, while collective trauma examined community-wide challenges, providing context for the subsequent focus on community resilience. The central focus of the research was community resilience, drawing from Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and theories by Ungar and Aldrich. Four subthemes were identified: individual factors such as psychological resources, connections to the land and the meaning of embroidering for the participants; the second subtheme was immediate groups of influence, including family, village, and the AAC; the third subtheme was resources such as monetary and legal frameworks shaped by the post-conflict context; and the last subtheme was societal environment, exploring cultural and religious influences specific to the region. The study also involved a symbolic analysis of AAC's embroidery pieces, aiming to understand how these symbols reflected the three main themes and complemented participants' narratives.

The analysis of the interviews allowed us to understand the events that took place in the region. They offer a narrative that explores the roots of violence in the village, examines its adverse impacts on individuals and the community, and concludes by exploring the factors that facilitated the group's progress in overcoming these challenges. This journey, undertaken by the Artesanas de Amor group and the San Miguel community, required the active participation of various stakeholders, including local government, NGOs, and leaders within the group itself. These collaborative efforts have fostered lasting cohesion within the group, even over many years. Such efforts facilitate not only individual healing but also collective restoration. Figure #3

illustrates the themes and systems analyzed in this study, enhancing the understanding of the analytical framework.
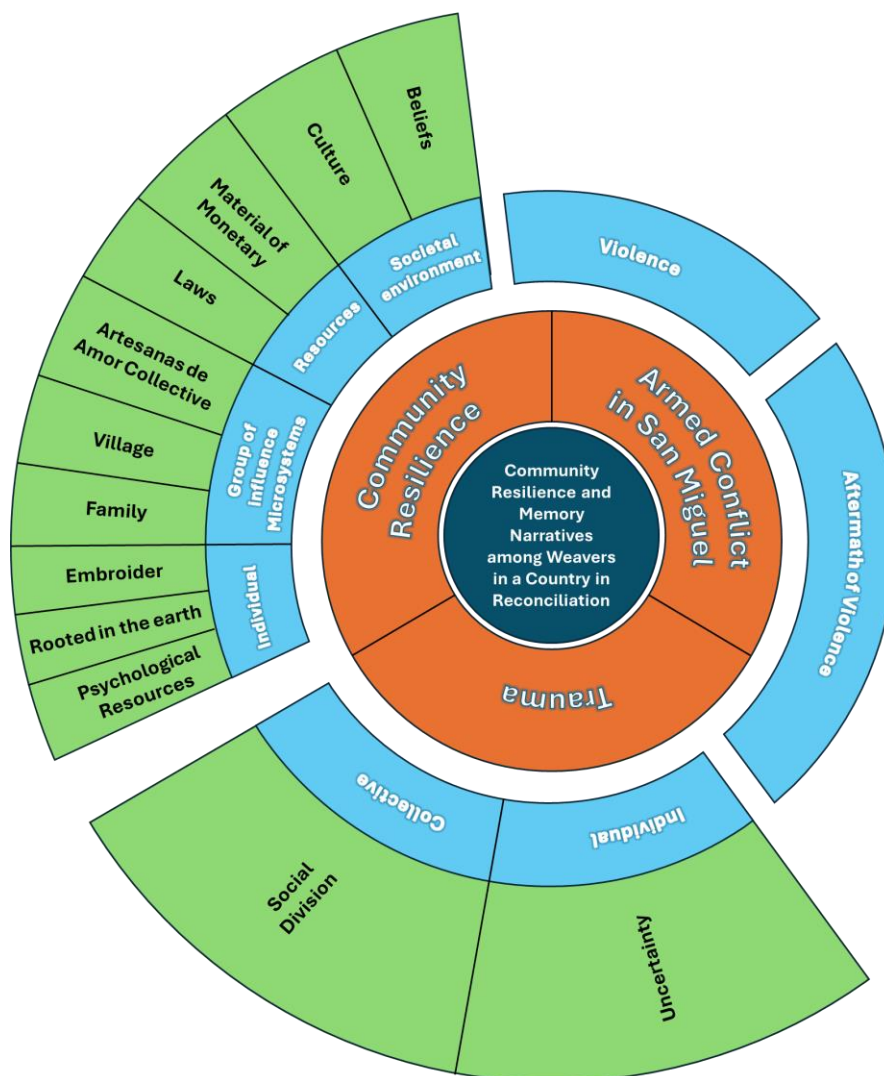

Figure 3: Themes Extracted from Interview Data

This graph serves as a visual representation of the topics examined in this research. At the primary level, the circle at the center denotes the title of the study. Moving to the second level, three general themes are presented: the armed conflict in San Miguel, trauma, and community resilience, represented in orange. The subthemes, which form the third level, are represented in blue. Finally, the fourth level features additional subtopics highlighted in green.

Topic 1: Armed conflict in San Miguel

The main objective of this research was to investigate and understand the mechanisms of community resilience employed by Artesanas de Amor to overcome adversity, rather than insist on their difficulties or sad experiences. However, throughout the interviews, cases related to violence within their community, the displacements they endured, and the sadness of losing their loved ones repeatedly emerged. Therefore, the initial aspect addressed in this analysis is the armed conflict within the community, as understanding how the members of Artesanas de Amor collective navigated through it provides a deeper insight into their experiences and the conditions within the community. Despite being a quiet and enjoyable territory, over time this village underwent important transformations due to the escalation of violence.

Between 1980 and 1985, several armed groups established a presence in the La Unión Antioquia region, particularly in rural areas. This strategic positioning allowed them better territorial control and dominion over the routes that connected neighbouring municipalities. In the period between 1995 and 2003, the conflict in this area intensified due to the actions of the FARC, the ELN and paramilitary groups. These factions carried out paramilitary strategies that resulted in a significant increase in violence and mass displacement. Given the presence and struggle for control of these groups, forced displacement became a cruel reality in the area. Residents were forced to leave their homes not only due to displacement but also due to the constant fear and terror generated by the stigmatization of the region as a guerrilla zone (Higuita Granada, 2018).

Although these groups primarily focused on rural areas, they managed to infiltrate La Union town on multiple occasions, gaining a presence and recognition to the extent that all its inhabitants were aware of their existence. Beatriz recounts one of these incidents involving the entry of these guerrillas into the town:

> "I was buying a meal right in front of the church when the shooting started. I was scared, for God's sake, when I saw someone running with one leg tied with a shirt, like a tourniquet to stop the blood. When I saw that man approaching, others were shooting in the air, how scary! The guerrillas had infiltrated the town, and I noticed they had bracelets. Red and black. They also hung fabrics on the trees in the park. They said ELN or FARC; I was trying to understand what they were doing.

They shouted at me: 'Compa[2], see. Have and distribute.' So, I received a magazine from them. When I opened it, I saw photos and articles of them. Oh, they gave some more to the park vendors and left. Then, I noticed a young man come out with a bundle and throw it into their truck. Of course, it was a bundle of money. I looked and thought, God, those boy's feet almost broke because he was so skinny. Later, I discovered he was a guerrilla forced to take money from the bank and throw it there. But how scary."

This testimony from Beatriz is not the only one regarding the guerrilla's entry into the town. There is also the testimony of Miriam, who recounts how a stray bullet hit her brother:

"When that happened, the guerrillas entered the town and all that. My brother was inside the house, and a stray bullet hit him. Yes, it was a big shock and fear at the same time. At that time, we did not dare to take him to the hospital due to fear of going outside.

Fortunately, the hand of God intervened, and my dad rescued him. He was in the yard while bullets were flying everywhere. He dragged him to the kitchen, covered him with a blanket, and then took him to the hospital. At this moment, thank God, my brother revived. He was only five years old at the time, and that bullet affected his liver and all his organs. Currently, he lives with a small liver."

If these testimonies can be chilling and harsh, as they reveal the harsh realities experienced in the urban area of the town, the experiences of the rural population can be even more terrifying and heartbreaking. As shown in Chapter 1, the rural population in Colombia has historically faced structural abandonment by the state, making it challenging for essential resources such as education, food, or security to reach them. This situation provided a fertile ground for these armed groups, as the state had limited control in some rural regions, facilitating their expansion and persistence over time. Angela described the situation in the rural area of San Miguel, stating:

"San Miguel was almost on a red list in La Union. They said there was danger and fear in this village, and you could not go there because people fought, and everything was negative. It was said that they are all guerrillas there."

This not only underlines the intensity of the armed conflict in this territory but also highlights the long-standing stigmatization that this area suffered. Multiple armed groups within the territory

---

2 Compa" is a colloquial term used in Spanish. It is a shortened form of the word "compadre" or "compañero," both of which mean "friend," "buddy," or "mate.

exacerbated the problem in this region. With more than one group competing for control, conflicts quickly arise as each faction seeks to dominate the territory to safeguard its interests. As revealed in Dora's interview:

> "It became a corridor for some and for others, and then everyone converged there, leaving our houses devastated. Now, my mother almost had to start from scratch."

Initially, each group searched to establish control over the territory, either for operational convenience or to consolidate power. In addition, they demanded support from the civilian population, whether in food or resources. The residents had no choice but to do so, as non-compliance meant facing severe consequences, including the threat of death. Lorena vividly describes her childhood experiences:

> " We had to leave because, at that time, the violence was uncontrolled. Multiple groups took control of the municipality's urban and rural areas, occupying the mountainous terrain for an extended period. It was common to see them passing along the roads or even entering our houses. Despite being only 4 or 5 years old, I have fleeting memories of those turbulent times; we had to move because my father received threats, and they accused him of collaborating with the paramilitaries he was coerced. To any request they made."

This testimony highlights how different groups intersect, consistently putting civilians in harm's way. When confronted with a problematic situation, Residents had no choice but to comply with the demands of these groups or leave their homes as their lives were in danger. However, compliance came at a dangerous cost, as meeting the expectations of one group often led to repercussions for others. The unfortunate reality was that civilians were accused of supporting opposing groups despite their genuine desire to avoid becoming involved in conflicts. During the war, the civilian population was the most affected, which underlines the need to understand the problematic experiences of violence in this territory.

1.1. Violence

When discussing violence in Colombia, it is expected to assume that the majority of people were either directly or indirectly affected by the armed conflict, given that almost 20% of the country has been reported as victims of the conflict (RUV, 2023) and Antioquia stands out as one of the areas that reported the highest number of victims throughout the conflict.

Taking a closer look at San Miguel, we observe a territory profoundly impacted in various ways by the consequences of violence. Among all the participants in Artesanas de Amor, the issue of displacement emerged as the most prevalent impact within the group. Out of the 14 interviews conducted, 10 individuals, primarily those residing in the village, had direct experiences with displacement. Three participants mentioned that they were not directly displaced because they lived in the urban area of La Unión, and the other was the youngest participant who at that time was in his mother's womb, so he mentions that he was not a direct witness of war. However, even without being born, he had to endure or rather feel the fear of war. Sebastian shared:

> "The paramilitaries always stopped the buses. Once, they made my mother and my grandfather get off, but they did not allow him to get back on. I was in my mother's belly at that time. So, even though I was inside my mom, I suppose I would have felt all that, too. I understand that [the conflict] leaves wounds, like that transgenerational thing."

In the context of the conflict, several narratives, such as Sebastián's, illustrate how the impact of the conflict was palpable. First, he demonstrates how armed groups, such as paramilitaries, affected multiple individuals within the community. This is directly related to collective trauma since the actions of these groups were not isolated incidents but constant, generating permanent uncertainty within the community. Furthermore, the testimony also exemplifies historical trauma by hinting at how the aftermath of past traumatic events continues to affect current and future generations. Sebastian reflects on how, even before he was born, he may have felt the emotional impact of the trauma that his mother and his grandfather experienced during their encounter with the paramilitaries. This idea suggests an intergenerational transmission of trauma, where traumatic emotions and experiences are passed from generation to generation. Sebastian consciously reflects and recognizes the depth of the conflict's impact on the community. This statement highlights how trauma extends beyond individual experiences and affects the collective identity and historical memory of the community as a whole.

Displacement emerged as one of the most intensely felt consequences for the residents of San Miguel and likely many other places in Colombia. Numerous individuals were compelled to abandon their homes, territories, and rural areas to seek refuge in urban centers, driven by the necessity to safeguard their lives. The social action graph shows evident displacements surged in the Antioquia region, particularly between 2000 and 2005. During these years, the San Miguel village was utterly depopulated.
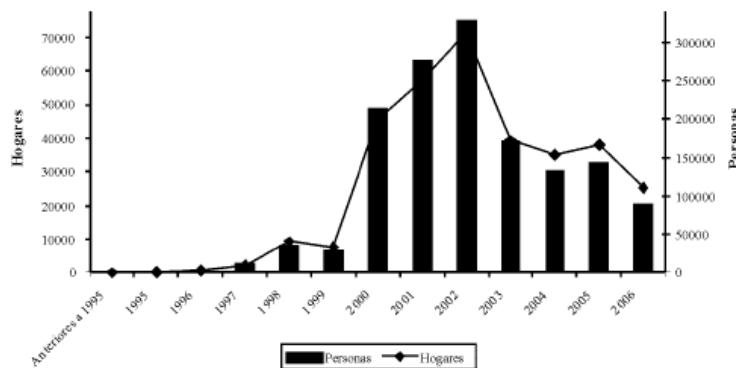
Figure 4. [3]Evolution of forced displacement in Antioquia 1995-2006

Some group members recollect these years from their perspectives, as Lorena mentioned: " I was born in '95, so between '95 and 2005 was pretty intense. It persisted for a while, calmed down, but then it came back on." Beatriz Also shared: "That was in the '90s. The years '97, '98, '99, and 2000 were terrible. The war was terrifying, especially when they targeted those peasants with bombs. It put an end to everything, leaving this entire village deserted."

Dora also provided additional information and emphasized the impact on residents: "Oh, yes, that is what I tell you about the past when that violence erupted. It greatly affected the residents, compelling locals and neighbours to flee and completely abandoning this area." Luz Dary's account also highlighted the repeated displacements experienced by the community: "People faced several massive displacements. The last one was in 2000, 2001, and more or less in 2004, when some families began to return. However, it was only around 2006 that the area started to be inhabited again."

These narratives underscore the residents' forced departure from the region during those years. While each person remembers it from their unique perspective, a common thread emerges – the necessity to abandon their homes and the countryside, primarily to protect their families. The constant fear of violence, including the possibility of being killed or having their children recruited, was a factor driving these difficult decisions.

In all the interviews, the predominant feeling emerged that no one wanted to leave their territory, but the circumstances left them no other alternative. Dora shares candidly: "Leaving everything

that had been built, no one likes it. It affected us like many people." She and her family had to abandon their homes because her brother suffered a severe attack and was shot several times. The decision was made to leave the territory to avoid further harm to other family members.

Others, like Dioni, report the absence of direct deaths in their family due to the decision to leave the territory before any tragedy occurred. Despite this, tears accompany her description of the distress she felt when friends and close people were negatively affected by a conflict that made no sense or meaning to them:

> "My stepfather almost lost his life when the violence escalated. My mother decided to move for fear that the guerrillas would enter our house and take the children. It was challenging. My mother said, 'I do not want this for my children,' we left to go to a nearby village in Abejorral. Looking back, we realized that was a lucky decision, or where else it could have been us. It was very painful to learn of the violent deaths of people left behind, as was the case with many. When you are at school with your classmates, and they get killed, that is incredibly difficult. Because most of those who studied with me went through a lot, that has been the hardest part."

Unfortunately, not everyone made it out before being affected by such circumstances, and many had to face the horrors of war firsthand. Evangelina, now a person full of joy and contagious sarcastic humour, looked for different ways to cope with the situation; she had to endure the loss of one of her most beloved family members, her son:

> " The first time I left was because they killed my son, and in the Village, that group was killing many young people. I went to a place called La Madera, where my daughter lives. I stayed for about two years. When I returned approximately eight months later, I had to leave again. I went to La Union to pay rent."

The story of Eduviges is equally moving. Before she decided to leave the area, her family was hopeful that the situation would improve, and peace would be restored. However, circumstances forced her to go, having already lost her husband and two sons:

> "We left when the violence intensified, displaced for three years. We left because everything around here was deserted. No armed group explicitly ordered us to leave. We were going to leave, but given the circumstances and their actions, they had already taken the children and my husband."

These testimonies are deeply rooted in trauma, both individual and collective, stemming from the traumatic experiences endured during the armed conflict. Initially, they reveal the individual suffering of those directly affected by violence and loss. Evangelina recounts the horrifying experience of losing her son due to violence in the area, motivating her to flee her home in search of safety. Similarly, Eduviges' narrative reflects the fear of losing loved ones, including her husband and children, and the desperation of having to escape the violence engulfing the community. These stories vividly depict the individual trauma experienced by women, highlighting how the uncertainty of conflict-related violence affects women who remain behind differently from men. Moreover, these testimonies also illuminate the collective trauma impacting the entire community. The necessity to abandon their homes due to violence and insecurity underscores the widespread impact of the conflict on the community as a whole, compelling many to forsake their lives and possessions in pursuit of safety elsewhere. The mention of the loss of loved ones and the escalation of violence in both stories emphasizes how these shared experiences of suffering and loss contribute to the collective trauma pervading the community.

Unfortunately, in times of war, the civilian population bears the worst part of the impact of the conflict. They suffer the consequences without playing any active role in the conflict, often becoming what is commonly known as "collateral damage." In the context of war, respect for life is ignored, and in Colombia, this is evident in the widespread violence that affected people of all ages and destroyed entire families. Tragically, it was often women who were found crying and burying their loved ones.

Through group meetings in Artesanas de Amor, I understood a disturbing turning point that led to the complete abandonment of the town—this crucial moment occurred when one of the women residents of the village, "Doña Judit," was murdered. The guerrilla group, unfairly accused her of keeping weapons for a rival group, the guerrillas were looking for her children. Frustrated in their search, they resorted to the unthinkable act of killing the mother. This grim event marked a change in the community's perception, with most realizing that there was no longer absolute respect for life. Later, after this tragic incident, the village of San Miguel was practically abandoned, plagued by the loss of its inhabitants and various problems within the territory.

1.2. Aftermath of Violence

The abandonment of the village brought with it numerous challenges for the territory. Described as an "invisible village," it even lost its legal status as a Community Action Board, meaning almost total abandonment by the state in this region. The inhabitants of the municipality of La Unión avoided the area due to the predominant fear of armed groups, which led to an isolated and marginalized assessment of the region.

