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Memory, Recognition and Solidarity: the Victims of Eastern Antioquia as Communicative Citizens

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this doctoral research to my parents, María del Socorro and Alfonso, and my girlfriend Louisa for the unwavering support and encouragement during these years. From the bottom of my heart, thank you so much for your love, inspiration and vital encouragement throughout my doctoral and life journeys. Your support and inspiration have influenced the individual I have become and the accomplishments I have obtained. I love you all.

ABSTRACT

This doctoral research focuses on the relationship between civil society, collective action and the victims' social movements of the Colombian armed conflict. It analyses the communicative and expressive dimensions of victims' collective action as a mechanism to restore a sense of citizenship. It shows how collective belonging is constructed through processes of memory, recognition and solidarity in the midst of armed conflicts. It introduces the concept of communicative citizenship field in which emotions and affection act as a catalyst to generate collective actions for counterpublic groups in armed conflict societies transforming their victim status into an active citizenship condition. The case study of this research is Eastern Antioquia in Colombia, particularly the victims' social movement of this Colombian region, and through a participative action research approach and developing a set of qualitative strategies, this research explores (together with the studied groups) the communicative and expressive resources they can access to obtain symbolic, cultural and political power and to act effectively within fragile public spheres. A key objective here is to understand what kind of citizen processes these collective communicative actions and strategies can open up within contexts of armed conflict and how these practices have been affecting the structure and shape of the regional and local public spheres of Eastern Antioquia in the last seventeen years.

Furthermore, this doctoral research aims to present non-official narratives about the Colombian armed conflict, using the victims' perspective to understand the dynamics of contestation in the construction of memory, recognition and solidarity during the conflict, as well as in the claiming of public and conflict-related spaces and the construction of victims' collective identity as civilians before the cessation of violence. This study finally argues that the communicative citizenship field is part of a new research agenda to better understand, analyse and describe contemporary processes of collective action of victims' social movements in armed conflicts and post-armed conflict societies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Name
AMOR	The Association of Organized Women of Eastern Antioquia
APROVIACI	The Provincial Association of Victims to Citizens
ASOVIDA	The Association of Victims of Granada Town
ASOVISIMA	The Association of Victims of Marinilla
CARE	The Centre to Approach Reconciliation and Reparation
CCJ	Colombian Commission of Jurists
CIDA	The Canadian International Development Agency
CINEP	The Research and Popular Education Centre
CNRR	The National Committee of Repair and Reconciliation
COMMGAP	The Communication for Governance and Accountability Program
CRIS	The Communication Rights in the Information Society Campaign
CHM	The National Centre of Historical Memory of Colombia
C3	Communication Competence Centre for Latin America
C4D	Communication for development
DAS	Colombian Administrative Department of Security
EAI	Children's Audiovisual School
ELN	The National Liberation Army
EPL	The Popular Liberation Army
ESDS	The Economic and Social Data Service
FARC-EP	The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FLIP	The Foundation for Press Freedom
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICCPR	The International Covenant of Civil and Political Right
IDEA	The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
MPP	Media for Peace
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PAN	Antonio Nariño Project
PRODEPAZ	The Regional Program for Development and Peace of Eastern Antioquia
PROVISAME	Life and Mental Health Promoters Group
PPP	Program for Peace
RWB	Reporters Without Borders
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
USA	United States of America
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Woman

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CHAPTER 1

1. Introduction

At 10:23 in the morning of the August 16th, 2008, the opening ceremony of the new headquarters building of the communicative project *Children's Audiovisual School* (EAI) in Belén de los Andaquíes began. Belén de los Andaquíes is a small town of 12,000 people in the Colombian Amazon's county Caquetá and I was working at the time with a Colombian research centre called CINEP as a coordinator of their communication, human rights and peace unit, supporting this civil society project in the middle of the Colombian jungle was one of the main responsibilities of my appointment. That day was one of the most important days of my life. After working for more than six years with this small community and as a result of a project of international cooperation, this local initiative was ready to deliver all the workshops and training for children of the region. However, the real importance of this event was not to celebrate the construction of a new building at Santa Teresa's neighbourhood in this Amazonian town. The main relevance was that the opening ceremony was the perfect excuse for the people involved in this project to commemorate the social process developed behind this initiative, and recognize together and in public the achievements, knowledge, difficulties and lessons learned during all these years of work. This doctoral research is one of the results of that social process, and some theoretical ideas, principal concepts and research intuitions and questions were born during that time, when I was working with Alirio González (the director of this school) and fifteen wonderful children.

Since 1970, the southern county of Caquetá, a territory in the heart of the Colombian Amazon, followed the scenario of development of local and regional economies based on drug trafficking (particularly cocaine) and it has been the territory where left-wing guerrilla organizations, The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) and The Popular Liberation Army (EPL) had their established headquarters for decades. While this area was geographically strategic for the armed conflict, paramilitary groups have been using this territory as a main corridor to transport illicit weapons, war supplies, illegal materials and smuggling kidnapped people. According to the United Nations Development Programme (2011), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2013) and The National Centre of Historical Memory of Colombia (2013) the county of Caquetá contributed 64% of the total coca leaf cultivations in Colombia from 1975 to 2012, and at the same time 26% of the total victims of the Colombian armed conflict (almost one in four) were from this region. In summary, this territory has been the epicentre of the armed conflict in Colombia for the last five decades, and where 54% of landmines victims', 27% of kidnappings and 26% of massacres of the total Colombian armed conflict happened (UNDP 2011; CHM 2013).

In this volatile context, since 2004, the project of the *Children's Audiovisual School* (EAI) of Belén de los Andaquíes in Caquetá (http://escuelaaudiovisualinfantil.blogspot.com) offered training and education in new technologies, storytelling and audio and video production for children and youth of the region. One of the main aims of this school is to inspire children to create, develop and disseminate multimedia narratives, audiovisual stories, chronicles, features and news about their personal social context, recreating through these audiovisual narratives and products their own visions of themselves and their region. Any children of the area (older than seven years) can approach the EAI with a story to tell, and the school offers him/her different alternatives to produce it. The child has to conduct the whole process: create the narrative, take pictures, do the editing and develop the digital soundtrack, receiving help from tutors (usually former members of the EAI). As a final stage, the audiovisual product is projected on a big screen placed out in the street in front of the producer's residence, transforming the street into a space where town people can watch the audiovisual piece and discuss local issues.

According to Rodriguez and González (2008) and Rodriguez (2011) the EAI articulated its goals through four principal ideas: first *No camera without a story*, the principal condition to begin the process is for the child to approach the school with a local story she/he wants to tell. The school does not teach anything that the child does not need for the achievement of her/his project goals. Second, *Technologies connected to our locality*, when a child observes his/her context through a digital camera, he/she is taking his/her place in the community and gains awareness of his/her role in the construction of a collective future. Third, *We narrate what we do and who we are*, so the community can discover where it wants to go in terms of future development. Finally, *We 'steal' children from war*, as this initiative intends to offer local children and youth an alternative to a life in the ranks of armed groups and drug traffickers (Rodriguez and González 2008; Rodriguez 2011).

While working to support this project, I came to appreciate how processes of communication 'from below' can catalyse degrees of social cohesion in communities that live in contexts of armed conflict, and how to use different expressive elements such as songs, video clips, dance, stop motion animations or multimedia and transmedia narratives to raise the voice against inequalities, injustice and violence from a civil society perspective in local communities. This experience gave me the opportunity to travel across Colombia to other armed conflict areas as Montes de María (Caribbean Colombian region), Putumayo (Indigenous county close to Ecuador) and Magdalena Medio (Resource-rich territory in the middle of the country); meeting initiatives with similar aims and

people doing humanitarian projects where offering alternatives to the war to local people were always one of the principal goals.

However, taking part in these initiatives, a principal issue was always at the centre of private conversations, public debates and academic analyses: the relationship between civil society, communication, citizenship and human rights in the midst of the Colombian armed conflict and the role of the victims to exercise their rights in the context of severe violence. The case of the *Children's Audiovisual School* in Caquetá is not unique in Colombia. The experience of the collective of *Keepers of the Memory* in Montes de Maria, a group of people that are developing a systematization of the narratives of the victims of the region to establish the truth about the armed conflict from a victims' perspective, or the initiative *Citizens' Radio*, a network of community radio stations of Putumayo and Magdalena Medio that are producing regional radios shows to discuss topics such as victims' reparation, the importance of claiming their human rights, or the meaning of democracy in contexts of high levels of violence. These are good examples of how communication can facilitate inclusive processes where civil society has a key role in the configuration of local symbolic regimes in armed conflict contexts. Nevertheless, it was one particular region in Colombia that kept my permanent attention during the years of working as a researcher for CINEP, a territory where different social movements of victims and civil society groups have been using conventional and nonconventional socio-political and communicative strategies to claim justice, truth, reparation and human rights in the public sphere: Eastern Antioquia. This Colombian region is the case study of this doctoral research.

Colombians have suffered five decades of armed conflict. It is a war sustained by structural socio-political causes that cannot be won militarily, but has not been resolved by peace or political agreements either. The shocking reality of violence in Colombia (more than six million victims in the last twenty years and more than four million internally displaced (OCHA 2013; CHM 2013)) underpins important questions regarding the nature of the conflict and the role of civil society in armed conflict contexts. Revisiting the academic work of García-Durán (2004) and Wills (2006) by international standards the magnitude of the Colombian conflict can be described 'as a war'. However, the multiplicity of factors and actors involved in the armed confrontation could designate a clear situation of 'multi polar violence' (Vasquez 2010), the degradation of the conflict can show a scenario of 'war against society' (Pecaut 2004), or the influence of the United States in Colombia (and the focus of its foreign policy after 11 September 2001) can equally suggest the Colombian conflict as an 'anti-terrorist war' (Hernandez 2004)'. As a consequence, some Latin-American

academics use the label 'the war without name' (Wills 2006) to stress how the Colombian armed conflict would appear to have a little of all these elements, highlighting the need to adopt a complex and multidimensional approach in order to understand the nature, and future solution, of this conflict.

Furthermore, as the oldest armed conflict in Latin America that takes aspects and characteristics of the 'new wars' of the Post-Cold war era (Kaldor 2013), the many approaches made by the Colombian government to develop peacebuilding operations across the country, and to attempt different peace process negotiations, establishing a diversity of models of conflict resolution to 'humanise the war' in Colombia, are fascinating examples of how to develop processes of 'new peace' for multidimensional or asymmetric wars. According to García-Peña (2004) and Gonzalez (2010) it is possible to identify two models of conflict resolution for the Colombian case. First, the 'Betancur/FARC-EP model of conflict resolution' (1982 - 1986) characterized by a broad agenda of social and political structural reforms based on an acceptance by the Colombian government of the 'objective causes' of the conflict such as social inequality and political exclusion, and recognizing guerrillas groups as legitimate interlocutors in negotiations. The innovative nature of this first model omitted the institutionalization of peace policies and failed to involve Colombian stakeholders, the Colombian army forces and key Colombian actors such as the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, this pioneering model of conflict resolution for Colombia lays down three basic pillars in order to guide peace resolution efforts: talks with the guerrillas, political reforms and social and economic relief.

The second model is the 'Barco/M19 model of conflict resolution' (1986-1990), focusing on demonstrating that social and political reforms should happen independently of negotiations with the guerrillas and moving to institutionalize peace policy in Colombia. The focus of this model was the former guerrilla group 'M19', and this insurgence group agreed with the Colombian government on the negotiations' aims before starting officially the peace talks. Those aims were to focus on political guarantees allowing the insurgents to disarm and transform themselves into legal democratic movements, as well as the terms for reincorporation of *ex-guerrilleros* into civilian life, which took place in 1990. This was a 'limited' agenda in comparison with the multiple topics of the previous 'broad' agenda, and Colombian administrations as Cesar Gaviria (1990 – 1994) and Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002) combined elements of both historical models to develop their own conflict resolutions approaches, including the ratification of the Second Protocol to the Geneva Convention and the recognition of the new role for civil society and the international community. For example, the *Agenda for Change for Peace* signed by the Colombian government and the guerrilla group of

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC–EP) to start a peace process in 1999 was inspired in the broad agenda of the 'Betancur/FARC-EP' model, combining the support of the armed forces and the international community, generating awareness of the peace process around the world. However, there was a peace resolution effort with a lack of governmental strategy for the negotiation process, producing any real progress on the substantive issues to achieve a final peace agreement (García-Peña 2004).

After three decades of conflict resolution and peace efforts in Colombia, my main argument here is that what is now emerging is a new Colombian model of conflict resolution that synthesises specific aspects of the two historical models, building upon lessons of the past and adjusting to the realities and dynamics of the actual armed conflict. Within this emerging new conflict resolution model the institutionalization of peace as a state policy rather than a presidential policy, the gradual application of the ethical values and norms of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, recognizing guerrilla groups as valid political interlocutors and embracing the idea that peace will entail structural changes in social and political terms, are central components. However, the central element of this new model of conflict resolution will have to be the active role of civil society, and particularly the social movements of victims of the country. In the Colombian war the armed political actors on the left (guerrillas groups) and the right (paramilitary groups), and the state itself, have precarious legitimacy (García-Peña 2004; Gonzalez 2010). Even collectively, they do not represent the nation as a whole. For this reason my argument is that civil society participation and social movements' collective actions have to be at the centre of this new model, reconfiguring the focus and aims of peace negotiations in Colombia at different levels and moments during the peace process. It is not simply a matter of having civil society participation or representation during peace talks with the Government and the guerrillas as a third part, rather the government needs to guarantee social movements of victims the ability to demonstrate in the public sphere without negative legal repercussions. It is a model of conflict resolution that understands the importance of civil society and victims' collective action to shape and decide the future, recognizing victims' collective action as a mechanism to restore a sense of citizenship, collective belonging and construction of processes of memory, recognition and solidarity in the midst of armed conflicts.

In this context, this doctoral work aims to analyse the impact of civil society groups and victims' collective action in the midst of the Colombian armed conflict in order to understand how the relationship between civil society, communication, citizenship and human rights are fostering this emerging model of conflict resolution in Colombia. Furthermore, this research analyses how victims

of the Colombian armed conflict have been addressing expressive dimensions of collective social action through practices, dispositions and mobilizations in order to rebuild and re-establish social, political and cultural bonds with their local communities. Specifically, how they transform their victim status into an active citizenship condition. Thus this work examines how different socio-communicative actions and strategies associated with the construction of political and cultural memory and struggles for recognition and solidarity are central to the human rights claims of victims of armed conflicts from counter-public perspectives; In so doing they are competing with other social actors for power, communicative resources and over the reconfiguration of symbolic regimes in the public sphere. For this research understanding the role of civil society and the impact of the collective actions of victims' social movements in the midst of armed conflicts are crucial. I believe that if Colombia wants to start real long-term processes of peace and reconciliation in the future, the voice of civil society and victims needs to be at the centre of the process.

The case study here is Eastern Antioquia in Colombia, specifically the victims' social movement of this Colombian region. The research question is: how can we understand and explain the communicative and expressive dimensions of social movements and, in particular the collective actions of victims of armed conflicts? Thus I explore this question through a case study of the social movement of victims of Eastern Antioquia, particularly the victims' groups of *The Association of Organized Women of Eastern Antioquia* (AMOR), *The Provincial Association of Victims to Citizens* (APROVIACI), *The Association of Victims of Granada Town* (ASOVIDA) and *The Centre to Approach Reconciliation and Reparation* (CARE). The contribution of this research is to understand what kind of citizen processes victims´ collective communicative actions and strategies can open up within contexts of armed conflict and how these practices have been affecting the structure and shape of the regional and local public spheres of Eastern Antioquia in the last seventeen years. The originality of this doctoral research is that it presents from the victims' perspective the dynamics of contestation in the construction of memory, recognition and solidarity during the conflict, and in the re-claiming of public and conflict-related spaces. This study identifies a communicative citizenship field as part of a new research agenda to better understand, analyse and describe the collective action of victims' social movements in armed conflicts and post-armed conflict societies.

Following this introduction, chapter two entitled *Literature Review: Civil Society, Citizenship and Human Rights from a Socio-Communicative Perspective* introduces contemporary discussions regarding the relationship between civil society, citizenship and human rights from a socio-communicative perspective. I present in this chapter a literature review outlining debates and

positions in order to identify gaps in the conceptual literature that the thesis aims to fill. Furthermore, I demonstrate in this second chapter how this thesis addresses gaps in the literature and how it contribute to debates about the role of civil society in the midst of armed conflicts. I will show how the thesis can address gaps of understanding of collective actions of social movements of victims of armed conflicts from a socio-communicative perspective. I will establish in this chapter that If we can better understand the communicative and expressive dimensions of collective actions from this approach, it is possible to analyse how civil society creates social cohesion, developing a sense of trust and a spirit of collaboration to promote peace, cooperation and reconciliation in contemporary fragile social contexts. A central proposition of this thesis is that the articulation of the communicative dimensions of political, social and cultural rights, can help civil society groups and social movements to restore a sense of citizenship, collective belonging and to generate processes of construction of social memory, recognition and solidarity from a counterpublic perspective.

Chapter three entitled *Communicative Citizenship Framework* describes in detail the theoretical approach to the communicative citizenship field. In this third chapter I argue that the interdisciplinary concept of communicative citizenship can be understood as the capacity of citizens to vocalize and express their demands and claims involving acts of communication in order to perform collective actions in the public sphere of armed conflict and post-armed conflict societies. In other words, I will demonstrate that communicative citizenship is the capacity of citizens to exercise their communicative agency, addressing affections and significant dimensions of collective action in order to mobilize and organize new types of collective action in fragile societies. Furthermore, I will argue that the communicative citizenship field focuses on analysing the operationalization of communicative citizenship actions of victims of armed conflicts in the public sphere as a way to restore the sense of citizenship and collective belonging for this counterpublic social actor. My principal argument in chapter three is that the social movement of victims of armed conflicts and post-armed conflict societies, addressing expressive dimensions of collective social action through practices, dispositions and mobilizations, can re-establish social, political and cultural bonds with their local communities. In short, transforming their victim status into an active citizenship condition. This theoretical construction will be the 'lens' that I will use in order to analyse, understand and comprehend the data to reconstruct the socio-historical evolution of victims' social movements of Eastern Antioquia from 1995 to 2012.

In chapter four, entitled *Anatomy of the Case Study*, I bring the information about the history of the armed conflict in Colombia and the current initiatives being undertaken in Eastern Antioquia in the light of political change. Specifically, in this chapter I present the strength and limits of the chosen case study and why this case study has a distinctiveness for the Colombian armed conflict context. Moreover, in this chapter I showcase the logic of the case study within the context of the Colombian peace process and in the context of the struggles over issues such as memory, recognition and solidarity. Chapter five entitled *Methodology* describes in detail the methodological approach of the study. In this chapter I explain the methodological design of this doctoral research, and the reasons and rationale behind every methodological step that I took in order to achieve the aims and goals of this project.

Chapters six, seven and eight present the results of the empirical research. In chapter six, *Memory as a battlefield: constructions of memory in Eastern Antioquia from a communicative citizenship perspective*, I analyse different communicative citizenship actions that have been developed by victims' groups of Eastern Antioquia (*e.g.* APROVIACI, AMOR and ASOVIDA), using the theoretical framework of memory, the concept that emerged as the first main code and theme in the qualitative narrative analysis. Chapter seven, *Politics of recognition in Eastern Antioquia: addressing victims' struggles for recognition from a communicative citizenship perspective* describes different victims' communicative citizenship actions such as the *Trails for Life and Reconciliation,* the *Garden of Memory, as well as From the House to the Square* and the *Constituent Assemblies* projects, using the theoretical framework of recognition, the second main code and theme that had emerged from the narrative analysis.

Finally, chapter eight, *Solidarity, social cohesion and public sphere: empowering victims through communicative citizenship actions in Eastern Antioquia*, aims at analysing different sets of communicative citizenship actions that have been developed amongst Eastern Antioquia's victims groups, using the theoretical framework of solidarity, the concept that emerged as a third main code and theme during the qualitative narrative analysis. As I describe it in chapters two and three, the categories of memory, recognition and solidarity are interconnected within the communicative citizenship field, and this relationship shapes three different modes of communicative citizenship: the *communicative citizenship social memory mode*, the *communicative citizenship expressive action mode*, and the *communicative citizenship solidaristic mode*. In the final chapter (chapter nine) entitled *The rise of communicative citizenship: a new agenda for collective social action* I present the conclusions for this doctoral research.

In 2012 the Colombian government opened up peace talks with the guerrilla group of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP), a peace process that is still developing at the moment (October 2015). In 2013 I had the opportunity to incorporate some of the ideas of this doctoral research in a report that I prepared for the United Nations entitled *The Duty of Memory: Research Agenda of the Mass Media Informative Coverage of the Armed Conflict in Colombia, 2002-2012*. The purpose of this report was to support the on-going Colombian peace process, through identifying a number of ways to resolve the armed conflict from a civil society perspective and allow for post-conflict recognition of the victims and their memories. As I was trying to show in this contribution to the current peace process negotiations, I strongly believe that the voice of the victims of the Colombian armed conflict will be crucial in order to start real processes of reconciliation, peace and inclusion in the future post-conflict Colombia society. My main hope is that this doctoral research can contribute in some way to the building of a post-conflict Colombia, where the victims can achieve full reparation, recognition, justice and guarantees of no repetition of the war atrocities, therefore creating conditions for building a better country for future generations of Colombians.

CHAPTER 2

2. Literature Review: Civil Society, Citizenship and Human Rights from a Socio-Communicative Perspective

The aim of this chapter is to introduce contemporary discussions regarding the relationship between civil society, citizenship and human rights from a socio-communicative perspective. I will present in this second chapter a literature review outlining debates and positions in order to identify gaps in the conceptual literature that the thesis aims to fill. Furthermore, I demonstrate in this chapter how this thesis can contribute to debates about the role of civil society in the midst of armed conflicts. I will establish that If we can better understand the communicative and expressive dimensions of collective actions, it is possible to analyse how civil society creates social cohesion, developing a sense of trust and a spirit of collaboration to promote peace, cooperation and reconciliation in contemporary fragile social contexts. The principal arguments for this chapter are two. The first argument is that the expressive/affective dimension has been missing from the analysis of civil society, particularly for the Latin American case. The second argument is that there is a lack of sufficient conceptualization and theoretical exploration of the ways in which social movements in conflict/post-conflict situations are empowered through communicative agency. In other words, contemporary social sciences do not sufficiently address the communicative dimension of collective action and, in particular, there are three key dimensions (memory, recognition and solidarity) that must be developed theoretically and explored empirically in order to provide a distinctive analysis of social movements.

2.1 Theories of civil society

It is widely documented in the academic literature that civil society plays a crucial role in fostering democratic governance in peaceful societies, citizens' participation in processes of political decision-making is seen as a core requirement of functioning democracies (Keane 1998; Marchetti and Tocci 2009; Spurk 2010). From a traditional political theory perspective, civil society is a category that describes the fact that people meet, communicate and organize in ways that are not established or controlled by the state (nor by family ties or kinship) and with purposes that are driven neither by the power logics of the state nor by market interests. From a conventional sociological perspective, civil society can be understood as a sector that aggregates a huge variety of mainly voluntary organizations and associations that maintain different objectives, interests, and ideologies and, often, compete with one another. Furthermore, both disciplines share the view that civil society can make political demands to the state and other social actors, but that they do not want an official

place in government. In other words, civil society is formally and legally independent from the state and the market, but it is oriented towards and interacts closely with them (Orjuela 2003; Paffenholz 2010). In this context, Mouffe (1992) and Bell and O'Rourke (2007) argue that civil society as a concept contains elements that are diverse, complex and contentious, and there is no consensus upon definition, beyond the idea of civil society as an arena of voluntary, non-coerced, collective action around shared interest, purposes and values.

From a philosophical and historical approach, the modern notion of civil society can be traced to the late eighteenth century development of the distinction between civil society and the state. Particularly, political philosophers such as Rousseau and Kant introduced a notion of civil society as being synonymous with the state or political society, expressing that the 'civil' was seen as the opposite of the state of 'nature' as well as 'uncivilized' form of government (Spurk 2010). For Keane (2009) during the period 1750 – 1850 the traditional language of civil society (which referred to at that time to a peaceful political order governed by the rule of law) suffered a radical transformation. During this period the modern usage of civil society emerged, as a term that describes and anticipates a complex and dynamic ensemble of legally protected nongovernmental institutions that tend to be nonviolent, self-organizing, self-reflexive, and permanently in tension, both with each other and with the governmental institutions that 'frame', constrict and enable their activities. Moreover, Gramsci (1971) focused on civil society from a Marxist perspective, arguing that civil society is part of the superstructure in addition to the state but with another role: the state served as the arena of force and coercion for capitalist domination, and civil society served as the field through which values and meanings were established, debated and contested. According to Gramsci, civil society contains a wide range of organizations and ideologies that both challenge and uphold the existing order, arguing that the cultural, social and political hegemony of the dominant classes and societal consensus is formed within civil society (Gramsci 1971; Spurk 2010).

In the second half of the twenty-century Jürgen Habermas (1992) approached the concept of civil society focusing on its communicative role within the public sphere, particularly in the open communicative interaction between civil society and the state in order to reach consensus on political decisions. According to Habermas, the political system needs the articulation of interests in the public arena to introduce a diversity of issues to the political agenda. Habermas argues that this articulation cannot be left completely to institutions such as political parties or political associations. For Habermas civil society mediates the relationship of individual citizens to political institutions by providing the space in which non-coercive communicative power is exercised. In summary, from a

Habermasian perspective, civil society is seen as a sector or intermediate sphere on its own, formally and legally independent from the state (but interacting closely with the political and economic sectors), articulating and negotiating political interests within society, comprising a multiple set of voluntary organizations, autonomously organized and permanent interacting with different sectors in the public sphere.

For some scholars (Cohen and Arato 1992; Edwards 2004) defining civil society theoretically is a political project in itself. Civil society is seen as an essential mediating structure not only because it stands as a buffer between the individual and the structures of the state but also because it plays a crucial role in cultivating citizenship, generating and maintaining social, cultural and political values in society. This view recognizes the epistemological centrality of morality and reason (following traditional Kantian and Hegelian perspectives) arguing that the public sphere is the place where the private interest of members of civil society could be reconciled with universal moral obligations. According to this approach, the main purpose of civil society is to enable human beings to respect one another's rights, and it has become an autonomous sphere, an arena operating beyond the borders of national states, societies or local economies. From a cultural sociological perspective, Alexander (1997) understands civil society as the arena in which social solidarity is defined in universalistic terms. For this scholar civil society is the 'we-ness' of a national community taken in the strongest possible sense the feeling of connectedness to 'every member' of that community that transcends particular commitments, narrow loyalties and sectarian interests (Alexander 1997, p.118). This conception of civil society is addressing post-Hobbesian ideas, recognizing individuals as responsible for their civil rights and stressing the significant role that social solidarity plays in democratic society.

Laine (2014) and Kocka (2004) emphasise that civil society is a social construct invoked not just in debates on democracy and governance but also with respect to intercultural understanding, social progress and cohesion. For these scholars to associate refers to uncoerced and self-generating collective action that is not part of the normative political decision making process, controlled directly by state institutions. Civil society has the ability to foster social capital in society, and should not be seen only passively, as a network of institutions, but also actively, as the context and product of self-constituting collective actors. Inspiring by Norberto Bobbio (1989) ideas about the nature and limits of state power, Laine and Kocka argues that civil society occupies the space reserved for the formation of demands (input) for the political system and to which the political system has the task of supplying answers (output). A framework that places less emphasis on normative political forms

and conformations, focusing more on the functions of collective action and social capital in the construction of the public sphere and society. In functionalist terms, Boltanski and Thévenov (1991) and Alexander (1997) argue that civil society can be conceived as a social dimension (or subsystem) that receives inputs from other spheres such as the family, the religious or the market and it is bound by their constrains and makes efforts to constrain them in turn. For these authors, in a more phenomenological sense, civil society supplies some of the basic assumptions upon which activities in these other spheres rely. In this approach, civil society constitutes a large part of the public lifeworld upon which contemporary social organization rest (Alexander 1997, p.129).