For many people, leaving their homes proved to be a difficult decision, not only due to financial limitations but also considering the significant effort involved in building their residences. Their homes were not just structures but represented a place of ownership and connection to the land. Moving elsewhere meant facing greater financial demands, limited opportunities, and residing where they may not have wanted to be. Despite the fear experienced by some, the desire to return prevailed. Eduviges her return:

> "And then I came; People always asked me: 'You are going there?' After your family was killed, then... I consistently responded, 'Well, wherever I go, I will not forget what happened to me because I will not find them anywhere, no matter how hard I search. And then, well, I came back here. After three years, I came back here again."

Before returning, Eduviges bravely wanted to guarantee that her children at least had an education, as it was impossible always to send them to the town of La Union. She needed at least one teacher in the territory since they had lost even that. This led her to approach the mayor for help:

> "And then when I went to the mayor of the Union... There was nothing here; there was no school. Yes, I was there, but alone. Not one person had returned when I visited the mayor; it was tough. I stood outside the house, and the house was falling by itself. When I asked the mayor what security he could provide us, he said he could not guarantee anything. However, at least with nine children, he could send a teacher for the territory."

This was the impulse she needed to return home, as she had no more money to support herself financially elsewhere and genuinely wanted to take care of her house. As a result of the houses being left alone, different lootings occurred, and many houses were left in a state where they could not be inhabited. Even today, some houses from that time are still being structurally repaired.

When Eduviges returns to the village, she says: "Those people were around; they came back and intimidated us, asking why we had left. They knew in advance what had happened to us, and they acted crazy. They approached a neighbour and looted his house. They sent some boys from those people from the Comunas[4] of Medellín. They sent them to take out a house, and from there, they went out and killed two boys one night after we had returned."

With these acts, even the few families in the village who had bravely decided to return faced constant uncertainty before and after leaving home. However, the region found additional problems, particularly a shortage of opportunities and employment. As Eduviges recounts, "The people who used to create jobs left. And those who were employed were attacked and killed". Ramiro expressed a similar sentiment, stating, " We could not get a job; we searched, but it was in vain." This highlights that beyond the challenges stemming from violence in their environment, the community also grappled with the hardships of unemployment, further intensifying the financial struggles of both the community and their families.

The problems that remained in the territory were many, such as abandonment, uncertainty, pain from the loss of loved ones, abandonment of the state, and a lack of opportunities such as education or work. Perhaps one of the things that harmed San Miguel the most was the breakdown of the social fabric, as there was no trust between each other even in the years when the conflict calmed down, and the armed groups left the territory, with the negative marks left by the conflict persists for some time.
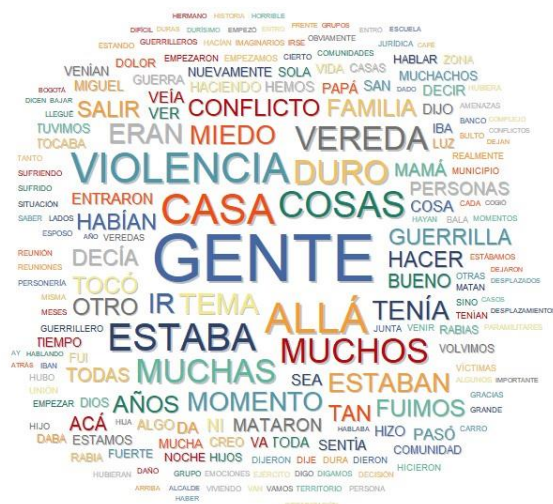

Figure 5. Word Cloud relative to the code violence and problems in the territory, QDA miner

---

4 In Medellín, Colombia, "Comunas" refer to administrative divisions within the city. They are similar to neighbourhoods or districts.

When examining the words most associated with the code of violence and the problems of the territory, it becomes evident that various terms are used in this context. From my perspective, I constantly heard terms like "scared," "tough," and "get out." Presumably, these words are frequently used as descriptors when recounting traumatic experiences, since there may be no other way to convey the intense fear felt in such situations. The widespread fear of what was happening and the persistent uncertainty that their lives could be in danger at any moment supported the use of that language. However, the most notable discovery is that the most frequently used word was "gente: people." This finding suggests that community is fundamental in the narrative of overcoming and adapting in the face of adversity. It emphasizes the centrality of the collective, where community support and unity play a crucial role in facing and overcoming challenges. These findings highlight the importance of recognizing and addressing the emotional impacts of trauma within the community, particularly in the context of violence and insecurity in the territory.

In their embroidery and narratives, AAC constantly emphasized their roles as artists, specifically as embroiderers or weavers, avoiding delving into the painful or adverse situations experienced during the conflict. Instead, they strove to underline their resilience and the continuous nature of their lives, using embroidery as a medium to convey their stories. This is important because in Colombia there are other groups of women, such as the Mapujan weavers, who have explicitly sought to capture their experiences on their looms using the patchwork technique. In these looms is possible to see the presence of elements such as weapons, camouflaged figures that represent armed groups, civilian populations, or even dead people. This technique has gained recognition throughout the country and beyond, as it serves as a means to inform and resist through art, representing the reality of their experiences. The following image serves as an example of the work carried out by this group.

On the other hand, in the case of Artesanas de Amor, their intention has not to portray their suffering through their embroidery. Unlike the specific works of Mapujan women, which explicitly represent the harsh realities of the conflict, AAC sought to highlight beauty. As they mention, it is the positive aspects that helped them move forward and recover despite the difficult circumstances they lived. This explains why no explicit representations of the repercussions or negative experiences of the conflict were found in their embroidery. However, two embroideries were created to denounce the events that occurred and advocate for the search for truth.

One of the group members created this powerful and denunciatory embroidery, presenting the image of two doves. While doves are commonly associated with peace, this piece transcends beyond that and is a powerful statement of denunciation. Beyond advocating for peace, it also demands the truth, recognizing the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of achieving peace without first confronting the truth. The embroidery has very striking colours, including floral tones such as purple, green, orange and brown, contributing to the overall beauty of the piece. Luz Dary explains this embroidery, "The creator is a woman who has endured significant suffering due to the loss of her family.

That's why what she wants most are truth and tranquillity. Well, the flowers are also because here in the area they all have a connection with gardening, if you go to any of their houses they are all decorated with flowers".

Notably, the presence of a dark dove alongside a light one adds complexity to the artwork. Although the artist did not explicitly explain a specific meaning, the contrast could show a message about the multifaceted nature of peace. In a broader context, it might imply a search for truth or even pain after experiencing a situation similar to what they went through.

Source: *Photograph taken by Lorena Ciro, 2022.*
Embroidery # 2

The artist of this piece did not provide direct insights, prompting an analysis considering various elements within the embroidery. The fabric shows a "paisa peasant," a distinctive figure from the Antioquia region. The characteristic traits of a peasant in this region, rooted in the land, are evident in the detail and colour choices that illustrate their labour, including representations of work tools such as the typical hat, a machete, and crops serve as symbols of tradition and the daily work of the peasant, elements that extend to other contexts such as town visits with the characteristic "ruana" [5]of the region.

The lush greenery and abundance of leaves in the representation symbolize the fertility and natural wealth of the agricultural environment in this region. The inclusion of the machete further underscores the peasant's role in working the land and emphasizes the significance of agriculture and their connection to nature. The piece offers multiple symbolic interpretations, primarily depicting the peasant's life and deep connection to the land, emphasizing the pivotal role of agriculture in local identity.

As mentioned, there were not many embroideries directly related to the theme of conflict in the region. However, the two selected embroideries were explicitly chosen to illustrate how the group portrayed these events from a somewhat more positive perspective while maintaining a commitment to reporting reality. The following section of this analysis explores trauma, examining its individual and collective dimensions. These individuals experienced profoundly challenging situations that have left lasting imprints on their lives.

---

[5] The "ruana" is a traditional Colombian garment, resembling a large, rectangular-shaped poncho with a center opening for the head. In Paisa culture, specifically in the Antioquia region, the ruana is symbolic of tradition and heritage.

Topic 2: Trauma

2.1. Individual

When addressing the theme of trauma, it is essential to recognize its manifestations in the psychological, physical, and social dimensions, as examined in Chapter 2. This analysis focuses mainly on the first two levels (physical and psychological), deferring the exploration of social trauma to a subsequent analysis. Among the multifaceted factors present in conflicts, psychological trauma stands out, which encompasses situations such as the loss of loved ones, uncertainty, and displacement. "Displacement emerges as a traumatic experience for many people, disrupting their emotional and physical sense of belonging and identity and fragmenting established routines and relationships. As a result, people often struggle with feelings of loss, longing, depression, and a sense of helplessness and loss of control" (Herman, 2001, cited in Clark & Ungar, 2021, p. 190).

As mentioned in Chapter 2 trauma is described by Caruth (1996) as an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events, characterized by the repetitive, often delayed, and uncontrolled occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena (Rajiva & Takseva, 2021). In the context of war, it can be argued that humans are ill-prepared to cope with such circumstances. Events such as witnessing the death of close family members or being forced to abandon homes obtained through significant sacrifices during armed conflict can be considered traumatic. The persistent threat to life in times of war surpasses reasonable human experience. Unfortunately, our world is marked by persistent conflicts, where each group pursues its interests, leaving civilian populations caught in the crossfire.

By listening to the experiences of those who found themselves in a conflict, it becomes evident that our problems seem brief in comparison. It is admirable to witness individuals who resume their lives after these traumatic situations and return to their territories and speak openly about their terrible experiences. Sharing their experiences preserves their memories and serves as an element of resistance against repeating such historical tragedies. Eduviges correctly points out:

> "Because violence generates many conflicts. Family members are killed, and they leave us alone, suffering because they do not care. They take them away; they do not say why, but they take them away and kill them. Those are the challenging moments experienced because I say we are living otherwise economically. "

Testimonies, such as Angela's, vividly transmit the profound emotional impact: "the sadness, the pain of what happened, because what happened here was very hard for everyone. One is left without a father, without brothers, without a partner. For example, say that my uncle was affected by a landmine; that is very hard." Losing a loved one, especially in unexpected circumstances or caused by armed conflict, is a traumatic experience, as mentioned by Falicov (1995, 2007). Distress over loss can arise from failed attempts to cope with an overwhelming situation. Symptoms may be triggered by crisis events, such as a traumatic loss in the family or by the broader impact of a large-scale disaster (Ungar, 2011).

These testimonies reveal the distress experienced by innocent families who bear no interest in war but suffer its most profound consequences. War causes psychological traumas and enduring wounds on populations, often challenging to heal. Persistent emotions of anger, pain from the loss of loved ones, and guilt for being unable to prevent conflict persist. Evangelina, mourning the loss of her son, reflects:

> "I have been a widow for a long time. Moreover, I was struck with violence. They killed my son and my husband. Twice, I was displaced... They killed him in the backyard of one of my daughter's houses. I tell my family, poor mother*, if I had been there, I would not let them kill him, or they would have had to kill two."

Anger, depression, sadness, and grief contribute to psychological trauma. Without necessary help, these emotions can exacerbate problems, as Luz Dary expresses:

> "It took me to a tough, complex moment. I was pregnant, and the baby's father was killed in the context of the conflict... I came to a point of being in moments of depression because when one is very active and not... finding a place where to take refuge is quite complex... My refuge at that time was even the least desired, which was…alcohol. I was there for about 2 or 3 years."

In the absence of genuine help, social and family support, and psychosocial assistance, individuals may seek refuge in readily available options such as alcohol. While alcohol may temporarily alleviate pain and provide momentary relief from suffering, it is, in reality, a temporary solution that can lead to additional problems in the future. In this testimony, resilience is highlighted as a crucial factor in overcoming trauma and continuing with life despite the adversities experienced. Despite facing intense emotions such as anger, depression, sadness and grief due to the loss of the father of her son in the context of the conflict, Luz Dary was able

to find a way to move forward. Although she acknowledges falling into moments of depression and turning to alcohol as a refuge, her ability to persevere through these difficult experiences demonstrates her resilience.

The importance of resilience in this case lies in Luz Dary's ability to navigate adverse circumstances and overwhelming emotions. Despite these challenges, she managed to adapt, find coping mechanisms, and progress in her life. Her ability to seek help, utilize available resources, and overcome problematic alcohol use exemplifies how resilience can facilitate the journey of recovery and personal transformation. This resilience was fundamental for Luz Dary, as it allowed her to restart her life and pursue her priorities. Additionally, Luz Dary's testimony underscores the importance of providing adequate support and resources to people facing traumatic experiences. Without that assistance, negative emotions can exacerbate and create additional challenges. Therefore, individual resilience may also be shaped by the presence of social support networks and accessible resources that help people overcome trauma and rebuild their lives.

Another trauma associated with conflict is physical. Physical trauma is an unexpected incident that becomes a defining moment in an individual's life, creating a clear distinction between the pre-and post-injury periods (Richmond et al., 2000). In other words, it is an injury or bodily harm experienced due to shocking or violent events. As analyzed in Chapter Two, particularly in the context of the internal conflict and more prominently in the Colombian scenario, I was discussing how one of the weapons used by the armed groups was landmines. The problem with these weapons is their ability to persist on the ground long after the conflict ends, posing a constant threat to civilian populations (Richmond et al., 2000). Beatriz highlights the prolonged presence of mines in the San Miguel Area in the interview: "They were minefields until not long ago, which were demined." This underscores the persistent risk faced by the population, including children, as the exact location of these mines was unknown, making any moment potentially dangerous.

Unfortunately, this was the case for Ramiro, a member of AAC and an individual affected by a land mine. This situation goes beyond physical mutilation, as it is exacerbated by the inability to resume activities that were previously taken for granted. The inability to work and the feeling that they prevent him from leading the same life as before is expressed by Luz Dary: "Well, because he is a victim of a landmine, and with the prosthesis, it is tough for him because he used to work in the field, which is why Ramiro often feels useless." Ramiro describes the weight

of this situation: "But that is very heavy, that affects me a lot. Walking and everything, doing gymnastics." Experiencing an event like this involves enduring the initial pain and terror and living with the lasting consequences in daily life.

Despite this situation and the impossibility of working directly on the land, Ramiro continues to be a very active person. He expressed in the interview his enjoyment of going to the town of La Union, socializing, and feeling a sense of belonging within the group of Artesanas. As he mentions, "You take the time to go, that helps to entertain you and dispel boredom and also feel part of the group as if they are asking you questions and want you to be there." This is very important because, in several interviews with other participants, Ramiro's willingness to learn and undertake new activities was evident. Despite coming from a generation where such tasks were often considered feminized, his openness to accepting these activities challenges traditional gender norms and underscores the importance of inclusivity and openness to diverse interests and abilities within the community.

Both psychological and physical trauma are closely related to uncertainty. Studies related to collective resilience argue that uncertainty is almost inevitable after a disaster (Norris et al., 2008). In post-conflict contexts, the result is the same: the population experiences significant uncertainty individually and collectively, creating a highly unpredictable and dangerous environment that constantly endangers security and stability. Those affected usually live in a perpetual state of alert, without knowing when or how events may affect them.

This prevailing uncertainty is a significant factor contributing to displacement, a challenge experienced by most affected groups. Although they were not given any direct order to leave, widespread uncertainty and constant fear of possible events led many to flee. Displacement, in itself, is strongly associated with continual uncertainty. Displaced people still do not know when they can return to their homes, denying them the security of a familiar environment. As mentioned, some feel "Arrimados[6]" and unwelcome when residing in relatives' homes but see no alternative. This lack of certainty and loss of control over their destiny contributes significantly to psychological trauma. Additionally, trauma can intensify in the absence of a solution, resources, or support to help people escape this constant uncertainty. The perpetual state of uncertainty can lead to deep feelings of loneliness, depression or anxiety as people struggle with the unknown and the potential challenges that await them. The absence of a

---

[6] In Colombia, "arrimado" refers to an individual who moves in with relatives due to various circumstances, such as economic challenges or family emergencies. While the term itself is not negative, the experience can present challenges as people adjust to this new experience and in some cases, people may even feel unwelcome.

straightforward solution to their situation exacerbates the psychological toll, emphasizing the importance of addressing uncertainty in post-conflict situations to foster mental well-being and resilience.

During these tragic circumstances, the group members' remarkable resilience becomes evident. Sharing traumatic experiences, as demonstrated by those who have managed to resume their lives, not only serves as a form of resistance against historical tragedies but also contributes to the healing process. Despite supporting the weight of uncertainty and facing ongoing challenges, people in this community have found the strength to overcome traumatic events and embark on new chapters of life. The ability to rebuild, return to the territories and openly discuss their experiences reflects the spirit that persists, even in the face of profound adversity. These narratives underscore the importance of resilience, community support, and people's potential to transcend the limitations imposed by psychological and physical trauma, demonstrating the human capacity to find hope and renewal in the darkest circumstances.

2.2. Collective

Facing situations of violence, as we have observed, not only has family and personal effects on individuals but, unfortunately, also breaks the bonds of an entire community, giving rise to collective trauma, as analyzed in Chapter Two. Collective trauma is defined as a deep and lasting traumatic experience that significantly impacts a group or community, transcending individual effects and leaving a lasting imprint on the collective memory and sociocultural consciousness of the affected community (Neal, 1998, cited in Alexander, 2004). This type of trauma is distinguished by its influence on a community with a shared identity, such as ethnicity, nationality, or religion (Borda Bohigas et al., 2015). In essence, collective trauma goes beyond individual experiences, permeates the fabric of a community, and leaves a lasting impact on its members' psychological well-being and sociocultural identity.

Perhaps one of the most significant impacts of collective trauma, as mentioned by several participants in the interviews, is the breakdown of the social fabric. This breakdown results from mistrust, fractured relationships, and anger toward the community. Ramiro said, "When I returned, it was awful because I do not know. Some went to one side and others to the other." At that moment, individuals were primarily concerned with defending their interests; the priority was safeguarding their lives, leading to not interacting with neighbours for fear of possible consequences. Even after the armed groups left the territory, this rupture of social bonds persisted, as highlighted by Lorena:

"It was tough for people to leave their homes and discuss what happened because it generated much pain. Additionally, out of fear, which is undeniable, one may be afraid that mentioning the events could lead to reprisals or a recurrence of the violence."

There was a period when people refrained from communicating. While such isolation could be considered normal in certain cultures where people tend to stay within their homes with limited interactions between neighbours, for a culture like Colombia, particularly the "paisa" culture, this could be considered an uncomfortable change due to the cultural importance of social ties. In this context, assistance to others and a sense of community support are highly valued.

However, following a period of violence where many had to evacuate the territory, experienced the loss of loved ones, and almost had to rebuild their lives from scratch without the support of the community, feelings of anger became prevalent, as expressed by Luz Dary:

"Someone in the village told me, 'I was furious because they killed my mother, left her lying around, and no one from the village accompanied me. I practically had to wait for dawn with her outside for some institution to arrive (the government, the police), and if they did not arrive, at least for the funeral home to arrive. They also killed another man that same day, and I was also there with them, basically doing everything that the two families could. No one else from the community accompanied us.' However, the community's people did not help due to lack of will, but because of the fears and threats they faced."

Within the conflict, assumptions emerge within the community, making these social ties increasingly fragile until they are entirely severed. People become apprehensive, afraid of potential consequences, distrustful of expressing themselves to the wrong person, and reluctant to talk to neighbours or even leave their homes due to the pervasive and permanent fear lingering at their doorsteps. Marycruz describes the situation in San Miguel:

"In San Miguel, the community fabric was so destroyed, so wounded, with so many bad feelings. Well, because San Miguel's history has been permeated by exercises of violence between neighbours and people within the same community."

The ADAPT (Adaptation and Development after Persecution and Trauma) model, proposed by Silove and Steel in 2006, suggests that trauma generated by conflict leads to persistent conflicts in the community, increasing the risk of violence. This risk is exacerbated by the adverse

socioeconomic conditions typical of post-conflict, which, in turn, difficult recovery and social development. The model highlights that frustrations can escalate anger, aligning with social disadvantage theories that connect poverty and mental health (Tausig et al., 1999, as cited by Brooks et al., 2011). The profound impact of violence left scars on the relationships and trust within the community, resulting in a fractured social fabric. When a community experiences such a rupture, it poses a significant challenge as it can foster feelings of isolation and reduce willingness to collaborate or trust others. This lack of cooperation can, in turn, have adverse economic implications, hindering the implementation of community improvement projects and discouraging economic activities within the region. However, the most significant potential harm lies in mental health. In contexts like San Miguel, where the entire community suffered from the traumas of war, the absence of community support can intensify feelings of isolation, mistrust, and loneliness, leading to conditions such as depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders.

San Miguel village, however, changed this trend and emerged as a resilient group. Despite persistent barriers and challenges after the war, they successfully engaged in discussions to comprehend the experiences of their neighbours. They gained insight into the community's fears and simultaneously fostered empathy among themselves. Through dialogue, they discovered numerous assumptions damaging the social fabric. The involvement of diverse individuals and organizations further facilitated this process, a topic that was explored in detail when discussing the resources that arrived in the region. It is crucial to emphasize that witnessing the considerable achievements of the group and the community has been significant, as they have successfully re-established a sense of community.

Through various initiatives, they rebuilt their social fabric and addressed the problems through open dialogue. This success forms the basis for a deeper exploration of community resilience in the subsequent analysis, focusing on four key factors: Individual, close environment of influence, resources, and societal environment.

Source: *Photograph taken by Lorena Ciro, 2021.*
Embroidery # 3

The embroidery shows two people hugging; one of the two faces expresses love, empathy, and pain, surrounded by flowers. It can be interpreted within the context of trauma, both on an individual and collective level. The portrayal of empathy and pain on the face suggests a profound emotional connection, symbolizing understanding, and mutual support between those who have experienced these situations amid conflict.

The surrounding flowers introduce an additional layer of meaning. Flowers, often associated with beauty and renewal, may symbolize hope and the potential for recovery after distressing events. Their presence could also signify resilience, highlighting the Artesanas' ability to find beauty amidst adversity, showcasing their strength and beauty in the face of difficulty and pain.

Regarding collective trauma, the representation of the two people shows the importance of solidarity and community support in the healing process. The connection between these individuals may signify the establishment of an emotional support network, a vital component for overcoming shared traumas.

Topic 3: Community resilience

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the primary focus of this research is community resilience, with "community" specifically denoting a group of individuals who share common characteristics such as culture, customs, or beliefs and are geographically located in the same area. In the case of the Artesanas de Amor Collective (AAC), this holds, as they are situated along the San Miguel village, that they share similar customs within the Antiochian or Paisa cultures.

The objective of this research is to comprehend how this group of women built community resilience after experiencing traumatic situations, particularly in the context of the Colombian armed conflict. Drawing on Aldrich's theory, which postulated that community resilience is the

capacity of a group to confront challenges and swiftly return to normal through cooperative efforts and social capital, this encompasses networks of social relationships, mutual trust, and cooperation within a community. Social Cohesion, characterized by solid social ties facilitating resource mobilization, information sharing, and mutual support, along with Interpersonal trust and community participation, is integral to resilience (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015). However, applying Aldrich's theory alone may not clarify AAC experiences. As explained earlier, during conflicts, the social fabric of a community is often torn apart due to fear and repression, hindering cooperation and support. Unlike natural disasters, conflicts involve prolonged healing processes on multiple fronts, making immediate resilience challenging.

According to Luz Dary, upon the community's return, a prevailing sense of melancholy enveloped the surroundings. She stated, "It felt like a sadness, anxieties, mistrust, fears, many things that were felt in the environment." This emotional tapestry unfolded over several years, constituting a deliberate process aimed at addressing and overcoming the challenges faced. In contrast to the immediate cooperation and collective action typically required in the aftermath of a disaster, this situation demanded a prolonged effort for recovery. Despite the property damages incurred, upon returning, each individual prioritized the repair of their own homes. The prevailing sentiment was self-concern, with residents focusing on restoring their houses rather than extending their efforts toward assisting neighbours or others. This prolonged process shows that various factors contributed to the current state of the community, and community work demonstrated its critical role in shaping the outcome. This is why, to understand these factors for the analysis of this research, additional resilience theories were used to help better understand this recovery process and the construction of resilience within the community.

This analysis draws on Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, which views resilience as a process influenced by various interconnected systems. For a community like the AAC, post-conflict healing and resilience construction require a series of events. Overcoming negative experiences and returning to normal involves transforming those experiences into constructive elements for the community, such as the embroidery that narrates their story. Attributing community resilience to individual factors limits understanding resilience as not just a personality trait. As highlighted by Ungar, resilience in the face of significant challenges depends mainly on the quality of social and physical environments rather than individual characteristics or talents (Ungar et al., 2011).

Therefore, exploring what aids a group in moving forward collectively after experiencing the unpleasantness of conflict requires considering various factors. This analysis is divided into four parts: individual aspects, influence groups like family and the Artesanas de Amor Collective, available resources, and the societal environment.

3.1. Individual

As I observed the people within the San Miguel community, particularly the members of Artesanas de Amor, I witnessed the cohesive nature of the group, as each person exhibited a strong sense of identity and pride in their role within the collective. Furthermore, they demonstrated a shared set of values, customs, beliefs, and other commonalities. However, it is essential to recognize that despite this collective identity, each individual retains their unique perspectives, especially about how they perceive violence or adversity.

Overcoming challenging situations often involves several factors, including individual attributes. These encompass psychological resources such as coping skills, optimism, personal strengths, and empathy. Furthermore, given the specific context of our analysis, as San Miguel is a rural territory, it is crucial to explore the personal connections that individuals have with the land. Significantly, despite facing displacement, the majority of the community chose to return, underscoring their enduring ties to the land despite constant fears of potential repercussions.

One of the most surprising aspects of the participant observation and interviews was witnessing the optimism expressed by all members of the AAC. They consistently emphasized their collective ability to overcome the challenging situations they had faced as a community. In all 14 interviews, participants, in various ways, referenced the factors that aided them in overcoming adversity and moving forward. While the responses were diverse, it is crucial to underscore that the common thread among all members was their proactive approach to changing their circumstances, confronting challenges, and striving to overcome them. For instance, Eduviges expressed:

> "The psychologists came to encourage us to keep going, but you have to put in a lot on your part because if you do not want to, no one will get into your head. However, it does help if that impulse that it gives you is helpful to the people."

Luz Dary also shared her perspective. When she began the process as a life and health promoter, a course promulgated by the government of Antioquia:

"When they were talking about the costs of war, that man was telling his life story, and, for him, those were the costs of war. I did not believe anything about those courses, but I found what this man said very interesting when I heard him speak. Additionally, he could express all those emotions and feelings as a man. So, I said it was kind of interesting, and I continued attending."

While external assistance was evident in some cases, primarily from professionals involved in other processes, both Luz Dary and Eduviges were willing to embrace available resources, navigate through them, and consider them viable options for coping with their situations. According to Ungar (2012), resilience from an ecological perspective is the ability of individuals to face and overcome significant adversities, navigating psychologically, socially, and culturally with resources that build and maintain their well-being. Ungar emphasizes the importance of recognizing that resilience and overcoming challenging situations depend not only on the availability of resources but also on an individual's willingness and initiative to utilize those resources. In essence, these elements are interconnected, making it challenging to build resilience and emerge from difficult situations if the resources are lacking or the individual lacks the motivation or readiness to engage with them, particularly after violence.

Optimism is another factor developed as a potential facilitator of resilience outcomes, underscoring its association with a positive life perspective and the ability to sustain hope for favourable results in the future, even amid current difficulties. This optimistic mindset is correlated with a flexible implementation of coping skills, which enhances individuals' proactive and positive approaches to challenges (Masten & Garmezy, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1989, as cited by Ungar, 2021). During the interviews, participants not only exhibited optimism when reflecting on past experiences of violence but also expressed present goals and aspirations for personal improvement and collective achievements. Eduvijes shared:

"You know, when one fills one's life with material things that are needed, logically they are needed because you can carry many burdens, as we Paisas say. However, we can say that we have already passed the most difficult time that has arisen, and we must move forward."

Similarly, Evangelina stated, "Because of what I have suffered and my age, I feel normal, I feel good. I think I know where I am going and where I stop. I can go to the doctor alone; I feel fine." Despite facing material needs, for many, the most challenging aspect was the loss of loved

ones. However, in the current moment, recognizing shared material needs allows them to move forward. As a group, they strongly desire to continue building, as Dora affirms, "There we are, and we continue. Yes, someone will not come back because the group is over, not right now. Maybe at another time, but not at this moment. I feel part of the group." As Angela shares, "When we are well, you feel more encouraged and energized. Indeed, you are not very united if you are not well. In that sense, the embroidery and the group have benefited us collectively."

Seeing situations positively makes it easier to maintain hope, as effective coping involves actively applying strategies to manage stress and confront difficult situations. Combining an optimistic approach and coping skills improves resilience, allowing people to approach challenges positively and develop practical strategies to overcome adversity, thus fostering individual and collective resilience. However, in the case of San Miguel village, we are not discussing isolated cases of experiencing violence; the entire community was affected. In this context, empathy becomes crucial. Despite fears of repercussions, threats, or the challenges of understanding each other during the violence, it became essential to recognize that they were a community collectively impacted. As Luz Dary explains:

> "We began to understand that and started weaving those social threads again. It was imperative to start seeing the other side of people. Moreover, although that was not important for many because we also had many opposition people, it explained why it was important to have coexistence as a community again."

Empathy enables communication and understanding and fosters unity in shared pain, such as identifying as victims of the conflict. Lorea expresses, "Well, because everyone, absolutely everyone, has suffered the severities of an absurd war. Oh, everyone. From those who have lost children to those forcibly displaced or victims of landmines. Everyone has endured such horrors." This shared identification allows mutual understanding of pain, fostering unity and making some experiences exemplary for others. Lorena explains, "Understanding, for example, when I listen to their stories. Many things that I have lived through, which may be a storm for me, are trivial compared to the situations they have experienced. That makes me humbler, right." This self-reflection and understanding of others create bonds, transforming individuals from isolated elements to interconnected components where abilities and behaviours impact themselves and others.

Before delving into the microsystems of AAC, it is crucial to explore their connections to the land. As mentioned, most of the group identifies as peasants, and those displaced search to return to the fields, considering it their safe place due to homes, roots, or familiarity with the work environment. However, as observed, forced displacement constitutes a traumatic experience for numerous individuals, impacting their emotional and physical well-being while also inducing a disruption in their sense of belonging and identity. This phenomenon results in the fragmentation of people's routines and relationships, leading to emotions of loss, longing, depression, and helplessness (Herman, 2001, as cited by Clark & Ungar, 2021).

For those who discussed their experiences of displacement, one of the most remarkable aspects was the ability to return to their properties, even in the face of constant fear. Nonetheless, being at home somehow gave them a sense of peace of mind that was absent when constantly moving from one place to another due to the economic challenges faced amidst displacement. As mentioned by Ramiro in his interview, "You have to move around there, from one ranch to another, that does not work, that is very difficult. The house was full of overgrown grass when we returned, but it was fine. Good to return home, very good."

Likewise, Eduviges expressed joy in her interview, highlighting the happiness of returning home. Despite some fear, she acknowledged that it could happen if someone were to come to harm, stating, "Yes, happy because I was returning to my own thing. With a little fear, but as I said, if they are going to kill someone, well, if they do not make it through the day."

Fortunately for the AAC members, there were no legal obstacles in reclaiming their properties. In many regions of Colombia, displaced individuals face the hardships of leaving their land and encounter legal challenges upon their return. Other individuals, typically landowners, illegally seize land, and peasants encounter difficulties legally proving ownership. Colombia has implemented the Land Restitution Law, considered one of the most ambitious and complex reparation programs globally, to address these issues. This law establishes a sophisticated system involving specialized judges and magistrates in land restitution claims. Additionally, institutions like the Victims Unit provide humanitarian assistance and compensation individually and collectively (Weber, as cited by Clark & Ungar, 2021). These initiatives are crucial because the peasants who have lived in rural areas for generations have deep roots in the land. They perceive it as their safe place, and their identity is closely tied to farming and cultivating the land, practices passed down through previous generations. This creates a strong emotional attachment, as their livelihood and way of life are intertwined with working the land,

understanding crop cycles, and managing animals. Lorena highlights the peasant's work precisely: "Through this process, the importance of peasant work is recognized. The world would have no balance if the peasants did not do that work. We would not have food on our table. Can you imagine? Moreover, it is a job that is underestimated, to which true value is not given."

In urban environments, peasants may feel useless, lacking activities where they can contribute meaningfully. The problem is further exacerbated when people are forced to leave their homes due to conflict. In such situations, individuals not only experience disorientation in an unfamiliar place but also grieve the abandonment of their land. Returning to the land is essential, particularly for healing as a community. It allows for the reconnection of ties that foster mutual support, understanding of each other's needs, and cultivating a sense of solidarity within the community. Almost two decades after the community of San Miguel experienced the most challenging conflict, they annually celebrate the "festival of return," starting in 2017, as outlined in Chapter 1 of the group's timeline. The entire community is invited to participate in the event held in the San Miguel village, encouraging community actions and the displaced individuals to reclaim their lands. As described by Luz Dary

> "As a result, the first festival was held where communities could meet again. Not only people who had managed to return participated but also those who, for various reasons, were not present in the territory, although they belonged to it. This day served as an opportunity for those who could not attend the initial festival to have a sort of excuse to return. Furthermore, this opened the possibility that others who did not attend began to perceive a change in San Miguel and gradually regained confidence in the territory."

The third theme of this individual analysis explores embroidery as a healing tool. Although the theories of Ungar, Bronfenbrenner or Aldrich do not explicitly mention textile activism or artistic elements as healing processes, I have included this aspect in the individual analysis. This decision arises from the recognition that embroidery is a skill that some people possess, and its therapeutic impact can vary from person to person. It is important to remark that although the AAC identifies as weavers, not all members are involved in embroidery or knitting. Some contribute to the group through other activities, such as growing medicinal plants, cooking, or creating various items. Adopting the name "Artesanas" reflects each member's diverse skills, emphasizing their knowledge exchange. Beatriz highlights this collaborative spirit by saying:

"For example, women who like medicinal plants did some workshops. There was also a workshop for those who liked to cook, who made desserts, cakes, a lot of different things; they began to give workshops; also, for example, those who liked massages could take some small massage courses."

Luz Dary also shared with us how group members could conduct these workshops: "And everything is precious. In the Artesanas, this has also been very positive, as everyone has come to share what each one knows how to do. So, as each one plays a role as a facilitator within the same group, what has been accomplished is sharing knowledge on various topics within the group."

This is an example of how they promote knowledge as a way to resist and empower themselves and the community because it demonstrates their agency to seek and share valuable skills and experiences. By organizing workshops on different topics, these collectives not only enrich their knowledge but also actively contribute to the community's collective knowledge base. In doing so, they resist traditional gender roles that may limit them to specific domestic or caregiving tasks. Instead, they are asserting their right to participate in various activities and goals that align with their interests and passions. By sharing their experience with others through workshops, they are also empowering other members of the community by providing them with valuable skills and knowledge that can improve their well-being and quality of life.

Additionally, by taking the initiative to organize and participate in these workshops, they are affirming their leadership and influence within the community. They are demonstrating their ability to mobilize resources, facilitate learning opportunities, and foster a sense of solidarity and mutual support among community members. In this way, they not only empower themselves but also contribute to the overall resilience and cohesion of the community. Thus, the group has facilitated different activities to ensure inclusion and knowledge transfer among its members. Although various activities contribute to the group's identity, embroidery has become a distinctive feature that gives them visibility inside and outside the village. This creative outlet is a storytelling tool, allowing the group to express their narratives.

As discussed in Chapter 2, textile activism has been observed in different groups because this mechanism allows the articulation of emotions that may be difficult to express verbally (Pérez-Bustos & Chocontá Piraquive, 2018). Lorena correctly expresses this therapeutic aspect by stating:

"If embroidery helps in anything, it is in controlling anxiety because what it allows you to do is be in the present moment, focused on what you are doing. It is very healing. Moreover, many times, we have feelings that maybe. With words, we cannot express or we cannot explain. However, in my case, if I take a needle and a thread, I can name it. That way, I also channel the emotion or what I feel.

Dioni also shares with us how this task helps her release stress:

"Because embroidering is relaxing and helps reduce stress. Nothing is better than taking a moment to relax after experiencing stressful situations. After letting off steam, you often feel overwhelmed and have a headache, but knitting to the rhythm of a soft melody can temporarily make you forget about your problems and contribute to the release of stress. Consider this activity to be truly therapeutic. Plus, when you look at the finished product and think, "Oh my gosh, I made this with my own hands," you experience a sense of accomplishment contributing to stress reduction."