During the last two decades different disciplines such as sociology and political science have theorized civil society as a field governed by a specific organizational logic and as a site of political agency (Wijkström and Zimmer 2011; Laine 2012; Reuter, Wijkström and Meyer 2014). This approach is highlighting three contemporary tendencies of how social sciences are trying to theorizing civil society in recent years. The first line of thought is the *Tocquevillean approach* which placed citizens´ associations in the core of civil society, stressing the importance of the production and accumulation of social capital in society. For scholars such as Putnam (1995) social capital is an essential element of good performance of any society, and the civic virtue of citizens is most powerful when is embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. However this approach is not entirely new. Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) had stressed before the importance of civic participation and the various social benefits generated by it. Nonetheless, the timely contribution of scholars as Putnam (1995) and Bellah (1996) was to popularize and fuel interest on the utilization of the Tocquevillean´s approach to think civil society as a form of social capital. Forming a self-conscious and active political society as well as a vibrant civil society functioning independently from the state are the main aims of this approach.

The second line of thinking is the *social economic approach*. It refers to the part of the economy that is neither private nor public but consists of constituted organizations, with voluntary members, undertaking activities for the greater good of local communities and marginalized groups, a possible surplus of which is used for the good of the community of members or for society (Social Economy Lisburn 2012). In this view, civil society is understood as a form of civil economy and constitutes a key component of the local and global economies and not a parallel market or a dependent sector. This approach is based on the principle of reciprocity for the pursuit of mutual economic goals and through social control of capital. On this perspective three sub-sectors are considered essential to the good shape of civil society: *community sector* (small, local, modesty funded), *voluntary sector*

(formal, independent, not-for-profit) and *social enterprise sector* (businesses with primarily social objectives, superpluses principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community) (Laine 2014).

The third line of thought is the *cosmopolitan approach* and it is related with the establishment of the framework of *global civil society* as a main conceptual tool to understand civil society in contemporary times. Such approaches argue that diverse geopolitical changes such as the third wave of the globalization process (Sassen 2007), the crisis of the nation–state (Held 2008), the emergence of the network society (Castells 2009), the crisis of the modernity project (Beck 2009) and the appearance of a new set of human rights in society (Bauman 2011) have affected the conventional meaning of civil society. For this perspective, phenomena like migration, new technologies of communication and information as well as transnational experiences have an enormous impact on the public sphere, invigorating the role of liberal representative democracy in society and portraying the role of civil society in a global scale. The main aim of this approach is to create cross-border linkages between civil organizations in order to support cosmopolitan collective actions within the context of a global civil society.

In a recent intervention, Piketty (2013) argues that the term civil society is outdated; suggesting that there is a decline in membership of traditional civic organizations and that markets are superior devices that undermine traditional forms of civic association. In other words, for this author the global market is regulating contemporary civic relationships and social capital between individuals. Conversely the central argument of this thesis is that the concept is essential in the context of globalisation in order to understand new forms of social organisation. However, in reviewing the main ideas of the three dominant contemporary approaches, my argument is that these perspectives do not develop in sufficient depth theoretically informed empirical approaches to understanding the role of civil society and civil society's collective action. In particular, more empirically informed analytic approaches addressing communicative or expressive dimensions can help us to better understand civil society as the institutional habitat of particular type of actors whose role is to provide a full range of experiences and actions in order to improve collective life.

Regardless of the differences, these three approaches (the *Tocquevillean approach,* the *social economic approach* and the *cosmopolitan approach)* share two principal assumptions. First, the relevance of civil society as a societal sphere, where actors such as political parties, trade unions or social movements organizations are often used in analyses of political systems or international

politics. Second, the relevance of the political agency of civil society to make the world more democratic, where it is important to take into account the entire range of civil society actors by placing less emphasis on organizational forms and a stronger focus on the functions and roles of informal associations, counter-public organizations and instances of collective social movements actions. However, these three approaches are sharing another crucial element: they are emphasising political categories to address and understand civil society theoretically, which understate the relevance of cultural, communicative and expressive dimensions of civil society. In other words, these three approaches are not conceptualizing in sufficient depth the ways in which civil society is shaped and developed through cultural and communicative agencies in contemporary times. My main argument is that these perspectives are conditioned by the preoccupation of the social sciences of addressing civil society in terms of traditional ideas of political agency rather than contemporary understandings of cultural or communicative action. If civil society is the arena that occupies the space where the other areas of society (e.g. state, market, mass media) interact and overlap and where people associate to advance common interests (Laine 2014), it is crucial to explore how cultural and communicative agencies are shaping and transforming the roles and capacities of citizens in their interest to achieve social common goals. In other words, it is necessary to explore expressive and affective dimensions of collective action and other social categories such as memory, recognition and solidarity in order to fully understand the role of civil society in contested contexts.

As a consequence, this doctoral research will theoretically address the notion of civil society from two perspectives. Firstly, civil society is understood as an actual or anticipated *condition of possibility* in the on-going struggle to achieve liberal values and egalitarian diversity in contemporary times. This perspective is highlighting the importance of analysing civil society's contribution to democracy from socio-communicative perspectives. Secondly, civil society is understood as an *arena of contestation* or a space which reflects the social divisions of society as a whole. From this perspective, civil society is a conceptual tool which may contain normative assumptions about the desirability of an associational life which is pro-democratic and civilizing, but which does not assume that this is empirically the case (Whitehead 1997; Pearce 1997; Keane 2009).

2.2 Civil society in contexts of armed conflict and post-armed conflicts

Since the end of the Cold War it is extensively documented in the literature that civil society played a crucial role in armed conflicts and post-armed conflicts societies, particularly in two macro issues:

first, delivering or supporting processes of peacemaking or peacebuilding; and second, generating waves of democratization in fragile contexts (Marchetti and Tocci 2009; Kaldor 2013). Ross (2000) and Rufer (2012) argue that non-state actors are more efficient in working for peace and national reconciliation than state actors, being able to talk to different parties without losing credibility and being more suitable to support transitions to democracy in post-armed conflict societies. Thus, in armed conflict and post-armed conflict contexts people organize to defend common interests or work for social and political transformations. Notably, they have an important role in four particular areas: preventing violent conflict and military operations against civilians, working with local communities in zones of high violence to deliver humanitarian aid, supporting peace negotiations, and endorsing reconstruction and reconciliation in post-conflict societies. In short, civil society groups and victims' social movements are decisive for the continuation of anti-war efforts and they are key actors to develop sustainable peace in the long-term.

Orjuela (2003) argues that in the context of armed conflicts, the primary responsibility of civil society groups is to create social cohesion, developing a sense of trust and a spirit of collaboration to promote peace, cooperation and reconciliation between different sections of society. For Orjuela the main consequence of an active civil society is the prevention of future armed conflicts, underlining the importance of the civic sphere in normalizing the living conditions of former victims and improving human rights records in conflict zones. The particular role of victims' social movements in promoting peace negotiations is fundamental in terms of positive influence on public opinion and in expressing victims' perspectives in the political arena. When a peace process is under way, victims' organizations can contribute to improving the legitimacy of political negotiations, addressing their claims and grievances during the process to the leaders and the general public opinion. On the other hand, in post-conflict contexts, civil society groups and victims' groups are crucial to build trust between former combatants and civilians, especially to consolidate democracy and good governance to rebuild broken societies. Thus the principal threats for civil society in armed conflict contexts are the possible suppression of human rights, limitations of basic civil society activities, undermining of trust and erosion of social capital, as well as partial lawlessness. In this context the free press and independent media are drastically controlled, depriving civil society organizations of communication channels connecting to other social groups, citizens and political institutions.

Importantly, the deterioration of civil society activities in armed conflict contexts makes social recovery after war even more difficult. Fear, mistrust, insecurity, uncertainty, prompted by years

and years of armed conflict, all go to obstruct citizens, social groups and common people from participating in local community developments or activities. This decline is sometimes a consequence of the exile or forced displacement of different civil society groups or key social actors, undermining the capacity of social and civic organizations to remain in times of war. At the same time, as this research shows, the development of collective actions of victims' social movements and civil society groups in armed conflict and post-armed conflicts societies can be crucial to restore participatory democracy and all forms of associational activity. In some contexts, collective action is a mechanism that strengthens the bonds between different victims' communities across armed conflict regions, restoring the sense of citizenship and collective belonging among them. Also, civil society's collective actions are central for formulating the demands for respect of human rights in the midst of armed conflicts, facilitating processes of democratization in post-authoritarian societies, and supporting processes of construction of political and cultural memory, recognition and solidarity during and after the conflict. In summary, collective action plays a key role to mobilize civil society in times of conflict, taking over part of the tasks normally performed by the state (e.g. assisting humanitarian work) and inducing the formation of strong political identities (e.g. victims' or survivors political identities) and socio-political scenarios for conflict resolution.

According to Marchetti and Tocci (2009) and Kaldor (2013) the interaction between context, identity, frameworks of action, and political opportunity structure determines the impact of civil society in contexts of armed conflict and post-armed conflict. For these authors, impact is taken to mean both the direct results of a particular action, as well as the influence upon the wider context underlying a particular manifestation of conflict of post-conflict. Civil society direct and contextual impact is determined by the wider conflict or post-conflict context, by the identities of civil society, by their actions within the four main frameworks of action (*conflict escalation*, *conflict management*, *resolution* and *transformation*), and by the political structure within which they operate. In other words, contexts of conflict or post-conflict shape the identities of civil society. Those identities determine their frameworks of action and aims. In turn, the ability of civil society to navigate the political opportunity structure of conflicts and post-conflicts defines their overall direct and contextual impact, the latter of which feeds back into the original conflict or post-conflict contexts.

Furthermore, for Marchetti and Tocci (2009) and Della Porta (2015) during the last two decades three main macro-impacts of civil society in contexts of armed conflict and post-armed conflicts can be highlighted. Firstly they can fuel conflict by, for example, intensifying the initial causes leading to

further securitisation. Secondly they can hold a conflict in its current state, preventing an escalation whilst laying the ground for peace, as Marchetti and Tocci´s note:

> At a minimum and most visible level, they operate upon the most acute symptoms of conflict such as extreme violence, poverty, health or destruction, by providing immediate relief. By doing so, they may help desecuritizing the conflict environment, thus creating a more fertile ground for an ensuing tackling of its roots causes in the long term (Marchetti and Tocci 2009, p. 216).

The third macro-impact of civil society in contexts of armed conflict and post-armed conflicts is *peacemaking*. It involves the range of impacts that civil society can have on reconciling incompatible subject positions by desecuritizing the conflict environment.

Revisiting the work of Kalyvas (2012) and Wood (2015) we can argue that in post-armed conflict democracies with a strong military presence and militarized culture, civil society is often related with the push for full democratization and the civilization of politics, threatening the state. However, we must also be aware that the state is central to shaping the nature and role of civil society. When a state does not exist or it is weak or failing, civil society comes to occupy part of the space normally filled by the functioning state. In contexts of armed conflict or post-armed conflict, when the state lacks stability, sovereign or independence, civil society can shape the actual nature of the state in question. In this context, from a political science perspective (Marchetti and Tocci 2009; Della Porta 2015) civil society needs to be both permitted and protected by the state, its existence, nature and role is determined by democracy, outlining the scope of associative freedom, as well as by the existence of other basic rights and freedoms normally protected within democratic states.

Nevertheless, I will argue here that when these freedoms and rights are curtailed, then civil society is expected to act beyond legal boundaries, often aiming to subvert the state rather than interact with it, problematizing further the distinction between 'civil' and 'uncivil' civil society actors. In contexts of armed conflict or post-armed conflict, the shape of civil society is affected also by the specific nature of the democratic order in question. In other words, civil society functions and roles are fundamentally shaped by the specific armed conflict or post-armed conflict context in question. As a result, civil society is both an *independent agent for change* and a *dependent product of existing structures*, where 'civil' and 'uncivil' actors carrying a wide range of actions can interact within the state, both influencing and being influenced inextricably by it.

From the perspective of this thesis, a lack of a theoretically informed communicative approach in recent approaches (Marchetti and Tocci 2009; Kalyvas 2012; Della Porta 2015; Wood 2015) limits the analysis of civil society's collective action in contexts of armed and post-armed conflict. As a consequence, a number of questions need addressing. What is the role of communicative agency in these contexts? How are the communicative dimensions of collective action helping civil society to address the three main macro-impacts (*fuelling conflict, holding conflict, and peacemaking)*? What is the impact of expressive and affective dimensions of collective social action in shaping the political institutions in fragile or contested contexts? These are questions that need to be answered in order to fully understand the contemporary role of civil society in fragile social contexts.

The thesis therefore aims to address these gaps in understanding by investigating the collective actions of social movements of victims of armed conflicts from a socio-communicative perspective. If we can better understand the communicative and expressive dimensions of collective actions it is possible to analyse how civil society creates social cohesion, developing a sense of trust and a spirit of collaboration to promote peace, cooperation and reconciliation in fragile social contexts. My main argument here is that civil society is one of the principal social actors that has to develop a new type of socio-communicative regime in armed conflict and post-armed conflict societies, demanding in different spaces, fields or 'socio-political arenas' the recognition of communicative rights as citizen rights. Thus this recognition is crucial to start a process of communicative democratization, where citizens' collective social action is one of the principal resources.

2.3 Democratisation and civil society in Latin America

After the Second World War the notion of civil society gained relevance in Latin America, predominantly in the case of issues such as international and development cooperation, the promotion of democracy and the implementation of governmental policies concerning public health and education. Particularly, the concept of civil society became important in the fight against military dictatorships at the end of the 1960s, primarily in countries such as Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil. Birle (2009) had identified five types of civil society according to the main focus of action for the Latin American case. First, the *antiauthoritarian civil society type*, that address civil groups working for protection of human rights and civil liberties, facilitating, promoting and supporting nonviolent resistance to military regimes. Second, the *Gramscian civil society type*, reintroducing the philosophy of traditional leftist groups after the revolutionary armed liberation in Latin America had failed, opening new scenarios for public deliberation. Third, *neoliberal groups*

within civil society focused on individual freedom and supporters of neoliberal deregulation and privatization, encouraging free liberal market, capitalism and private business. Fourth, *New social movements,* label to describe civil society groups sceptical of established political parties and in favour of a new egalitarian and participative order. Finally, *social networks groups of civil society* type, to designate groups that want to improve the quality of governance, working toward reforming educational systems and improving civil society's participation in political and public life (Birle 2009; Spurk 2010).

However, Pearce (1997) and Lavalle and Bueno (2011) argue that towards the end of the last century the term civil society had become increasingly confused in its usage by Latin America academics, policy makers, activist and non-governmental organizations. For these scholars the concept of civil society become 'all things to all people', undermining the concept as a useful analytical tool for exploring the process and progress of democratisation and capitalist development in Latin America. Pearce (1997) argues that there is an assumption that the full integration of three elements (civil society, the market and democracy) would end the pendulum of cycles of Latin American political history between 'populist inclusion and authoritarian exclusion', creating dynamic economies, establishing the rule of law and consolidating fairly elected and accountable civilian governments. As a consequence, and following Pearce's ideas, there is a need for a serious debates about precisely how the concept of civil society should be used in studies of contemporary Latin American processes of economic and political liberalization and democratization. Regarding the relationship between Latin American democratization and the concept of civil society Pearce argues that:

> For scholars interested in the process and progress of Latin American democratization, the concept of 'civil society' encourages us to ask what difference a more diverse associational life can in fact make to the development of a rights-based state in the region. We can explore the *extent* to which the inequalities of the market place can be reconciled with the political equality premised in the concept of 'democracy', and whether associational life can contribute to such a reconciliation by re-shaping the political arena in ways that make it accountable to and representative of wider social groups (Pearce 1997, p.114).

Fine (1997) argues that the debate on the usefulness and relevance of the concept of civil society to understand Latin American democratization processes must distinguish between 'civil society' as a concept and 'civil society theory'. For the Latin American context, this scholar establishes that the concept of civil society derives from the political economy tradition and the unwilled, non-purposive

arena of human interaction. Associational life emerges from the interactions of individuals as they pursue their private interest. It rest on negative liberty, that is, freedom from interference and assumes no positive content to that freedom. On the other hand, civil society theory is about willed action, resistance, agency and creativity. It reflects the efforts of the progressive movements and organizations of Latin America to build a theoretical and methodological tool for political action and change in the wake of the collapse of communism. Thus it is about the search for new subjects and agents of history (Fine 1997; Pearce 1997).

Nevertheless, it is important to argue that these two distinct approaches to civil society in Latin America (as a *concept* and as a *theory*) are often confused with each other and should be treated as different projects. The main theoretical framework derives from the political economy perspective, leading to voluntarism amongst social movements that derive their impetus from a critique of the market as well as the state. It is no accident that contemporary attempts to modernize capitalism in Latin America hark back to ideas associated with the emergence of capitalist modernity in United States and Europe. Many of the social movements and popular organizations of Latin America, on the contrary, are expressions of ethnic, gender and class-based challenges to core elements of this neoliberal economic project or at least its failure to deliver satisfaction to all sector of society in the South American continent. As a consequence, civil society in Latin America holds the promise of a network of self-regulating and mutually restraining associations that can guarantee the freedom to pursue private interests. However, just as neo liberalism could never remain the exclusive ideology, the concept of civil society has meaning also for social organization amongst the excluded and marginalized of a region where inequitable wealth distribution is acknowledged to be the most extreme in the world. It legitimizes their efforts to access the new or revived democratic structures at national and local level, to make political parties accountable, emphasising ´civility´ in political life for the continent (Pearce 1997; Lavalle and Bueno 2011).

According to O'Donnell (2010) during the last two decades the concept of civil society in Latin America can be understood as a 'theoretical weapon against dictatorships' (O'Donnell 2010, p 76) and as a vital ingredient in the resistance to totalitarian regimes. However, Pinkney (2003) argues that the role of civil society in Latin America is very limited, and that it failed to become an important political actor once democracy had been restored. For this author, social movements on the continent are good for fighting against authoritarian regimes but less suitable for the promotion of civil participatory processes and sustaining democracy. As Birle (2009) suggested, one reason for this maybe that during military rule, some reduced forms of civil society did exist and that dictatorship

motivated the engagement of social and civic organizations that normally would not engage as part of civil society. However, after democracy was restored in Latin America, a growing heterogeneity of civic and social groups developed, contradicting assumptions that civil society would diminish once democracy was established. Positively speaking, support for civil society in Latin America infers the duty of citizens to defend greater pluralism, recognizing centralization of power as a barrier to improve social and communal life.

Jelin (1994) and Langenohl (2008) argue that there are three historical waves of democratization in the twentieth century: the first wave dates from the nineteenth century until after the end of World War I, when European monarchies were overthrown or democratically transformed. The second wave happened after the end of World War II, and included two important groups of countries: first, Germany, Italy and Japan (defeated in World War II and democratized from outside), and second the colonies of the European empires in Africa and Asia that achieved independence and aspired to a become a part of the World's democratic order. Finally, the third wave of democratization encompassed Latin America (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, etc.), Asian (Cambodia, South Korea, Taiwan, etc.), and South European Countries (Greece, Portugal, Spain, etc.), whose authoritarian regimes were overthrown in the course of the 1970s and 1980s. According to O'Donnell (2010) this third wave of democratization introduced an important consideration related to the role of civil society movements and the development of collective actions in the public sphere: a possible contradiction between political pragmatism and juridical morality in the ways that these societies wanted to address the past events emerged around the issues of exoneration or impunity for the perpetrators to become the centre of these discussions. In this context, Arenhövel (2000), Gamarra (2006), and O'Donnell (2010) established that three principal categories (memory, recognition and solidarity) have emerged as crucial to fully comprehend the relationship between processes of democratization and civil society's collective actions for the region.

According to Arenhövel (2000), Dubiel (2004) and O'Donnell (2010) the role of civil society's collective actions in processes of democratization of post-authoritarian Latin American societies can be addressed using four main perspectives: first, the function of collective action to create a new narrative about these new democratic societies, and how to develop a transition to democracy characterized by the dilemma of combining justice in a legal and a moral sense with the necessity of political and social integration of former victims and perpetrators. Second, the role of collective action in providing a sense of belonging and creating collective narratives about the past when the end of regime brings the challenge of a democratic consolidation between the perpetrators and

victims, who have very different interest and expectations. Third, the challenge of building a new political and cultural narrative about the past and the present when perpetrators (or their supporters) still have influential positions in post-authoritarian societies, pressuring new authorities to advocate impunity or exoneration, and, on the other hand, victims (or their representatives) reproach new democratic government for continuing the authoritarian legacy. Finally, the role of collective action in dealing with political, moral and criminal guilt, and how it affects social solidarity and political integration of the members of this new 'imagined community' (Nino 1996; Tucker 1999; Arenhövel 2000; Dubiel 2004).

In this context, I would like to provide three particular Latin American examples of victims' collective action in order to highlight the importance of these four main topics, the relevance of the categories of memory, solidarity and recognition, which are central to this thesis, and their implications for the region. First, after the fall of authoritarian regime in Argentina (1976 – 1983) in 1986 the former Argentinean President Raul Alfonsín voted two amnesty laws (*Ley de Punto Final* and *Ley de Obediencia Debida*) in order to prevent trials against militaries involved in human rights violations as a part of the negotiations with the military government before the restitution of democracy in 1984. According to different human rights reports (CONADEP 1984; Crenzel 2008) more than 30,000 people were tortured, arrested or secretly executed without trial between 1977 and 1983. Argentina's National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons documented that more than 11,000 victims died as a consequence of different human rights violations during this military regime. Twenty years after (in 2006) human rights defenders, NGOs and victims' groups such as Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo succeeded in overturning those two amnesty laws after a long and persistent struggle to pressure the Argentine Supreme Court. This example shows how the legitimacy of juridical solutions for macro-criminal actions to a high degree depends on the engagement of victims in creating those solutions, and how impunity cannot be part of the negotiated changes before the restitution of democracy in post-authoritarian regimes.

Moreover, the Argentinean example underpins Arenhövel's (2000) and Dubiel's (2004) ideas concerning the role of memory, recognition and collective actions in the public dealing with political and criminal guilt, and the challenge of democratic consolidation in the situation when perpetrators and victims have different interest and expectations. On the one hand, the military leaders that ruled Argentina for almost nine years wanted to create a narrative about the past that did not address institutional practices of human rights violations or individual stories of suffering as a consequence of the ruling of this authoritarian regime. On the other hand, victims and their

representatives wanted the entire truth about what happened during these nine years to become part of the narrative, treating it as a key element for obtaining symbolic restitution. That is a good example why collective action cannot be neutral in post-authoritarian societies. The main challenge in the construction of collective memory through collective actions, without doubt, is how to create cultural and political narratives in the midst of the tension between the political imperative to integrate victims and counterpublics in the society, and the juridical imperative to do justice to perpetrators and offenders.

The second example is post-authoritarian Chile. From 1973 to 1989 the dictator General Augusto Pinochet was the commander in chief of the Chilean armed forces and the political head of the military government, abolishing civil liberties, criminalizing union activities and being directly responsible for more than 30,000 victims of torture and approximately 3,000 disappearances during this period (Salmon 2006). When in 1990 the transition to democracy in this country started, a crucial discussion about how to represent the violent past generated a lot of tensions between the victims and the supporters of military government. General Pinochet never apologized for committing those crimes and he was never put to trial for these atrocities. Moreover, in the institutional memory frame of this country the military government was a necessary step to prevent communism in this region. Antagonistically, local human rights organizations, international NGOs and organizations of victims claimed through collective actions that General Pinochet was a murderer and had to be charged for his actions, thus establishing a narrative of *oppositional memory* where the military government, and specifically General Pinochet, was responsible for those crimes against humanity.

This example of Chile underpins the tension of remembering collective crimes where for some part of the population these atrocities are justified or "necessary", and, on the other hand, how the swing from silence to public acknowledgment may strengthen a democratic political culture instead of undermining the legitimacy of new democratic institutions. The challenge in this case is how to create mechanisms to develop processes of democratic consolidation when some political narratives are referred to as a 'glorious past' (the times of the military government) that clearly undermines theories of societal integration. In other words, this case is the perfect example of Nino's (1996) ideas about the challenge of building a new political and cultural narrative of the past and the present when perpetrators, their supporters, or some important part of this population still has influence positions in post-authoritarian societies and still supporting past authoritarian times.

The third example is Paraguay. The commander of the armed forces General Alfredo Stroessner was the dictator of this Latin American country from 1954 to 1989, and during his authoritarian regime Paraguay became a safe place for Nazi war criminals, deposed dictators (*e.g.* Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza), drug traffickers and smugglers. At the end of 1989, Stroessner escaped to Brazil in order to avoid Paraguayan courts that requested him for homicide charges, and he was never judged for his crimes. Institutional reports established that more than 20,000 people were assassinated by the armed forces and almost 128,000 people were tortured or disappeared for political reasons during his military regime (El Pais 2008). In this context, Gamarra (2006) argue that the consequences of this dictatorship are still evident today "in terms of the structures he established, the absence of political institutions (…) Constructing stable democratic institutions has been a real challenge. The armed forces have undergone internal disarray, between factions that still see Stroessner as their leader and new ones open to fundamental change" (Gamarra 2006, p.5).

The case of Paraguay is an example of *memory cultural trauma* (Alexander 2004; Arnold-de Simine and Radstone 2013), where the long-term effects of authoritarian regimes on socio-political cohesion and democratic stability makes it a historical challenge to encapsulate national memories (where perpetrators still have symbolic political power), and the public awareness of consolidate new democratic institutions as a key element to elaborate new narratives about the past. Thus, juridical responses to authoritarian heritages are an indispensable part of transition to democracy, and when impunity is a fundamental part of these narratives of the past it can undermine the inclusive construction of representations of victims' suffering as a part of post-authoritarian national identity. In other words, the relevance of Tucker's ideas (1999) about how to develop a transition to democracy characterized by the dilemma of combining justice in a legal and a moral sense with the necessity of political and social integration of former victims and perpetrators, is still crucial to understand the processes of constructions of political memory, recognition and future victims' collective actions in Paraguay.

The importance of analysing civil society's role in processes of democratisation in Latin America is now proven (Pearce 1997; Arenhövel 2000; González and Aguilar 2001; Dubiel 2004; Gamarra 2006; O'Donnell 2010; Rufer 2012). However, this academic tradition does not fully conceptualise and explore in sufficient depth ways in which civil society can address communicative and expressive dimensions of collective action in fragile contexts, which, as the above examples illustrate, are clearly central to processes of democratisation. This thesis aims to fill this gap contributing with a

theoretically informed analysis of the communicative and expressive dimensions of civil society's collective actions, focusing on the collective actions of the victims of the Colombian armed conflict.