These two perspectives underscore the therapeutic essence of embroidery as a means of expressing and navigating emotions. Deeply rooted in ancient practices, weaving involves observing, touching, and manipulating various materials to convey a message. This process creates a space for understanding and interpreting emotional events, promoting subjectivity (Huss et al., 2010, cited by Arias López, 2017). Intimately, weaving facilitates a connection with the individual's emotions and thoughts, connecting them in the present while doing the embroidery work. At the same time, their mind reflects on past events, particularly when they relate to specific experiences. This is evident in the AAC, where people weave to remember and articulate their memories. Dora elaborates:

"You do not just sit down and knit; you can express your thoughts or remember what happened. So, for me, knitting is like knitting memories, not necessarily negative ones. Rather, it does not matter; you can have good or bad memories, but I embroider the good and the beautiful ones."

Within the group, both at an intimate and collective level, embroidery has been valued as a tool of resilience. It serves to demonstrate what helps people overcome the challenges associated with conflict. For many, it becomes an essential element also to focus on future thoughts, as Angela expresses:

"Memory and knitting go hand in hand, and it is a healing therapy. Perhaps someone may question its relevance; they can ask why. Well, because I can find comfort in weaving the threads while you weave, you are also weaving of life, contemplating well-being and the future with the family, the community and all the members of the group."

Within the AAC, this activity is no longer solely intimate. Although several people expressed in interviews that they enjoy knitting or embroidering at home after completing daily tasks, this work within the group has also evolved towards a more public aspect, becoming a distinctive feature of the AAC. Throughout history, weaving has consistently united the public and private spheres, symbolizing an origin in the home that transcends borders and geographies (Arias López, 2017). Initially, weaving begins as a private task linked to feminization and, to a certain extent, the subordination of women confined to domestic spaces. Over time, this activity has transformed into more public participation, serving as an "excuse" for community building. Lorena explained how, in her case, it went from being a purely private task to becoming something more public:

“I feel that embroidery accompanied me a lot, especially in those moments of distress and uncertainty when we did not know what would happen (the pandemic). At that moment, for me, embroidery became a great ally. This initial process was quite individual, something very personal to me, but as I moved back into the territory, the embroidery became more collective and social for me. Knitting alone was an exercise in introspection, an opportunity to immerse myself in my thoughts. However, when it is a collective effort, it becomes something more. It involves conversation, sharing and expression through words. Furthermore, it involves learning from others.”

This is why these practices extend beyond mere meetings; they encompass pedagogies focused on everyday life, allowing women to narrate, denounce, cry and repair from their experiential knowledge. These practices focus on everyday spaces women create, such as friendship, intimacy, and sensitivity, to impart and acquire personal dimensions of the political (González-Arango et al., 2022). For AAC, embroidery and their community engagements serve as tools to preserve historical memory, share stories, denounce injustices, and facilitate healing. Beatriz reflects on this:

“We started embroidering as part of storytelling. Luz Dary started this to capture the achievements of the magazine (a collaborative project with the Adagio corporation)

through embroidery. Workshops were organized to reflect women's challenging experiences. Everyone shared their stories, so I decided to do the same, starting to embroider without prior knowledge, and today I enjoy this activity a lot."

This type of technique can serve various purposes, both political and to connect with people who have some interaction with them. Testimonial textiles emerge as a political tool, not only for their ability to document facts about the armed conflict but also for the visual and sensory engagement they trigger in those interacting with them (González-Arango et al., 2022). Marycruz highlights why the embroiders produced by AAC are a powerful tool:

"It becomes a living archive that goes beyond audiovisual or written paper. It transforms into something tangible, something you can touch and engage other senses. It is something that has taken time, feeling and emotions. I think this facilitates the exercise of memory and historical memory. I also see that this contributes to the effort to recover our cultural heritage."

Lorena also exalts this work within the embroidery of the group, not only as a reporting element but also as a healing process and for what it has allowed them to achieve as a group.

"But now, on the contrary, embroidery, sewing and weaving have become political tools. Through these practices, people can express various realities and situations. The presence of men in this group who want to participate in these activities seems beautiful since it implies deconstruction. We arrive with threads and fabrics, and we say: We have the possibility of expressing what we are feeling. We can represent part of our history." For me, this is also making memories; it represents events through fabrics, threads, and needles, which I consider very relevant. It makes much sense if we make an analogy between threads and life. We are a fabric of people making things, healing through sewing and embroidery, a practice transcending beyond simply capturing something. Through this practice, we can release and channel various feelings, some of which may be painful. In my opinion, this practice has great power in the processes of resilience, memory, and reconstruction of the territory."

Dioni emphasizes how this process has contributed to the group's healing:

"I believe the weaving process has played a crucial role in the group's healing journey. Everyone here has used weaving to heal, finding relief for their souls. I am convinced it is more than enough if it comforts the soul."

As mentioned above, within the AAC group, they have sought to give a purpose to the embroidery, to tell what happened. It is seen as a tool through which the community's historical memory can be narrated. "In the context of the current conflict in Colombia, memory is the expression of rebellion or resistance to violence to avoid impunity (Schultz-Kraft, 2017), and the reconstruction of the historical memory of said conflict is perceived as a fundamental and oriented step to the future, allowing victims to seek justice and reparation" (Tamayo Gómez 2019 cited by Elcheroth & De Mel, 2021). This is achieved through the collection, preservation and reinterpretation of past events and experiences, especially those related to significant or traumatic events experienced by the community. However, the approach sought within the AAC is to avoid speaking from sadness and, instead, highlight the strength each has achieved individually and as a group throughout these years. As Luz Dary mentions:

"The armed conflict strongly impacted the community, and the topic of historical memory became fundamental for us. We decided to address this issue and unite various lines through art and embroidery, at which time the pandemic arose. If we speak individually, we understand how healing on a collective level also supports them. We use art as a tool and ask them a straightforward question: "Let us embroider what helped us get out of those critical and painful moments." This became a way for them to overcome that critical and painful moment. Each person expresses their feelings. Some represent the garden, others their house, others their family, and some the hill. While we knit and embroider, we also talk about these topics, about those emotions and everything that it implies."

Although not all members of the group are dedicated to knitting or embroidery, they still feel like active participants within the group. However, since the group began using these techniques, they have noticed increased visibility beyond their immediate area. Having tangible products has allowed them to show their work in other environments and explain the purpose behind it. This activity has allowed the group to overcome the limits of its local circle and gain recognition elsewhere. This increased visibility can be attributed to the collective nature of their work, which amplifies its impact. As Dora pointed out, being part of a group gives importance to your efforts. She said: "For example, the students came to visit us from Canada or we are having this

conversation because we are part of a group. If I were here knitting alone, I probably wouldn't be interviewed because my work wouldn't matter at the same level."

Therefore, the collective effort to address shared trauma and seek healing is powerful, as it restores the social fabric that was once broken, a crucial aspect of community well-being. This collective action also places the group in diverse contexts, allowing them to serve as agents of change. Not only do they challenge traditional gender roles by participating in activities beyond household chores, but they also play an advocacy and impact role within and outside their community. This transformation demonstrates that the group is not simply made up of victims but also agents of positive change.

Within the topic defined as embroidery, words related to this practice emerged, such as embroidery, knitting, making and memory. The most exciting thing about this section is that the term "memory" appears frequently in this topic. This fact takes on special significance by underlining AAC's intention to carry out its work by exploring historical memory through its embroidery. Using fabric as a medium is a tool in this search, serving as a tangible and symbolic channel for preserving and expressing historical narratives. In essence, the prominence of the word "memory" reflects the group's overall goal of weaving the tapestry of history into their work, thus providing a sample of this approach. They sought to transmit several embroideries through artistic expression. These textiles not only showed the creative side of the creators but also reflected a connection with the territory. Many of the embroidery presented significant elements such as nature, with particular emphasis on the mountains, a prominent feature of the region:

Figure 6. Word Cloud relative to the code embroidery, QDA miner

Source: *Photograph taken by Erika Garcia, 2022.*
Embroidery # 4

The embroidery, as the artist describes, is "a self-portrait, it is me in a meditative position, I really like flowers, so I wanted to reflect that in this embroidery." Each meticulously crafted stitch in this embroidery enclosed the artist's emotional depth, underscoring her intimate connection to the image portrayed. The level of detail is evident in the various stitches used, giving a sensation of movement in the image, whether in the hair, the flowers or the serene expression of the face.

The beauty and emotional expression conveyed through this embroidery offer an individual vision of the artist.

It seems to capture a reflective phase, where the person searches for answers within themselves, contemplating their past while looking optimistically toward the future. This ability to reflect on situations with a sense of optimism and calm is woven into the artwork, showing the artist's creativity and a deep connection to the creation process. In short, embroidery serves as a means to convey a message of serenity.

According to the artist's description, "We see there half a woman and half a butterfly, the earth because we are part of the planet, we are women who give life, who suffer." This embroidery exemplifies the creation of a symbolic image that portrays the interlaced relationship between femininity and nature. The artwork visually emphasizes the dual nature of the woman, showing both her human form and the metamorphosis suggested by the butterfly.

The female half embodies strength, fertility and the ability to nurture life, symbolizing motherhood and resilience to endure life's challenges.

In contrast, the butterfly half introduces a transformative aspect, signifying a woman's ability to change, emerge renewed, and discover beauty amid adversity.

Source: *Photograph taken by Lorena Ciro, 2021.*
Embroidery # 6

This embroidery emerges from a workshop with the clear objective of reconstructing memory and territory to transmit the emotions of the individuals involved in its creation. The image portrays the face of a serene individual who aspires to achieve peace in harmony with the environment. This essence of tranquillity signifies a deep desire to connect with nature, offering a moving look at the rural surroundings of San Miguel, where this embroidery was created.

This embroidery serves as a tangible manifestation of the transformative process, rooted in the context of this rural community, to reclaim its territory while finding solace in proximity to nature.

The embroidery encapsulates the artisan's remarkable skill in employing various sewing techniques, displaying technical skill and an ability to articulate personal emotions.

Source: *Photograph taken by Erika Garcia, 2022.*
Embroidery # 7

The colour palette used in this piece predominantly presents three shades. Black outlines the person's figure, green symbolizes nature's vitality, and blue imparts floral symbolism. These three colours create a composition that shows sobriety without losing its charm.

According to the creator of this embroidery, "the image represents the Morro de San Miguel, a mountainous place rich in nature that attracts attention from the San Miguel Road". The artist aimed to capture the beauty and grandeur of the site, conveying the notion that if the hill could articulate its history, it would tell countless stories.

This place is perhaps thousands of years old and has seen myriad experiences, including times of hardship, particularly during deforestation. Despite facing challenges, the hill has regenerated, symbolizing its resilience and ability to bounce back from adversity. Thus, the artist and the group feel a deep emotional connection with the hill, considering it a living testimony of their history and struggles.

The embroidery skillfully represents a vibrant variety of colours, showing the natural beauty of the surroundings: flowers, mountains, trees, and the river adjacent to the San Miguel trail. They shared that the river has observed the various experiences of the region, both positive and negative. In addition, the hummingbird, a characteristic animal of the area, symbolizes the region's local fauna and wealth.

Interestingly, while the artist identifies explicitly the image as the hill of San Miguel, it has the potential to represent other characteristic places in Colombia when viewed in different regions. It offers a unique perspective, similar to that of a farmer, representing mountains, nature, rivers, and biodiversity, capturing the essence of various Colombian places.

Source: Photograph taken by Erika Garcia, 2022.
Embroidery # 8

This embroidery is a sample of the typical landscape of San Miguel, skillfully crafted with beautiful embroidery complemented by additional techniques such as painting. Despite presenting a different style and using various elements compared to the previous embroidery, the general components remain consistent: the mountain, the river, the trees, and nature. This continuity underlines a deep connection not only with nature but specifically with the territory.

As highlighted in previous analyses, the rural population maintains a solid connection to the land, which allows them to perceive its beauty and value the resources of their environment. For the Artesanas de Amor Collective, the territory is of vital importance. This work of art goes beyond mere artistic reflection; it is a profound expression of appreciation, connection, and rootedness with the land.

Source: Photograph taken by Erika Garcia, 2022.
Embroidery # 9

This embroidery beautifully captures the artist's affectionate memories associated with her grandparents' house. In her own words, "I made this when I was learning to embroider and it just has two or three types of stitches, representing my grandparents' farm."

This place captures numerous stories and anecdotes within the comforting confines of the mountain house, situated along a trail in Las Acacias. This location symbolizes both the security of the home and the natural beauty of the surrounding territory. Noteworthy details within the embroidery include different colours and the beauty of nature.

The landscape of eastern Antioquia is prominently featured, showcasing a mountainous region teeming with lush vegetation. While the house embodies tranquillity, the embroidery also conveys a sense of community, reflecting the interconnectedness and shared experiences within the familial setting.

Source: *Photograph taken by Erika Garcia, 2022.*
Embroidery # 10

At first glance, this embroidery could represent several flowers showing the region's diversity, and I did not receive a direct explanation from the artist of this embroidery. However, it is essential to highlight a significant aspect of floral representation in Colombia. The country is known for its flower exports, constituting one of the most critical industries. The eastern region of Antioquia, particularly, is distinguished by the cultivation of flowers.

In fact, during the interviews, there were some comments regarding this industry in the region. Unfortunately, in some cases, they say that the working conditions were not ideal, as shared by Miriam, who worked in the industry for over seven years. In her interview, she commented: "They start super early, at 6 am, and if you are 5 minutes late, they close the door on you. If you go to the bathroom, they tell you how long you have been there, and the performance is also closely monitored. You had to hydrate 250 per hour. I last long". This highlights a side of the industry that often goes unnoticed. While the final product is a beautiful flower that displays the

splendour of Colombian nature, the process involves hard and significant work on the part of many people. Although this may not have been the artist's direct intention, the embroidery could express the diversity of flowers and their importance within the region, showing the complexities of the industry and the hard work done by numerous people behind the scenes.

These embroideries serve as a powerful expression of resilience within AAC. They represent the community's collective effort to confront and overcome adversity by highlighting elements that have provided strength, comfort, and healing during difficult times. By creating and sharing these pieces, members of this collective not only express their individual and group experiences, but also foster a sense of solidarity, connection, and empowerment. The act of embroidering these pieces allows the group members to process their emotions, reflect on their experiences, and find meaning in their stories. In doing so, they regain their ability to act and affirm their resilience in the face of trauma.

Additionally, these embroideries serve as tangible reminders of the community's resilience and ability to adapt and thrive despite adversity. They show the diverse ways in which people draw on their cultural heritage, their connection to nature, and their strengths to cope with difficult circumstances. By celebrating these elements, embroidery inspires hope and collective action within the community.

The second theme related to community resilience involves examining influential groups guided by the ecological model of resilience with a specific focus on microsystems. Microsystems, as defined within this model, pertain to immediate relationships such as family, peers, or any other group that influences the person, playing a pivotal role in the provision of essential resources (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, as cited in Ungar et al., 2011). This study aims to precisely comprehend the impact of the individual components of these systems and how they contribute to the community's collective efforts toward healing in the aftermath of a conflict. By exploring microsystems, the intention is to understand how influential groups close to the person foster a sense of community resilience, facilitating the community's collaborative process toward community recovery after experiencing conflict.

3.2. Groups of Influence/ Microsystem

Chapter 3 discusses resilience, referencing Werner & Smith's study that tracked multicultural children living in poverty on the Hawaiian island of Kauai. The study illustrated how supportive relationships and religious participation significantly contribute to resilience, emphasizing the

interaction of multiple risk and protection processes over time (Ungar, 2011). This underlines the concept of resilience represented in several studies. The exploration has mainly adopted a multisystemic perspective, especially relevant in the context of families and, more broadly, conflict situations. Families play a crucial role as an emotional support network in these environments, marked by uncertainty and difficulty trusting the community. During conflicts, people often encounter stressful and traumatic situations. The presence and emotional support of the family play a fundamental role in mitigating the negative psychological impact and offering comfort and understanding. As Angela mentioned:

> "Definitely, for me, what helped me get out of violence was, how do I explain it? The motivation comes from my family. Family is the most important thing; it is like the best company. I am convinced that if the family is well, society will also be well. A united family does not fall apart; no, it does not fall apart; it means a lot. It is not that it turned out super pretty, but I wanted to capture what motivates me every morning when I get to work. In short, my family is the most important thing to me."

This family unity also facilitates mutual support during challenging times, making it easier to bear burdens and enabling individuals to confront difficult situations more effectively. In some cases, family members even share whatever little they have. The crucial aspect is to feel support from others, especially during displacement when people struggle with uncertainty and the disorientation of not knowing where to go or live. Dora articulates this sentiment in her interview:

> "We are many brothers, so at the moment, we all collaborate and help each other. The entire family was here. They assisted us in staying here; for instance, we arrived at a sister's house (La Union Town). We were with my children, my mother, and my brothers. Initially, 17 people lived in the house, but over time, we spread out."

Family serves as a fundamental support network in conflict, violence, or adversity. A concept of "family resilience" has been developed, initially proposed by Walsh in 2006. Family resilience is defined as the ability of a family to adapt, confront, and successfully navigate challenges, crises, or adverse situations. It highlights the family's ability to maintain functionality and positive cohesion even under challenging or stressful conditions (Ungar, 2011). While the ecological model positions the family as a crucial microsystem that influences the development of resilience, it also recognizes the existence of other factors that play a role in helping people

overcome difficult circumstances. In the 14 interviews with group members, references to family were prevalent, underscoring how family support has been essential in moments of conflict or uncertainty. The family is fundamental for individuals to move forward and stay motivated.

According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, microsystems are all those systems that interact directly with the person; they are groups experienced directly in an individual's daily life. These environments are closest to the individual and immediately impact their development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, cited in Ungar et al., 2011). For example, the family explained above, and the neighbourhood, the community and the physical environment where a person lives. This includes interactions with neighbours, local friends, and the availability of resources in the community. Therefore, it is important to talk specifically about the San Miguel village for this investigation. Before delving into this topic, it is essential to clarify the mesosystem level. Although I do not delve into this aspect, it is necessary to mention it since, according to this ecological theory, mesosystems are the interconnections and relationships between two or more microsystems in which a person participates. In other words, mesosystems involve the connection between different environments that are part of a person's daily life.

In the Artesanas de Amor (AAC), there are these interconnections within the microsystems since the majority are neighbours of the village, except for four people who live in La Union. In addition, within the group, there are also family members, such as mothers and daughters, nephews and uncles or aunts. This shows the interconnection between the systems, where the group would be a microsystem, bringing neighbours and family together. Ultimately, these interconnections within the microsystems help the person to have different groups interacting in the healing process.