2.4 Civil society in Colombia

According to the report *Civil Society Voices: Agendas for Peace in Colombia* (2014) compiled by different international NGOS that have worked in Colombia since 1980 to promote peace and respect for human rights (OXFAM, CAFOD, Amnesty, Human Rights Watch, Christian AID, SCIAF, Trocaire and ABColombia) Colombia is facing a crucial and complex moment in its history. The Government of President Juan Manuel Santos opened peace dialogues on October 2012 with the objective of ending the armed conflict with the guerrilla group the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – FARC-EP. The dialogues have received furious opposition from right-wing groups in the country, including the previous president (now Senator) Alvaro Uribe Vélez. Notwithstanding opposition, Mr Santos was re-elected for a second term of office in June 2014. President Santos was re-elected with support from social movements of victims, left-wing political parties, indigenous groups and afro-Colombians and peasants communities. The reason for its support was the commitment of President Santos to continue the peace process and finish the armed conflict with the FARC-EP. By October 2015, the peace process had reached item five in a six point agenda (*rural reform*, *drug trafficking*, *political participation, justice and rights of victims, end of the conflict* and *implementation*).

The complexity of Colombia's situation is that building a sustainable peace is a lengthy process requiring long-term engagement and commitment from a diverse range of social actors. Thus Colombian civil society is essential for promoting dialogue with government, contributing to the construction of public policies and defending human rights (ABColombia 2014). Furthermore, civil society in Colombia has been the main victim of the armed conflict over the last five decades. The National Centre of Historical Memory (CHM 2013) has recognised 1,982 massacres of the civilian population between 1980 and 2012, 1,166 attributable to paramilitary groups, 343 to guerrilla groups, 295 to governmental security forces and the remainder to unknown armed groups. The armed conflict has claimed the lives of at least 220,000 civilians, 6.1 million have been forced to abandon or dispossessed of their land, almost 26,000 enforced disappearances and at least 30,000 kidnappings (CMH 2013; ABColombia 2014). As a consequence, it is clear that Colombian civil society will be essential for the promotion of human rights, good governance, democracy, development

with social justice and guarantees of non-repetition in order to achieve an integral sustainable peace in the country.

According to Villar (1998) and Vasquez (2010) civil society groups and social movements are diverse in Colombia. For these scholars, the 1991 Colombian Constitution generated institutional and legal conditions for the development of heterogeneous civil society organizations. This Constitution facilitates their autonomy and their participation and active presence in public policy debates, in the provision of social services, and in the monitoring of governmental programs. As a result, participatory democracy, the possibility of grater private sector influence in social development and the construction of a social and democratic government were the principal framework of action for civil society organizations in Colombia since 1991 (Villar 1998; Vasquez 2010). However, despite the active presence of civil society organizations in public affairs in Colombia in the last two decades, the space opened for social movements and other civil organizations is always challenged by limits to civic participation imposed by the armed conflict and political violence. In this context, my argument is that it is clear that the political, social, cultural and institutional reconstruction of Colombia will require an active role of Colombian civil society in order to create a social and democratic society.

Following ideas of different scholars and human rights reports (Wills 2006; Villa 2007; Sarmiento 2007; HRW 2010; UNDP 2011; Saavedra 2012; CMH 2013; ABColombia 2014) seven particular civil society and social movements groups have emerged in Colombia since 1991. First, a strong *women´s movement* has contribute to design and implement initiatives to resolve the armed conflict and demand justice for abuses from a feminist perspective. Civil organizations such as *La Ruta Pacifica de las Mujeres, Mujeres de Negro, Red Nacional de Mujeres* or the network *Mariposas con Alas* are examples of women´s groups working to increase women´s access to human rights and to empower women in armed conflict areas to be more visible in the public sphere. Second, *journalist and human rights defenders organizations* have been working denouncing abuses by guerrilla and paramilitaries groups against civilians and researching cases of crimes against humanity in Colombia such as extrajudicial executions committed by Colombian security forces or the use of child soldiers by guerrilla groups and the Colombian army. Third, a diverse *peasant, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities* that have implemented initiatives at the regional and local level to promote respect for civil space and the civilian population from a human rights perspective. The development of strategies such as *peace communities*, *indigenous reserves* and *humanitarian zones* are examples of actions made by these civil organizations demanding to not be involve in the armed conflict, claiming

for respect and making clear that they do not want to provide information or logistical support to any armed actor.

Furthermore, *local church communities* have been playing an important role in protecting victims and vulnerable groups across the country. They have been focusing on topics such as internal displacement, inequality, social exclusion, poverty, and the relationship between armed conflict and social exclusion. Catholic organizations such as *Pastoral Social*, *CINEP*, *Justpaz, Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados Colombia,* and *Peace Programme* have been advocating and helping civil society organizations to work for peace, reconciliation, peace education and the promotion of human rights in areas of Colombia with high levels of violence. Another example of civil society´s organizations in Colombia are *Community Action Councils* (Juntas de Acción Comunal). These organizations are active in the planning, evaluation and implementation of development programmes, particularly in rural areas of the country. These councils evaluate the interests, needs and concerns of rural communities in order to advise policy-making actors in the implementation of governmental programmes and public policies. The main aim of these civil organizations is to generate social and economic programmes based on the consensus of the community. The sixth type of organization are *victims groups*, social actors that have been working supporting and representing victims of political violence, demanding truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition in the context of the Justice and Peace process. These civil organizations are focused on defending and promoting victims´ rights in different socio-political arenas, developing strategies such as rallies, demonstrations and marches across the country to demand information about their relatives and an end to forced disappearances. Finally, *grass roots organisations* have been working in Colombia providing direct assistance, aid and training to the civilian population of the country in topics such as cooperatives, rural welfare and associations of community mothers in rural areas. These organizations work to promote sustainable economic alternatives and livelihoods for Colombians involved in drug production in rural areas, defending human rights and helping marginalized communities to resist threats and stigmatizations.

However, civil society groups in Colombia have reconfigured their identities and focus of action in the last four years because the current peace process between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP. According to UNDP (2011), CMH (2013) and ABColombia (2014) civil society groups in Colombia have responded to the peace dialogues in a multiplicity of ways. For some, the dialogues are viewed suspiciously, in many cases due to the past unsuccessful experience of demobilisation processes with other guerrilla groups such as M-19 and EPL in the past. Other civilian groups are

incredulous or against the peace process because they consider the FARC-EP should be defeated militarily. Nevertheless, these reports argue that a large section of the Colombian population have actively engaged in the current peace process, considering these dialogues as the best opportunity Colombia has for ending five decades of armed conflict between the state and the FARC-EP. Spaces for civil society participation in the peace process has been created in different ways. For example, the creation of 'Victims Forums' across the country between 2012 to 2014 to formulate and present to the peace dialogues proposals on how to ensure truth, justice, reparation and non-reparation from a civilian perspective is an example of direct civil society participation. As a result of these forums, four delegations of victims have participated in roundtables and workshops with the delegates of the government and the FARC-EP in La Havana to explore solutions and agreements to the agenda´s point of justice and rights of victims.

Another example is Colombian women´s organizations that have taken an active role in establishing, promoting and calling for formal spaces for consultation and participation into the peace process. The Colombian government had recognised that women have been the vortex in which the pain of the conflict has focused with immensity (CMH 2013). However, it took considerable work, lobby and internal pressure from women´s organisations across the country for two women negotiators to be appointed to the government team in November 2013. Until that date all negotiators (on both sides) had been male. As a consequence, a gender sub commission was created in 2014 to ensure a gender perspective in all of the future agreements reached in the peace process, and a 'Women and Peace' Summit was lead in Bogota in August 2014 where women´s organizations of the country demanded a leading role in decision making in the transition to post conflict (UN 2014). According to women´s organizations such as *Mujeres de Negro* and *Red Nacional de Mujeres* knowing the truth is an essential ingredient for people in Colombia to be able to move forward: "the truth, acknowledgement of responsibility, restitution of rights and guarantees of non-repetition are the foundation of reconciliation and the way to obtain forgiveness" (ABColmbia 2014, p.2).

In this context, this thesis is focusing on how civil society groups in Colombia, particularly victims´ groups, are addressing communicative and expressive dimensions to claim for truth, justice and guarantees of non-repetition in areas of high levels of armed conflict. This contributes to, but is distinctive from, the range of literature focusing on the causes and consequence of the Colombian armed conflict (UNDP 2003; Wills 2006; HRW 2010; UNDP 2011; Saavedra 2012; CMH 2013; ABColombia 2014). In addressing symbolic and expressive strategies to construct memories and processes of recognition and solidarity through communicative agency, the thesis identifies non-

conventional ways of building a future sustainable peace for Colombia. It is this socio-communicative approach, empirically substantiated, that marks out the original contribution of the thesis.

2.5 Collective actions of victims' social movements in Colombian civil society: memory, recognition and solidarity

The aim of the thesis is to comprehend civil society and social movements' collective action focusing on analysing the expressive dimensions of collective action. It is possible to establish an extensive literature about how to understand collective action of victims´ social movements from a descriptive approach (Baumgarten, Daphi, and Ullrich 2014; Daphi 2014; Jasper 2014). The thesis will offer an alternative understanding based on a socio-communicative approach. As a result, one of the aims of the thesis is to demonstrate how emotions and expressive dimensions of social actions are key to holistic understanding of contemporary changes of social movements´ collective action in contexts of armed conflict.

The case study here is Eastern Antioquia in Colombia, specifically the victims' social movement of this Colombian region. The research question is: how can we understand and explain the communicative and expressive dimensions of social movements and, in particular the collective actions of victims of armed conflicts? Thus I explore this question through a case-study of the social movement of victims of Eastern Antioquia, particularly the victims' groups of *The Association of Organized Women of Eastern Antioquia* (AMOR), *The Provincial Association of Victims to Citizens* (APROVIACI), *The Association of Victims of Granada Town* (ASOVIDA) and *The Centre to Approach Reconciliation and Reparation* (CARE).

This case study has a singularity for the Latin American context: the collective actions for this Colombian victims' social movement are happening in an on-going conflict and not after the conflict. Contreras (2012) has demonstrated that the challenge here is that Colombia's victims' collective actions are being used as a means of conflict resolution during the on-going conflict and the interpretation of victims' collective actions and histories represents a particularly sensitive and contested field. Furthermore, in order to establish the main interpretations about what has been happening in more than five decades of armed conflict, this case study is an example of the permanent tension between *official narratives* about war created by the Colombian government, Colombian army, paramilitary groups and guerrilla groups ('the official warriors'), and *non-official narratives* created by civil society organizations, NGOs, social movements, civilians and victims ('the unofficial war actors'). In other words, one of the main contributions of this doctoral research is to

present these non-official narratives about the Colombian armed conflict from the victims' perspective, analysing how these narratives evidence the expressive dimensions of victims' collective action in the public sphere and their impact.

Scholars as Zelizer (2008) and Erll (2008) argued that for this particular case the tension between *official* and *non-official* narratives shows how victims' collective actions are constantly challenged by other agents, actors or institutions that have their own political, social, and cultural agendas. The central aim of these contesting social actors is to promote and establish a particular set of views about what has been happening in the Colombian armed conflict into collective frames of memory, shaping particular social contexts, sites of memories and meanings according to their values, narratives and identities. The tension between *official* and *non-official* narratives takes place in scenarios where the clash of diverse sets of values and social memories defines positions of power, recognition, solidarity and visibility inside this on-going armed conflict. As a result, the development of multiple frameworks of collective action on the part of victims' social movements is crucial to restore a sense of citizenship inside victims' groups, and to promote processes of national reconciliation and transition to democracy from a civil society perspective.

A good example of the complexity of the tension between *official* and *non-official* narratives is the mechanisms that the Colombian government implemented from 2002 to 2010 to build a collective memory of the armed conflict focused on the role of criminal acts in society. However, this ignored the structural causes of the armed conflict and undermined the role of victims in the construction of social process of memory. The consequence of this was that the official memory of the conflict during these years promoted a false notion of reconciliation and peace that has contributed to prolonging the conflict, portraying a lack of plural narratives in the public sphere. In summary, the construction of memory where official narratives focus on the perpetrators' point of view, strongly affects the formation of national reconciliation processes. In regimes of violence individuals attempt to make sense of the daily violence using cultural relations (Alexander 2004), while the function of official sources is the legitimization of social order so, in this particular case, is the legitimization of a 'criminal social order' against civilians.

In this context, this thesis will address the concept of *subaltern counterpublics*, developed principally by Nancy Fraser (1990; 1997; 2008), to analyse the importance and relevance of *non-official narratives* in the construction of memory, recognition and solidarity in the midst of armed conflicts. The concept of subaltern counterpublics can be understood as "parallel discursive arenas where

members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser 1997, p. 81). This scholar argues that subjugation perpetuates and reproduces systems of domination, exclusion and discrimination, and, as a result, the creation of subaltern counterpublics narratives offers subordinated social groups a means of support and collective resistance. In Fraser´s (1997) words: "In stratified societies subaltern counterpublics have a dual character. On the one hand, they function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment. On the other hand, they also function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics. It is precisely in the dialectic between these two functions that their emancipatory potential resides" (Fraser 1997, p. 82).

Furthermore, this thesis will also consider the category of *recognition*, following Axel Honneth´s (1996; 2003; 2004; 2007; 2011) ideas, as a main category to comprehend the struggle of recognition between *subaltern counterpublics* and *dominant actors* in particular armed conflict contexts. For this author recognition plays a crucial role in individual identities formation and in the configuration of theories of justice in fragile social contexts. Honneth (1996; 2003) stress that recognition is essential to self-realisation and I will argue that if we can identify the ways of how this is achieved would be possible establish the normative role that this category can play in understanding the dynamics of victims' social movements in armed conflict contexts from an intersubjectivity and less normative perspective. Thus this scholar defines three spheres of interaction (love, rights, and solidarity), which are connected to different patterns of recognition necessary for an individual's development of a positive relation to self. This thesis will use this framework of spheres of interaction in order to analyse how expressive and communicative victims´ collective actions are affecting the patterns of recognition of regional and local communities in Eastern Antioquia.

Drawing on Colombia as a case study, this doctoral research aims to contribute in five principal ways to the field of research into social movements, particularly those involving the victims of armed conflict, to fill the gap where empirically informed analysis is absent. First, it analyses how the victims of the Colombian armed conflict have been addressing expressive dimensions of collective social action through practices, dispositions and mobilizations in order to rebuild and re-establish social, political and cultural bonds with their local communities, specifically transforming their victim status into an active citizenship condition. Second, it creates a theoretical and methodological tool (which I will call 'the communicative citizenship field') to understand the relationship between communication, citizenship and human rights in contemporary armed conflict contexts and thus

proposes a more holistic approach, highlighting the importance of emotions and affection as a catalyst to generate collective actions for counterpublic groups in armed conflict societies. Third, it aids our understanding about how different socio-communicative actions and strategies associated with processes of construction of political and cultural memory and the contemporary struggle for recognition and solidarity for different actors in the public sphere are addressing the importance of victims of armed conflicts to claim human rights from counter public perspectives, competing with other social actors for power, communicative resources and the reconfiguration of symbolic regimes in the public sphere. Fourth, it shows how the forms of collective action based on emotions rather that reflexive actions can open the door to new ways to claim for justice, truth and reconciliation in contemporary armed conflicts, underlining the importance of symbolic reparation as a strategy to start real processes of transition to democracy in fragile contexts. Finally, this doctoral research aims to present non-official narratives about the Colombian armed conflict addressing victims' perspectives, understanding the dynamics of contestation in construction of memory, recognition and solidarity during the conflict, as well as the claiming of public and conflict-related spaces and the construction of victims' collective identity as civilians before the cessation of violence.

CHAPTER 3

3. Communicative Citizenship Framework

The following chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I will introduce the concept of communicative citizenship, the main dimensions of this citizenship mode, including how this it operates in public spheres. The main argument here is that the operationalization of communicative citizenship actions for victims of armed conflicts in the public sphere is the best way to restore a sense of citizenship and collective belonging for (at least) part of counterpublic social actors. Thus I will argue that communicative citizenship can be understood as the capacity of citizens to vocalize and express their demands and claims involving emotions and acts of communication in order to perform collective actions in the public sphere. In other words, the capacity of citizens to exercise their communicative agency addressing affections and significant dimensions of collective action in order to mobilize and organize new types of direct action.

In the second section, I will present three modes of communicative citizenship and the distinctive features of each mode, arguing that the operationalization of communicative citizenship agency for social groups can catalyse processes of social memory, recognition and solidarity from a counterpublic perspective. In the last section I will present the main conclusions for this chapter, stressing two principal aspects. Firstly, that civil society is at the centre of the new dynamic that emerges from the operationalization of the concept of communicative citizenship in the public sphere, providing communicative agency to citizens in order to transform specific social structures and claim different types of rights from a socio-communicative perspective. Secondly, that the development of communicative citizenship actions for counterpublic actors in the public sphere is crucial in order to transform social memory narratives, symbolic regimes and struggles for recognition and solidarity.

The construction of the communicative citizenship framework is based on Alexander's ideas of *cultural trauma* (2004), *civil solidarity* (2006) and his work regarding the *centrality of power in culture* (2011; 2013). This thesis concurs with Alexander that the development of a strong civil society in the public sphere of armed conflict and post armed conflict societies can generate inclusionary practices of reconciliation, reparation, solidarity and equality in fragile societies with real possibilities of justice. Treating harmful social incidents such as armed conflicts not as "naturally born" but as "intentionally made" (Alexander 2004), the communicative citizenship framework is

focusing on the role of civil society to constitute a prevailing sense of community in contested social contexts. Thus the three modes of communicative citizenship (the *communicative citizenship social memory mode,* the *communicative citizenship expressive action mode* and the *communicative citizenship solidaristic mode)* are addressing the importance of victims of armed conflicts to claim human rights from non-conventional socio-communicative perspectives, competing with other social actors for power, communicative resources and the reconfiguration of symbolic regimes in the public sphere.

3.1 The communicative citizenship field: concepts, dimensions and aims

In the following section I am going to introduce the concept of communicative citizenship, its dimensions and a description of the main communicative citizenship mode, including the provision of information of how this category operates in public spheres and what aims and goals it serves. Three main considerations will shape this exercise. First, this tries to go beyond the instrumental and media-centric perspective that social sciences traditionally use to comprehend the communicative field and its relation with other political, cultural or social fields (Hesmondhalgh and Toynbee 2008; Castells 2009). Second, this communicative citizenship concept aims to create a bond between the categories of memory, recognition and solidarity that crosses the disciplinary borders of social movements' studies and communication theory. Moreover, this approach is relevant to the particular role of civil society, citizens and victims in the construction of democratic public spheres in armed conflict and post armed conflict societies. Third, communicative citizenship is concerned with processes of civil solidarity. In Alexander's (2006) words:

> Societies are not governed by power alone and are not fuelled only by the pursuit of self-interest. Feelings for others matter, and they are structured by the boundaries of solidarity. How solidarity is structured, how far it extends what it is composed of – these are critical issues for every social order, and especially for orders that aim at the good life. Civil solidarity is possible because people are oriented not only to the here and now, but to the ideal, to the transcendent, to what they hope will be the everlasting (Alexander 2006, p.3)

In societies that suffer long periods of armed conflict, fundamental values such as respect for life and human solidarity are under threat, and one of the consequences is the rupture of social contracts and social cohesion inside local and regional communities. Thus Alexander's notion of civil solidarity is important in order to understand how expressive dimension of collective action can restore a

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sense of social belonging and citizenship in armed conflict and post armed conflict societies. Moreover, following Alexander´s ideas about the centrality of power in culture (2011; 2013), I would draw upon a performative approach to the category of symbolic power to develop the concept of communicative citizenship. Alexander (2013) argues that power becomes authority when social actors exercise their agency (for our case communicative agency) vis-a-vis one another, highlighting how legitimate symbolic power is subtle and complex and highly contingent. For Alexander, any theory of modern power must become a theory of the cultural performance of power, and it is necessary to analyse how material and ideal resources are creatively employed for social actors to deploy effective symbolic actions in the public sphere. In this context, my argument is that analysing expressive dimensions of collective action is the best way to understand the impact of symbolic actions (and the operationalization of cultural performances of power) for armed conflict contexts. On the relationship between cultural performances of power and symbolic actions Alexander establishes that:

> Cultural performance of power is the social process by which actors, individually or in concert, display for others the meaning of their social situation. This meaning may or may not be one to which they themselves subjectively adhere: it is the meaning that they, as social actors, consciously or unconsciously wish to have others believe. In order for their display to be effective, actors must offer a plausible performance, one that leads those to whom their actions and gestures are directed to accept their motives and explanations as a reasonable account (…) symbolic actions provides the deep background of collective representations for cultural performance of power (Alexander 2006b, p.32-33).

Nevertheless, and most importantly, the concept of communicative citizenship is recognizing the notion of civil society as a sociological concept on both at a theoretical and empirical level. This means, following Alexander (1997; 2004; 2011), going beyond the Marxist and social democratic considerations of civil society as principally a realm of economic interest, on the one hand, and beyond the liberal equation of civil society with legal protections of individual rights, on the other. As a result, the concept of communicative citizenship focuses on civil society as a realm of solidarity, a 'we-ness' that simultaneously affirms the sanctity of the individual and these individuals' obligations to the collective (Alexander 1997; 2006). Communicative citizenship establishes an arena in which social solidarity is connected to every member of the community that transcends individual commitments, limited loyalties and partisan interests.

3.2 The concept of communicative citizenship

The interdisciplinary concept of communicative citizenship can be understood as the capacity of citizens to vocalize and express their demands and claims involving acts of communication in order to perform collective actions in the public sphere of armed conflict and post armed conflict societies. It is the capacity of citizens to exercise their communicative agency and mobilize and organize new types of direct action and is especially significant in fragile societies. As a result, the communicative citizenship field focuses on analysing the communicative citizenship actions of victims of armed conflicts in the public sphere as a way to restore a sense of citizenship and collective belonging for this particular social actor. My principal argument here is that victims of armed conflicts, by addressing expressive dimensions of collective social action can re-establish social, political and cultural bonds with their local communities, transforming their victim status into an active citizenship condition. The embodiment of communicative citizenship actions by armed conflict victims' groups in the public sphere demonstrates the importance of emotions and affections in generating collective actions of counterpublic groups. Victims of armed conflicts claim human rights using non-conventional communicative strategies in the reconfiguration of symbolic regimes in the public sphere. As I will argue, communicative citizenship agency by different social groups generates processes of social memory construction, recognition and solidarity from a counterpublic perspective.

To emphasise the non-conventional, expressive and symbolic dimensions of social and political action is to differentiate the current thesis from an orthodoxy which has focused on goal oriented rational action. From a classic perspective, Max Weber (1978) distinguished four types of social actions regarding rationalization. For Weber rationalization is the process whereby an increasing number of social actions and social relationships become based on considerations of efficiency or calculation. Thus social actions can be categorized into four 'ideal types' (*traditional social action*, *affective social action*, *value rational social action*, and *instrumental-rational social action*). Following this analytical approach, my argument here is that a Weberian rational consideration of efficiency or calculation for social actions cannot address the goals and aims of the operationalization of communicative citizenship actions in the public sphere. For this case, the operationalization of emotions and affections are underpinning significant dimensions of collective action in order to mobilize and organize new types of direct action in fragile societies. Communicative citizenship is here understood as non-conventional political action expressed in counter publics by symbolic and affective action, focusing on the ways that those new political actions are generating new forms of social organization.

As an ideal against which political progress can be measured, communicative citizenship includes equal representations and plural narratives in the mass media, wider access to governmental information and data as well as guarantees of freedom of speech and expression. Furthermore, it promotes the use of communication and information for governance and development in order to generate participatory communicative practices in public spheres and to encourage diversity within the mass media ecosystem. When the citizen and civil society are at the centre of the dynamic that emerges from the operationalization of communicative citizenship, communicative agency to citizens transforms different social structures. The next figure describes the relationship between communicative citizenship dimensions and the set of rights that can emerge.

Figure 1
Relationship between communicative citizenship and communicative rights
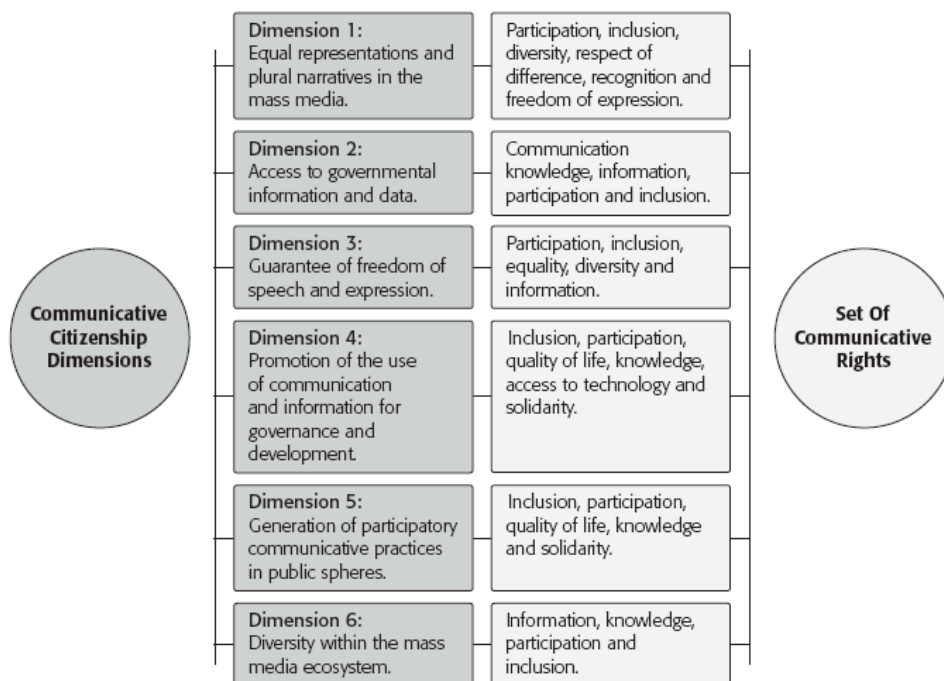
As figure 1 shows, there are six communicative citizenship dimensions which link to a different set of communicative rights that come from the communicative dimensions of civil, political, cultural and social rights. These six dimensions have a direct relationship with rights and responsibilities, as the communicative citizenship field tries to encourage the development of communicative agency in citizens. If by agency we understand, after Stevenson, "the ability to be able to act within a social and cultural context while making a difference to the flow of events. Agency should not be thought of as the opposite of structure, but dependent upon rules and resources generated by social structures. To have agency is defined by the ability to be able to intervene actively" (Stevenson

2003, p. 155), these linkages connect communicative citizenship actions and aims to the wider social and political structure.

The first dimension, *equal representations and plural narratives in the mass media*, refers to the possibility of claiming more diverse perspectives in the narratives of the mass media, especially in news and informative narratives. This dimension has a strong link to journalist practices and to the notion of social responsibility of mass media to provide information addressing different types of resources in order to describe the complexity of social reality. The access of audiences to different perspectives and points of view about social issues improves the quality of the public sphere, because this diversity encourages the recognition of other social actors and their demands. The rights to participation and inclusion have an important role here, and this plurality and diversity represents the first step in demanding another symbolic regime, where the equal access to other social perspectives and values could transform power relations in social structures. If multiculturalism seeks to understand how different cultures might best live together (Stevenson 2003; Held 2010), the aim of this dimension is to transform the mass media into plural spaces where different cultures and social actors can interact on equal terms and freely express arguments and reasons in the mediatised agora (Bonilla 2004; Castells 2009), therefore creating inclusive mass media sphere.

The second dimension, *access to governmental information and data*, is crucial for "enabling citizens to exercise their voice, to effectively monitor and hold government accountable, and to enter into formed dialogue about decisions which affect their lives" (Mcloughlin and Scott 2010, p. 29); therefore having strong ties with the relationship between communications and governance. This dimension provides citizens with the ability to use information to contribute to governmental transparency and demand better governance and public services. The right to information is a central right here, establishing participation in governance for parts of civil society, and promoting equal economic development, reducing poverty and fighting corruption. At the same time, this dimension is connected with the right of communication for knowledge, and tries to support governmental actions in favour of participation, recognition and inclusion, stimulating the capacity of public bodies to provide information in the public sphere. The British national data website (data.gov.uk), The United States Open Governmental Data Project (data.gov), The City of Toronto's official Data Set Catalogue (toronto.ca/open) or The New Zealand Open Data Catalogue (open.org.nz), are some examples of the operationalization of this dimension in specific contexts.

The third dimension, *guarantees of freedom of speech and expression*, has a strong relationship with the historical development of civil and political rights, and is one of the most traditional communicative demands, supported by the freedom of press rule. This dimension is crucial to understand the quality of democracy in a country, and it is an indicator of how effective the communicative structures are in specific societies. Furthermore, the right of freedom of speech is recognized in The International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and as a Human Right under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). In this context, this communicative citizenship dimension is directly associated with a set of values including equality, respect of difference, participation, recognition, justice, information, knowledge and quality of life. This is the only dimension that falls within the category of Human Right and it is the node which interconnects the action and development of other communicative citizenship dimensions.

The fourth dimension, *promote the use of communication and information for governance and development*, has two elements: on the one hand, this dimension focuses on the role of the state to support independent and plural media systems, to increase access to information, to give representation to marginalized social sectors at the governmental communicative agenda, and to enable citizen participation, social accountability and state capability, accountability and responsiveness (Mcloughlin and Scott 2010, p. 6). On the other hand, this dimension encourages the process of communication for development (C4D) on different levels, trying to promote social development from a communicative perspective. The United Nations (1997) points out that communication for development "stresses the need to support two-way communication systems that enable dialogue and that allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns, and participate in the decisions that relate to their development" (United Nations 1997, p. 2). In other words, the final aim of this dimension is to use communication and mass media to empower people and communities to visualise aspirations, discover solutions to their problems and create a more diverse public sphere through the creation of citizens' media.

The fifth dimension, *generate participatory communicative practices in public sphere*, promotes the use and development of communication and information resources in order to improve the action of citizens, social movements and NGOs in public sphere, especially in the deliberation and public participation in political decision-making. The rights to inclusion, participation, quality of life, knowledge and solidarity have a crucial relevance here, and they are indicators of whether civil society has, or has not, a key role in the deliberation of public policies. The final aim of this dimension is to generate ideal conditions to develop a better dialogic communicative and

democratic deliberation process in societies, increasing civic engagement and political participation for counter-public communities. As a consequence, this process should be characterized by inclusiveness, joint ownership, learning, humanity and a long-term perspective (Pruitt and Thomas 2007).

The final dimension, *encourage diversity within the mass media ecosystem*, focuses on issues such as media democratization, concentration of media ownership, fight against media homogenization and consolidation. This dimension stimulates democratic media activism and encourages the establishment of varied mass communication choices, trying to overcome the actual mass media democratic deficit (Hackett and Carroll 2006; Castells 2009). The relationship between democracy and mass media monopoly is crucial in this dimension, because without media diversity commercial and private issues overcome public interest, affecting the quality of public sphere and values such as pluralism and equality. Especially economic issues, the tension between treating audiences as "customers" rather than citizens, have an important relevance in this dimension.

At this point, my main argument is that with the operationalization of these six communicative citizenship dimensions, it is possible to encourage, promote and catalyse communicative citizenship agency and actions for particular communities and counterpublic actors, building a strong capacity for individuals to act independently and to make their own free socio-communicative choices in specific contexts. One of the final goals of this citizenship dimension is to start a long-term process of communicative emancipation and civil solidarity (Alexander 1997) where citizens can develop a more active role in the configuration of their communicative and symbolic regimes and compete with other social actors for power and communicative resources in the public sphere. Thus following Alexander's ideas about the centrality of power in culture (2011; 2013) and the argument of the contemporary significance of the communication and information processes in modern societies (Castells 2007; Bauman 2011), it is clear that the exercise of communicative citizenship in case of counterpublic actors could help the consolidation of civil, political, cultural and social rights in democratic societies. This is the starting point of a two way socio-communicative process where an active communicative citizenship can be the base from which to claim other sets of rights, and to exercise other dimensions of citizenship at the same time.

Furthermore, for particular contexts of armed conflict and post-armed conflict, these six communicative citizenship dimensions are addressing the relationship between cultural trauma and

collective identity from a socio-communicative perspective. Following Alexander (2004), cultural trauma:

> Occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways. Cultural trauma is first of all an empirical, scientific concept, suggesting new meaningful and causal relationships between previously unrelated events, structures, perceptions, and actions (...) It is by constructing cultural traumas that social groups, national societies, and sometimes even entire civilizations not only cognitively identify the existence and soured of human suffering but "take on board" some significant responsibility for it (Alexander 2004 p. 2).

My argument here is that the operationalization of different communicative citizenship dimensions on the part of civil society groups can help victims to identify and address the cause of cultural trauma in armed conflict and post armed conflict contexts. Thus this identification will be the catalyser to develop communicative citizenship actions in the public sphere, helping victims to overcome traumatic events through communicative agency and reshaping their collective identities during the process. According to Alexander (2004; 2011) members of collectives define their solidarity relationships in ways that, in principle, allow them to share the suffering of others. Nevertheless, social groups can, and often do, refuse to recognise the existences of others´ trauma. As a result, developing communicative citizenship actions in the public arena can be the way to recognize others´ suffering in public, empowering civil society groups to demand and claim rights from a moral perspective.

However, it is possible to recognize five barriers in the operationalization of this perspective: first, a lack of social cohesion among counter-hegemonic groups in specific contexts that could affect their socio-communicative actions; second, particular political and social conditions where the concept of democracy is under serious threat; third, a lack of participation of civil society in public space that encourages the reproduction of social and political *status quo*. Fourth, a lack of interest and sense of apathy among citizens not willing to be involved in social actions; and fifth, a lack of realism regarding the effect of power and control with respect to the role of civil society in social change.

These barriers demonstrate the challenges that citizens and civil society social movements face in trying to exercise communicative citizenship dimensions in particular contexts. Nevertheless, these barriers also illustrate the crucial role of communicative agency in generating collective actions on

the part of counterpublic groups in armed conflict and post armed conflict societies. Following Alexander (2006; 2013) when particular social conditions such as lack of social cohesion or a lack of interest and sense of apathy among citizens are threatening the operationalization of social action, solidarity and performativity can emerge to transform these social circumstances.

Furthermore, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* (1977; 1984; 1990) can be useful in order to understand how civil society groups can improve their position in the public sphere through exercising different communicative citizenship dimensions. According to Bourdieu (1984) the concept of habitus refers to:

> A socially and culturally conditioned set of durable dispositions or propensities for certain kinds of social action. This set or repertoire is internalized by individuals in the course of their life experiences and in relation to their social positions. The dispositions of habitus selectively generate everyday social practices immediately and in the context of specific social fields. As a set of neither wholly conscious nor wholly non-conscious perceptions, outlooks, points of reference, habitus guides personal goals and social interactions (Bourdieu 1984, p. 66).

Following Bourdieu, my argument here is that civil society actors can reconfigure their habitus developing communicative citizenship actions. The concept of habitus shows how everyday practices have a relationship with sociocultural spheres, highlighting the capacity of actors to move from one social position to another exercising their agency. Moreover, Jenkins (1992) argues that "the power of the habitus derives from the thoughtlessness of habit and habituation, rather than consciously learned rules and principles. Socially competent performances are produced as a matter of routine, without explicit reference to a body of codified knowledge, and without the actors necessarily knowing what they are doing" (Jenkins 1992, p. 76). This argument is stressing that most social practices can only be accounted for by relating them to social conditions in which the habitus is generated and constituted, suggesting a relationship between social behavior and socio-cultural structure. However, for the communicative citizenship framework, Alexander's ideas of civil solidarity as social action are more relevant, as they underline the relationship between long-term processes of communicative emancipation and the configuration of symbolic regimes from a cultural perspective. In other words, Alexander's approach allow us a deeper understanding of collective action through operationalization of *performativity* in contested contexts, which is crucial in order to fully comprehend how victims can achieve human rights from a socio-communicative approach.

3.3 Communicative citizenship and the public sphere

It is in the public sphere that civil society groups and victims display the expressive dimensions of collective social action through practices and mobilization that begin to restore a sense of citizenship and collective belonging. One of the main aims of developing communicative citizenship actions in the public sphere is to help the reconstruction of democratic societies after armed conflicts or make visible demands, claims and rights of victims in the midst of armed conflicts. For those reasons, it is particularly relevant to understand the relationship between the communicative citizenship field and the construction of the public sphere in democratic societies, creating a conceptual framework to understand the different socio-communicative actions and strategies associated with the construction of social memory and the contemporary struggle for recognition and solidarity among victims and social movements in the public sphere. In this part I would like to address this particular relationship between the communicative citizenship field and the construction of the public sphere, highlighting the crucial role of this relationship in fostering democracy after armed conflicts contexts.

Stevenson (2003; 2012) and Bonilla (2003; 2011) have demonstrated that it is possible to consider the public sphere using four different approaches: first, as a *social space* (face-to-face or mediated) where matters of public importance can be discussed to determine the public interest (Stevenson 2003); second, as a *permanently socio-political field* in constant dispute, where different social actors establish relationships of cooperation and conflict with other communicative agents and institutions to become visible or invisible in this field and struggle for power, recognition and significance (Bonilla 2003). Third, as a *social interactive place without a specific centre*, where four sectors – state, market, mass media and civil society – share and dispute socio-communicative resources to form social hegemonies and affect public representations (Bonilla 2011). Fourth, as a *discursive space* in which social actors congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest, creating diverse waves of public opinion to influence political action (Stevenson 2003; 2013).

Figure 2
Traditional model of public sphere

STRUGGLE FOR VISIBILITY
Access significance

INCLUSION
Public use of reason
Ampliffy voices
Power visibility

EXCLUSION
Concealment
Silence
Marginalization
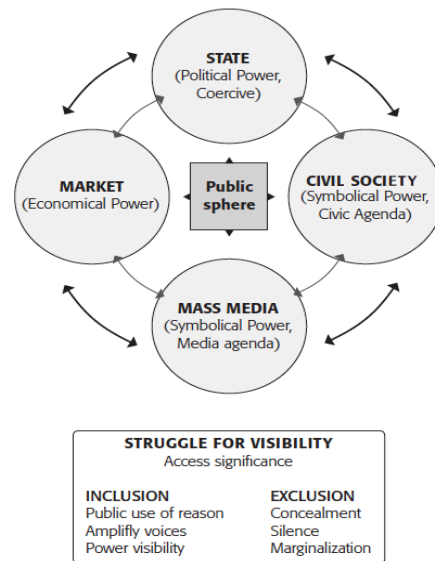
However, in order to more fully understand the communicative citizenship field and the construction of democratic societies after armed conflicts, it is important to address the concept of the public sphere. In the next part, I would like to focus on two aspects: first, I would like to explain the particular theoretical frame of the public sphere that underlines the operationalization of different communicative citizenship actions; and second, I want to present some key concepts of this theoretical frame and their relationship with other social categories in order to have a comprehensive idea of the impact of this theoretical construction in other fields.

It is possible to establish two analytical dimensions to understand different models of public sphere in contemporary times from the perspective of political philosophy (Alexander 2006; Koçan 2008; Bärenreuter 2009; Brüll 2009; Klicperova-Baker 2010; Sicakkan 2010; Cushion and Wahl-Jorgensen 2010). Firstly, we can understand the public sphere *descriptively*, which is the public sphere as a product of historical development processes of political society and how this public sphere affects political and social life (Brüll 2009; Klicperova-Baker 2010). This descriptive conceptualization can be shaped in three different forms. The first form is called *fact based* and tries to explore the main character of existing public sphere as a principle that can contribute to development of democracies. In other words, it focuses on underlying principles and the social construction of these principles in specific periods of time. The second form is the *explanatory approach* and attempts to explain why the public is the way it is, and explore the structures of socio-communicative action of specific actors and socio-political institutions (Bärenreuter 2009; Sicakkan 2010). The third form is called *structural descriptive* and refers to theories about the consequences that will be produced by given structure of public sphere. In Koçan's (2008) words "this is the sense of 'descriptive theory' that is most

frequently invoked by democratic theories. The question – 'What effects will a dialogical structure of communication (as opposed to a monologic) regime have on the democratic outcomes?' – can be answered by a public sphere theory that is descriptive in the sense that it calculates communicative actions but does not explicitly evaluate the desirability of the regulation" (Koçan 2008, p.4).

The second analytical dimension is called *normative conceptualization*, and attempts to describe what the public sphere ought to be, taking a stand on the question whether active participation in public sphere is better than regulation (Brüll 2009; Sicakkan 2010). The three most important general normative theories are utilitarianism, deontology and teleology, and these theories have an evaluative character. In order to clarify the difference between *descriptive* and *normative* conceptualizations of the public sphere, it can be said that descriptive theories are about facts and normative theories are about values and principles, or as Cushion and Wahl-Jorgensen put it "a descriptive theory of the public sphere might seek to explain what causal forces have produced the structures of the public sphere, whereas a normative theory of public sphere would tell us what structures of political and social life in connection to would be best, right, or justifiable" (Cushion and Wahl-Jorgensen 2010, p.3). Assuming that there is a clear line that separates those two analytical dimensions could be a useful working hypothesis linking this notion with the communicative citizenship field. However, Brüll (2009) and Klicperova-Baker (2010) argue that it is better to assume some intersections between both dimensions: the descriptive theory in the service of the normative theory and the descriptive theory as a constraint on normative theory. Therefore, those intersections should be treated as the clue to understand the construction of relationships between these theoretical frames and the communicative citizenship field.

There are two levels that are central to the communicative citizenship field: *the macro level,* that focuses on public sphere as a whole, with interconnections of actors, institutions and structures; and *the micro level*, that focuses on analysing micro practices of interaction that occur between individuals as well as between individuals and their environments in the context of shaping, criticizing and reproducing norms, meanings, values and identities (Koçan 2008). These two levels reveal the relationship between structure and agency in the realm of a public sphere, and the on-going practices of individuals, and the actions of some institutions in particular spaces and in times of armed conflict.

The final theoretical factor to consider is the ideal types of public sphere and their distinctions between ends and means. Koçan (2008) and Cushion and Wahl-Jorgensen (2010) argue there is not a

single 'model' of the public sphere (because it is impossible to find a culturally neutral universal phenomena) it is correct to construct theoretical approaches following Weberian considerations of ideal types:

> Theoretical constructions of public sphere should be seen as a Weberian ideal type. An ideal type of public sphere based on some concrete instances should consist of a measurement instrument allowing for an understanding to occur, to unite views of public sphere from various countries and to produce comparative analyses between different cases. At this level, the public sphere develops in various historical domains as well as in the concrete instances, with different ideas and realities stemming from other ideas (Cushion and Wahl-Jorgensen 2010, p.13).

Both Cushion and Wahl-Jorgensen as well as Koçan (2008) divide ideal types of public sphere between two main strands in regard to means and ends: the end-oriented ideal type and the act-oriented ideal type. The end-oriented ideal type shows how the public sphere can play a decisive role in determining policies that may contribute to certain ends of political society: "the end-oriented public sphere theories have attempted to identify common ends that the public sphere should appeal before its communicative process is initiated (…) after defining ends, they pragmatically try to define means and ways of achieving such ends and objectives in the context of public sphere. End-oriented ideal types see public as simply instrumental" (Koçan 2008, p.13). It is important to express that this approach considers autonomy and mutual respect as twofold function, trying to guide public action toward public opinion and having five procedural terms at its core: symmetry, truthfulness, rational justification, common interest and plural participation. The most representative theorist of this approach is Jürgen Habermas, who suggests that any understanding-oriented interaction in the realm of public sphere implies recognition of the corresponding validity claims of consent, truth, truthfulness and rightness (Habermas 1991).

On the other hand, the act-oriented ideal type sees public sphere is an end in itself, and it is through socio-communicative actions that the public sphere can be established, because "the public sphere is a context in which citizens come together to disclose their distinctive identity, to exercise their capacities for social and political community and to realize their existence by means of communication" (Bärenreuter 2009, p.18). These arguments address the idea of the public sphere as a place to disclose identities in the process of communicative activity that corresponds with the human condition of plurality and freedom. Arendt (1958), Fraser (1992) and Taylor (2005) are the most important theorists behind this approach. Furthermore, the act-oriented accounts define

public sphere as spaces of dissidence rather than consent and "emphasize the preservation of forms and spaces of spontaneous individual action from encroaching bureaucratic structures while they built strong correlation between public sphere and a confirmation of incommensurable plurality" (Arendt 1958, p. 57). One of the most important arguments in this approach is that instead of focusing on a single homogeneous public sphere, the act-oriented ideal type perceive public sphere as a set of multiple spheres, each comprising of several public forums or arenas, isolated by their subject issues as well as social, political, cultural and economic histories (Koçan 2008).

Drawing upon the act-oriented ideal type, this thesis understands public spheres as embedded in specific social, cultural and historical situations that reflect the set of traditions (laws, institutions, language and practices) that have structured these social spaces. Hence, we must acknowledge a particular set of relationships between agents, institutions and networks that have been constituted within and through time in particular spaces and with the active involvement of people sharing traditions and values in public arenas. The public sphere emerges as a structure where different positions of agents are expressed by practices constituted through power relations in which communicative citizenship has the ability to change power relations between social actors, historical institutions and political narratives. This theoretical framework is further developed by an understanding of the importance of the concepts of diversity, pluralism and gender.

3.4 The public sphere and the categories of diversity, pluralism and gender

Much contemporary analysis has been trying to interconnect the public sphere debates with contemporary issues such as the conformation of new political identities and the emergence of contemporary subjectivities (Keane 2000, 2003, 2004, 2009; Sicakkan 2005, 2008, 2010; Alexander 2006, 2011, 2013; Koçan 2008; and Cushion and Wahl-Jorgensen 2010). For example Keane (2000; 2004), in contrast to Habermas and Taylor, offers a descriptive understanding of the public sphere based on particular, concrete and actual situations, and defines the public sphere as "a particular type of spatial relationship between two or more people, usually connected by a certain means of communication (…) in which non-violent controversies erupt, for a brief or more extended period of time, concerning the power relations operating within their milieu of interaction and/or within the wider milieux of social and political structures within which the disputants are situated" (Keane 2000, p. 77).

Keane describes three spatially differentiated and multi-layered notions of public sphere: *the micro sub-cultural public spheres*, that comprises a wide variety of the local interactions between 'dozens,

hundreds or even thousands' of people at sub-national levels in a contestable relationships between 'imperializing power' and locales; *the meso-national public spheres*, that consist of the interaction of millions of people at the level of the nation state structure or regions of state; and the *macro-global public spheres*, that involves communication that take place between hundreds of millions at the supra-national or global level (Keane 2000; Koçan 2008). From the point of view of the communicative citizenship field it is crucial how Keane understands the category of power in this context. His concept of the public sphere defines power as a highly complex system of spaces of communication that branches out into a multitude of overlapping international, national, regional, local and subcultural arenas encompassing millions of people who are watching, listening or reading across distant spaces (Keane 2000; Koçan 2008). This is relevant in order to understand, for example, how international actors have been affecting local social movements of victims with their socio-communicative actions, strategies, practices and narratives in specific periods of time, or the relationship between social movements of victims and technologies such as the Internet, as well as the use of microblogging in transnational political actions and expressive collective actions.

Furthermore, in recent years Sicakkan (2005, 2008, 2010) has explored the relationship between multiculturalism, diversity and the shape of contemporary public sphere, and how the impact of pluralism could develop desirable models of society. This scholar provides three perspectives that can be discerned here: individualism, communalism, and pluralism. On the one hand, by giving ethical priority to individual identities and persons' dignity, individualists founded their models of political rights on the atomist ontology of autonomous individuals. On the other hand, communitarians based their models of political rights on the holistic ontology of embedded persons. Whereas the former model of political rights accommodates individual differences, the latter delineates forms of political rights to accommodate group differences. Rejecting both for their singular recipes for the good life, pluralists look to accommodate both individual and group differences. The commonality of these three citizenship paradigms – individualism, communalism, and pluralism – is their focus on difference. As Sicakkan argues, difference thinking conceives either individuals or groups, or both, as indivisible wholes and therefore blinds us to what is common or shared between people and between communities (Sicakkan 2008). Sicakkan's contribution is to show that the "the diversity perspective is based on the notion of otherness rather than difference. Whereas 'differences' signifies disparities between persons or between groups, or between both, 'otherness' signifies both disparities and commonalities. 'Otherness' here is not about being 'the other' (noun); but being 'other' (adjective)" (Sicakkan 2008, p.6).

Similarly, Cushion and Wahl-Jorgensen (2010) underline the importance of diversity in order to analyse contemporary public spheres and how the traditional rules of participation/communication in public debates could result in exclusion of some groups such as migrants, asylum seekers, indigenous groups or other traditional minority communities. Thus the discussion about diversity, discrimination of minority groups in times of new flows of communication is fundamental in order to understand in holistic terms the communicative citizenship field. Civil society groups have been trying to reconfigure traditional forms of participation in public debates using non-conventional strategies, which is indicative of how communicative citizenship agency has been reconfiguring socio-communicative actions of social groups in the last two decades. The category of *public communication* (Koçan 2008) is key in this respect and involves an active and conscious individual participant (or group of people) who has particular goals and ends to exercise *objective factors* (structures, choices available, responses of others) and *subjective frames of reference* (personal values, preferences, views) in order to shape the public sphere (Koçan 2008).

Another important category to understand the development of public sphere debates is gender. According to Domaradzka (2010, 2014), Monro (2010) and Richardson and Monro (2012) gender identity and gender roles remain important determinants of the distribution of power, rights and access to resources, among various social groups. For these scholars, traditional gender roles are proven to be an important factor of women's lower economic status, poor access to health and education, exposure to violence and poverty, and a lack of visibility in traditional masculine public spheres. In this context, gender equity is strongly connected with fairness and justice in the distribution of opportunities and responsibilities. It underlines the importance of equal treatment of women and men under the law and in policies, in achieving more just, democratic and open societies. A necessary condition to reach this goal is to create more balanced access to the public sphere and to resources and services within societies, markets, but also communities and families. It is argued that traditional gender norms and inequality harm not only women, but whole families, as well as men and transgender individuals.

As a result, a gender perspective is crucial in order to construct a more diverse public sphere in contested contexts (Domaradzka 2010; 2014). Gender equality policies are important tools in enhancing women's citizenship rights and participation in the public sphere. It can be also argued that gender equality is one of the fundamental building blocks for the conflict resolution and peace building. From this perspective, success in post-conflict environments is dependent on addressing the gender dimension of inclusion, safety, citizenship and participation. Conceptualised from a

masculine perspective citizenship is supposedly gender-neutral. Achieving greater equality requires stretching the concept of citizenship, going beyond legal definitions, and understanding citizenship as a lived experience. Citizenship is bound up with relationships and expressions of power, underpinning that citizenship rights are not abstract. Thus citizenship rights are objects of struggle to be defended, reinterpreted or extended for the sake of justice and inclusion in contested contexts (Domaradzka 2010; 2014).

Debates about diversity, pluralism and gender and citizenship highlight the extent to which citizenship is an increasingly contested concept. Citizenship has been traditionally understood in relation to the rights and responsibilities of citizens within a specified nation-state (Richardson and Monro 2012). This conception of citizenship is associated with the work of T.H. Marshall (1950) who defined citizenship in terms of three stages of sets of rights: civil or legal rights, political rights and social rights. In the same way of thinking, Charles Tilly (1995) defines citizenship as a tie or special sort of social contract, providing the next definition of citizenship:

> A continuing series of transactions between persons and agents of a given state in which each has enforceable rights and obligations uniquely by virtue of (1) the person's membership in an exclusive category, the native–born plus the naturalized and (2) the agent's relation to the state rather than any other authority the agent may enjoy (Tilly 1995, p.8).

Stevenson (2003) argues that the category of citizenship is "more often thought to be about membership, belonging, rights and obligations. In institutional terms the terrain of citizenship is usually marked out by abstract legal definitions as to who is to be included and excluded from the political community" (Stevenson 2003, p. 4). In other words, "The state demands loyalty from the individual, and in return, the individual could expect duty of care and protection from the state. This conception of citizenship (…) prioritizes political belonging" (Yip 2008, p. 102). However, the traditional concept of citizenship is in crisis and undergoing reconfiguration, as a consequence of social change, notably transnational processes and the crisis of neoliberalism, have affected the original homogenous meaning of citizenship and its link with the nation-state (Plummer 2003, Croucher 2004, Held 2008, Vertovec 2009). Beck (2002; 2009) considers that "the nation-state is transforming into a type of political organization or apparatus involving more multiple and overlapping jurisdictions, set of identities and social orders no longer really contained by borders" (Beck 2002, p.67), and that the traditional function of the nation–state to define a sense of

belonging with one territory. Its political and symbolic centrality is now 'in dispute' with different forms of citizenship experience, identifications and dimensions emerging as a consequence.

In this context, it is necessary to identify new modes of communicative citizenship as the response to fragile situations that are no longer resolved by traditional state-centred citizenship responses. It is apparent that the relationship between the communicative citizenship field and the development of plural and diverse public spheres is crucial in order to build the capacity of individuals to act independently, to make their own free communicative choices in specific contexts and to start processes of civil solidarity and communicative emancipation. What is key in this respect is symbolic power and the capacity to exercise of this power to shape values, norms and ways of life and the narratives and representations that inform public opinion. In the final section I would like to present three modes of communicative citizenship which bridge the relationship between the empirical data of this doctoral work and the theory of communicative citizenship.

3.5 Three modes of communicative citizenship

In this part, I would like to introduce three possible modes of communicative citizenship and the distinctive features of each mode. I emphasise that communicative citizenship agency for different social groups catalyses processes of constructing of social memory, recognition and solidarity from a counterpublic perspective. These three modes are the framework for the substantive chapters of the thesis (chapters six, seven and eight).

The first mode is called *communicative citizenship social memory mode*, concentrating on the socio-communicative actions that different social actors can develop in order to construct cohesive collective identities, creating social narratives of memory through communicative citizenship actions. In this mode counterpublic actors exercise symbolic power in the public arena using strategies of visibility or exclusion according to some predefined interest. This mode is about how particular societies interpret and appropriate their political, social, cultural and communicative past, in an on-going attempt to shape its future. Furthermore, for this mode the construction of social, historical and cultural memory from a victims' perspective is a tool to claim truth and reparation in the midst of armed conflicts. The aim is to constitute plural discourses of memory in the public sphere in order to create plural narratives of collective memory, reconfiguring socio-communicative and symbolic regimes. In this mode, the social process of memory construction is a struggle over

power and the exercise of this power to shape collective representations and meanings of the past with important connections to the creation of subjectivities, narratives and values in the present.

The second mode is called *communicative citizenship expressive action mode*, focusing on how citizens and civil society groups are taking direct actions seeking recognition in the public sphere. For this second mode, the operationalization of communicative citizenship actions in the public sphere is a tool to demand recognition of some particular aspects of counterpublic socio-political identities which have been demeaned by armed conflicts, and where the implementation of particular communicative citizenship actions is helping social movements to configure a dynamic socio-political identity as a strategy to fight against injustice, discrimination and misrecognition. This mode addresses the concept of *struggle for recognition* (Honneth 2003, 2004, 2011). It argues that experiences of misrecognition violate the identity of subjects and this misapprehension can be the main motivation to start processes of resistance in the public sphere. As a result, recognition is a crucial category leading to the development of public forms of collective action, highlighting the relational character between the subject of recognition (the recogniser) and the object of recognition (the recognised) in the development of collective communicative citizenship actions.