Having clarified the information about the mesosystem in ecological theory, it is essential to continue talking about the microsystems with which the members of AAC interact, which in this case would be the people of the village. This microsystem specifically encompasses where they live and their interactions with the community. When addressing the collective trauma, it becomes evident that after the residents returned to their homes and the reoccupation of the territory, a feeling of distrust arose in their interactions with their neighbours. This apprehension was fueled by fear of possible repercussions and misunderstandings arising from the conflict. However, in the village, critical processes were carried out to rebuild that social fabric. Luz Dary relates:

> "When we started participating in the workshops, we said we had to understand people's pain, mistrust and anger. Some imaginaries were just imaginary things. They said things like this person belongs to that group or that someone's son did something... Those were the consequences of war in the territory; people did not speak to each other and distrusted others."

Ungar's concept of resilience, involving navigation and negotiation processes, becomes pertinent in this context. In navigating personal power for resources and negotiating access to sustainable services, individuals gain the ability to define success in their coping strategies. Consequently, community resilience finds its roots in the resilience of individuals (Ungar, 2011). In the case of AAC, this rebuilding process unfolded on multiple fronts, supporting the community and creating opportunities for people to participate in previously unexplored activities. The process can be viewed from two perspectives: an individual aspect where individuals sought healing and a more collective process focused on the community. This aligns with Ungar's assertion that having resources and knowing how to navigate between them is crucial to building or working toward community resilience.

A notable advance was the creation of a gymnastics group in 2013, which promotes interaction between people in different spaces. Angela provides additional insights, stating, "Initially, we did not begin as a women's group; it was more of an Adult gymnastics group... 2013, our journey began, and we gradually expanded our initiatives, eventually forming as a group of women in 2017." This transformation marked a significant shift, emphasizing the community's adaptability and resilience.

The AAC process involved external agents and the willingness of the people of the village to participate in these processes. When this happens, a transformation occurs among the people in the territory. They begin to dialogue, feel more empathy, and understand each other's pain. The construction of truth and memory among the inhabitants allows bonds of trust and solidarity to be generated again. Although the institutions that contributed to the process are mentioned later, it is crucial to highlight the transformative impact within the community. This transformation was made possible by acquiring knowledge on effectively navigating their challenges. For instance, understanding how to approach a neighbour who may have been impolite or aggressive with the community or being aware of their rights and responsibilities, including perceptions others hold about them. This knowledge empowers the community to collaborate and strengthens their cohesion. As Lorena pointed out

"The articulation has been beneficial. The community was deeply involved in territorial issues. With the support received, they now understand their rights and duties, enabling them to voice their opinions and take action in various circumstances."

At this moment, it is admirable to witness the mutual support and familial atmosphere within the territory, driven by a strong sense of community belonging. An inclusive identity has been cultivated, fostering a welcoming environment for everyone. The bonds of unity have been strengthened through open communication to address misunderstandings and collectively heal community wounds. Ultimately, this transformation has been facilitated by the profound sense of belonging that the community shares. This is relevant because "Recent research on the impact of traumatic events suggests that the community environment, and an individual's sense of belonging in particular, can serve as protective factors against the negative consequences of adversity" (Masten, 2001; Norris et al., 2008, cited by Ungar, 2011, p.416). Precisely within the AAC group and within the community of San Miguel, recovering this sense of belonging helped the healing process, both individually and in the community, as Lorena states.

"Here, everyone is a peasant, a neighbour, a friend, and a brother. A natural inclination toward solidarity emerges when you perceive your brother, neighbour, or colleague facing challenges. It is truly heartwarming."

In other words, this process not only served to heal and have a better coexistence as a community but precisely to strengthen the bonds of solidarity that had existed at some point but disappeared after the violence; the assistance and collaboration extend far beyond AAC. For instance, as I walked along the village, I felt the warmth and welcome from the residents when they encountered a new face, someone unfamiliar to them, yet they greeted me with a smile. Some group members mentioned that you do not have to be a part of AAC to experience the willingness to help. An example is a neighbour who is not part of the group, but the group is actively repairing the roof of her house. In Angela's words:

"Someone noticed that their house was very damp, and the roof needed to be fixed, so we took care of it. As a group, we are focused on addressing the needs of people who live in the community to help each other. So, we think: 'What can we do? Oh, there is always something we can do. Moreover, even if we can do nothing, we look for the means by going to the municipal mayor's office or anywhere."

These strong connections have helped a sense of community in everyone, fostering a willingness to help others and address neighbours' needs. The bonds of brotherhood initially forged within the Artesanas group have spread over time and now encompass the entire village of San Miguel. Luz Dary explained this sentiment:

"When a family member became ill, the community supported us. Similarly, when another lady faced a serious illness that required intensive care, we all came together to evaluate how we could help. Also, we have participated in various festivals and witnessed remarkable solidarity. People are eager to contribute and move forward. Today, resilience can be seen in the community, which is beautiful. Furthermore, the commitment between people is remarkable; if someone commits to helping, they can be trusted to follow through because everyone values their word and keeps their promises."

Even though AAC is the focal point of my research the intent is to gain a deeper understanding of community resilience through this group's lens. Within the ecological model of resilience, this group emerges prominently as one of the influential entities within microsystems. As mentioned above, all the people interviewed are part of AAC. Therefore, delving into the group dynamics becomes crucial to understanding their collective experiences and how they have navigated challenges together, moving forward and sustaining each other throughout these past few years.

Within the 14 interviews, Artesanas de Amor's members highlighted several positive aspects of the group, such as collaboration, motivation to participate in this collective, sense of belonging, and commitment to group activities. To delve deeper into each aspect, it is essential to analyze these elements and understand why they are important in the context of community resilience.

Collaboration emerges as a crucial element in the context of community resilience, as emphasized by Kate Murray and Alex Zautra. Their research highlights that community collaboration strengthens social bonds and fosters a shared sense of identity and empowerment (Ungar, 2011). This underlines the importance of cooperation within the group. All participants emphasized receiving help from the group in various ways. Lorena eloquently captures this feeling:

"But that is the beautiful thing, more than a group, more than a collective, we are a network, a fabric, well, of support. Knowing that we can go to the group for solutions or

answers when faced with difficulties has been meaningful to me. The mutual help we offer each other in adverse or complex circumstances is significant."

Even in complex situations, they express gratitude for having the group unconditionally. Angela shares: "For example, I had a situation with the children's mother (Angela's daughter); They put her in jail, and they gave me first the girl and then the boy. So, the group was always there asking me what I needed and what we could do. They offered me support with words and assistance, such as buying diapers or milk. This made me feel loved, so we are always there to help each other."

Monetary challenges have also been faced within the group, particularly in carrying out proposed activities that require resources such as purchasing materials or acquiring items such as t-shirts with the collective's logo. Miriam highlights some members' financial constraints: "When we started making those T-shirts, some said they could not afford it. What did we do? We pooled our resources, helped each other, and managed to buy the T-shirts despite the financial constraints." This exemplifies the group's collective effort and mutual support, even in economic challenges.

These are just a few examples people shared during the interviews, but the collaboration was evident. There was a genuine willingness to help and a shared understanding that the group would support them if needed. This highlights how, by rebuilding this social fabric, it is possible to foster trust and, beyond trust, cultivate a sense of empathy and collaboration towards others. This, in turn, facilitates more efficient mobilization of resources, allowing the group to overcome challenging situations.

Another aspect that individuals highlight regarding the group is the motivation to join and the constant motivation to remain part of the group. Many mentioned that attending the group weekly allows them to break away from their routine and get out of their homes and daily activities. It is a time dedicated to sharing and doing something different with the group. Dioni expresses this feeling by saying: "You share, you get out of your house routine, you meet new people." Dora has a similar sentiment and says: "Because you are boring at home all the time. Now I do go out. But not before. With them, we have a reason to meet and to share. I have done very well with them and greatly like the group."

Being part of the group has also allowed many to discover talents they were unaware of, thanks to the group's motivation in different tasks, as Beatriz points out: "Oh, for example, someone

says, 'I just can't do it.' I asked why. No, we all are. Do not say that; try. I told someone of them eight days ago that no one was born knowing everything. Nobody, we all have to try to learn things." This encouragement helps people try new things and reinforces the idea that it is okay not to succeed right away, as Evangelina exemplifies. Despite being unable to embroider due to vision problems and pain in her arms, she actively participates in all the group's activities and feels welcomed by the other members. She mentioned: "I feel good with everyone. They treat me well; they are patient with me. I like gymnastics because I do not knit. Luz Dary tells me, 'Come on, the idea is for you to join the group so you do not pick up a needle.' However, it fascinates me to see everyone having fun knitting. In those moments, I untangled the threads that got tangled. Moreover, I go from one to the other; that amuses me."

Another vital motivation to stay within the group is their admiration for each other. Witnessing the ability to learn from each other or understand the challenges each member has faced creates a feeling of admiration within the group, as Sebastian puts it:

> "Of course, everyone has their problems. Although I do not like to compare, sometimes I wonder if what affects me is trivial compared to the experiences of Eduviges or the people in the group. Despite that, I was always impressed because she always welcomed everyone with a smile, while I sometimes withdrew for unimportant things. It is not a comparison, but something that motivates and provides some inspiration."

One of the most notable aspects that emerged from the interviews and active participation in group activities is the deep sense of belonging that Artesanas de Amor members experience. This feeling is particularly evident during group activities, where members proudly wear shirts with the group's logo, indicating their affiliation. Across all 14 interviews, participants consistently expressed their sense of being an integral part of the group and emphasized the roles they play within the community. The concept of belonging encompasses the perception of oneself as a member of a collective entity, marked by mutual concern, connection, community loyalty, and trust that individual needs will be met through active engagement with the group. Additionally, there is a personal inclination to remain engaged in the community and a shared motivation to encourage others to join. These expressions of belonging extend to a deep attachment to the land and a sustained commitment to the place (Ungar, 2011). This sense of pride and belonging is evident throughout the interviews, and here are some examples. Angela, one of the founders, shares: "I was one of the group's founders because it started with the health promoter. We met here, and it is a beautiful group. I love this group. Just belonging to the group has helped me

cope with the sadness and pain of what happened, which was very hard for all of us". Eduviges also expresses how being part of the group makes her feel good, emphasizing not only attending but also playing and living in community with others. She says: "We are doing very well, and we enjoy being part of the group."

Dioni also emphasizes the bonds of friendship within the group, saying: "There is a friendship. When someone comes from La Union, that is love and friendship. It is someone who has a lot to do and takes time for the group. That is more than love. If they did not invest in love, that friendship would not exist. You spend an hour and a half or two hours talking to someone, and in return, you leave peacefully. That is friendship and love for the group." Lorena expresses the positive change in her life since she joined the group, saying: "Lorena herself, who arrived, is now a different and improved version. I will continue to learn much from these wonderful beings who teach me so much". Overall, each showed happiness at belonging to the group, feeling its positive impact on their lives, and expressing a desire to continue belonging to the group as it grows and achieves more goals.

Finally, to close the group dynamics, a notable aspect that emerges from the group interviews is the unanimous positive feedback on the group dynamics. Initially founded in 2013, the group primarily focused on fitness activities aimed at older adults, emphasizing general health. However, in 2017, there was a transformative turn with the arrival of Luz Dary. She envisioned the group as a platform for physical activities and a cohesive community fostering deeper connections. Through dedicated efforts, the group has persevered, and Luz Dary highlights their achievements as a collective effort, stating:

> "This process has been developed thanks to the collaboration of many wills. We have worked on various projects and aspects, addressing topics such as training in a basic way. However, it was at the end of 2020, amid the pandemic, when we realized that we had to take measures since the beginning of the year was quite complex. Starting in the second half of the year, being on the path, we decided to act. The important thing is not the quick results but the processes we live through. Surely, the time will come when we share a book of memory that reflects all the aspects of this village. The crucial thing is that we are an independent collective; we do not depend on the administration or the government to continue. Even if the government changes, we continue to exist collectively."

Significantly, the group's strength lies in its independence, as it operates without specific management or government oversight. Luz Dary affirms their autonomy, stating that regardless of external changes, they remain a collective entity, resilient and not subject to external mandates. Fundamentally, members are motivated by the joy of sharing and belonging rather than material or monetary gain. The group's success is attributed to fostering a culture free of egos or hierarchies, ensuring inclusive decision-making. Lorena articulates this spirit, noting:

"I think that is why the group has endured over time. Because there have been no conflicts such as interests or egos, which often happen in social movements, I witnessed that because before being in Artesans, I participated in other social processes. From other communities where this has been seen. That people disagreed. There was no balance, and those processes tend to fail or tend to generate divisions".

Within the group, leadership, although unofficial, is evident through the dynamic efforts of Luz Dary, Lorena, and Marycruz. This leadership revolves mainly around securing resources to sustain projects and recognizing the achievements of the collective. It is essential to highlight that this leadership model prioritizes open communication, incorporating diverse opinions to preserve the group's sense of brotherhood. During the interviews, all participants consistently expressed that a collective approach is taken when making decisions within the group. The group meets to seek input from each member, ensuring that everyone can agree or disagree before assumptions are made or decisions are finalized.

Participants explicitly recognize this leadership, using descriptors such as "Luz Dary is a treasure," "Luz Dary mobilizes resources," "Lorena is the one who teaches us," and "Mary Cruz has helped us apply for different projects," among others. Furthermore, Mary Cruz also highlights the importance of Lorena's contributions to the group, stating:

"I believe when Lorena joined the group, she brought very different and alternative perspectives, rooted in exercises of denunciation, resistance and empowerment of the women's voices... This marked the beginning of exhibitions 'rostros de la resiliencia' (face of resilience), beginning a transformative process. Lorena's arrival to the group opened opportunities to showcase their work beyond the village of San Miguel".

During the interviews, individuals consistently emphasized their appreciation for the diverse range of activities performed within the group. These activities include group walks to nearby locations, short trips to other places in Antioquia, and opportunities to interact with different

groups and gain insight into the work of their peers. Participants enjoyed participating in gymnastics and embroidery, highlighting the collective positive results. For example, the group successfully collaborated to create a quilt and subsequently raffled it off to generate funds to distribute to all members. Diversity and the opportunity to participate in different activities within the group have immense value for each participant. Not everyone may possess knitting skills, but the sense of belonging, importance within the group, and the ability to contribute knowledge in various ways contribute significantly to their active participation in the group.

Something important to highlight is how this group has become very active within the community. On the one hand, there is political activism within the group, as they actively participate in political projects, such as holding workshops with children from different closed villages. This shows that women participate in the public sphere and take action to influence their community. This reflects a shift in the perception of women as active political agents rather than simply passive participants in society.

On the other hand, it also shows how they have been building community resilience not only within Artesanas de amor but also in projects that involve their territory. For example, they have projects such as the Book of Memory with the Community Action Board. Through collaboration and teamwork, they address challenges and preserve the memory and identity of their community. This reflects a capacity for adaptation and resistance in the face of adversity. A project they want to undertake is not only for them as a group but also to involve the community in these issues. Luz Dary describes these projects:

> "Our goal is to create individual logbooks. In this case, not all the pages have to be embroidered, not everything has to be uniform, and there can be many techniques. What matters is that they capture what each one has. We also want to create the Book of Memory, which is a collective effort and involves the entire community. We are thinking of creating it with the Community Action Board. So we presented two proposals to Conciudadania, for a subsidy of one million pesos (approximately 300 CAD), and they were approved. With these projects, we are planning to conduct workshops with children in nine villages. We will work with them to identify what they like and what they don't like about their village, and we want to create a cartography of each of those areas. The children will contribute to it, but we will be responsible for completing it. As it

is an election time, we want to make sure children's voices are heard, expressing what matters to them."

This is very powerful because it shows how the feminization of the task, such as embroidery, has served as a means of engaging the community, including not only women but also men and children, with the goal of being active agents, discussing what happened and continue improving the community and the territory.

Two embroidered pieces stand out, reflecting a deep connection and love for the family. The artists expressed this feeling, and it is also inherent in the interpretation of the design of one of the fabrics. These particular textiles emerged due to the "Rostros de la resiliencia: Faces of Resilience" exhibition, where the process revolved around the question: What helped you in those difficult moments? While responses varied, a recurring theme was the importance of family, which I also noticed in interviews where participants emphasized family as the primary aspect of their lives. Another photo is the quilt that resulted from a collaborative effort that lasted several months. This project was a recurring theme in multiple interviews, and participants eagerly anticipated the final result. Notably, the effort produced tangible creation and generated financial resources.

Source: Photograph taken by Erika Garcia, 2022.
Embroidery # 11

This embroidery has a deep meaning as it focuses on the symbolic representation of the family. The artist explains: "This embroidery reflects what helped me overcome sadness, which was my family. Therefore, the inclusion of the dog symbolizes our family pet during that time."

The decision to highlight family as a central theme gives the work a meaning that transcends mere artistic expression. It serves as a means to process and share personal experiences, turning embroidery into a compelling narrative of the artist's journey.

It not only describes the challenges faced but also celebrates the importance of family unity when going through difficult circumstances. The artist herself emphasizes that, although the embroidery is not so elaborate, the most important thing is her message, which is to show the importance of family.

Source: *Photograph taken by Lorena Ciro, 2022.*
Embroidery # 12

This beautiful embroidery is a piece that the artist created in honour of her mother, Rosa. It becomes a delicate reflection of feminine beauty, flowers, and nature around her. Full of emotion, this embroidery finds its inspiration in the figure of the artist's mother, who, although she is no longer physically present in this world, lives on in the memory of her family. Her spirit lives and is now immortalized in this embroidery that captures the essence of her soul.

This embroidery shows the artist's technical expertise in manipulating various stitches and colours and achieves a harmonious integration that links the surrounding nature with the facial expression. The artwork conveys the serenity of the individual captured within it but goes deeper by revealing the artist's profound intention to express her love for her mother. This precisely underlines the idea that, for some people, verbally expressing their emotions is challenging. In the case of the artist, the pain of losing her mother to cancer is a moving reality. However, through her embroidery, she strives to display her beauty and preserve the memory of her mother. The work of art becomes a visual testimony of the love that the artist has and, at the same time, captures the tranquillity that defines the essence of her mother.

Source: Photograph taken by William Escudero, 2022.

This photograph captures the moment of AAC's creation of a quilt. This project was much more than a craft for them; It was an experience that united the group since each member contributed in some way to achieve the final result.

The singularity of this project lies in the dedication of each participant, who took home their tasks to continue working between group meetings.

The activity becomes a personal task for each one, demonstrating exceptional commitment. The photograph reflects the collective effort over several months, where each piece came together in meetings, creating a work that symbolized the collaboration and dedication of the group.