The third mode is called *communicative citizenship solidaristic mode*. These communicative actions underpin processes of social and civic solidarity inside counterpublic groups and empowering these groups to exercise their rights in the public sphere. The aim of this mode is to catalyse and allow communicative agency to emerge from below, generating new solidaristic practices, linkages and connections between civil society movements and counterpublic groups. Furthermore, this third mode is addressing the relationship between solidaristic actions as an expression of high levels of collective social cohesion, and communicative agency as expression of victims' empowerment, revealing the understanding of ideas such as community, liberty, inclusion, loyalty or justice for counterpublic actors in particular contexts. Thus the analysis of expressions of solidaristic actions in the public sphere is crucial in order to understand how civil society groups are constructing their egalitarian political ideas from a sociological perspective. In this final mode the concept of solidarity is understood as the exercise of individual social identities to increase the level of social cohesion inside particular collectives in order to achieve communitarian goals (Alexander 2006; 2013). As a consequence, the development of solidaristic actions is crucial to the empowerment of victims in their struggles for recognition and justice in the public sphere of armed conflict contexts.

In drawing upon the case study of Eastern Antioquia in Colombia I aim to show how these three modes operate in a particular armed conflict context. In so doing I develop an in-depth theoretical relationship between the categories of memory, recognition and solidarity and the communicative citizenship field. Using the aforementioned case study, I will argue that the typology of communicative citizenship involves instruments, actions and processes that can reconfigure citizens' socio-communicative resources in their demand for political, social, cultural, economic and communicative rights in the public sphere. As a result, the different communicative citizenship actions that emerge in each mode accentuate the connection between communicative citizenship agency and the configuration of socio-political armed conflict contexts, affecting political subjectivities, social institutions and ways of understanding social structures from a communicative perspective. Moreover, it is crucial in this context to understand how a diversity of communicative citizenship actions can affect symbolic orders, local social structures and practices through which communities have been building their shared past, struggling for recognition and developing processes of solidarity. The analysis of the production of different modes of remembering, recognition and solidarity in each communicative citizenship mode aim to go beyond *what* is remembered or recognized, instead focusing more on *why* and *how* it is remembered and recognized.

As a result, the development of communicative citizenship actions for part of counterpublic actors in each mode can affect two dynamics. First, these communicative actions can break the homogeneous concept of public sphere into a heterogenic concept of public spheres. In other words, the exercise of communicative citizenship agency recognizes a *central public sphere*, the social space where the official language reproduces its issues, topics and arguments and is more legitimized in the society. However, the implementation of communicative citizenship agency in particular contexts recognizes also the *minority public spheres*, social spaces where thematic actors can overcome the central public sphere and can define other types of narratives, actors, structures and dynamics affecting power relations, subjectivities, and processes of memory, recognition and solidarity (Bonilla 2003; 2011). Second, analysing the exercise of communicative citizenship agency by some counterpublic actors can be used to understand the formation of new socio-communicative processes, structures and regimes in armed conflict and post armed conflict societies, helping to comprehend on what scale and level processes of construction of memory, recognition and solidarity are affected by this socio-communicative dynamic.

Figure 3
Central Public Sphere – Minority Public Spheres
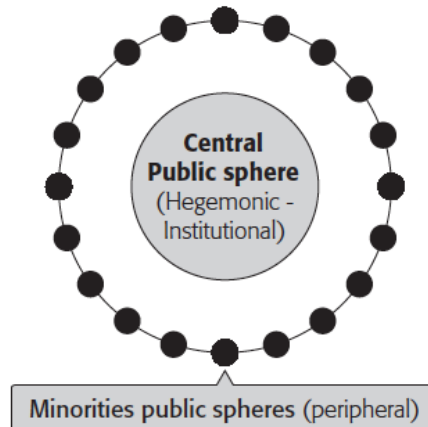
It is important to express that the purpose of these three communicative citizenship modes is to provide more power to citizens and civil society in order to exercise and demand rights from non-conventional perspectives (in this case a communicative perspective), amplifying the set of strategies, tactics and resources of counterpublic social actors. Furthermore, each mode of communicative citizenship is stressing the importance of cultural power to create processes of memory, recognition and solidarity in contested contexts. Following Alexander´s ideas (1997; 2004; 2011) cultural power is determined by social structure and material resources. Thus understanding how processes of memory, recognition and solidarity are affecting particular social structures in armed conflict contexts is a valid method to confront the complex ways in which cultural power has material consequences. Alexander (2011) stresses the importance of finding (through public acts of commemoration, communication and cultural representations) some collective means for undergoing repression and allowing the pent up emotions of loss and mourning to be expressed. As a result, each mode of communicative citizenship are promoting counterpublic discourses and empowering victims in armed conflict contexts through processes of memory, recognition and solidarity.

In summary, the interdisciplinary concept of communicative citizenship can be understood as the capacity of citizens to vocalize and express their demands and claims involving acts of communication in order to do collective actions in the public sphere of armed conflict and post armed conflict societies. In other words, it is the capacity of citizens to exercise their communicative agency in order to mobilize and organize new types of direct action in fragile societies. The communicative citizenship field focuses on analysing the operationalization of communicative citizenship actions on the part of victims of armed conflicts in the public sphere as a way to restore a

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sense of citizenship and collective belonging for this counterpublic social actor. Furthermore, a central argument in this chapter has been that social movements of victims of armed conflicts and post armed conflict societies address expressive dimensions of collective social action through practices, dispositions and mobilizations to re-establish social, political and cultural bonds with their local communities, transforming their victim status into an active citizenship condition. Thus the embodiment of communicative citizenship actions for part of armed conflict victims' groups in the public sphere is an example of contemporary forms of agency and communication, highlighting the importance of emotions and affection as a catalyst to generate collective actions for part of counter-public groups in armed conflict and post armed conflict societies. Equally important, the apprehension of communicative citizenship agency by victims can generate processes of construction of social memory, recognition and solidarity from a counterpublic perspective. For the purpose of this thesis it is proposed that victims' groups can engage in three possible modes of communicative citizenship: the *communicative citizenship social memory mode*, the *communicative citizenship expressive action mode* and the *communicative citizenship solidaristic mode*.

3.6 Conclusions

The first argument of this chapter was that the concept of communicative citizenship provides a new approach to articulate the communicative dimensions of political, social and cultural rights. It is central to our understanding of how citizens and social movements of victims of armed conflict restore a sense of citizenship and collective belonging. This thesis shows that communicative citizenship emerges through processes of social memory construction, recognition and solidarity within counter-publics. The development of communicative citizenship in the public sphere enables citizens, victims and civil society groups to transform specific social structures and claim social, political and cultural rights. One of the main goals of theoretically developing a communicative citizenship field is to contribute to socio-communicative emancipation. Citizens develop a more active role in the configuration of their symbolic regimes when they draw upon non-conventional communicative approaches with the potential, as will be demonstrated in this thesis, to transform the armed conflict and post armed conflict context. It is important to emphasise that the theoretical construction presented here is a result of an inductive/deductive methodological process of analysing the qualitative data derived from in-depth interviews and observations gathered during my doctoral research. The main outcomes are therefore the result of a conversation between the theoretical approach and the empirical data and will be presented in full in the further empirical chapters of this thesis (chapters six, seven and eight).

CHAPTER 4

4. Anatomy of the Case Study

4.1 Eastern Antioquia and the Colombian armed conflict

Colombia has a population of 48 million, a landmass of 1.139.000 Km2, with five million internally displaced people, 480,000 refugees, two left-wing guerrilla groups/armies, and more than six new right-wing paramilitary groups/armies called BACRIMS. Also, Colombia has the most unequal distribution of wealth across the continent, with 30% of its population living in poverty, and it is experiencing one of the longest armed conflicts in the world, lasting almost 50 years (Fisas 2009; UNDP 2010). The United Nations Development Programme identifies five structural factors underlying the chronic armed conflict in the country: drug trafficking, limited and ineffective regional and local government, persistent inequality and exclusion, the incapacity of the state to establish democratic institutions and the apparent indifference of political and economic elites (UNDP 2003; UNDP 2010). According to Sanchez and Meertens (2001), Gonzalez, Vasquez and Bolivar (2003), Pecaut (2004) and Wills (2006) the principal cause of the Colombian conflict is the asymmetric war between the Colombian army and the other irregular military groups (guerrillas, paramilitaries, drug dealers) for control over territory and the incapacity of the state to develop democratic mechanisms in the country. From 2002 to 2010 this was exacerbated by the Government's redefinition [which informed policy] of the armed conflict as a 'terrorist threat' (Republic of Colombia - Ministry of National Defence, 2010).

In 2002 Colombia started to undergo deep socio-political change. After a failed peace process between the guerrilla group of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) and the government of conservative president Andrés Pastrana (1998 – 2002), a new president, Alvaro Uribe Vélez, was elected with the support of paramilitary groups and extreme right parties (Romero 2007; Lopez 2010). This right-wing president introduced a new policy called *Programme of Democratic Security* which was based on the militarisation of the civilian population and military combat against the guerrillas. This programme was supported by the government of the United States through the *Colombia Plan* (Fisas 2009). After four years of Uribe's government, the president, using his political influence, changed the constitution to get a second term in 2004. As a result of his eight years in office (2002 – 2010) he established a strong relationship between paramilitary groups and official political parties, where the reconfiguration of the state in favour of illegal groups was the principal consequence. During these years, 77% of Colombian MPs were paramilitary group supporters, which

resulted in huge damage to democracy in the country (HRW 2010; Lopez 2010; Torres and Barrera 2010). Furthermore, a radicalization of public opinion into two groups (the supporters of Uribe's government Vs the critics of Uribe's policies) shaped the stereotypical and misleading image of both sides: groups who upheld the extreme right policies were associated with paramilitary groups, while groups who supported centre and left policies were associated with guerrillas groups (UNDP 2010; Gonzalez 2010).

Another consequence of the implementation of the programme of 'democratic security' during these years was the government's persecution of journalists, trade union workers, teachers, human rights activist, United Nations employers, lawyers, Colombian MPs, Supreme Court judges and NGO activists; particularly in principal cities such like Bogotá, Medellin and Cali and regions with the highest levels of violence as Caquetá, Putumayo, Montes de María and Antioquia (HRW 2010; Vasquez 2010; UNDP 2010; Romero and Arias 2010). In 2010 Juan Manuel Santos, former Minister of Defence of Uribe's administration, was elected as new Colombian president for a period of four years (2010 – 2014) in order to continue the development of these right-wing policies. However, president Santos took distance of this ideology and opened up peace talks with the FARC-EP in 2012, although still keeping heavy military operations across the country and his government receiving technical cooperation in defence issues from the United States.

As a result, the principal victims of the Colombian armed conflict and state failure are civilians, and this is especially true for women. The Colombian research centre *Program for Peace* argues that 86% of more than six million victims of the Colombian war in the last twenty years were non-combatants, out of which 71% were women and 41% were from Eastern Antioquia (Program for Peace 2010). Furthermore, Antioquia is the county with the highest number of victims of the Colombian armed conflict (1.2 million) and Eastern Antioquia is the territory with the highest percentage of massacres in the last twenty years in Colombia (CHM 2013). In other words, four in ten Colombian civilian victims in the period of 1993 – 2013 were women, most likely victims of a massacre and coming from Eastern Antioquia.

Map 1
Colombia – Eastern Antioquia (Oriente Antioqueño)
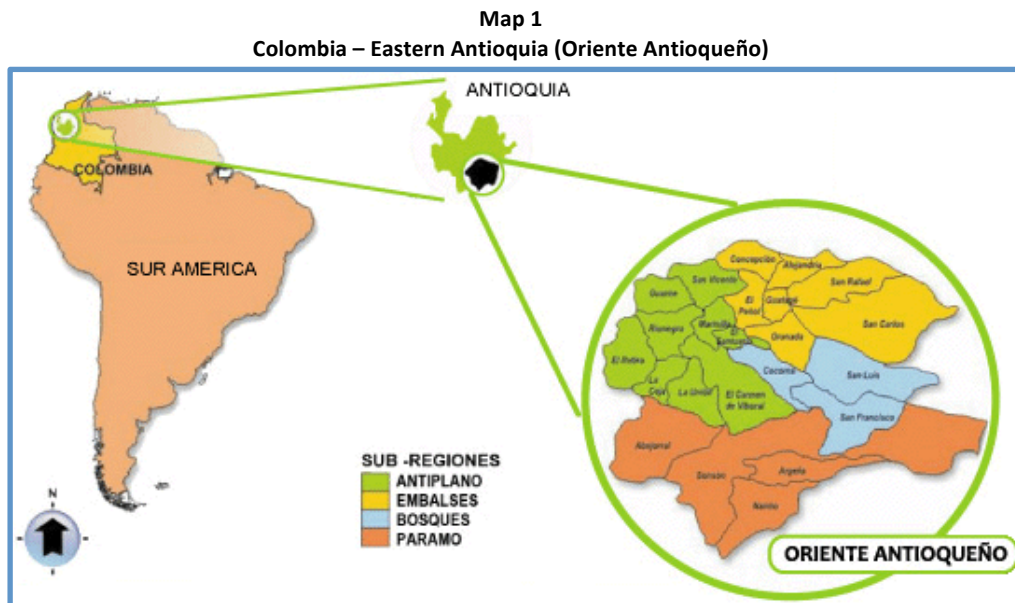
Source: EAFIT University (2010). *ADEPROA Project*. Retrieved May 18, 2010, from http://ideas09.eafit.edu.co/adeproa/

The Regional Program for Development and Peace of Eastern Antioquia (PRODEPAZ) had established three reasons why the armed conflict is high in the region and women are principal victims. First, 45% of Colombian energy resources are concentrated in this region; it is a geographically strategic area within the armed conflict and women have an active role in local companies. Second, in the logic of the Colombian armed conflict, women are *war booty* and a specific target for warriors. While a strong patriarchal society exists in this region, targeting women is an especially powerful way to debilitate the local community and damage its social and family structure (PRODEPAZ 2009). According to Jaramillo (2003), Villa (2007), Carrillo (2009) and García de la Torre and Aramburo (2011) it is possible to establish four main characteristics of the humanitarian crisis in Eastern Antioquia. First, it is the rise of an *uprooting generation* with immediate effects in the social structure of the region; where the negative process of forced displacement has deeply undermined social and cultural ties of families and communities with this particular territory. The second characteristic is the establishment of a culture of fear and distrust between the communities of the urban and rural areas as a result of the asymmetric armed conflict in Eastern Antioquia. Often erroneously, illegal groups have been related with some local communities (i.e. guerrillas groups with residents of rural areas and paramilitary groups with residents of urban areas), creating an environment of dangerous stereotypes and rumours inside the population. As a consequence, the justification of some military operations was often based on those wrong generalizations, targeting specific people as local leaders, politicians, peasants or human rights defenders.

The third characteristic is the targeting of civilians as a method of war. This strategy is utilised by both illegal and legal armed groups, and became the main objective of their military operations. By

killing innocent bystanders they prove their power, superiority and ownership of specific Eastern Antioquia's territories to their rivals, as well as undermining the social and cultural base of support for another armed group (García de la Torre and Aramburo 2011). The final main characteristic is the configuration of a *regime of terror* in the region, where one particular group uses cruelty to obtain the dehumanization of the war adversary (Jaramillo 2003; García de la Torre and Aramburo 2011). In this context, it is important to understand the construction of the *dehumanization of adversaries* process in order to analyse the reasons behind the use of some war methods (i.e. massacres, landmines, and car bombs) by militant groups in Eastern Antioquia, and how combatants have been configuring their own identities to send powerful messages to civilians and other armed groups (i.e. an identity of *savages* for part of paramilitary groups or an identity of *sanguinary* for part of the guerrillas).

In this context, García (2004), Bedoya (2006) and Estrada (2010) argue that the armed conflict situation in Eastern Antioquia is a good reference to understand in holistic terms the contemporary dynamic of the armed conflict in Colombia. Following these ideas, it is possible to establish that this particular case reveals the main strategies that illegal groups have been developing in Colombia since 1993, and how some war tactics were implemented first in Eastern Antioquia in order to replicate it in other Colombian regions. For example, Eastern Antioquia was the first place where guerrillas groups used landmines to prevent territorial control of the Colombian army, or where the methodical implementation of massacres against civilians was used as a war strategy by some of paramilitary groups to spread fear and terror in the country.

However, the principal aspect to consider the case of Eastern Antioquia is the permanent suffering of civilians in the midst of the armed conflict (Estrada 2010). The citizens of Eastern Antioquia had experienced all the possible consequences of war (stigmatization, forced displacements, massacres, persecutions, marginalization, extra-judicial executions, tortures, etc.), and they are victims of all forms of violations and human rights abuses. In summary, three main aspects can characterize Eastern Antioquia as a representative example of the dynamic of war in Colombia: first, the on-going fighting between different illegal and legal armed groups for control over the territory and its resources; second, the co-optation of local institutions as town councils or local governments by illegal forces to affect local democracy and control the economic resources; and finally, the establishment of illegal economies around drug trafficking, kidnapping and extortion that strongly affects local and regional economies.

4.2 Communication, citizenship and collective action: the role of victims' organizations in the midst of Eastern Antioquia's armed conflict

In this context, in Rionegro (the principal town of Eastern Antioquia) the *Association of Organized Women of Eastern Antioquia* (AMOR) and *The Provincial Association of Victims to Citizens* (APROVIACI) were created in 1994 and 2007 respectively. This region has 23 municipalities and these two organizations represent women in all of them, especially focusing on the victims of the armed conflict. In 2015 these groups represented the voice of 125,000 women, with their work categorized in four dimensions: political, economic, sociocultural and symbolic, but with a strong gender emphasis within each. According to Villa (2007) AMOR and APROVIACI reconfigures the traditional conception of women's identity and citizenship with the intention to find a balance between *strong citizenship* (political and economic participation) and *active identity* (socio-cultural and symbolic changes) in a patriarchal public sphere. Therefore, AMOR and APROVIACI established small projects, workshops and programmes in order to develop citizenship, political identity and human rights in all 23 municipalities. Through those actions they aim to valorise and nurture the political voices and civic activism of women in the region.

It is important to note that AMOR, in the last twenty years, has been deploying three socio-communicative strategies that aim for recognition, visibility and inclusion of women in the local and regional public sphere. The first strategy called *From the house to the square* (De la casa a la plaza) is an effort to involve women in public discussions about the war, victim reparation and reconciliation and also in discussion about the future of local peace programmes. The second strategy aims at political inclusion and includes the formation of *constituent assemblies* (Asambleas Constituyentes) to create economic health and educational programmes for women in extreme poverty. Finally, the *psychosocial strategy* aims to encourage women to symbolically express and externalise the personal consequences of war and to transform the victim condition into the active citizen condition. AMOR works with women to explore ways to 'democratize the pain' stemming from the armed conflict, to create new narratives and rediscover hidden memories of the conflict in ways that can reconfigure the social imaginaries of women in Colombia. It is proposed that the actions of these groups demonstrate how to claim justice, truth, reparation and human rights in contexts of fragile public spheres and violence using nonconventional socio-political and communicative strategies.

Furthermore, in 2003 two Colombian NGOs (Conciudadania and the Centre for Research and Popular Education/Peace Program) developed a project for training women in Eastern Antioquia called *Emotional First Aid*, where victims learned how to help other victims to confront the pain caused by

the armed conflict through practical workshops with a gender perspective. One of the final results of this project was the creation of a victims support group called Life and Mental Health Promoters – PROVISAME – also known as *Las Abrazadas* (Embraced Women) in 2006. In this context, 45 women from Granada Town and part of this support group (most of them displaced peasants) decided to go beyond the initial objective of this initiative and founded *The Association of Victims of Granada Town* (ASOVIDA) with the purpose of demanding their rights as victims. In ASOVIDA's (2012) words, the organization was created to achieve five aims: first, to bring support to the armed conflict victims in aspects as emotional and psychological recovering, social reparation and reconciliation; second, to demonstrate how victims' initiatives for social reparation and reconciliation can strengthen the social bonds broken by violence. Third, to create new narratives about the armed conflict from a civil society perspective, reconfiguring social imaginaries of victims in the region. Fourth, to reconstruct victims' memories in order to start a symbolic process of restoration of collective memory in Granada; and finally, to organize processes of mobilization and resistance against the armed conflict, creating public spaces for victims' political participation.

Additionally, one of the most important aspects of ASOVIDA is the use and appropriation of different communicative resources to claim human rights in the public sphere and overcome *the imposition of silence tactic,* a strategy used by guerrillas and paramilitary groups in order to obtain the symbolic control of civilians in the region. Showing pain in public for someone's violent death was forbidden by the armed groups in Granada town, imposing a claim of fear and terror inside this community. Romero (2012) argue that the imposition of silence as an ally of fear has been part of the social and cultural dimension of violence in Colombia for decades, sometimes with more enduring consequences than those caused by its physical dimension. In the same perspective, in 2006 a group of women of San Carlos town started to adapt the work methodology of the regional group PROVISAME in order to deliver psychological help to the victims of the town; confronting the pain caused by the war through therapeutically workshops with a gender perspective. After initial support of AMOR, APROVIACI and regional NGOs as Conciudadanía and PRODEPAZ, this collective of women founded the victims' group *The Centre to Approach Reconciliation and Reparation* (CARE) with the main purpose to support victims in all aspects of emotional, mental and psychological recovering. After two years of intensive healing work with the victims, CARE started to focus on other related issues, adding three more aims to their project. These additions were the creation of strategies to bring social reparation and public recognition to the victims of San Carlos, the development of processes of reconciliation between victims and perpetrators to rebuild social

cohesion in the town, and the compilation of victims and perpetrators narratives as a mechanism to establish the truth about what has been happening in the on-going armed conflict in San Carlos.

Furthermore, all these organizations of Eastern Antioquia have been addressing specific political communicative actions to construct processes of collective memory from victims' perspectives and claim human rights in their struggle to obtain recognition in the public sphere. The examples of such initiatives or in other words – collective political communicative actions – are:

- *The walls of memory*, with big walls of photographs made to remember the victims of the armed conflict in Eastern Antioquia;
- *The march of the light*, where every week women and people from different towns march across public roads with candles in their hands, claiming the truth, justice and recovering of the good name of some victims that had been wrongly accused of being part of some army group;
- *The never again exhibitions*, photo exhibitions about people that have disappeared during the armed conflict, whose families and communities wish to commemorate them;
- *Trails for life*, where groups of victims try to recover the meaning, significance and uses of public spaces where massacres against civilians happened by organizing annual walks to places where their relatives were killed or where the bodies of missing persons are presumed to be buried; and
- *Memorial parks*, green spaces created in order to construct another memory about this armed conflict from the victims' point of view.

I have decided to develop a case study for three reasons. First, case study research is holistic. This perspective acknowledges that units of analysis are wholes that are not completely reducible to the sum of their parts. Second, case study research studies understand causation conjuncturally. One of the assumptions of this approach is that relevant causes are the result of multiple and contingent processes that come together in particular times and places. And finally, case study strategies are more sensitive to historical outcomes and, for that reason, suitable for establishing more productive conversations between theory and evidence (Regin 1987; Delgado 2012). The limitations of this type of approach reside in its inability to establish broad and systematic comparisons beyond the particular case that confirm the researcher's hypothesis. In this sense, the advantages of the case study method do not displace the need for a variable-based approach. According to Ragin (1987) and Delgado (2012), variable-based strategies are also valuable in several aspects. First, these kinds of

strategies are more theory-centered insofar as they pay more attention to the relationship between the characteristics of large number of units. Second, instead of reconstructing complex historical sequences, variable-based study tests hypothesis with criteria of statistical significance and parsimony. Third, due to their information-reduction techniques, the analytical drive of variable-based approaches also provides broader generalizations about cases and comparisons. However, quantitative validity and reliability also come with a price. Following Ragin´s ideas, variable-based approaches not only use broad categorizations that tend to lack historical specificity, but also regression models that impede complex conjunctural arguments to establish causality. In other words, the apparent contradiction between case study approaches and variable-oriented studies boils down to research goals. While case studies are more attentive to complexity and conjunctural causality, variable-base studies care more about generality and linear causality.

According to Max Weber, "Sociology […] is a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences. We shall speak of 'action' insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his behaviour –be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence. Action is 'social' insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course" (Weber 1978, p.4). As understood by Weber, *interpretive understanding* is not an obstacle for establishing *causal explanation*. Moreover, by *interpretative understanding* Weber did not refer to just a positivist social science, but to a concept of science that is concerned with the *subjective meaning* of social action. As the main research goals of this doctoral research is to describe, understand and analyse *subjective meanings* of different group of victims in Eastern Antioquia, and following Weber and Delgado ideas, I decided to use complexity and conjunctural causality as first variable, and generality and linear causality as a second variable, utilising the case study approach as the main methodological strategy in order to achieve a more productive conversation between theory and evidence.

Furthermore, from this particular case study it is possible to generalise four aspects of the relationship between the collective actions of victims' social movements and armed conflict contexts. First, to realise the struggles of victims' civil solidarity processes reviewing experiences of local collective action and the ability of victims' groups to organize themselves and act collectively. Second, to comprehend the dynamics of local communities' participation to resist state and non-state armed actors in areas with high levels of violence. Third, to understand the obstacles faced local communities to overcome the dynamics of armed conflict violence and the symbolic control of

non-state armed groups, particularly guerrilla and paramilitaries groups. Finally, to fully recognise the private pain, grief and sorrow that civilians of rural areas of Colombia have been suffering for most than fifty years of armed conflict confrontations across the country. However, the weaknesses of this case study are that it would be difficult to establish a clear cause/effect relationship between victims' collective action and the impacts of their initiatives in the structural development of the armed conflict in Colombia. There are also limitations of the data collection for this particular case study because of difficulties of accessing key rural areas of Eastern Antioquia. Finally, there are clearly disadvantages of a qualitative single case study concerning the generalisation of the results to the wider population.

Moreover, one of the major challenges of data gathering and future analysis was my double role of a researcher and activist supporting grassroots victims groups in Eastern Antioquia since 2004. Over the time I developed relationships with some of the interviewed respondents, my principal concern was to make sure that I approached data in a methodical manner, minimizing the potential bias resulting from my activist involvement. However, I strongly believe that I would not be able to gather the necessary in-depth qualitative data without forging trust relationships with victims' groups, and ensuring some level of psychological safety, allowing them to open up and retell the stories of their engagement. Thus considering the emotional complexity of the topic, I want to argue that some level of engagement from the researcher is crucial for ensuring inter-subjective understandings of the respondents' actions.

As a result, in the research process I have tried to combine the advantages coming from my academic perspective as well as activist engagement. Discussing my ideas and previous results with former students, previous work colleagues and experienced academics at every stage of the research allowed me to strengthen the critical approach to my own data and my role as a researcher. On the other hand, my previous involvement working with community radios across Latin America (2004-2008), indigenous communities of the counties of Caquetá, Putumayo and Cauca in Colombia (2002-2004), journalist and human rights defenders of Central America and Colombia (2002-2008) allowed me to develop a critical approach to civil society actors involved in the peace process, prior to develop the doctoral research. Furthermore, my academic affiliation and positive relationships with activists across Latin America allowed me to access a diversity of actors of the network of victims groups in the continent. Thus the achievement of their trust was crucial to ensure data quality and richness. This was particularly difficult in cases of people, victims and communities involved in massacres and extra-judicial executions as a result of their cooperation with

armed groups. However, allowing each of the involved parties a chance to describe their stories, perspectives and points of view as their feelings and motivations, remained one of my main goals. The respondents themselves recognized the importance of collecting different accounts, as they underlined the need to deliver justice to both victims and perpetrators as a way to heal the communities they were working for.