An essential aspect of this process is that everyone agrees to hold a raffle to sell the quilt, showing the group members' commitment and trust. The sale became a more shared task, where each person was responsible for selling the tickets. The equitable distribution of resources ultimately reflects transparency and recognition of the efforts of all those involved.

It is fascinating to see how even people not directly involved in the embroidery had an active role in the process. This project was not only an artistic expression but also a testimony to the strong bond and commitment of the group, where each member actively contributed to achieving the final result. The photograph captures the essence of a collective journey where creativity, collaboration and solidarity converge to form a tangible symbol of resilience and empowerment. Through the creation of the quilt, the community asserts agency over their life story and actively opposes the violence that has affected their lives, thus reclaiming their narrative and fostering a sense of collective strength and resilience.

3.3. Resources

The next factor to analyze is resources. This approach aligns with the ecological model of resilience, which considers this aspect of the system as an exosystem. The Exosystem encompasses the institutional environments where individuals participate, and services and policies are designed and implemented (Boyden & Mann, 2005; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2004, cited by Ungar, 2011). According to the theoretical framework that guides this research, which incorporates three main theories (Bronfenbrenner, Ungar and Aldrich), the identified system comprises several services. In Bronfenbrenner's model, these services encompass legal services, healthcare, government, or institutions. On the other hand, Ungar's theory identifies services as Health Care, Accommodation, Nutrition and Policy, and Aldrich's theory incorporates governance and effective structure as integral components of this system. Graphic number 2 in Chapter 3 of Resilience attempts to integrate these three theories. Consequently, the analysis of the interviews was conducted, and the term assigned to this code was "resources," primarily understood from two perspectives. It includes the material or monetary resources the group has received and the laws that have directly or indirectly affected them.

As mentioned above, the leaders of this group have actively strived to obtain resources from various channels. They emphasize the need for financial independence, anticipating possible changes in government or support from NGOs. Its strategy involves obtaining financing from multiple sources, which underlines its commitment and determination to ensure the group's continuity. Despite the group's economic modesty as peasants who live with essential means, they have dedicated time and efforts to foster the group's growth. This commitment is crucial, as addressing basic needs allows the group to sustain itself and actively contribute to positive processes. According to Ungar (2013), people can direct their energies towards other aspects linked to positive growth in contexts favouring well-being. In other words, if the fundamental concerns of life, such as food, housing, and medical care, are addressed, there is the possibility that they will dedicate more resources, including the emotional aspect, to transitional justice processes (Clark & Ungar, 2021). From my observations within the group, it was evident that they live modestly, without luxuries. The budget appears to be limited, as some people find it challenging to cover necessities such as participating in monetary activities like public transportation or buying t-shirts. While additional financial resources are limited, most people in the group are homeowners, which gives them a sense of security, especially considering the challenges of paying rent in Colombia. Furthermore, their basic needs, like food, are covered

since some receive some help from the government or in many things, they receive help from their own family such as children, they use also the public health system. It is essential to note that this characterization applies specifically to the AAC, and the situation may differ for other groups in Colombia. For the AAC group, most people have their fundamental needs covered, even in a primary way, allowing them to focus on their work on other topics.

Something notable that became evident during the interviews and group activities is the group's lack of trust in institutions, and they do not perceive the local government as a reliable ally. For example, Ramiro mentioned, "The help that reaches the village is very little; this corresponds to the board, but very little is given." Angela attributes this lack of support to the indifference of the local government, expressing, "We have approached several times asking for help to come like threads, fabrics and nothing, so it is tiring not to have any of them, so it is better to do it outside." Eduviges also mentioned: "The community lacks much help, although there have been some things such as support from a psychologist or workshops within the group to embroider, but in general very little." The municipality's perception of a lack of resources has led the group and the community to seek resources elsewhere, highlighting the need to ensure the group's sustainability regardless of government support. Luz Dary explained this topic in the interview, recognizing that the group has been able to remain thanks to the help of several people and the connections or friends that she and some people in the group have that have allowed them to have other sources of income.

Examining the resources the group has received, we can create a chronological record of the resources or institutions that have helped them. This process began in 2007-2008 when the village received a psychosocial support program initiated by the province of Antioquia. This program, implemented throughout the region, was crucial for individuals affected by forced displacement as it employed a therapeutic model that utilized narrative as a methodological strategy to identify constructed meanings and support their reinterpretation (Galindo and Tovar, 2006, cited by Arango, 2021). According to Arango (2021), psychosocial support was extended beyond traditional interventions, emphasizing social understanding. The communal nature of this support helps rebuild broken social bonds, which, in the end, is essential to healing collective trauma. The project in the province of Antioquia was before the agreement with the FARC. Still, it was possible since, in the region, the conflict was somehow reduced when the paramilitaries signed the peace agreements with the government, thanks to the different dialogues with other governments and armed groups.

By 2013, the municipality of La Unión initiated organizing senior groups in various villages with a primary focus on health. The activities commenced with gymnastics but also included additional elements such as measuring blood pressure and tension and providing nutritional advice; people of San Miguel began to participate in these processes since there was not the number of elderly adults that the government needed, the possibility was given that people of other ages could also participate. In 2015, La Tulpa organization became involved with AAC; La Tulpa is a community organization created in La Unión Antioquia by young people and women linked to social problems in the region. The 2015 project aimed to recognize the territory and identify critical spaces for reconstructing the village's historical memory. This initiative also allowed Johan Higuita Granada to work in the territory because he wanted to reconstruct the events in the town during the period of violence. He had the support of Luz Dary (who at that time did not formally belong to AAC). Still, they tried to reconstruct these periods of violence, speaking with people in the community, which allowed them to understand that many problems still existed within the community.

With La Tulpa's support, AAC had the opportunity to engage in various activities in 2016 beyond gymnastics, discovering the potential to work in different community spaces. This development culminated in the group successfully acquiring its first project in 2017, titled "Rememorando nuestra historia: Remembering our history." This project received support from Tulpa and Adagio, an Artistic, Social, and Cultural Corporation. Adagio focuses on generating social fabric through culture and raising awareness about culture as a pivotal sector in the social development of the eastern Antioquia region. The collaboration and support from Tulpa and Adagio were instrumental for the group, providing the realization that collective project applications could be successful.

Another influential factor for AAC was the accompaniment of Social Pastoral in 2018. During this time, they had the opportunity to get involved in various projects and, as a cohesive group of women, attend the rural pastoral meeting held in Rionegro this year. The Social Pastoral aims to contribute to the construction of the social fabric and the development of the subjectivity of individuals. Its vision is to promote education in the Social Doctrine of the Church and spread it in all sectors of society. This initiative facilitated the creation of spaces where group members feel supported, with the presence of priests from the region and participation in various scenarios. Additionally, another psychosocial support was carried out in the village the same year, facilitated by the Adagio Corporation and Ideas en Grande Corporation, supported by the Community Action Boards (JAC). These non-profit organizations, comprised of community,

neighbourhood or sector citizens, advocate for comprehensive and sustainable development through participatory democracy in managing community development.

AAC has also had the opportunity to work on some projects with the local government. In 2019, they participated in the production of the video "Mujer Rural: Rural Women," where interviews with several group members were presented. Additionally, a tour to La Honda (a neighbouring village) was conducted to reconnect the two villages that had been cut off following the period of violence. In 2020, they received materials from the local government to start their embroidery work. In 2022, they successfully won the "Arte para el alma: Art for the Soul" project from the Institute of Culture and Heritage of Antioquia (the provincial government). Another institution that approached AAC was Conciudadanía, an NGO mainly active in the province of Antioquia, which focuses on citizen participation in constructing sustainable, reconciled and peaceful territories to transform rights into tangible actions. The AAC group was awarded a project in 2023 to implement community initiatives. The extensive process undertaken by the group over several years illustrates its effort to obtain resources from various sources. This strategic approach has allowed them to maintain independence, ensuring they do not depend on any specific source to sustain themselves or execute their projects over time. This generally reflects the sense of belonging they have towards the group. Everyone contributes to the group's sustainability beyond the material possessions they may receive, ensuring its existence despite possible obstacles or challenges.

As a second analysis point, it is essential to see the laws that directly or indirectly have affected the AAC. Identifying themselves as victims of the conflict, AAC members are influenced by various policies and processes within Colombia. One of the most representative laws for all victims is Law 1448 of 2011, better known as the Victims Law, which gave rise to the formation of a National Table of Victims, made up of 950 regional tables, 32 at the provincial level and 52 at the Nacional level (Villarraga S., 2015). Luz Dary actively participated in the victims' negotiation table, representing the municipality of La Unión. This allowed her to collect concerns, suggestions, or questions from people from San Miguel and nearby areas. Luz Dary states: "When the legal process of Law 1448 arrived, there was a boom in the country because people were finally able to recognize themselves as victims. They could claim their rights, although with a certain fear and mistrust, but at least they could express their experiences". Before this law, there were no precise mechanisms to help and protect victims, and its implementation recognized victims and sought comprehensive material and symbolic reparations.

Despite Colombia's internal laws, the peace processes and recognition of victims have also received different international support. Various international organizations and countries have provided technical, financial, and diplomatic assistance to promote the peaceful resolution of the armed conflict in Colombia. For example, the United Nations (UN) has played a critical role in facilitating peace talks, overseeing agreements, and providing humanitarian and development assistance in conflict-affected areas. In addition, it has supported the implementation of the Peace Agreement signed between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP. Other organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS) have supported peace efforts in Colombia through the Mission to Support the Peace Process (MAPP/OAS) and have provided technical assistance in areas such as verification of the cessation of fire and the demobilization of armed groups. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has played a crucial role in the protection of civilians, humanitarian assistance, and the search for missing people in the context of the conflict. These are some examples, but the Colombian process has received help from other international organizations.

Weber (2020) highlighted that the land restitution process through the Victims Law, despite initial promises of quick results, has been slow, taking several years to obtain property titles (Clark & Ungar, 2021). In the specific case of AAC in San Miguel, they did not experience a direct impact since homes were temporarily abandoned, but fortunately, no external entity took possession of them. Consequently, upon their return, the group members could reoccupy their homes. However, this favourable situation was not the case in all regions of Colombia, where many individuals still find it difficult to claim their properties. The inefficiency of this process for many citizens is a significant concern, as it prevents them from returning to their territories, which could lead to other problems.

Reparations, which aim to establish socioeconomic justice and meet basic needs, play a crucial role in fostering individual, community, and social resilience, assisting in adaptation to crises. Unfortunately, both perpetrators and States frequently fail to adequately compensate victims for the lasting material and psychological harm suffered (Lambourne, cited in Clark & Ungar, 2021). Despite the challenges in the Colombian context, the reparation process has been fundamental for victims, offering them a platform for expression, recognition, and the search for reparation mechanisms. This recognition has empowered victims to share their experiences and participate in healing, restoring the social fabric within communities by facilitating discussions about past events and reestablishing pre-conflict dynamics. Ultimately, this restorative journey has the potential to positively impact the nation by mitigating the likelihood of recurrence,

promoting social justice, and providing opportunities for the less privileged to contribute to building a better society.

An older legal framework that played a role in bringing victim reparation was Law 975 of 2005, commonly known as the Justice and Peace Law. This law was particularly controversial as it granted extensive criminal benefits to those who participated in its specialized procedure, resulting in minimal consequences for those involved and contributing to a high perceived level of impunity (Villarraga S., 2015). Primarily focused on the demobilization of paramilitaries, the law aimed to uncover the truth, promote reconciliation, and provide reparations to victims while ensuring accountability for perpetrators. However, challenges and gaps in implementation persisted, leading to cases of impunity and a persistent sense of impunity in various processes. Although none of the interview participants directly mentioned the impact of this law on them, understanding this historical context is crucial since the agreement between the paramilitaries and the government around 2005 or 2006 coincided with the return of many individuals to their territories, creating a somewhat calmer situation.

One of the most recent and impactful initiatives in Colombia was the signing of peace agreements with the FARC guerrilla in 2016, with a strong focus on addressing victims' concerns. As part of this comprehensive approach, a Truth Commission was established, which is an integral part of Colombia's system of truth, justice, reparation, and non-repetition, together with the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) and the Search for Missing Persons. (UBPD). The Truth Commission began its work in November 2018 with a three-year mandate and presented its findings in November 2021. As an independent organization, its mission was to uncover the truth about the events that occurred during the Colombian armed conflict through the compilation of testimonies from victims, ex-combatants and other actors involved. The goal was to build a shared narrative about the historical truth of the conflict, providing a platform for victims to be heard and documented reports that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the country's conflict history.

Along with the Truth Commission, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) served as another avenue for victims to express their concerns and needs, offering broader recognition of their suffering. While no AAC members participated in these processes directly, these mechanisms represent an opportunity to create additional spaces where discussions about victims' experiences become a form of resistance against the possibility of forgetting what happened. These also facilitate meetings between regions and establish a process in which victims feel

empowered to speak out, feeling that the legal system is attentive to their complaints. Despite the imperfections and challenges, including the lack of commitment of some governments to execute these processes, it has played a role in reconciling specific sectors of the country. This, in turn, has opened up possibilities for victims to participate in other forums and assert their rights.

Source: Photograph taken by William Escudero, 2022.

The photograph captures one of the exhibitions of the projects carried out by the group; the event took place at the school in the village of San Miguel. This event brought together people from both the village and nearby villages to present the work carried out by AAC. The image displays a variety of creations made by the group, such as the quilt, embroideries, dream catchers, pillows and tablecloths. Although they have focused primarily on embroidery lately, they have explored and practiced various techniques to improve their skills. Likewise, the wide range of colours present in the image reflects the group's enthusiasm and passion for their work as they strive to infuse beauty and aesthetics into each of their creations.

3.4. Societal environment

In this analysis, the Macrosystem is the final focus, emphasizing the importance of the broader cultural context, encompassing customs, practices, values, and beliefs. These artistic influences serve as a basis for adaptive coping strategies, contributing to overall resilience (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, cited in Ungar et al., 2011). Therefore, for this analysis, I have named this code "social environment," which encompasses external factors that shape society,

including cultural and belief elements. The study is divided into two parts: first, it shows the "Paisa culture" that I mentioned before, highlighting the behaviours of the people of this region; Second, it explores beliefs, particularly in religion. The interviews revealed the relevance of faith in God or religion as a crucial aspect in the members of AAC in providing strength to overcome challenging situations and move forward with their lives.

Social and cultural values are fundamental to Bronfenbrenner's bioecological perspective, manifesting as the most extensive layer of environmental influences integrated into child development. In a more contemporary approach, Ungar has highlighted how culture plays a central role in defining and fostering resilience (Ungar, 2021). In other words, culture and customs play a crucial role in cultivating resilience as they provide a framework that shapes individuals' perceptions, beliefs and coping strategies. This framework can significantly impact people's ability to cope while shaping their responses to situations of adversity.

This is relevant because, as mentioned earlier, Paisa culture possesses characteristics like hard work and entrepreneurship, hospitality, and religion. In the region, it is common to hear phrases like "echado pa' lante: very forward"**.** This concept encapsulates an individual's persistent desire to overcome present challenges, reflecting their hard work and entrepreneurial spirit when they seek to create new businesses or start a company. I observed numerous individuals within this community who have dedicated their entire lives to labour, some since childhood, often focusing on agricultural work, a historically undervalued and poorly compensated occupation. For instance, Dora shared, "I have worked my whole life; I have been working since I can recall, around the age of 6 or 7."

Another noteworthy characteristic of this culture is its profound hospitality. People from this region are renowned for their friendliness and welcoming nature. This trait is particularly pronounced in rural areas, where individuals openly display warmth and readily share whatever little or much they may have. As Lorena expressed: "To me, a peasant embodies solidarity itself. It is common for someone to arrive in the countryside, and the house's owner 'will take the bread out of his mouth[7]' to offer it to the person who arrives. Thus, I believe solidarity is intrinsic to the people living in rural areas, similar to something inherent in their personality, an essential aspect of their nature."

---

[7] This is an idiom in Spanish, which conveys the idea of extreme generosity and altruism, where someone is willing to give everything, they have to help others.

This cultural behaviour significantly influences coping processes under challenging situations and provides people with valuable tools to deal with difficulties effectively. Through these cultural attributes, people can learn adaptive strategies that improve their ability to overcome challenges. The persistent pursuit of advancement, rooted in this cultural mindset, contributes to a sense of perseverance, reducing the likelihood of giving up easily. This perseverance, in turn, provides emotional tools, allowing people to approach challenging situations with a more optimistic perspective. The cultural emphasis on community and hospitality is crucial in providing social support. This community support is essential when facing adversity, as the sense of hospitality in this culture helps people feel less isolated. In this region, a sense of community is highly valued, emphasizing the importance of supporting others and fostering the belief that if help is needed, someone within the community will assist.

Another crucial aspect of analyzing the "social environment" code is the belief system, which falls within the broader cultural context. However, I decided to address it specifically to highlight the importance of religion in building resilience. "Religion represents a crucial element in the macrosystem. As an abstract value system, religion substantially influences people's psychology and spirituality. Abundant empirical evidence supports that religious beliefs generate positive effects on resilience of young immigrants, at a macrosystemic level." (Ungar, 2021, p. 383). The more significant influence of relationships within individuals can be attributed to several factors. First is the values framework since religion usually provides a set of moral principles that guide behaviour and decision-making. Additionally, religion or specific beliefs can offer resources for coping with difficult situations, such as prayer. Luz Dary shared an experience when the community could not care for a person who was murdered: "They said, 'From our homes, we sat down to pray because we could not go out for fear'. However, they could not speak about that with the affected family."

Religion also inculcates a sense of optimism and hope; even during difficulties, there are reasons to have faith that circumstances can improve. Prayer, in particular, facilitates internal communication, as Beatriz puts it: "At that moment, I asked God, 'God, why do you allow all this?'" In many interviews, especially with older adults, their faith and gratitude to God stand out. Within the Catholic context, they were evident. They thanked the Virgin Mary or sought her intercession under challenging situations. The connection with the Church is also observed through the support or projects that AAC carries out with the pastoral, where the community had the opportunity to receive mass from the village, leaving everyone deeply grateful for this.

In this context, religion serves as an additional element that provides people with comfort, believing that God is helping them while fostering a sense of belonging to the community. Standard practices such as attending mass, reading religious texts, or discussing difficult times contribute to this shared identity. This phenomenon can also be seen as a cultural expression, reflecting the community's customs. In Colombia, almost 80% of the population identifies as Catholic, although other religions exist. This Catholic tradition is especially prevalent in rural areas and small towns, where regional festivals often are around religious celebrations.