A way to approach the resulting issue of possible bias was to remain critical toward the narratives of my respondents, and crosschecking them against each other as well as official accounts and data describing the Colombian armed conflict. This was possible through involving in the sample victims representing different perspectives about the conflict across time, allowing them to give account of their stories and narratives on equal grounds. Another solution that I developed to overcome possible bias was to apply triangulation of methods (Bryman 2008; Silverman 2011) as well as data sources, to minimize the weaknesses of each of them, while taking full advantage of their strengths. As a result, I combined individual qualitative interviews, focus group interviews, documental and desk research and documents analysis data, adding statistical information from official United Nation, NGOs and governmental reports. At the stage of analysis, the use of NVivo and MAXQDA software allowed me for developing codes coming from the qualitative data, instead using pre-defined ideas or concepts. It was at this moment, when I realized the existence of patterns concerning memory, recognition and solidarity that were common theme in gathered narratives and documents. From this point I was able to approach the data in a more systematic perspective, organizing it according to theoretical and interpretative frameworks developed as result of the literature review and the development of the communicative citizenship field.

In summary, as an academic I define my role as a critical observer of armed conflict communities and an analyst of the socio-communicative strategies and actions developed by civil society actors in order to claim human rights in the public sphere. As an activist I see my role in using research results to empower the above-mentioned actors and allow them more critical insight into their own collective actions. By giving account to different narratives and point of views regarding the Colombian armed conflict from victims' perspectives, I hope to facilitate grassroots process of community reconstruction and future sustainable peace in Eastern Antioquia. I strongly believe that the process itself require for all the social actors to recognize each other narratives in order to initiate the construction of collective memory that would give justice and voice to the victims, without turning to violence.

CHAPTER 5

5. Methodology

5.1 Eastern Antioquia as a case study: aims and methodological design for this doctoral research

This doctoral research takes a multi–strategy qualitative research approach (Luker 2008; Bryman 2008; Hancock and Mueller 2010) and uses action research techniques to reconstruct the socio-historical evolution of civil society organizations from Eastern Antioquia in a specific context and period of time (the regional and local public spheres of Eastern Antioquia from 1995 to 2012) from a communicative citizenship theoretical perspective. A participative action research approach – PAR – (McNiff 2001) is adopted, based upon "approaches to enquiry which is participative, grounded in experience, and action-orientated" (Reason and Bradbury 2001). For eight years, I have worked in partnership with these groups of survivors of the Colombian armed conflict to understand and document their struggles for recognition, visibility and inclusion. The aim of this doctoral research is to explore (together with the studied groups) the communicative resources they can access to obtain symbolic, cultural and political power and to act effectively within fragile public spheres. A key objective is to understand what kinds of citizen spaces these socio-communicative strategies can open up within context of armed conflict and how these practices have been affecting the structure and shape of the regional and local public spheres in the last seventeen years. Therefore, the principal objective of this doctoral research project is to describe, understand and analyse the different collective socio-communicative actions that have been developed since 1995 by key civil society organizations from Eastern Antioquia (e.g. AMOR, APROVIACI, ASOVIDA and CARE), claiming human rights in the midst of the Colombian armed conflict. My research question is: how can we understand and explain the communicative and expressive dimensions of social movements and, in particular the collective actions of victims of armed conflicts?

In order to develop this doctoral research I used a set of qualitative methods as *semi-structured interviews*, a method where "the researcher has a list of questions on fairly specific topics to be covered, often referred to as an interview guide, but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply" (Bryman 2008, p.212); *oral histories,* a qualitative tool to collect information about individuals, groups, important events or everyday life issues in order to preserve the knowledge and understanding of people from an eye-witness' point of view (Gordon and Jones 2002; O´Neill 2009); and *focus groups*, a method of collecting qualitative data which usually involves recruiting a small group of people who usually share a particular characteristic to encourage an informal group

discussion (or discussions) focused around a particular topic or set of issues (Bryman 2008; Silverman 2011). The main outcome from using this set of qualitative methods was the in-depth documentation of the socio-communicative and symbolic practices of AMOR, APROVIACI, ASOVIDA and CARE from 1995 to 2012, and the reconstruction of motivations, reasons and understandings behind these socio-communicative strategies.

Furthermore, as a part of this doctoral research project I carried out semi-structured interviews with 10-15 participants belonging to AMOR, APROVIACI, ASOVIDA and CARE for every Eastern Antioquia sub-regions (Altiplano, Bosques, Paramo and Embalses), in other words, from 23 towns in total. I have divided these groups of participants into three categories: first, people that have been working with AMOR, APROVIACI, ASOVIDA and CARE since 1995 (*pioneer group*); second, participants that have been working with these organizations since 2004 (*second generation group*) and, finally, people that have been working with these organizations since 2009 (*new generation group*). The methodological decision behind this categorization was to represent in the sample social actors with diverse histories within these organisations, thus capturing the diverse and complex relationships between individual biography and social movement trajectory. Thus I have carried out oral histories and focus groups for every Eastern Antioquia sub-region with people at strategic levels inside these organizations in order to reconstruct motivations, reasons and understandings behind various socio-communicative strategies developed and deployed by the Eastern Antioquia organisations.

I have decided to develop a multi–strategy qualitative research approach and use this set of qualitative methods for three reasons. First, this research approach is the best method to deliver the logic of qualitative triangulation into this doctoral research. The logic of triangulation refers to qualitative efforts to corroborate or support the understanding of an experience, a meaning, or a social process by using multiple sources or types of data, multiple qualitative methods of data collection, and multiple analytic or interpretive approaches (Bryman 2008; Drisko 2011). Following the main aims of this doctoral research, qualitative triangulation is the best tool to collect participants' social experiences, perceptions and perspectives; using these narratives for socio-historical reconstruction of particular civil society actions from Eastern Antioquia. Second, this approach is a relevant strategy to establish validity to this research, combining theoretical ideas and qualitative data sources with new research questions and hypothesis that emerged during the fieldwork. Finally, this strategy facilitates the interpretation of the relationships between variables, concepts and participants' narratives, providing new aspects and perspectives in order to explain the patterns and trends founded during the development of the fieldwork.

5.2 Methodological design: an approach to research the communicative citizenship field in armed conflict and post armed conflict societies

Specifically, between October and December 2012, I conducted forty-eight (48) *semi-structured interviews*, two (2) *focus groups* and five (5) *oral histories* with a sample of people belonging to different civil society and victims' organizations from Eastern Antioquia as *the Association of Organized Women of Eastern Antioquia* (AMOR), *the Association of Victims of Granada Town* (ASOVIDA)*, The Provincial Association of Victims to Citizens* (APROVIACI) and *The Centre to Approach Reconciliation and Reparation* (CARE) for every Eastern Antioquia's sub-region (Altiplano, Bosques, Paramo and Embalses). I organized these interviews, focus groups and oral histories into three categories. The first category is the *pioneer group* that includes people that have been working with or are part of these victims' organizations since 1995 - the year when the first victims' association (AMOR) had emerged in this Colombian region. The second category is the *second generation group* that includes people that have been working with these civil society groups and victims' associations since 2004; and, finally, the *new generation group* of people that have been working with these social organizations since 2009. As it was already mentioned, the methodological decision behind this sample construction and categorization was to include different social actors that have been working in particular moments with these organizations in order to reconstruct multiple perspectives, moments, memories and overcome possible biases.

Furthermore, I conducted two focus groups: one with thirteen (13) senior members of AMOR, ASOVIDA, APROVIACI and CARE in order to know their perceptions, memories and opinions of the whole social process that they have been developing since 1995; and another with fourteen (14) local and regional journalists from Eastern Antioquia in order to know their perceptions, subjectivities, and opinions regarding the impact, importance and relevance of the collective communicative citizenship actions for the region. Moreover, as a part of the participative action research approach, I participated in six (6) regional and local public demonstrations organized by AMOR and APROVIACI in the towns of Marinilla, Granada, San Francisco, San Carlos, Guarne and La Unión. The reason of my participation in these demonstrations was to understand the dynamics, logics and interactions behind the implementations and developments of some collective communicative citizenship actions in local public spheres and the reactions and perceptions of the general public toward these socio-communicative actions. I created a set of research journal notebooks for every town that I have visited during my fieldwork (twenty-three (23) research journals notebooks in total) in order to organize, track and enrich my research and, most importantly, to prepare questions to the interviewees according to local contexts. In this set of

research journals notebooks I have also outlined ideas and articulated speculations or intuitions concerning the empirical evidence that I found in the field. The delivering of a public lecture at EAFIT University to postgraduate students in Medellin (Antioquia's capital county) after the first month of fieldwork to receive feedback about preliminary ideas, and the participation in five radio morning shows in order to obtain comments from the local public opinion about preliminary findings were other strategies that I applied to enrich the collection of data in Eastern Antioquia.

From October to December 2012 I have been travelling across Eastern Antioquia visiting the towns of Carmen de Viboral, El Retiro, Santuario, Guarne, La Ceja, La Unión, Marinilla, Rionegro, San Vicente, Alejandría, Concepción, El Peñol, Granada, Guatapé, San Carlos, San Rafael, Sonsón, Nariño, Argelia, Abejorral, Cocorná, San Francisco and San Luis (23 in total). I conducted semi-structured interviews with thirty-two women (66% of the sample) and sixteen men (34% of the sample) from AMOR, APROVIACI, ASOVIDA and CARE, an average of two/three interviews per town. The length of the interviews was between forty-five minutes to two hours. I also carried out two focus groups (one with senior members of these victims' organizations and another with local and regional journalists) and five oral histories with three members of APROVIACI and two of ASOVIDA. As a result of using this sample design and combining different methods of data collections, the fieldwork resulted in obtaining rich, relevant and accurate qualitative information, which I used in order to reconstruct, understand and systematise the socio-historical evolution of victims' associations of Eastern Antioquia for a specific context and period of time (the regional and local public spheres of Eastern Antioquia from 1995 to 2012) from a communicative citizenship theoretical perspective.

5.3 Data analysis and research results

At the first stage of qualitative data analysis I categorized the information from the forty-eight semi-structured interviews, determining their levels of relevance. In order to do this I followed a categorization approach called *conceptual clustering* (Stepp and Michalski 1986; Talavera and Béjar 2001), a method to classify clusters of information, in this case interviews, according to conceptual descriptions or categories, in order to group objects together by similarity into classes and to generate a classification structure. This approach is related to fuzzy set theory (Zimmermann 2001) in which clusters of information can be in different degrees a part of one of more categories, groups or classifications. According to this rule, I created three clusters of information relevance, addressing two categories: first, the category of *sense of belonging and time*, classifying the interviews according to the time when every interviewee had been associated with any particular victims'

group (categories of *pioneer group, second generation group* and *new generation group*); and second, the category of *accurateness*, organising the interviews according to how the participants have addressed in their narratives topics concerning the socio-historical evolution of their particular association and its relationship with the communicative citizenship field. I have produced these clusters of information manipulating the qualitative data combining the use of the software *Access data-base* with the graphic generator *Many Eyes*.

As a result, the first cluster of 'information relevance' brings together fifteen (15) interviews: 7 of the *pioneer group*, 4 of the *second generation group* and 4 of the *new generation group*. This first cluster of information is the main core of qualitative information for this doctoral research. The second cluster of information relevance agglomerates twenty-three (23) interviews: 6 of the *pioneer group*, 11 of the *second generation group* and 6 of the *new generation group*. This second cluster of information is the proximal qualitative information for this doctoral research. Finally, the third cluster of information relevance compiles ten (10) interviews: 1 of the *pioneer group*, 2 of the *second generation group* and 7 of the *new generation group*. This third cluster of information is the peripheral qualitative information for this doctoral research.

Figure 4
Categorization for relevance following a conceptual clustering approach using the software 'Access data-base'

Categorization of Fieldwork Interviews

Communicative citizenship, another dimension of rights
Categorization of Fieldwork Interviews

22/01/13

First Level of Relevance

No	Name	Organization	Town	Interview Time
1	Nadis Milena Londoño	AMOR / APROVIACI	La Unión	2 hours 35 minutes
2	Luz Dary Valencia	APROVIACI	La Unión	1 hour 57 minutes
3	Ofelia Orozco	APROVIACI	Guarne	1 hour 42 minutes
4	Nohora Ossa	ASOVIDA / APROVIACI	Granada	2 hours 51 minutes
5	Chelly Melissa Llano	AMOR / INFORIENTE	Rionegro	3 hours 12 minutes
6	Jaime Montoya	ASOVIDA / APROVIACI	Granada	3 hours 29 minutes
7	Juan David Villa	APROVIACI	Medellín	2 hours 33 minutes
8	Rosalba Usma	APROVIACI	San Carlos	1 hour 26 minutes
9	Leididiana Valencia	AMOR / APROVIACI	La Unión	3 hours 03 minutes
10	Beatriz Montoya	AMOR	Marinilla	1 hour 16 minutes
11	Asenet Muñoz	AMOR	Cocorná	1 hour 38 minutes
12	Claudia Toro	AMOR / APROVIACI	San Luis	2 hours 27 minutes
13	María Viveros	AMOR / APROVIACI	Sonsón	1 hour 11 minutes
14	Focus Group	AMOR / APROVIACI	Medellín	4 hours 26 minutes
15	Focus Group	Regional Journalists	Rionegro	4 hours 06 minutes

Communicative citizenship, another dimension of rights
Categorization of Fieldwork Interviews

22/01/13

Third Level of Relevance

No	Name	Organization	Town	Interview Time
39	Edixón Perea	AMOR	Abejorral	2 hours 43 minutes
40	Patricia Maldonado	PRODEPAZ	San Carlos	1 hour 32 minutes
41	Ignacio Guisao	AMOR / APROVIACI	San Luis	39 minutes
42	Angelica Arias	AMOR	Marinilla	1 hour 11 minutes
43	Jorge Villegas	APROVIACI	San Vicente	54 minutes
44	Catalina Vasquez	AMOR / APROVIACI	Argelia	1 hour 41 minutes
45	Alfonso Palacio	APROVIACI	San Francisco	58 minutes
46	Ana María Giraldo	AMOR	Argelia	1 hour 32 minutes
47	Germán Gaviria	AMOR / APROVIACI	Concepción	2 hours 02 minutes
48	Ricardo Arevalo	AMOR / APROVIACI	El Retiro	44 minutes

Levels of relevance

Communicative citizenship, another dimension of rights
Categorization of Fieldwork Interviews

22/01/13

Second Level of Relevance

No	Name	Organization	Town	Interview Time
16	Yolima Ramírez	APROVIACI	Nariño	46 minutes
17	Carlos Restrepo	AMOR / APROVIACI	El Carmen de Viboral	54 minutes
18	Mary Luz Salazar	AMOR / APROVIACI	Guatapé	1 hour 07 minutes
19	Marcela Gallego	APROVIACI	El Retiro	1 hour 11 minutes
20	Roberto Ardila	AMOR	La Ceja	39 minutes
21	Nohemi Quintero	AMOR / APROVIACI	San Vicente	1 hour 23 minutes
22	Angela María Gámez	AMOR / APROVIACI	Alejandría	55 minutes
23	Gertrudis Nieto	APROVIACI	Sonsón	1 hour 39 minutes
24	Nelly González	APROVIACI	Abejorral	2 hours 07 minutes
25	Mario Gómez	AMOR / APROVIACI	San Luis	1 hour 22 minutes
26	Ana Beiba Giraldo	APROVIACI	Granada	1 hour 43 minutes
27	Belén Loaiza	APROVIACI	Sonsón	48 minutes
28	Esteban Jaramillo	AMOR	San Carlos	1 hour 44 minutes
29	Estella González	APROVIACI	Marinilla	57 minutes
30	Olivia Miranda	APROVIACI	El Carmen de Viboral	2 hours 58 minutes
31	Max Martinez	PRODEPAZ	Rionegro	1 hour 3 minutes
32	Claudia Jaramillo	PRODEPAZ	Rionegro	1 hour 38 minutes
33	Gloria Alzate	APROVIACI	San Rafael	1 hour 12 minutes
34	Juan Betancurt	EAFIT	Medellín	2 hours 43 minutes
35	Clara Mesa	AMOR	Nariño	1 hour 47 minutes
36	Oscar Zapata	AMOR / APROVIACI	El Peñol	48 minutes
37	María Teresa Muñoz	APROVIACI	Guatapé	2 hours 32 minutes
38	Rodolfo Garces	ASOVIDA	Granada	1 hour 23 minutes

Fieldwork in Eastern Antioquia, Colombia.   Camilo Tamayo Gómez.

The three clusters of information have electronic labels in the Access data base with information about: the context of data collection, data collection method, sampling, data collection process, identification of different versions of data files, main topics covered in the interview, keywords, and use conditions or data confidentiality. In the same way, every cluster of information has a document in a MS Word format or Rich Text Format (RTF) with this information: name, labels and descriptions for variables, records and their values; explanation or definition of codes and classification schemes used and definitions of specialist terminology or acronyms used. I stored the information of these three clusters on a website repository (https://www.dropbox.com) and I have developed a Metadata for this doctoral project on the website Soundcloud (*https://soundcloud.com/camilo-tamayo).* Furthermore, in order to provide back up to the qualitative data I have adopted two strategies: first, an internal back up process made by me every month on the Metadata website, and second, an external back up process made by an external researcher every three months during the lifetime of this doctoral research project on the website repository. These decisions are made following the qualitative data processing procedures outlined by the Research and Enterprise Office at The University of Huddersfield, the qualitative data collection processing procedures of the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) data management guides document version 3.0 (2010), the recommendations of the UK Data Archive Managing and Sharing Data Guide (2011) and the University of Huddersfield policy on back-ups.

Figure 5
Construction of levels of relevance using the graph generator 'Many Eyes' based on clusters of information
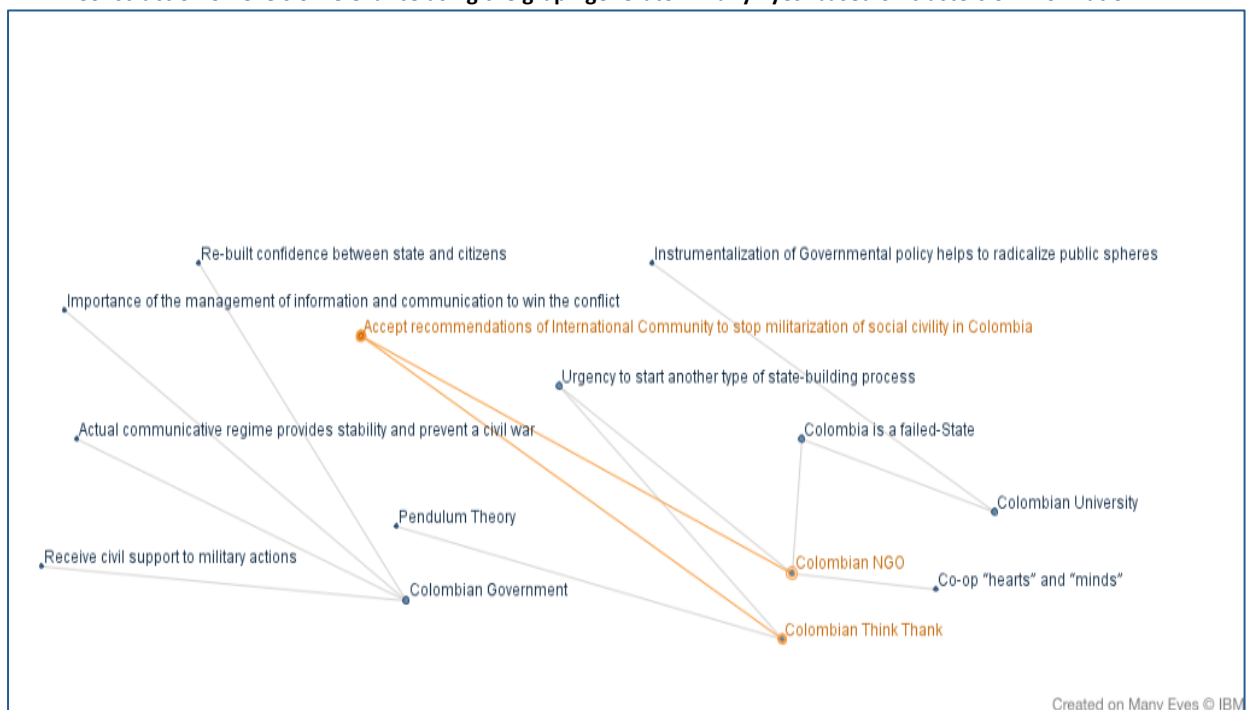
After categorizing the above information, the second methodological decision was to develop a dialectical *inductive/deductive reasoning process* (Greco; Masciari and Pontieri 2001; Holyoak and Morrison 2005) to analyse the first cluster of information and generate ideas, notions and reasons (hypothesis generating) in order to comprehend how different civil society groups, especially victims' groups from Eastern Antioquia, have been developing different communicative citizenship actions to claim human rights in regional and local public spheres, and how these groups of victims have been struggling for recognition, visibility, inclusion and power in the public arena. Thus I have addressed these two topics as a first approach to reconstruct, understand and systematise the socio-historical evolution of victims' associations of Eastern Antioquia from a communicative citizenship theoretical perspective.

I decided to use the dialectical inductive/deductive reasoning process for three reasons. First, this process allows improving the data analysis process through combining the use of clusters of information (characterizing topics and narratives in terms of logical rules) with the deductive technique to derive knowledge and verify hypotheses. Second, using this approach one can coherently integrate deductive tools and data mining resources as visualization tools (e.g. *Many Eyes, Piktochart*) with qualitative analysis software (e.g. *Acces*, *NVivo*, *Atlas.ti*). Finally, and most importantly, this dialectic technique is the perfect approach to generate a dialogic conversation between theoretical ideas (the communicative citizenship field) and the qualitative data derived from the case study (narratives of Eastern Antioquia's victims' groups) in order to answer the main research questions of this doctoral research.

In order to develop the inductive/deductive reasoning process, the next methodological step was to use an analytical strategy called *narrative analysis*, to focus on sociocultural narratives as specific forms of discourse, occurring as embodiments of cultural values and personal subjectivities (Dauite and Lightfoot 2004). I used this approach to analyse how these narratives can be used to examine the political, social and cultural meanings and interpretations among these groups of victims that guided perception, thought, interaction, and action inside the public arenas of Eastern Antioquia in the last seventeen years. While the main reason to use a narrative analysis is when narrative discourses describe human social experiences with the world, organize life-social relations, and provide interpretations of the past and plans for the future (Dauite and Lightfoot 2004), it became clear that this is the best methodological strategy to reconstruct the socio-historical evolution of victims' groups of Eastern Antioquia and understand their collective communicative citizenship actions and struggles for recognition in their particular social context. For that reason, I archived all

the interviews of the first cluster of information (fifteen interviews) in two languages: first, transcribing the entire interviews in Spanish; and second, translating these interviews from Spanish to English. As a result, the core of qualitative information of this doctoral research is based on those 38 hours and 23 minutes of victims' narratives.

In practical terms, the next step was to develop a *thematic analysis model* emphasising the content of qualitative data in order to create conceptual groupings. A thematic analysis model focuses on examining themes, patterns, and trends within data. It is a tool to identify implicit and explicit concepts present in the data; recognizing ideas and notions within the raw data and encoding it prior to interpretation. In other words, thematic analyses require more involvement and interpretation from the researcher; moving beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas, or themes, within the data. Furthermore, codes are then typically developed to represent the identified themes and applied or linked to raw data as summary markers for later analysis (MacQueen and Namey 2012). Following this approach, the thematic analysis model for this doctoral research consisted on six phases: familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing reports, maps and results. The next table presents the results that I have achieved for every phase:

Table 1
Phases and results of thematic analysis model

Phase	Results
Phase One: familiarization with data	Preliminary start codes and detailed notes
Phase Two: generating initial codes	Comprehensive codes of how data answers the research questions
Phase Three: searching for themes among codes	List of candidate themes for further analysis
Phase Four: reviewing themes	Coherent recognition of how themes are patterned to tell an accurate story about the data
Phase Five: defining and naming themes	A comprehensive analysis of what the themes contribute to understanding the data
Phase Six: producing reports, maps and results	Main findings

The analytic software that I used to manipulate the clusters of qualitative information and to develop the six phases of the thematic analysis model was NVivo, version No 10 (for the main core of qualitative information) and MAXQDA, version No 11 (for the proximal and peripheral qualitative information). The decision to combine those two was based on the different tools that they offer to better explore and visualize data, helping to turn codes and themes into variables. The first step in

order to identify categories, codes, themes and concepts within participants' narratives using this software was to address the qualitative data using a grounded theory approach. Corbin and Strauss (2008) and MacQueen and Namey (2012) argue that the emphasis on supporting claims with data is what links applied thematic analysis to grounded theory. For these academics, grounded theory is a set of inductive and iterative techniques designed to identify categories and concepts within text that are then linked into formal theoretical models. As Bernard and Ryan (1998) argue, the process is simple: first, read verbatim transcripts; second, identify possible themes; third, compare and contrast themes, identifying structure among them; and finally, build theoretical models, constantly checking them against the data (Bernard and Ryan 1998). As they explain: "applied thematic analysis involves steps one through three as well as a portion of step four. As implied by step four, a key attribute of the process is that the resulting theoretical models are grounded in the data. In applied research, our output may or may not be a theoretical model (which comprises a distinction with grounded theory), but as with a grounded theory approach, we are greatly concerned with ensuring that our interpretations are supported by actual data in hand" (MacQueen and Namey 2012, p.12).