Source: Photograph taken by Erika Garcia, 2022.
Embroidery # 13

The photograph shows an image of the Virgin Mary, a powerful symbol of faith and hope for many people, particularly in times of adversity. Believers find comfort in believing that a spiritual presence accompanies them and identifies with their struggles.

The compassionate expression on the Virgin's face probably comforts those who entrust their problems to her care, instilling a sense of calm. In particular, the embroidery surrounding the Virgin is adorned with flowers and vibrant colours, showing the group's reverence for nature. These details not only enhance the visual appeal but also underscore the group's appreciation for the beauty and diversity found in the natural world.

This analysis shows how violence leaves not only individual but also collective scars. In the aftermath of conflict, communities often face fractured social ties and emotional wounds, hampering their ability to heal and rebuild. These challenges are deeply intertwined with trauma; Individuals bear the weight of personal pain stemming from the horrors they lived while entire communities struggle with collective traumas that span generations. It is in this context that the resilience of groups like the Artesanas de Amor emerges as particularly noteworthy. Despite enduring the difficulties of war, they have emerged as proactive agents within their community, striving to overcome these situations and prevent the repetition of such events, recognizing that the general population suffered unfairly. Resilience demonstrated by AAC shows the

interconnectedness of individual agency, community support systems, leadership dynamics, and broader social frameworks. Together, these elements have facilitated the group's journey toward healing, empowering them to rebuild the social fabric and advocate for the well-being of the entire community. Embroidery, as a shared activity, has played an important role in fostering solidarity, preserving cultural identity, and serving as a tangible expression of resilience in the face of adversity.

Conclusion

The study aimed to investigate community resilience, with a specific focus on the Collective of Artesanas de Amor (AAC), exploring community experiences within the group and the role of textile pieces, particularly embroidery, in fostering community resilience. This thesis underscores the importance of individual and collective efforts, social support networks, access to external resources, and the cultural or societal context in resilience-building efforts, drawing on theories by Michael Ungar, Daniel Aldrich, and Urie Bronfenbrenner. These theories were integrated to deepen the understanding of community resilience, comparing theoretical frameworks with data collected through interviews and participant observation methodologies conducted during fieldwork in Colombia with AAC.

One of the research objectives aimed to uncover the factors, strategies, or actions aiding conflict-affected groups in building community resilience and initiating projects within the community. After exploring different theories and analyzing the fieldwork, it is crucial to highlight that community resilience encompasses more than individual capabilities; it signifies a community's collective ability to face, adapt to, and rebound from adversity. Collaboration, solidarity, and organized efforts among community members are central to this process, extending beyond post-disaster assistance to fostering long-term social cohesion and functionality. However, achieving solidarity or collaboration among communities affected by conflict is challenging due to the destruction of social bonds and a prevailing atmosphere of mistrust and individuality. Despite these challenges, viewing resilience from an interdisciplinary perspective reveals that it is a multifaceted process requiring several factors to be built.

On one hand, individual factors such as optimism, self-esteem, coping mechanisms, connection to land, and participation in activities like embroidery correlate with psychological resources or individual abilities crucial for resilience-building. This process entails individuals independently facing their circumstances, defining their approach to problems, identifying essential elements

for progress, and evaluating aspects they can modify to improve their situation. Additionally, social support networks play a vital role, as their absence can hinder individuals' ability to effect changes in their circumstances. Therefore, addressing the consequences of conflicts independently presents enormous challenges. Family, community, and support networks play a critical role in providing platforms to share experiences and foster mutual understanding, highlighting the importance of empathy to facilitate communication and healing. However, cultivating empathy or solidarity in the immediate aftermath of a conflict can be difficult and requires alternative resources or assistance to facilitate community resilience. Leadership also emerges as critical, providing direction toward recovery, particularly when generated from within the community itself.

Resources, community empowerment and leadership are interconnected pillars vital to community development. While resources and support are essential, community empowerment is equally crucial to ensure sustainable progress. In situations where basic needs are lacking, even modest satisfaction of these needs can empower people to strive to improve their situation. Furthermore, legal mechanisms aim to recognize and support victims while deterring future violence, but their effectiveness depends on their implementation and commitment to social justice. Cultural or social environments also play a crucial role in fostering community resilience by providing a shared sense of identity and comfort in difficult times.

The factors contributing to community resilience within AAC must be attributed to various factors. These include the individual's determination to overcome the difficult and painful situations they lived in, the close support groups or environments of influence that played an important role, the resources and laws that directly or indirectly impacted the group and the social context in which they lived. As many members of the group expressed, their goal is to remember what happened not in a painful way, but rather as a means to preserve memory, serve as agents of change, and positively influence the new generation. This is why the journey of this group has been of great relevance, not only for the transformative impact it has had on each of its members but also for its broader influence within the community.

One of the key objectives of this research was also to understand the role of textile narratives in fostering community resilience. This involved an evaluation to determine whether these textiles serve as narratives that represent lived experiences and whether this process has importance in both individual healing and community recovery. Within the Artesanas de Amor (AAC), while embroidery represents another activity of the collective's journey, their exploration of diverse

artistic forms and techniques has substantially contributed to the solidification of each member's sense of belonging and resilience within the group. The collective has engaged in various activities such as gardening, and utilizing medicinal plants among others, which initially provided members with a sense of purpose, inclusion, and an opportunity to share skills with others. This is highly significant as it provides an alternative role for women, particularly considering that the majority of the group's members are women. These activities enable them to step out of traditional domestic roles, empower them in new contexts, and enlarge their perspectives. Also, it is important to highlight that not all members participate directly in weaving or embroidery; however, this does not imply exclusion or detachment from the group. On the contrary, those who do not engage in these activities seek involvement in other ways. However, despite that the collective has been dedicated to various activities, embroidery and weaving have marked an important turning point.

The use of embroidery has significantly strengthened the group's identity. By displaying their embroidered pieces in various exhibitions, both in the village and outside, they have successfully communicated their narrative with clarity and purpose. This process has allowed them to shape their story and determine the way they want to convey it. In this framework, members act as witnesses, as Caruth describes. Some members directly experienced the region's violence, while others bore witness through the stories of their peers. Consequently, embroidery serves as a means of testimony, allowing each member to narrate her experiences from their unique perspective. It functions as a textile narrative through which the group effectively communicates its message.

Furthermore, this empowerment extends beyond their immediate community. Through various initiatives, they now empower members of other communities, not limited to women, but also children and men. It aims to amplify voices, including in political spheres, allowing them to express their views and advocate for their needs effectively. In doing so, they contribute to the development and implementation of more relevant tools and policies for the benefit of the community at large. The embroidery has emerged as a powerful tool directly linked to community resilience, facilitating the creation of identity, reflection, storytelling, and denunciation within AAC. This feminized work has empowered them to participate in other platforms as agents of change and community transformation, allowing this group to be seen not only as victims of the conflict but also as resilient individuals who resist, denounce, and actively seek change.

In exploring the final question of this research—why the discussion of resilience is particularly significant within the context of post-conflict in Colombia, especially in the territory of San Miguel—the concept of resilience emerges as crucial within the landscape of post-conflict Colombia. It not only shows the processes facilitating community recovery from historical trauma but also highlights avenues for fostering positive social change. Fundamental to this understanding is the recognition that the resilience of communities through their healing efforts goes beyond the immediate demographics of those directly affected by the conflict. Instead, it extends its influence to encompass future generations committed to advancing a fairer society. Resilience underscores the urgency for Colombian communities to rebuild their social fabric and promote restoration, enabling the development of initiatives that, beyond narrating past hardships, foster community healing. This must permeate future generations, steering them toward a path of national reconciliation, a journey fraught with challenges amid the country's prolonged conflict.

A primary limitation of this research lies in its exclusive focus on the Artesanas de amor collective, characterized by effective leadership, multifaceted intervention, and extensive external support. The possible variation in cultural context, resources received, and individual agency among different groups underscores the need for caution when generalizing the findings. Consequently, future research efforts would benefit from examining diverse typologies of groups, such as those located in urban settings or lacking outside assistance, to obtain comprehensive information on the diverse outcomes experienced by different communities.

References

Aldrich, D. P., & Meyer, M. A. (2014). Social Capital and Community Resilience. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *59*(2), 254–269. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764214550299

Alexander, J. C., Eyerman, R., Giesen, B., Smelser, N. J., & Sztompka, P. (2004). Chapters 1 & 2. In *Cultural trauma and collective identity* (pp. 1–59). essay, University of California Press.

Alfaro Vargas, R., & Cruz Rodríguez, O. (2010). Teoría Del Conflicto Social Y Posmodernidad. *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* (Cr), II-III (128-129), 63-70.

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Trauma- and Stress-Related Disorders (Chapter 8). In Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association

American Psychological Association. (2023). *Trauma*. American Psychological Association. https://www.apa.org/topics/trauma

Arango Tobón, M. A. (2021). Procesos de acompañamiento psicosocial en el marco del conflicto armado: una revisión crítica de la literatura. *Revista Virtual Universidad Católica del Norte*, (62), 308-340. https://www.doi.org/10.35575/rvucn.n62a12

Arias López, B. E. (2017). Entre-Tejidos y redes. Recursos Estratégicos de Cuidado de la Vida y promoción de la salud mental en contextos de sufrimiento social. *Prospectiva*, (23), 51. https://doi.org/10.25100/prts.v0i23.4586

Arteaga, A. (2016), De la memoria traumática a la memoria crítica. Reflexiones sobre escritura y testimonio (pp. 17-29) In Arrieta Burgos, E. (Compilador). (2016). *Conflicto armado, justicia y memoria (Tomo 3. Narrativas de la memoria)*. Medellín: UPB

Atencio Gómez, M. S. (2020). Los Derechos de las mujeres víctimas del conflicto armado colombiano. *Revista Científica General José María Córdova*, *18*(30), 401–415. https://doi.org/10.21830/19006586.584

Bello Tocancipá, A. C., & Aranguren Romero, J. P. (2020). Voces de Hilo y aguja: Construcciones de sentido y gestión emocional por medio de prácticas textiles en el conflicto Armado Colombiano. *H-ART. Revista de Historia, Teoría y Crítica de Arte*, (6), 181–204. https://doi.org/10.25025/hart06.2020.10

Borda Bohigas, J. P., Carrillo, J. O., Garzón, D. F., Ramírez, M. P., & Rodríguez, N. (2015). Trauma Histórico. Revisión Sistemática de un abordaje diferente al conflicto armado. *Revista Colombiana de Psiquiatría*, *44*(1), 41–49. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rcp.2014.09.005

Botero, A. Á., (2016). Retórica dialógica y memoria: reparación simbólica de las víctimas del conflicto colombiano. *Opción*, 32(7), 97-117. https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/310/31048480002.pdf

Brooks, R., Silove, D., Steel, Z., Steel, C. B., & Rees, S. (2011). Explosive anger in postconflict Timor Leste: Interaction of socio-economic disadvantage and past human rights-related trauma. Journal of Affective Disorders, 131(1–3), 268–276 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2010.12.020

Caruth, C. (1995). Truth and testimony: The process and the struggle. In C. Caruth (Ed.), Trauma: Explorations in memory (pp. 61-75). Johns Hopkins University Press.

Castleberry, A., & Nolen, A. (2018). Thematic analysis of qualitative research data: Is it as easy as it sounds? *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning*, *10*(6), 807–815. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2018.03.019

Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica y Fundación Prolongar (2017). La guerra escondida. Minas Antipersonal y Remanentes Explosivos en Colombia, CNMH, Bogotá.

Cerquera Córdoba, A. M., Peña Peña, A. J., García Vargas, C. J., Orejuela Castro, D. A., & García Nova, M. Á. (2017). Psicología de la Salud en el contexto del conflicto armado en colombia: Un Marco de Referencia. *PSICOGENTE*, *20*(37). https://doi.org/10.17081/psico.20.37.2427

Choudhury, Jharna (2022) "Telling Trauma: Resisting through Embroidery Stories," *Journal of International Women's Studies*: Vol. 24: Iss. 6, Article 21. Available at: https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol24/iss6/21

Clark, J. N., & Ungar, M. (Eds.). (2021). *Resilience, Adaptive Peacebuilding and Transitional Justice: How Societies Recover after Collective Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Correa Gutiérrez D. & Jaramillo Giraldo, E. (2019). Reconfiguración del conflicto. Documentos de trabajo, (12), 3-42. https://revistas.udea.edu.co/index.php/iner/article/view/339392

Drury, J., Carter, H., Cocking, C., Ntontis, E., Tekin Guven, S., & Amlôt, R. (2019). Facilitating collective psychosocial resilience in the public in emergencies: Twelve recommendations based on the Social Identity Approach. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *7*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2019.00141

Drury, J., Cocking, C., & Reicher, S. (2009). The Nature of Collective Resilience: Survivor Reactions to the 2005 London Bombings. International Journal of Mass Emergencies & Disasters, 27(1), 66-95. https://doi.org/10.1177/028072700902700104

Elcheroth, G., & de Mel, N. (Eds.). (2021). In the Shadow of Transitional Justice: Cross-national Perspectives on the Transformative Potential of Remembrance (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003167280

Espinosa Menéndez, N. (2012). Impactos del paramilitarismo en la Región Urabá/Chocó 1998-2006. Claves para la Lectura de las afectaciones colectivas. *Agora U.S.B.*, *12*(2), 289. https://doi.org/10.21500/16578031.223

Freud, S. (1920). Más allá del principio del placer. Recuperado de http://www.philosophia.cl / Escuela de Filosofía Universidad ARCIS.

Garmezy, N., Masten, A. S., & Tellegen, A. (1984). The study of stress and competence in children: A building block for developmental psychopathology. *Child Development*, *55*(1), 97. https://doi.org/10.2307/1129837

Giraldo, J., & Jaramillo, L. G. (2017). *Entre dos paces: Colombia y Antioquia, 1991-2016*. Editorial EAFIT.

Giraldo Pérez, Y. (2022). Radiografía amorosa del conflicto armado: relacionamientos sexo-afectivos, una estrategia asociada a las violencias sexuales y reproductivas utilizada como mecanismo de control paramilitar en la zona urbana del municipio de La Unión, Antioquia (1995-2003) [*Trabajo de grado profesional*]. Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia. https://bibliotecadigital.udea.edu.co/dspace/handle/10495/30602

González-Arango, I. C., Cuéllar-Barona, M., Pérez-Bustos, T., Rivera, M. X., & Siman, Y. (2022). Prácticas Textimoniales: Narrativas, resistencias y formas del hacer textil. *Revista CS*, (38), 9–15. https://doi.org/10.18046/recs.i38.5806

González-Arango, I. C., Villamizar-Gelves, A. M., Chocontá-Piraquive, A., & Quiceno-Toro, N. (2022). Pedagogías textiles sobre el conflicto armado en Colombia: Activismos, Trayectorias y Transmisión de saberes desde la experiencia de cuatro colectivos de mujeres en quibdó, Bojayá, sonsón y maría la baja. *Revista de Estudios Sociales*, (79), 126–144. https://doi.org/10.7440/res79.2022.08

Guerrero, M. T. (1994). Origen del Arte Textil Colombiano contemporáneo. *Historia Crítica*, (9), 82–93. https://doi.org/10.7440/histcrit9.1994.10

Gunderson, L. H., Allen, C. R., & Holling, C. S. (2012). *Foundations of Ecological Resilience*. Island Press.

Hassan, T. (2023, January 20). *World Report 2023: Rights trends in Colombia*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/colombia

Higuita Granada, J. A. (2018). La Unión: un territorio en disputa, memorias del conflicto armado. [*Trabajo de Grado Profesional].* Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia. https://bibliotecadigital.udea.edu.co/handle/10495/15122

Jackson, R. L., Drummond, D. K., & Camara, S. (2007). What is qualitative research? *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, *8*(1), 21–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/17459430701617879

Jones, E., & Wessely, S. (2006). Psychological trauma: A historical perspective. *Psychiatry*, *5*(7), 217–220. https://doi.org/10.1053/j.mppsy.2006.04.011

Jones, L. K., & Cureton, J. L. (2014). Trauma redefined in the DSM-5: Rationale and implications for counseling practice. *The Professional Counselor*, *4*(3), 257–271. https://doi.org/10.15241/lkj.4.3.257

Junjie, M., & Yingxin, M. (2022). The discussions of positivism and interpretivism. *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *4*(1), 10–14. https://doi.org/10.36348/gajhss.2022.v04i01.002

Kallio, H., Pietilä, A., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: Developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *72*(12), 2954–2965. https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031

Masten, A. S. (2014). *Ordinary magic: Resilience in development.* Guilford Press.

Mayorga Coy, A. (2021). La reparación y la participación de las víctimas en la ley 1448 de 2011 y el acuerdo de paz de la habana. *Trabajo Social*, *23*(2), 219–235. https://doi.org/10.15446/ts.v23n2.91183

McCleary, J., & Figley, C. (2017). Resilience and trauma: Expanding definitions, uses, and contexts. *Traumatology*, *23*(1), 1–3. https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000103

Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social. *(2020). Boletines Poblacionales: Víctimas de eventos de salud publica -2020.* https://www.minsalud.gov.co/sites/rid/Lists/BibliotecaDigital/RIDE/DE/PS/boletines poblacionales-victimasI-2020.pdf

Montenegro Trujillo, S. (2002). Antecedentes de la industria textil. Universidad de los Andes. Disponible en: http://hdl.handle.net/1992/67292

Montenegro, S. (1982). La Industria Textil en colombia: 1900-1945. *Revista Desarrollo y Sociedad*, (8), 117–176. https://doi.org/10.13043/dys.8.4

Norris, F. H., Stevens, S. P., Pfefferbaum, B., Wyche, K. F., & Pfefferbaum, R. L. (2007). Community resilience as a metaphor, theory, set of capacities, and strategy for Disaster Readiness. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *41*(1–2), 127–150. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-007-9156-6

Otero Bahamón, S. (2022). ¿En dónde combaten los actores armados? Desigualdad de Tierras y capacidad estatal en el conflicto Armado Colombiano. *Desafíos*, *34*(1). https://doi.org/10.12804/revistas.urosario.edu.co/desafios/a.8818

Parker, Rozsika (2010). The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine. I.B. Tauris.