Figure 6
Coding of core qualitative data using the software NVivo version No 10
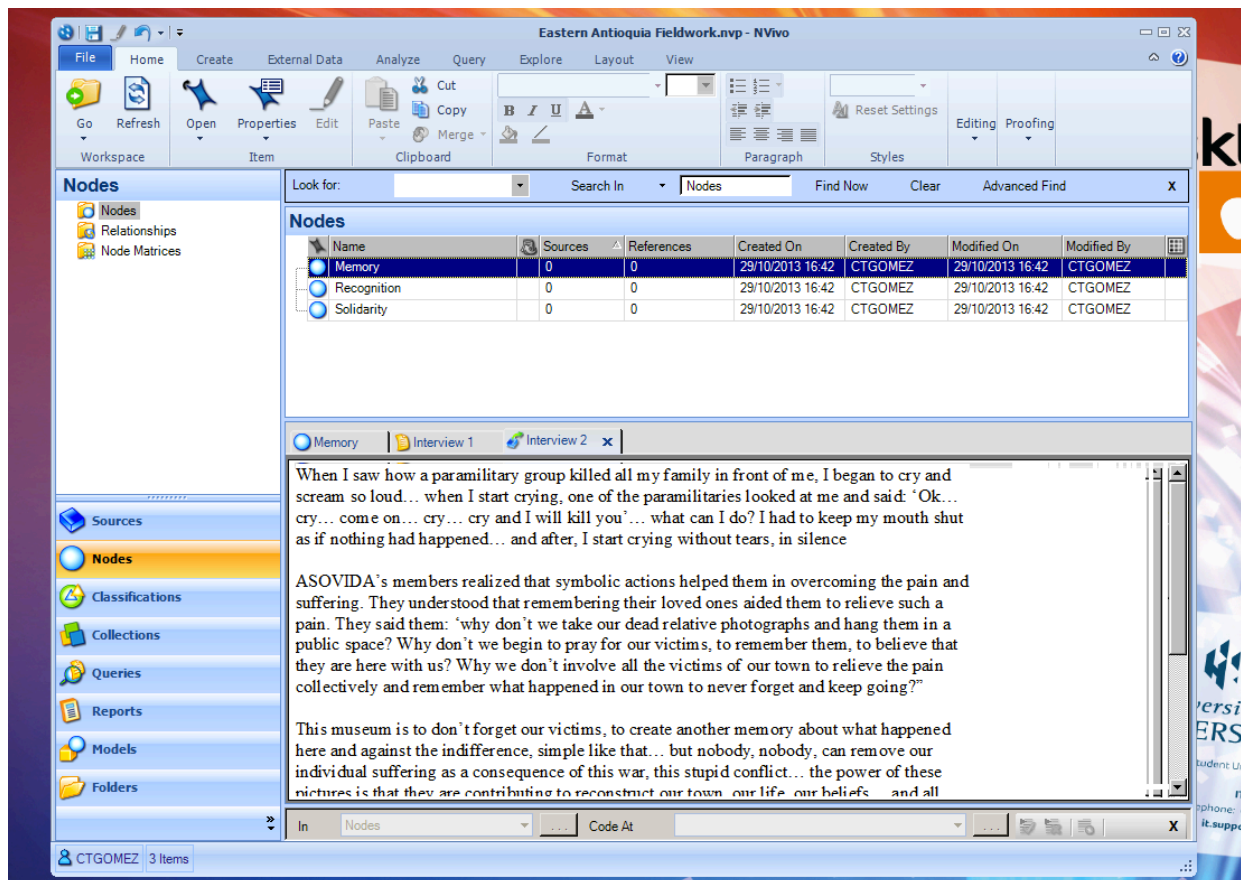
After the development of phases one to four using analytic software and analysing participants' narratives within the frames of the communicative citizenship field, it became transparent that three main codes and themes emerged as the rationales for performing collective communicative citizenship actions for these victims' groups: the categories of memory, recognition and solidarity. In other words, these three main codes are crucial ideas, notions, rationales and concepts for these civil society groups in order to develop processes of communicative citizenship in the public spheres of the region. Furthermore, it became clear after the analysis that the four principal collective communicative citizenship actions that Eastern Antioquia's victims' groups have been developing since 1995 are: first, *The walls of memory*; second, *The march of the light*; third, *The never again exhibitions* (photography exhibitions about people that have disappeared during the armed conflict); and finally, *Trails for life*, where groups of victims try to recover the meaning, significance and uses of public spaces where massacres against civilians happened. Therefore, this analysis confirmed the key methodological objective, which was to understand what kinds of citizen spaces these communicative citizenship actions can open up within contexts of armed conflict and how these practices have been affecting the structure and shape of the regional and local public spheres.

Following the results of phases four to six of the thematic analysis model, and using the qualitative information collected from focus groups, oral stories, as well as feedback from the public lecture and the radio programs (and some ideas that I outlined in the research journals), in the next three chapters I will present the main research findings. In other words, in the next chapters I will try to reconstruct, understand and systematise the socio-historical evolution of Eastern Antioquia's victims' groups for a specific context and period of time (the regional and local public spheres of Eastern Antioquia from 1995 to 2012) from a communicative citizenship theoretical perspective using an inductive/deductive reasoning process. As I described earlier, it is important to keep in mind that since 1995 Eastern Antioquia's victims' groups has been deploying three socio-communicative strategies that aim for recognition, visibility and inclusion of victims in the local and regional public sphere: 'From the house to the square', 'Constituent assemblies' and the 'Psychosocial strategy'. It is proposed that the collective communicative citizenship actions of these groups demonstrate how to claim justice, truth, reparation and human rights in contexts of fragile public spheres and violence using nonconventional socio-political and communicative strategies; encouraging victims to symbolically express and externalise the personal consequences of the war.

CHAPTER 6

6. Memory as a battlefield: constructions of memory in Eastern Antioquia from a communicative citizenship perspective

The aim of this chapter is to analyse different collective communicative citizenship actions that have been developed by victims' groups of Eastern Antioquia as APROVIACI, AMOR and ASOVIDA, using the theoretical framework of memory. The principal arguments of this chapter are two. First, that for the case of Eastern Antioquia the construction of social, historical and cultural memory from a victims' perspective is a tool to claim truth and reparation in the midst of the armed conflict. Second, the effort of these victims' groups to constitute plural discourses of memory in the public spheres of Eastern Antioquia is crucial part of an architecture of the collective memory of this Colombian region, helping the development of the more active role of individuals in the configuration of their socio-communicative and symbolic regimes. This chapter focuses on the category of memory as a main framework for two reasons. First, this category is one of the principal theoretical concepts that helps to configure different modes of communicative citizenship; underpinning the role of *counterpublics narratives* (Fraser 1992) and *oppositional or counter-narratives* (Arnold-de Simine and Radstone 2013) in the construction of different points of view in the public sphere. Second, the concept of memory emerged as the first main code and theme in the qualitative narrative analysis. In this context, the category of memory highlights the challenge taken up by victims to construct subjectivities, narratives and values to address the relationship between symbolic power and the construction of memory regimes in Eastern Antioquia. As a result, the social process of construction of memory in this Colombian region became a struggle over power and the exercise of this power to shape collective representations and meanings of the past with important connections to the creation of subjectivities, narratives and values in the present.

This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, I will present the set of results of the narrative analysis that focused on explaining the main motivations and reasons why groups of victims from Eastern Antioquia have been developing processes of construction of memory from the victims' point of view. I will analyse collective communicative citizenship actions as the *March of Light* and the *Walls of Memory* using the theoretical framework of construction of memory as a socio-cultural process. Furthermore, I will present in this section the case of ASOVIDA and their initiative of the *Never Again Museum*. I have decided to pay particular attention to this specific case for two reasons. Firstly, the initiative of the *Never Again Museum* in Granada town addresses directly questions about the construction of memory narratives in the armed conflict context from a

victims' perspective. Secondly, this museum is the only public space in Eastern Antioquia that aims to create an institutional memory to change subjectivities and representations about the victims of the conflict. In other words, this museum hopes to reconstruct victims' memories in order to start a symbolic restoration of collective memory in Granada Town, demonstrating how victims' initiatives for social reparation and reconciliation can strengthen the social bonds broken by violence in Eastern Antioquia. In the second section of this chapter, I will present some conclusions derived from these examples of construction of memory through the developing of collective communicative citizenship actions, as well as interconnections between these communicative citizenship actions and the expressive dimensions of social movement activism.

6.1 Construction of memory narratives from the victims' point of view in Eastern Antioquia: the struggles to approach the past and the present

One of the most important collective communicative citizenship actions that AMOR and APROVIACI have been developing since 2002 is the *March of Light*, when every Friday of the week group of victims and people from different towns of Eastern Antioquia march across public roads with candles in their hands claiming for truth, justice and recovering of the good name of victims that had been wrongly accused of being part of some army group. One of the aims of this collective action is to empower, transform and reconfigure the position of particular civil society groups in specific socio-historical contexts (in this case victims' groups), encouraging a more active participation of victims in the construction of their collective memory. The importance of the relationship between the *March of Light* and the creation of memory narratives from a victim's perspective was well described by one member of APROVIACI:

> "For us, the members of APROVIACI, the *March of Light* is about dignity, remembrance, and memory… especially about creating together our memory… memory about what happened here… memory to remember and remembering not to forget… we can feel more powerful together trying to express our feelings, thoughts and ideas just holding a candle. But, to be honest, the most important thing for us is how we are writing another chapter about what happened in the midst of the armed conflict here in our own words, with our own feelings, with our own memories, creating memories for the future, for our children, to never forget…" (Personal interview, women from San Carlos, Colombia, October 2012).

This creation of memory narratives developed through the *March of Light* every Friday can be categorized in two levels: first at the collective level, where this group of victims demands the truth and justice in order to exercise their rights in the public sphere. The second level is at the individual level, where the aim of particular members of this group is to recover the good name of the singular victims that had been wrongly accused of being part of some army group. These two levels – collective and individual – are developing the symbolic dimension of the construction of memory narratives and shape the collective political actions of victims in the public sphere. As one of the members of APROVIACI expressed:

> "We are demanding truth and justice as a group of victims every Friday because knowing the truth can help us to do juridical and political actions against perpetrators, write another kind of history about Eastern Antioquia and get collective reparation, real collective reparation, real emotional reparation, and do real political action in different places… this is something that we called 'collective political actions' because we are acting as a group to know the truth…at the same time, every member of APROVIACI is doing a huge individual effort to say to the community: hey! This person that you think that was a *guerrillero* or *paramilitary* was my brother, my father, my son and was not a bad human being… and when the people can fully understand and believe that this relative was not a bad person, I think this member of APROVIACI is going to get some reparation, no material, more like spiritual reparation… and this is good for us, because we are writing another memory about our victim… the real memory…" (Personal interview, men from Granada, Colombia, November 2012).

In the 1990s Anderson (1991) introduced innovative concepts to comprehend the relationship between the symbolic dimension of the construction of memory narratives and the social construction of the past and present from different perspectives. Anderson's concept of *imagined community* was not concerned with whether the social constructions of memories are false or real; but saw the narratives that people use to 'imagine' their 'communities' as the key to recognising the ways that people (inside these 'communities') develop a sense of belonging and identity through collective narratives about the past and the present. These types of collective narratives could provide a sense of social cohesion inside those 'imagined communities', and generate processes of social construction of memory. Analysing the narratives used in the interviews it is possible to argue that those modes of remembering (*e.g.* the *March of Light* or the *Walls of Memory*) are symbolic

descriptions and expressions of the 'imagined communities' that victims want to shape in their towns and villages of Eastern Antioquia. That is how the member of AMOR addressed this topic:

> "Every time that we are in the streets holding a candle or showing the pictures on the walls of memory in the public squares, I think we are addressing the past and we are creating a 'new community' in our 'actual community' at the same time… a kind of 'new society', you know what I mean? We believe that a new society can be reborn in this territory after all this violence, after all this bloody insanity… a new society in peace, inclusive, open, democratic, with dignity and respecting the past… where the people can truly respect each other, with opportunities for everybody without differences… a better place to grow up in and dream again…. but, definitely, I think that the most important thing in this process is imagination; to imagine that we can create this new society without violence and be part of a new group of people without fear, where everybody is welcome… maybe this can sound idealistic, but if one word can describe our group it is idealism, because we idealise that it is possible to forget the horror of the war and bury in a grave all our suffering and all our pain… and after that, we can be reborn again…" (Personal interview, woman from Cocorná, Colombia, October 2012).

On the other hand, we can ask ourselves what happens when people cannot develop senses of belonging with the community as a consequence of the war. Some survivors believe that one of the biggest impacts of the armed conflict in Eastern Antioquia is the impossibility to be the part of your community again, after you witnessed the direct armed conflict actions as massacres or extrajudicial killings. Therefore, the stigmatization or defamation to particular groups of people inside those communities (*e.g.* human rights defenders, victims, witnesses, peasants or NGO workers) are some of the main consequences of this long-term armed conflict; affecting the construction of collective narratives of belonging and representations of cultural memories for part of those social groups. This sense of lack of belonging is visible in the next narrative:

> "I'm dead in life you know? When some people in town start to say that I'm a supporter of the guerrilla because after I witnessed a paramilitary squad kill a peasant family with grenades, showing no compassion or mercy to these people, I demanded the intervention of national NGOs to expose this madness to the country and get some help from the national Government; some people from town started to say that I'm a *guerrillera,* and when this rumour started to spread no one in town wanted to talk to me again… It was like a social death,

a kind of 'ghost' for these people... and I started to hate this town... I started feeling like 'disconnected'... feeling alone... like erased from the history of this town... I think I don't belong here anymore, you know? And, to be honest, I don't want to be part of this town either... I think this paramilitary squad killed me as well... the only bad thing is that I'm still 'alive' in some way... but not for the people of this town, I'm dead to them" (Personal interview, woman from Sonsón, Colombia, November 2012).

In the same decade of the 1990s Husseyn (1995) and Hirsch (1997; 1999) developed other categories to understand the relationship between the construction of memory narratives and the different dimensions of cultural memory. For example Husseyn (1995) introduces the categories of *amnesia* and memory together, rather than in traditional oppositional terms; arguing that the so-called 'memory boom' in the 1990s signifies a reaction against to the 'culture of amnesia', establishing as a consequence a new 'culture of the memory' as a tool to improve historical consciousness in public culture (Husseyn 1995). In other words, the intrinsic relationship between amnesia and memory is crucial in order to understand ethical responsibilities towards the past, and the construction of sense of social belonging in post-traumatic societies. It is important to express at this point that the so-called 'memory boom' during the 1990s was one of the consequences of the proliferating number of studies about the events of the Holocaust and questions regarding how those events should be remembered in connection with social conformation of public memory in open spaces (*e.g.* through memorials, museums, statues, etc.).

In the same perspective, Hirsch (1997; 1999) presented the concept of 'post-memory' to address issues about how second and third generations (who grew up with different social constructions of the past and the present through narrative memories) could reproduce previous political and ethical conceptions that do not necessarily correspond to present public remembrances. This scholar suggests that individuals can be dispossessed of their family memories by a diasporic existence or by historical and ideological ruptures that can stigmatise their memories as taboo (Hirsch 1999). Those contributions started discussions around the concept of 'the ethics of memory appropriation', debates about the 'false memory syndrome'; and triggered questions around of who has a right to certain memories, who is allowed to pass them on, and in which form they should, or can, be passed on successfully (Arnold-de Simine and Radstone 2013). For some former and actual members of APROVIACI and AMOR the issues that Husseyn (1995) and Hirsch (1997; 1999) touched upon can have another interpretation in this particular armed conflict context. Questions about the historical responsibility to teach future generations about what happened in Eastern Antioquia in recent years

to and how to express this learning in open public spaces are crucial for those collectives of victims. This is how a member of APROVIACI expressed it:

> "We know in APROVIACI that any public demonstration that we do has ethical and political responsibilities with the past, with the present and with the victims… the question for us here is that we need to teach the people in our communities about what happened in the past in our town… about the killings, the massacres and the car bombs… but teach about the resistance, the hope, and our courage as well… I think this is our historical responsibility, our first and final motivation, teaching in dissimilar ways to all generations… You know what? I guess that the principal reason of our movement is to teach people about our personal suffering and teach our children to never, never, never forget… and be really proud that we are survivors of this war and spread and pass this proudness to our future children…" (Personal interview, woman from La Unión, Colombia, November 2012).

In the same perspective, regarding the relationship between memory and the construction of the future, a member of APROVIACI stated:

> "I believe that when we are doing public demonstrations in our towns we are educating people about the armed conflict of Eastern Antioquia. I strongly believe that we have the right to create a legacy of memory for our children and for future generations… I don't want to be labelled as "a victim of this conflict" all my life, of course not, and I consider that the way to move from this label is educating people in the square, in the market, in the church about the reasons behind our actions and the history of our collective of victims… about our struggles, hopes and fights… and after all this, my dream is that these people can come with us to the squares and demonstrate together!" (Personal interview, woman from Guatapé, Colombia, October 2012).

At this point, I want to make four considerations. First, following the work of Anderson (1991), Husseyn (1995) and Hirsh (1997; 1999) we can say that for this case memory reveals a plethora of approaches based on various factors as *levels of analysis* (individual or personal, collective, local, regional, institutional, national or global), *origin* (official, oral, commercial, non-official), *status* (contested, consensual, shared, selective) and *substance* (historical, cultural, social, political); and the analysis of these constructions of memory narratives could be the key to understand in holistic terms the relationship between memory and identity, memory and social belonging, and memory

and politics (Verovšek 2008; Arnold-de Simine and Radstone 2013). Specifically, for the particular case of Eastern Antioquia it is possible to argue that the two collectives of victims (AMOR and APROVIACI) have developed a strong tie between collective memories of the armed conflict as a form of communitarian identity, and memory narratives as a process to create sense of social belonging. In the words of some AMOR and APROVIACI members:

> "Our memories are our identity… As a group of victims the one thing that we have is our personal and collective stories about the war and the resistance … and these stories make us what we are now… I belong to every story of suffering in this town because I can identify myself with this pain; with this misery… my identity is made of everybody's tears, hopes and collective resistance… I stand here for anybody who has suffered in this armed conflict… this is my identity" (Personal interview, woman from El Retiro, Colombia, October 2012).

> "I'm part of this group because I'm a victim, a woman, a survivor, a dreamer, a fighter and a citizen! I'm all of that! But the most important thing is that I'm a living memory as well… I belong to this community because I can tell everybody in the world about the horrors of this conflict… I belong to this communal memory and this memory makes me feel part of this community, of course! But, you know? I guess in essence my identity is made of every tear that my fellow friends of APROVIACI have dropped for their victims… my identity tastes like salt water" (Personal interview, woman from Granada, Colombia, November 2012).

My second argument is that for the case of Eastern Antioquia it is possible to establish a relationship between memory and democratic values, because through remembering their past victims' groups as AMOR or APROVIACI are able to gain a public voice, resulting in building a plurality of memories in expanding and possibly more democratic public sphere (Bonilla 2011). Furthermore, this visibility of *counterpublics narratives* (Fraser 1992) or *oppositional or counter-narratives* (Arnold-de Simine and Radstone 2013) in the construction of diverse points of view in the public sphere creates different *memory communities* (Booth 1999; Whitehead 2009) that promote their own narratives and fight for recognition in the public sphere.

It is clear for the case of Eastern Antioquia that those groups of victims are 'memory communities' for two reasons. First, because one of the principal aims of these groups is to take distance from

official narratives (or Governmental assumptions) about the actions of particular regional social actors, and create another version and narratives of what happened in this territory since 1995. Second, because AMOR and APROVIACI wanted to help the future establishment of commissions of truth and reconciliation for this region in post-conflict Colombia; and through their memory narratives can contest power relations in the collective construction and (re)construction of the horrors of war. The former treasurer of ASOVIDA explains how this relationship between public recognition and memory has been really important to claim human rights in the public sphere:

> "The most important achievement for ASOVIDA in recent years is how events as *The march of light* and *Trials for lif*e have brought us political, social and public recognition as victims in our town and given us the power to write the memory of our territory in our own words, making our relatives that were killed visible… Now we can claim for truth, justice and recognition of our rights without fear or shame because the people in our town know who we are and the reasons behind our claims and demands… I think to write our community's memory is the best tool to obtain recognition in our town; to get public recognition in the public space, in the square, in the park, in the market, in the church… thanks to all these actions we can creates public memory 'in public', and this is the most important thing of this whole process" (Personal interview, ASOVIDA's former treasurer, Granada, Colombia, October 2012).

Furthermore, the former president of AMOR explains in the next narrative the relevance of this victims group in the future establishment of commissions of truth and reconciliation for Eastern Antioquia:

> "Our historical responsibility as a group of victims and survivors of this armed conflict is to claim the truth, demand the truth and help to get the truth for everybody, victim and non-victim… If one day it can be possible to create a commission of truth for Eastern Antioquia, AMOR will be the voice of the victims and the voice of women's memory… the voice of more than 25,000 women from this region that have been suffering this armed conflict for a long long time… and, most importantly, AMOR can be the organisation to verify if the versions of armed actors, officials and non-officials, are truth or not…I believe that we can help, thanks to our perspective, experience and our knowledge about what has happened here… we can help to build a more inclusive truth for everyone" (Personal interview, woman from El Carmen de Viboral, Colombia, November 2012).

My third consideration is that following the ideas of Barahona De Brito, González and Aguilar (2001) and Assmann (2006; 2008) building processes of memory denotes ways in which victims' social movements actively construct direct and indirect relationships with the past and the present; establishing three particular types of memory. First *communicative memory*; the memories of individuals, which are only shared with his/her immediate environment; second the *political memory*, collectively organised acts and public rites of commemoration; and finally *cultural memory*, articulations and representations of memory which gain a wider forum in different cultural arenas in which they have different functions and are controversially discussed; and because they exist in material form, can be archived, rediscovered and reinterpreted (Assmann 2006). It is evident for the case of AMOR and APROVIACI that these victims' groups are developing and establishing these three particular types of memory simultaneously and synchronically in their region of Eastern Antioquia. In this context, the value of collective communicative citizenship actions as *The march of the light*, *Trails for life* or *The walls of memory* as that individual expressions of memory narratives can produce collectively public acts to demand human rights or the truth about what happened in this conflict from the victims' point of view. Personal claims in the *The walls of memory* as example of communicative memory or collective demands in The *march of the light* and *Trails for life* as example of constructions of political memory highlight the importance of these collective actions in the public sphere.

Furthermore, this long process of constructions of memories in Eastern Antioquia from the victims' point of view cannot be understand it if we do not recognize first that those collective communicative citizenship actions are touching on different communicative, political and cultural dimensions of memory at the same time. It seems that for the case of Eastern Antioquia there can be no neat separation between individual and collective constructions of memory in the public space. Those examples show that public constructions of memory is a social practice developed and fostered in particular social context; in other words, this is a clear example of developing processes of memory as a social construction (Halbwachs 1992; Arnold-de Simine and Radstone 2013).

My final consideration is that for the case of Eastern Antioquia it is clear that the construction of memory narratives in the midst of armed conflicts is a scenario where different social actors (particularly victims) struggle to approach the past and the present; contesting versions of the past and the power relations around the construction of collective remembrance. In other words, the phrase "History is written by the victors" could be most accurate in addressing the relationship between the construction of collective memories in the midst of armed conflicts and the power

relationships around the establishment of official narratives of the past. At the same time, this sentence reveals how the category of power defines who is allowed to write the narratives of what happened in the midst and at the end of war confrontations. Specifically for the topic of memory construction and conflict, the case of Eastern Antioquia has a singularity, because the process of construction is happening in an on-going conflict and not after the conflict has come to an end. For Contreras (2012) the challenge of this is that in Colombia "memory construction is being used as a means of conflict resolution during an on-going conflict, and the interpretation of the past here represents a particularly sensitive and contested field" (Contreras 2012; p.1). Furthermore, in order to establish main interpretations about what has been happening in more than five decades of armed conflict in this country, it is important to note that this is a field of constant tension between *official narratives* about war waged by the Colombian government, the Colombian army, Paramilitary groups and Guerrilla groups ('the official warriors'), and *non-official narratives* created by civil society organizations, NGOs, social movements, human rights defenders, civilians or victims ('the unofficial war actors').

This tension between *official* and *non-official narratives* shows how collective constructions of memory, collaborative constitution of narratives and particular reconstructions of the past are set in place by agents, actors or institutions that have their own political, social, and cultural agendas (Erll 2008). This is why memory is a battlefield for the case of Eastern Antioquia, because the final aim of these actors is to promote and establish into the region's collective memory a particular set of views about what have been happening during the war; shaping particular social contexts, sites of memories and meanings according to their values, narratives and identities. In other words, this dichotomy is an example of how in Eastern Antioquia the constructions of different *social frameworks of memory* (Erll 2008) are essential to understand the relationship between narratives and acts of memory, because this tension (between *official* and *non-official narratives*) is a part of scenarios in which the clash of diverse sets of values and social memories defines positions of power, recognition and visibility inside this on-going armed conflict.

In order to understand the complexity of this tension for the case of Eastern Antioquia, the next example can provide an illustration of this intricacy. In 2005 the Colombian government submitted a bill to create a transitional justice framework for the demobilisation of some paramilitary groups called the Justice and Peace Law which states "former combatants are given reduced sentences of up to eight years in prison in exchange for appearing before prosecutors in public hearings and confessing their crimes" (Romero 2012, p.4). Addressing construction of memory issues, this law

made it the perpetrators' responsibility to reconstruct the truth about what happened during the conflict with a strongly limited participation of victims in these reconstructions. As a result "victims were invited to ask questions of the paramilitaries, but they could not tell their own accounts" (Romero 2012, p.5), and the truth about facts and reasons behind some paramilitaries actions as massacres or extra judicial executions against civilians was unreliable or incomplete. For some victims from Eastern Antioquia, the feelings of frustration, impotence and impunity were the result of these public hearings inside their communities:

> "I went to the public hearing of 'Lázaro' (former member of one of the paramilitary groups that operated in Eastern Antioquia) and I asked him why he killed and tortured my husband and my son... He didn't answer... He said that he couldn't remember the name of my husband or the name of my son but he could remember the massacre... and after these words just silence... silence... and I felt so annoyed and frustrated because I couldn't get the truth, the reasons... why he killed my family? Why could he not remember?" (Personal interview, women from Granada, Colombia, November 2012).

In the same context, the following narrative is a good example of the tension between *official* and *non-official* narratives; the establishment of the truth is always in permanent debate between the actors:

> "At the public hearing this paramilitary leader started to say that he never was involved in dodgy activities and this is untrue... He ordered my brother to do all sorts of things... make landmines, uniforms and work in drugs fields.... He had to work 20 hours per day making landmines... no food... no water... my brother said that the same thing happened with several other child recruits... Why if my brother told the truth to the Red Cross, the real truth, the Colombian Government believes the confession of this paramilitary leader more than my brother? Is this not a clear example of impunity or injustice? Why does my brother have to be in jail for more than 25 years and this paramilitary leader jailed for only eight?" (Personal interview, women from Granada, Colombia, November 2012).

Saavedra (2012) and Rinke (2012) have demonstrated that all the mechanisms that the Colombian state has been implementing in recent years to build collective memory of the conflict are focusing on the role of the criminal acts and ignoring the structural causes of this conflict; undermining the role of the victims in the processes of construction of memory. The consequence of this, in Rinke's

(2012) words, is that "the official memory of the conflict that is being created in Colombia is promoting a false peace that either prolongs the conflict or indeed is setting the stage for new conflicts in the future" (Rinke 2012, p.1); and the lack of plural narratives, indispensable in the architecture of collective memory, is deeply affecting this social process. Thus, this construction of collective memory where official narratives focus on perpetrators' point of view extremely affects the dignity of the victims of the armed conflict, because official actors have the symbolic power to legitimize social orders (Bourdieu 2005) and, in this case, those official actors are establishing the legitimization of a criminal social order against Eastern Antioquia's victims.

6.2 Collective narratives and the ideological operationalization of memory

Revisiting the work of a range of scholars (Sontang 2003; Koselleck 2004; and Landsberg 2004) we can say that only the individual neurophysiological capacity to remember should be called 'memory' and that it is misleading to talk about collective acts of 'remembering', when the term can at best only be used in a metaphorical sense and at worst creates a smoke screen for the political and the ideological operationalization of memory. Sontang introduced the concept of 'collective instruction' rather than 'collective memory', focusing on questions about ideology and authority in the social processes of construction of memories. Landsberg proposes the term 'prosthetic memory' to address issues around different forms of memory mediation and how some mediated representations of the past (which involve a strong emotional investment) can create a sense of belonging to certain representations, re-creations and re-enactments; constituting a key dimension of the constructions of social frameworks of memories from ideology concerns. Following these ideas of Sontang and Landsberg it is clear that when the Colombian government focused on perpetrators' point of view in order to create narratives of collective memory in Eastern Antioquia, they were developing collective instructions of memory and exercising the ideological operationalization of memory as a particular consequence of political decisions made by the Colombian government long time ago. The next narrative explains why it is possible to establish this argument for the case of Eastern Antioquia.