Pérez-Bustos, T., & Chocontá Piraquive, A. (2018). Bordando Una etnografía: Sobre cómo el bordar colectivo afecta La Intimidad etnográfica. Debate Feminista, 56, 2–25. https://doi.org/10.22201/cieg.2594066xe.2018.56.01

Pérez-Bustos, T., Chocontá-Piraquive, A., Rincón-Rincón, C., & Sánchez-Aldana, E. (2019). Hacer-SE Textil: Cuestionando La feminización de los oficios textiles. *Tabula Rasa*, (32), 249–270. https://doi.org/10.25058/20112742.n32.11

Piña López, J. A. (2015). Un análisis crítico del Concepto de Resiliencia en psicología. *Anales de Psicología*, *31*(3), 751. https://doi.org/10.6018/analesps.31.3.185631

Ramírez Valencia, B. (2020). Las matanzas vitales ejecuciones extrajudiciales en el oriente antioqueño: el caso de la cuenca del rio calderas, 2002-2006. [*Trabajo de Investigación Presentado Para Optar al Título de Magister En Derecho*]. Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia. https://bibliotecadigital.udea.edu.co/handle/10495/17917

Registro único de Víctimas. *Unidad para las Víctimas*. (2023, May 30). https://www.unidadvictimas.gov.co/es/registro-unico-de-victimas-ruv/37394

Richmond, T. S., Thompson, H. J., Deatrick, J. A., & Kauder, D. R. (2000). Journey towards recovery following physical trauma. Journal of advanced nursing, 32(6), 1341–1347. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2000.01629.x

Rajiva, M., & Takševa, T. (2021). Thinking against trauma binaries: the interdependence of personal and collective trauma in the narratives of Bosnian women rape survivors. Feminist Theory, 22(3), 405-427. https://doi-org.library.smu.ca/10.1177/1464700120978863

Rey Alvarez, J. M. (1994). El traje y la otra historia de la mujer. *Historia Crítica*, (9), 38–42. https://doi.org/10.7440/histcrit9.1994.05

Ríos, J. (2017). Un laboratorio de guerra en antioquia: desmitificando la victoria paramilitar y la desaparición de las guerrillas. *Revista UNISCI, 44*. http://dx.doi.org/10.5209/RUNI.55776

Rivera Martin, D. (2022, July 3). *Antioquia, La Gran Herida del conflicto armado*. www.elcolombiano.com. https://www.elcolombiano.com/antioquia/las-cifras-de-violencia-en-antioquia-segun-informe-de-la-comision-de-la-verdad-FL17944023

Rojas, J. C. (2016). Etapas del conflicto armado en Colombia: Hacia el posconflicto. *Latinoamérica. Revista de Estudios Latinoamericanos*, *62*, 227–257. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.larev.2016.06.010

Roldán, M. (2002). *Blood and fire: "La violencia" in Antioquia, Colombia, 1946-1953*. Duke University Press.

Rolnick, A. C., "Resilience and Native Girls: A Critique" (2018). *Scholarly Works*. 1229. https://scholars.law.unlv.edu/facpub/1229

Rosero García, L. C., Mora Acosta, F., & Rosero Arcos, V. H. (2013). Vivencias traumáticas en víctimas de minas antipersonales. *Revista De Psicología (Trujillo),* 15(1), 92–103. Recuperado a partir de https://revistas.ucv.edu.pe/index.php/revpsi/article/view/462

Rúa Delgado, C. F. (2015). The moments of Transitional Justice in Colombia. *Revista de Derecho Uninorte*, (43), 71–109. https://doi.org/10.14482/dere.43.6270

Ruiz M, Y. (2020, April 14). Con Acto Simbólico de Memoria despiden la guerra en la Unión, Antioquia.ELESPECTADOR.COM. https://www.elespectador.com/colombia/medellin/con-acto-simbolico-de-memoria-despiden-la-guerra-en-la-union-antioquia-article-722157/

Rutter, M. (1987). Psychosocial resilience and protective mechanisms. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 57*(3), 316–331. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.1987.tb03541.x

Rutter, M. (2007). Resilience, competence, and coping. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *31*(3), 205–209. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2007.02.001

Rutter, M. (2012). Annual research review: Resilience – clinical implications. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *54*(4), 474–487. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2012.02615.x

Said Pace, D. (2021). Probability and non-probability sampling - an entry point for undergraduate researchers. *International Journal of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods*, *9*(2), 1–15. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3851952

Salvador, M. C. (2009). El trauma psicológico: un proceso neurofisiológico con consecuencias psicológicas. *Revista de Psicoterapia, 20*(80), 5–16. https://doi.org/10.33898/rdp.v20i80.835

Sánchez-Aldana, E., Pérez-Bustos, T., & Chocontá-Piraquive, A. (2019). What are textile activisms: A view from feminist studies to fourteen cases from Bogota? *Athenea Digital. Revista de Pensamiento e Investigación Social*, *19*(3), 2407. https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/athenea.2407

Sánchez García, C. J., & Hincapié Gómez, Á. E. (2021). Prácticas de resistencia en territorios de conflicto armado. *Revista Estudios Psicosociales Latinoamericanos*, *4*(1), 56–78. https://doi.org/10.25054/26196077.3135

Sierra-Puentes, M., & Correa-Chica, A. (2019). Realidad Socioeconómica de personas en condición de desplazamiento forzado en Colombia: Revisión Sistemática. *Suma Psicológica*, *26*(2). https://doi.org/10.14349/sumapsi.2019.v26.n2.1

Southwick, S. M., Bonanno, G. A., Masten, A. S., Panter-Brick, C., & Yehuda, R. (2014). Resilience definitions, theory, and challenges: Interdisciplinary perspectives. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, *5*(1). https://doi.org/10.3402/ejpt.v5.25338

Sullivan, J. P., & Bunker, R. J. (2002). Drug cartels, street gangs, and Warlords. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, *13*(2), 40–53. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592310208559180

Tavera de Téllez, G. (1994). Tejido precolombino, Inicio de la Actividad Femenina. *Historia Crítica*, (9), 7–12. https://doi.org/10.7440/histcrit9.1994.01

Tawse-Smith, D. (2008). Conflicto armado colombiano. Desafíos, 19, 269-299. Recuperado a partir de https://revistas.urosario.edu.co/index.php/desafios/article/view/413

Teitel, R. (2000). Transitional Justice. Oxford University Press.

Torres Ávila, J. (2013). La memoria histórica y las víctimas. Jurídicas, 10(2), 144–166. Recuperado a partir de https://revistasojs.ucaldas.edu.co/index.php/juridicas/article/view/4863

Trejos Rosero, L. F., (2013). Colombia: una revisión teórica de su conflicto armado. *Revista Enfoques: Ciencia Política y Administración Pública*, XI (18), 55-75. http://www.revistaenfoques.cl/index.php/revista-uno/article/view/52

Ullmann, E., Barthel, A., Taché, S., Bornstein, A., Licinio, J., & Bornstein, S. R. (2015). Emotional and psychological trauma in refugees arriving in Germany in 2015. *Molecular psychiatry*, 20(12), 1483–1484. https://doi.org/10.1038/mp.2015.164

Ungar, M. (2011). The social ecology of resilience: Addressing contextual and cultural ambiguity of a nascent construct. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *81*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01067.x

Ungar, M. (2012). The Social Ecology of Resilience. *Springer Science + Business Media*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-0586-3

Ungar, M. (2018). *What Works Manual*. A manual for designing programs that build resilience. https://resilienceresearch.org/whatworks/

Ungar, M. (2021). *Multisystemic resilience adaptation and transformation in contexts of change*. Oxford University Press.

Villamizar, J. C. (2023). La restitución de tierras el nuevo rostro de la disputa por la tierra en Colombia. *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura*, 50(2), 209–245. https://doi.org/10.15446/achsc.v50n2.103203

Villarraga Sarmiento, A. (2015). Los procesos de paz en Colombia, 1982-2014: Documento resumen. Bogotá: Fundación Cultura Democrática. *Biblioteca de la paz: Serie el proceso de la paz en Colombia, 1982-2013*, 16-68.

Walker, B., & Salt, D. (2006). *Resilience thinking sustaining ecosystems and people in a Changing World*. Island Press.

Widom, C. S. (2012). Chapter 1 & 7. In *Trauma, psychopathology, and violence: Causes, correlates, or consequences* (pp. 23–205). essay, Oxford University Press

Wilson, G. A. (2015). Community Resilience and Social Memory. *Environmental Values, 24*(2), 227–257. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43695225

Yaffe, L. (2011). Conflicto armado en Colombia: Análisis de las causas económicas, Sociales e institucionales de la oposición violenta. *Revista CS*, 187–208. https://doi.org/10.18046/recs.i8.1133

Zarrelli, N. (2017). *The wartime spies who used knitting as an espionage tool*. Atlas Obscura. https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/knitting-spies-wwi-wwii

Zepf, S., & Zepf, F. D. (2008). Trauma and traumatic neurosis: Freud's concepts revisited. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, *89*(2), 331–353. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-8315.2008.00038.x

Appendices

Interview Guide

Questions for individual semi-structured interviews

Introduction

Hi, my name is Laura Sarmiento, and I am currently working on my research project, which is a necessary component to obtaining the master's Arts degree. The research project is entitled "Women's Textile Groups and Collective Resilience in a Country in Reconciliation". The central topic of my project is to explore the experiences of women from your group who have used

weaving as a tool for collective resilience. Today, I would like to talk to you about your experiences with weaving and how it has helped you overcome difficult situations in your life.

In this study, I will explain the purpose of exploring the experiences of women who weave as a tool for collective resilience, also I would like to highlight the importance of life stories in assessing collective resilience. Michael Ungar's theory of resilience will be used to frame this research. He is a professor in Canada, and he has worked with the concept of resilience where the principal idea is that "resilience is a dynamic process that involves the interaction between individuals and their environment. According to Ungar, resilience is not a fixed trait or characteristic that some people have, and others do not. Instead, resilience is something that can be learned and developed over time"

Clark, J. N., & Ungar, M., (2020). Resilience, adaptive peacebuilding and transitional justice. The Cambridge Handbook of Evolutionary Perspectives on Human Behavior. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108919500

As you have expressed your desire to participate in this study, I will ask questions about your experiences with the group and the processes you have been involved in. Additionally, I will inquire about your personal life, daily activities, and your role within the group. The main objective of this research is to understand the factors that have contributed to the group's collective resilience, including the dynamics and methodologies employed, and the individual contributions of each participant.

Informed Consent
Before we begin, I want to inform you of the study's objectives and that the interview will be recorded with your consent.

Consent and Confidentiality: Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You may choose to end the interview at any time or skip any question you do not wish to answer. As I am conducting a semi-structured interview, the final report will include excerpts from our conversation. Additionally, I plan to deliver a final report to the group that will contain the study results, along with memories and photos of you, photos of the group and the location where the activities were developed. This consent form ensures that you agree to have your identity revealed and photographs taken for these purposes. If there is any information you would like to share with us but prefer not to be published, please let me know and I will remove this information. By signing this consent form, you agree to proceed with the interview. However, remember that you can end it at any time or choose not to answer any questions you are not comfortable with.

Background
• Can you tell me a little about yourself?
• What is your name, age, and occupation?
• Would you like to provide more information about your family, your experience living in the neighbourhood or town, or the time you spent in "Artesanas de amor"?

Identify Key Moments: Inquire about the difficulties, crises, and negative experiences they may have had and how they have overcome them.

Protective Factors: Ask the participant about the factors that have helped them overcome difficulties. Identify the personal, family, and community resources that have been useful to them during difficult times.

Capabilities and Skills

Ask the participant about the skills and abilities they have developed throughout their life and identify the personal strengths that have allowed them to overcome some of these difficulties.

• Can you tell me about your experience with weaving?
• When did you start, and what inspired you to do so?
• Do you weave alone or in a group?
• What are your thoughts or feelings about the weaving group "Artesanas de amor" and the historical process that has taken place?
• Do you feel that the weaving process has changed your perspective or vision of how you saw weaving before to how you see it now?
• Is there a connection between the current weaving process and historical memory
• Could you describe the weaving process when you are in a group, as well as the group dynamics?

Support Networks

People and organizations that have supported them during difficult times identify the support networks they have in their daily lives.

• How did you come together as a group, and what motivated you to start working together?
• How has the group been able to overcome challenges and obstacles in the face of social inequality and other forms of adversity?
• What role does collective decision-making play in the group's ability to resist and overcome difficult situations?
• How do you balance individual needs and goals with the needs and goals of the group as a whole?
• Could you describe a moment when the group faced a particularly difficult situation and how they were able to overcome it together?
• How has the collective identity and sense of purpose of the group helped build resilience and resistance against social inequality?
• What strategies has the group employed to address social inequality problems in the community, and what have been the results of these efforts?
• How has the group's ability to work together and support each other impacted the individual members' lives outside the group?
• How does the group maintain its sense of solidarity and mutual commitment? over time?
• How have you and your group supported each other in difficult times?
• In your opinion, what has been the activity or behavior that has helped you feel most a part of the group?

• In your opinion, how important is it to have a support group to overcome difficult situations?
• Regarding solidarity, is there any specific action or process that has helped you in your process of overcoming some difficult situations you have experienced?
• What are the group´s strategies or attitudes that make you think that your community supports you?
• Do you remember any adversity or difficulty that you had to face as a community?
• What was the attitude of the members?
• What are the positive and negative aspects to highlight from that day?

Conclusions
Conclude the interview.

• How has weaving and collective resilience impacted your life?
• What are your future goals and aspirations related to weaving and collective resilience?
• What advice would you give to other groups or communities facing similar challenges and seeking to build collective resistance and resilience?
• How do you feel after sharing your story, and would you like to add anything else?

Thank you for sharing your story and time. The data collected in these interviews will be used for academic purposes and the creation of a final report. This report will contain parts of this interview, some images related to the group´s textile production, some of the photographs of the participants and the results of this research.

Informed Consent Forms

SMU REB #23-084

Student Principal Investigator: Laura Sarmiento - laura.sarmiento.salazar@smu.ca
Faculty Supervisor: Andrés Arteaga - andres.arteaga@smu.ca
Global Development Studies
Saint Mary's University, 923 Robie Street, Halifax, NS - Canada B3H 3C3

To complete my Master of Arts degree in Global Development Studies at Saint Mary's University, I am conducting a research project titled "Women's Textile Groups and Collective Resilience in a Country in Reconciliation" under the supervision of Dr. Andrés Arteaga. I invite you to participate in a study that seeks to understand the role of community resilience in your area, the strategies you and your group used to build resilience, and how this has helped in overcoming difficult situations. This research project aims to delve into the complex and dynamic relationship between community resilience and difficult situations. Specifically, the study seeks to explore the various strategies and actions that women have utilized to overcome the effects of these experiences and build collective resilience. Through an analysis of different socio-economic and geographic contexts, the research aims to identify factors contributing to successful resilience-building among women in Colombia. Additionally, the study aims to examine the role of memory narratives and cultural artifacts in the process of building collective

resilience and how they can help in healing processes and recovery. This study is an individual research project and is not funded or sponsored.

This research will involve individual semi-structured interviews, participant observation and focus group discussions. The individual interviews will last approximately 60 minutes and will involve questions about your childhood, family background, work, and other life experiences. The interviews can take place either at the group´s community hall or at your home, according to your preference. There will be three focus groups, each lasting 1.5 hours, where I will discuss the group's different perceptions and thoughts. For example, I may ask questions like "How would you describe the management of local, community, and state governments? What are the positive and negative aspects that you would highlight for each one?" The focus groups will also take place at the community hall of each group. During participant observation, I will actively participate in the normal activities of the group, such as weaving and sewing, with the principal goal of observing the group's dynamics and learning about its members.

This research aims to enhance my understanding of collective resilience in difficult situations and to support the development of impactful projects that benefit the society in which the group resides. The group will receive a final report with the results of this study, which will contain information on the study's findings, as well as some photographs of the group participants, the textiles or products designed by the participants and the significance of these artifacts for them.

Your participation in this research will be entirely voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or consequences. You decide to provide information, and you have the right to ask questions and not answer questions during this process. In addition, you may revoke your consent even after you have signed this form.

Please be aware that participation in this study involves some risks, such as the potential for emotional discomfort when discussing past experiences. For example, you may be asked if you remember any adversity or difficult situation that you experienced as a community. However, an atmosphere of trust will be created during the interviews, and if at any point you feel uncomfortable or do not want to answer a question, you can openly tell the interviewer that you do not feel comfortable answering that question. In case you wish to stop the interview at any time, you can also mention it, and the interview will stop immediately. If you wish to reschedule the interview for a later date, this can be done too. If you wish to withdraw completely from the study, you can do so by telling the interviewer, and all the information collected will be erased. There is no penalty or repercussions to withdrawal from this study.

Participant observation, focus group and individual semi-structured interviews will be recorded and photographed for academic purposes. I will be using a photo camera, a video camera, and a voice recording device, to capture and store the data. My alternative plan in case to have a problem with these devices is to use my cellphone which is password protected. If you do not wish to be recorded or photographed or want your identity to remain anonymous, please mark that option on the form. Once the interviews and activities are completed, all the images and

recordings will be downloaded and stored securely at the university's OneDrive. This data will be used solely for academic purposes, and the records will be kept in storage for one year, after which they will be permanently deleted.

The information collected from this study will be used as part of a major research paper which is a necessary component to complete the requirements in my master's program, I will also submit a paper to a peer-reviewed journal for publication. There will be no monetary incentive for your participation in this research. If you prefer not to appear in photographs or want to keep your identity anonymous, please let us know by indicating this on this consent form.

By signing this consent form, you acknowledge that you have been informed about the nature of this study, its risks, and benefits, and have had an opportunity to ask questions. You also understand that participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw your consent at any time without penalty. Finally, you agree that you do not waive any legal rights that you may have because of participating in this research study.

Yes ☐   No ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can end my participation at any time without penalty.
Yes ☐   No ☐

I give permission to be audio recorded.

Yes ☐   No ☐

I give permission to be photographed.

Yes ☐   No ☐

I want my identity to remain anonymous.

Yes ☐   No ☐

I agree to participate in the participant observation methodology.

Yes ☐   No ☐

I agree to participate in the focus group.

Yes ☐   No ☐

I agree to participate in the individual semi-structured interview.

Yes ☐   No ☐

I agree that my identity and photographs appear in the final report.

Yes ☐   No ☐

Research Participant

Signature: _____

Name (Printed) : _____ Date : _____

(Day/Month/Year)

Principal Investigator

Signature: _____

Name (Printed) : _____ Date : _____

(Day/Month/Year)

By signing this form, I agree to participate in the study. This research has been reviewed and cleared by Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions or concerns about ethical matters, you may contact the Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board at ethics@smu.ca or (902) 420-5728.