As has been previously discussed, in 2002 Colombia started a profound socio-political transformation. After the failed peace process between FARC-EP and the government of conservative president Andrés Pastrana (1998 – 2002), the new president, Alvaro Uribe (2002 – 2010), was elected with the support of paramilitary groups and extreme right parties (Romero 2007; Lopez 2010). He introduced a new policy called 'Democratic Security Programme' which was based

on the militarisation of the civilian population and focused on military combats against the guerrillas. This programme was financially supported by the United States Government through a long term political and military agreement called 'Plan Colombia'. Under Uribe's administration the Colombian government developed strongest ties with paramilitary groups, reconfiguring the State in favour of illegal groups. Two examples of this reconfiguration of the Colombian state in favour of illegal extreme right groups during Uribe's administration are: the fact that at that time 77% of the Colombian parliament consisted of paramilitary group supporters, and that the Security Service Agency and Administrative Department of Security of the Colombian Government – DAS – (the Colombian version of the UK's M16) was performing systematic persecution of investigative journalists, trade union workers, teachers, human rights activists, United Nations employees, left wing politicians, Supreme Court judges and NGO activists (HRW 2010; Vasquez 2010; UNDP 2010; Romero and Arias 2010; Restrepo and Aponte 2010).

Based on my fieldwork in Eastern Antioquia, I would argue that the policy of 'Democratic Security Programme' tried to establish a new ideological memory narrative framework about the war into Eastern Antioquia's collective memory. This new narrative focused on perpetrators' point of view as an ideological armed conflict strategy to 'normalise' this illegal support of Uribe's administration for paramilitary groups in this region and, through this, obtain public support for other illegal government's armed conflict operations. Regarding this relationship between Uribe's administration and paramilitary groups in Eastern Antioquia some members of APROVIACI and AMOR stated:

> "I think that Uribe's government caused huge damage to our country and primarily to our region… His extreme right wing mentality of war, war, war made people suspicious of anyone with left wing political ideas, human rights workers and victims from Eastern Antioquia… "The usual left suspects" in his words… You know what? I believe that when he openly supported paramilitary groups of this region in the past like the *Convivir*, he was saying: hey! It is better to be a *paramilitar* than a *guerrillero*, because these paramilitary squads are trying to fix the problems that the left wing guerrillas have been doing for the past 50 years! …and this war mentality starts to affect your thoughts and suddenly you start thinking: yes, maybe he is right, Uribe is right, it is better to support paramilitary groups because the government is one of its allies and the civilian victims are simply insignificant war causalities!" (Personal interview, women from Sonsón, Colombia, October 2012).

"This country was like a western film you know? Uribe was like this cowboy trying to kill all his enemies using whatever methods: bombs, grenades, pistols, bribing the police, everything! … but the problem was that Uribe used to be the president of this country, and as President, you cannot support illegal groups for eight years, using the power of the state to help criminals, because, at the end of the day, he is sending the message that any method is ok to win the war… and when the people start to support this idea of 'any method', is when the people start thinking that the heroes are the cowboys and the baddies are the Indians… but the problem is that in Colombia we are more Indians than cowboys, we have more victims than happy sheriffs." (Personal interview, women from la Ceja, Colombia, November 2012).

As a result, Susan Sontang's concept of collective instruction that links ideology, authority and the construction of social processes to construction of memories (Sontang 2003) it is crucial for this case, and it is correct to say that previous radicalization of public opinion in Colombia into two groups under Uribe's administration (75% of Colombian population being supporters of Uribe's government and his extreme right policies; 25% being critics of Uribe's policies and his radical procedures) (Vasquez 2010; Restrepo and Aponte 2010); are a clear example of this operationalization of collective instructions for part of the former Colombian government and how positions of authority can affect public ideological constructions of frameworks of memory in armed conflict contexts. In other words, ideological radicalization can be the best tool to get public support for controversial/illegal governmental armed conflict actions and, through this way, establish new narratives of memory that could change social orders in support of one of the groups in confrontation. For the case of Eastern Antioquia an example of that mainstream mentality was to associate left wing political groups (who supported centre and left policies, NGOs or human rights defenders) with guerrillas groups. As members of AMOR and APROVIACI argued:

"Here in Eastern Antioquia it is really simple: if you are involved in human rights you are a *guerrillero*, if you work for the local government you are a *paramilitar*" (Personal interview, women from El Carmén del Viboral, Colombia, November 2012).

"The ideology in my town is clear: if you support Uribe's ideas you obviously are a *paramilitar*, if you support the victims you are a *guerrillero*" (Personal interview, women from Alejandría, Colombia, October 2012).

On the other hand, in this regional context it became transparent that AMOR's and APROVIACI's collective communicative citizenship actions as *The march of the light, The walls of memory* or the *Trails for life* have been affecting these constructions of ideological social frameworks of memory in the region and the practices through which this community has been building their shared past. Memory became a battlefield again, because the recognition of AMOR and ASOVIDA in the public sphere has been constructed and reconstructed by these counterpublic acts of political memory, by remembering their victims as former members of those communities and in this way creating cross-connections between meaningful constructions of individual remembering and collective conceptions of public memory. Furthermore, in the last ten years, some actors of this armed conflict as paramilitary groups, guerrilla groups and the Colombian army had tried to establish symbolic orders in this social context around the idea of "killing civilians is allowed in this town because these people does not support our actions and they are against us" (Program for Peace 2010). For this purpose they were creating this stigmatizing narrative inside those communities, introducing a dangerous symbolic dichotomy between *the good people* (civilians supporting legal or illegal armies) and *the bad people* (civilians supporting no-violent actions, claiming human rights in the midst of the conflict and protesting against any kind of ties with legal or illegal army groups). Those constructions of stigma are part of narrative strategies that legal and illegal actors have been developing in Eastern Antioquia to create new symbolic orders and, through them, gain the support of civilians in the midst of this armed conflict. In summary, it is clear for this case that ideology is highlighted and addressed as a war strategy in different periods of time, and particular constructions of official and non-official narratives are the result of this operationalization of ideology into public collective narratives.

6.3 The cases of the *Association of Victims of Granada Town* (ASOVIDA) and the *Never Again Museum* in Eastern Antioquia

Granada town has a population approximately of 10.000 people, a landmass of 183 Km2, and is 77 kilometres from Medellin, the capital of Antioquia's county. This town is part of a sub region in Eastern Antioquia called Embalses (reservoirs), where 45% of all Colombian energy resources are concentrated. It is a geographically strategic area for the armed conflict, so guerrillas and paramilitary groups have been using this territory as a main corridor to transport war supplies and illegal materials. According to the document *Strategy to attend the victims of the armed conflict in the municipality of Granada*, created by the local council of Granada town in 2012, and García (2004) and García de la Torre and Aramburo (2011), two guerrilla groups, The National Liberation Army

(ELN) and The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP); five particular paramilitary groups, Carlos Castaño's Self-Defence group, Magdalena Medio Self-Defence group, Metro bloc, Cacique Nutibara bloc and Heroes of Granada bloc; and, on the other hand, the Colombian Army and the Eastern Antioquia's Police forces, have been struggling to gain control over this territory and its resources for more than 30 years.

In order to understand the context and impact of the armed conflict in Granada one more fact is relevant: since 1980 more than 800 civilians were killed as a consequence of the military actions between legal and illegal forces in this territory. Furthermore, in the last three decades in Granada more than 128 people have disappeared or were abducted, 12 massacres happened (92% of victims were local peasants), 83 people were affected by landmines (78% of victims were children), 2 car bombs exploded (one in 2000, which destroyed the 70% of the urban area and another in 2003, which killed 18 people) and 15 mass graves have been discovered in neighbouring rural areas (Colombian Government 2003; INFORIENTE 2010; ASOVIDA 2012). However, the principal impact of the war in Granada is the internal displacement of their population: 80% of citizens have left the town as a consequence of the armed confrontations since 2000; affecting women and children population principally, reducing economic output by 37% in the local and regional economy of this Eastern Antioquia's sub-region and undermining the social cohesion of Granada community (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2008).

According to Jaramillo (2003), Villa (2007), Carrillo (2009) and García de la Torre and Aramburo (2011) four main characteristics of the humanitarian crisis in Granada can be established: First, is the rise of an ´uprooting generation´ with immediate effects on the social structure of this town, because the negative process of forced displacement has deeply undermined social and cultural ties of families and communities with this particular territory (Carrillo 2009). The second characteristic is the establishment of a culture of fear and distrust between the communities of the urban and rural areas as a result of the ongoing armed conflict. Erroneously, some illegal groups have been related with some of the local communities (*e.g.* guerrillas groups with residents of rural areas and paramilitary groups with residents of urban areas), creating dangerous stereotypes and rumours inside this population (Villa 2007). As a result, the justifications of some military operations were often based on these wrong generalizations, targeting specific people as social leaders, local politicians, peasants or human rights defenders.

The third characteristic is the targeting of civil society as a method of war. This strategy is utilised by both illegal and legal armed groups, transforming killing of civilians into the main objective of military operations. By this means, armed groups prove their power, superiority and ownership of specific territories to their rivals; undermining the social and cultural base of support for other armed group (García de la Torre and Aramburo 2011). The final main characteristic is the configuration of a regime of terror in the region, where one particular group uses cruelty to obtain the dehumanization of their war adversary (Jaramillo 2003; García de la Torre and Aramburo 2011). In this context, understanding the construction of the process of *dehumanization of adversaries* is important in order to analyse the reasons behind the use of some war methods (*e.g.* massacres, landmines, and car bombs), and how combatants have been configuring their own identities to send powerful messages to civilians and other armed groups (*e.g.* an identity of 'savages' for part of paramilitary groups or an identity of 'sanguinary' for part of the guerrillas).

Furthermore, García (2004), Bedoya (2006) and Estrada (2010) argue that the armed conflict situation in Granada town is a good reference to understand in holistic terms the contemporary dynamic of the armed conflict in Eastern Antioquia. Following the ideas of those authors, it is possible to establish that this particular case reveals the main strategies that these illegal groups have been developing in the region since 1980, and how some war tactics were implemented first in Granada in order to replicate it in other towns in the region. Good examples of tactics that have started first in Granada are the use of landmines by some of the guerrillas to prevent territorial control of the Colombian army, or the methodical implementation of massacres against civilians as a war strategy of the paramilitary groups to spread fear and terror in the region.

However, the principal reason to consider Granada town as a good reference is the permanent suffering of civilians in the midst of this armed conflict (Estrada 2010). The citizens of Granada had experienced all possible consequences of the war in this region (stigmatizations, forced displacements, massacres, persecutions, marginalization, extra-judicial executions, tortures, etc.), and were victims of all forms of violation and abuses of human rights. Thus, three main aspects can characterize Granada as a valid example of the dynamic of the war in Eastern Antioquia: first, the on-going fighting between different illegal and legal armed groups for control the territory and their resources; second, the co-optation of local institutions as town councils or local governments by illegal forces to affect local democracy and control economic resources; and third, the establishment of illegal economies around drug trafficking, kidnapping and extortion that affect local and regional economies (Bedoya 2006).

In this context, in 2003 two Colombian NGOs (Conciudadania and the Centre for Research and Popular Education/Peace Program – CINEP/PPP) developed a project for training women in Eastern Antioquia called *Emotional First Aid*, where victims learned how to help other victims to confront the pain caused by the armed conflict through practical workshops with a gender perspective. One of the final results of this project was the creation of a victims support group called *Life and Mental Health Promoters* – PROVISAME – also known as *Las Abrazadas* (Embraced Women) in 2006. Thus, 45 women from this support group (most of them displaced peasants) decided to go beyond the support group's initial objective and founded *The Association of Victims of Granada Town* (ASOVIDA) with the purpose of demanding their rights as victims. A former president of ASOVIDA remembered what was at the beginning the main purpose of this organization:

> "We were about 45 people who used to talk and chat about the value of life and dignity here in Granada… we used to talk about this in different places, our homes, the market, the main square in town or at the church every Sunday… Our intentions were to know, as victims of this armed conflict, our rights, and fight for the reinstatement of our land and to search for more than 100 of our missing relatives and friends…" (Personal interview, women from Granada, Colombia, November 2012).

In ASOVIDA's (2012) words, this organization was created to achieve five aims: first, to bring support to the armed conflict's victims in aspects as emotional and psychological recovering, social reparation and reconciliation; second, to demonstrate how victims' initiatives for social reparation and reconciliation can strengthen the social bonds broken by violence; third, to create new narratives and other memories of the armed conflict and reconfigure the social imaginaries of victims in Granada. Fourth, to reconstruct victims' memories in order to start a symbolic restoration of collective memory in Granada; and finally, to organize processes of mobilization and resistance against the armed conflict, creating public spaces for victims' political participation (ASOVIDA 2012). Moreover, women of ASOVIDA at the same time belong to *The Association of Organized Women of Eastern Antioquia* (AMOR), and they have been together (ASOVIDA and AMOR) developing different psychosocial strategies to encourage women to externalise the personal effects that the armed conflict had upon them, to transform the 'victim status' (Villa 2007) into the 'citizenship condition' (Program for Peace 2010).

Furthermore, one of the most important aspects of this victims' group is the use and appropriation of different communicative resources to claim human rights in the public sphere and overcome *the*

imposition of silence tactic, a strategy used by guerrillas and paramilitary groups in order to obtain the symbolic control of civilians in this region. As is common in Eastern Antioquia's, showing pain in public for someone's violent death was forbidden by the armed groups in Granada town, imposing a claim of fear and terror inside the community. In Romero's (2012) words: "the imposition of silence as an ally of fear has been part of the social and cultural dimension of violence in Colombia for decades, sometimes with more enduring consequences than those caused by its physical dimension" (Romero 2012, p.6). As a peasant woman recalls:

> "When I saw how a paramilitary group killed all of my family in front of me, I began to cry and scream loudly… when I started crying, one of the paramilitaries looked at me and said: 'Ok… cry… come on… cry… cry and I will kill you'… what could I do? I had to keep my mouth shut as if nothing had happened… and after that, I started crying without tears, just in silence…" (Personal interview, women from Granada, Colombia, October 2012).

ASOVIDA (like AMOR and APROVIACI) has been developing three communicative citizenship strategies since 2006: *The march of the light*, *Trails for life* and *Memorial parks*. However the principal collective communicative citizenship action of ASOVIDA is the *Never Again Museum*, a hall on Granada's main square where victims' families have put more than 260 pictures of their murdered and missing relatives as an instrument for the preservation of memory, and describing the effects of war and violence in Granada. From a psychological perspective, this museum wants to be a place to mourn and express feelings in the way that people could not use when different illegal armed groups were in control of the region. At the same time, this museum makes visible the absence of the community members who were taken by the violence, and this strategy "consist of highlighting the vacuum created by the murders and disappearances in order to bring the victims back into the communal awareness, to make them reappear in the community's social life" (Romero 2012, p.8). Through the public exhibition of victims' pictures, armed conflict timelines and *bitácoras,* (small notebooks with the picture and brief biography of each victim, exhibited in such a way that they are accessible to visitors, who can read and write in them), this museum tries to provide a space where the absent live on and to generate a dialogue of memories in order to rebuild life.

The museum was opened in 2009 and (as other strategies used by the victims) it is a collective communicative citizenship action to create a memory narrative from the victims' point of view. The aims of this initiative are to fight against the foundations of violence in Granada town, to keep sight of its negative social effects, and to preserve the living memory of those who were taken away by it;

creating a social space where the local community can confront the absence of many of its former members. Thus, this museum "allows for the resumption of a social dialogue interrupted by violence through symbolic acts that transform personal experiences of loss into common knowledge for reconstructing local ties" (Romero 2012, p.10). A former president of ASOVIDA explains where this idea came from:

> "ASOVIDA's members realised that symbolic actions helped them to overcome the pain and suffering. They understood that remembering their loved ones helped them to lessen the pain. They said: 'why don't we take photographs of our dead relatives and hang them in a public space? Why don't we begin to pray for our victims, to remember them, to believe that they are here with us? Why don't we involve all the victims in our town to alleviate the pain collectively and remember what happened in our town so we don't forget and keep going?" (Personal interview, former president of ASOVIDA, Granada, Colombia, November 2012).

The construction of local memory narratives through the public exhibition of victims' pictures, victims' narratives and other collective actions as memorial installations or timelines inside this museum, reveals ASOVIDA's strategies of making their voices heard as the best way of confronting perpetrators' stories and honour their dead and disappeared relatives. For the former ASOVIDA's secretary, this museum is a contribution to overcome the collective effects of the armed conflict in this region, which sends a simple but powerful message: they are never going to forget their victims and they want to establish another memory narrative about what happened in this town. In the words of the former secretary of ASOVIDA:

> "The museum is to not forget our victims, to create another memory about what happened here and against the lack of sympathy, simple... but nobody, nobody, can take away our individual suffering as a consequence of this war, this pointless conflict... pictures contribute to reconstructing our town, our life, our *beliefs*... and all these memories have to be together, in one public space... if not, a collective amnesia is the best way to impunity and oblivion" (Personal interview, former secretary of ASOVIDA, Granada, Colombia, November 2012).

For the members of this local initiative there were four motivations behind the construction of this museum. First, to address in the public sphere that they *never again* want to repeat the consequences of this armed conflict; second, to express that the victims in Granada have names,

faces, families, and are not just 'cold numbers' or another vague data in the statistics of the Colombian conflict. Third, to remember that Granada's civilians victims are part of the collective history of this town and it is a historical responsibility of their relatives to preserve this social bond with the local community; and finally, as an act of civil resistance against the legal and illegal armed groups of Eastern Antioquia. As a member of ASOVIDA's expressed it:

> "One aim of our museum is to say to the whole society, to the whole world: we don't want to repeat these horrible things ever, ever, ever again… It is our historical responsibility against indifference… against amnesia… this space is for our loved ones to express that they are not just numbers of this war, they were human beings that are part of our history" (Personal interview, ASOVIDA's member, Granada, Colombia, November 2012).

Furthermore, it is clear that this collective communicative citizenship action helps to create a sense of belonging and cohesion inside this victims' group:

> "As victims we recognise that these practices of resistance, like this museum, make us stronger… we are in this together as a big family… but we also understand that if this armed conflict continues we cannot construct a complete collective memory inside our town… our victims are part of our community, but we need to create bonds of reconciliation, and I think this museum is a good first step towards this and overcoming social indifference and violence in our region" (Personal interview, ASOVIDA's member, Granada, Colombia, November 2012).

After conducting my fieldwork in Granada, I can argue that this museum illustrates how collective communicative citizenship actions could be crucial for building up the road to sustainable peace in Colombia in the future. This initiative is affecting the everyday life in Granada town through symbolic communicative acts that are transforming personal experiences of loss into common knowledge, serving the reconciliation of local social bonds. Those victims' communicative actions are confronting the apathy that has facilitated the expansion of terror in the Colombian armed conflict, and victims' memory narratives are breaking with years of forgetting; producing collective recognition of the victims' suffering from a socio-communicative perspective. The production of different modes of remembering and recognition in this context went beyond of '*what* is remembered or publicly recognized' (facts, data, number of civilians killed, etc.), and focuses more on '*how* it is remembered and recognized' (quality and meaning of communicative citizenship actions in the public sphere, uses

of symbolic metaphors in order to reconstruct public memory, engagement of civil society groups around the idea of reconciliation, truth and dignity, etc.). Moreover, this production of local memory narratives shows the importance of constructing different modes of remembering in contexts or armed conflict; building most reliable ways of reconstructing the past with civil society at the centre of this dynamic. This focus on *how* the cultural memory is constructed in this particular context scrutinizes the double role of public spaces as a communicative externalization of memory, and the traces of the past emphasizing public recognition as a memorial practice.

6.4 Conclusions. Construction of memory from a communicative citizenship perspective: an approach to understanding expressive dimensions of social movement activism in armed conflict context

In the second section of this chapter, I would like to present some conclusions stemming from aforementioned examples of construction of memory through development of collective communicative citizenship actions by the victims. Furthermore, I want to explain the interconnections between these collective actions and the expressive dimensions of social movement activism. However, I want to make two arguments before presenting the main conclusions for this chapter. First, that in the case of Eastern Antioquia, groups of victims (AMOR, APROVIACI and particularly ASOVIDA) paid particular attention to the relationship between cultural memory and institutionalization of time frames. In other words, these victims' groups had understood cultural memory as a social and generational institution, and therefore they had developed mnemonic institutions as the *Never Again Museum* to provide sense of memory to generations that do not have a formalized memory as a consequence of a lack of fixed points with the past. As a consequence, this collective action became the realization of socio-cultural belonging, affection and assimilation, or even a social obligation, that shapes the dynamics of association and dissociation in particular towns of Eastern Antioquia.

My second argument is about the notion of *modes of remembering* for the case of Eastern Antioquia. This notion highlights the idea that the past is not given, on the contrary, it is continually re-constructed and re-presented; where our memories of previous events (at the individual and collective level) can fluctuate in different degrees or scales. Following this approach, it is important to express that some collective communicative citizenship actions developed by those victims' groups not just focuses on *what* is remembered (data, facts, events) but also on *how* it is remembered. It is really relevant in armed conflict contexts, because those two aspects (*what* and *how*) can define the quality and the meaning of the past in the situation when the construction of

memory is in permanent tension. In Erll's (2011) words: "As a result, there are different *modes of remembering* identical events. A war, for example, can be remembered as a mythic event ("the war as apocalypse"), as part of political history (the First World War as "the great seminal catastrophe of the twentieth century"), as a traumatic experience ("the horror of the trenches, the shells, the barrage of gunfire", etc.), as a part of family history ("the war my great-uncle served in") or as a focus of bitter contestation ("the war which was waged by the old generation, by the fascist, by men") (Erll 2011, p.7). Understanding the role of those different modes of remembering (as a trauma, generational memory, political history or family remembrance) in memory narratives in the case of Eastern Antioquia is important in order to comprehend how specific mediums could influence socio-cultural shapes of memory in this region.

To sum up, this chapter brings four main conclusions. First, that it is important to emphasize the role of memory as a tool of truth in contexts of armed conflict, war or in post-authoritarian societies. There were different examples in the recent past (*e.g.* Africa, Latin America, Asia and Southern European Countries) which showed that in order to make a future transition to democracy the establishment of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (when the conflict is finished) is a good strategy to develop new democratic institutions and orders. For this reason, the narratives, representations and constructions of the conflict that AMOR, APROVIACI and ASOVIDA created for different actors and perspectives (victims, perpetrators, bystanders, profiteers, warriors, etc.) can establish historical truth about what happened in these confrontations; providing some degree of reparation and symbolic restitution to the victims. The second conclusion is that the effort of these victims' groups to constitute plural discourses of memory in the public spheres of Eastern Antioquia is crucial in the architecture of collective memory in this Colombian region, because these heterogeneous discourses can help to develop a more active role of individuals in the configuration of their socio-communicative and symbolic regimes in democratic societies. These arguments are addressing the idea of the public sphere as a place to disclosure memories, identities and narratives in the communicative activity; corresponding with the human condition of plurality and freedom through visibility, recognition and representation in public spaces.

The third conclusion is that it is clear for the case of Eastern Antioquia that questions of power, ideology and authority do not "evaporate" through just giving voice or visibility to the victims, the poor, or the powerless in society in order to construct plural political memories at different levels or dimensions. My conclusion is that the construction of memory as a social process in this Colombian region is a struggle over power and the exercise of this power to shape collective representations

and meanings of the past with important connections to the creation of subjectivities, narratives and values in the present. The challenge in this armed conflict context is to understand how victims can access or exercise different levels of symbolic power in order to shape new meanings of the past that can affect memory narratives of the present. In other words, the question of how to change power relations between social actors, historical institutions and political concepts from a political memory perspective could be the key to understand the relationship between symbolic power and memory regimes in Eastern Antioquia.

The fourth conclusion concerns the relationship between trauma theory and constructions of traumatic memory as a tool to contest the past in Eastern Antioquia for part of victims' groups. Following Hodgkin and Radstone's ideas, traumatic memory is "a particular narrative of the psychic consequences of a real event; and the debates around what can and cannot be spoken, remembered, represented, take place in relation to arguments about whether that event happened or not" (Hodgkin and Radstone 2003, p.6). In the context of on-going armed conflict as the one in Eastern Antioquia, the concept of traumatic memory can be developed in relation to the idea of unrepresentability, and the capacity of subordinated people to generate memory narratives of their own past, through which they can address their suffering in a framework of political memory; therefore providing symbolical restitution to the victims. Thus, it is clear that in Eastern Antioquia this aspect of traumatic memory is crucial to understand how particular groups of victims can apprehend and create narratives about their past after witnessing traumatic events as massacres, displacements, or other acts of violence. In other words, these collective communicative citizenship actions are important examples of how construction of memory can be a healing process for victims in contexts of armed conflict.

Lastly, as a final conclusion for this chapter, it can be said that there is an interconnection between the collective communicative citizenship actions made by AMOR, ASOVIDA and APROVIACI and the category of *expressive dimensions* of social movement activism. This concept of expressive dimensions of social movement activism, developed by Neil Stammers in 2009, is a key term to understand the impact of social movement activism and the social construction of human rights 'from below'. Thus, the term *expressive* is intended to designate the affective and normative dimensions of social movements activism, and how these movements want to construct, reconstruct and transform norms, values, identities and ways of living, combining cultural and political concerns as a challenge to power from a human rights perspective (Stammers 2009). Remaining under the theoretic influence of Max Weber's conceptualisations of social action and rationality (Weber 1978),

this approach focuses on Weber's third category of 'affectual action' in order to emphasise how particular collective actions can be dominated by actor's emotions or passions as a strategy to facilitate shifts of norms, values and ways of living in particular social contexts.

Following Stammer's (2009) and Weber's (1978) ideas, the main conclusion and argument for this chapter is, that in the case of the social movement of victims of Eastern Antioquia, the developing of their collective communicative citizenship actions to construct memory narratives is based on *expressive activism* as an instrument to exercise political and social actions in the public sphere. In other words, this case of Eastern Antioquia's social movement of victims is an example of how subjectivity, emotions and expressive dimension are the social agency can generate collective actions of memory in armed conflict contexts. Thus, this case illustrates how feelings as pain, suffering, fear, anxiety, or rage can become main motivators to encourage collective action, to mobilise resources or to take advantage of political opportunities. It therefore confirms, that the construction of memory narratives is not just a rational or formal victims' collective action; it can combine, at the same time, different formal or substantive levels of rationality and irrationality. As a result, Eastern Antioquia case is a good example of the importance and relevance of emotional reasons and expressive dimensions as key elements behind social constructions of memory through which groups and individuals can exercise human rights from non-conventional perspectives in armed conflict scenarios.

CHAPTER 7

7. Politics of recognition in Eastern Antioquia: addressing victims' struggles of recognition from a communicative citizenship perspective

The aim of this chapter is to analyse different victims' collective communicative citizenship actions as *Trails for Life and Reconciliation, Garden of Memory,* projects *From the House to the Square* and *Constituent Assemblies* using the theoretical framework of recognition. The principal argument of this chapter is that in the case of Eastern Antioquia, victims' groups such as ASOVIDA, AMOR and APROVIACI have been developing collective communicative citizenship actions as a way to demand recognition of some particular aspects of their socio-political identities which have been demeaned by the armed conflict. Furthermore, I argue that the case of the social movement of victims of Eastern Antioquia can be a contemporary example of struggles for recognition, where the implementation of a set of collective communicative citizenship actions is helping this social movement to configure a dynamic socio-political identity as a strategy to fight against injustice, discrimination and misrecognition. This chapter focuses on the category of recognition as a main framework for three reasons. First, this category engages with Axel Honneth's concept of *struggle for recognition* (Honneth 2003, 2004, 2011); the idea that experiences of misrecognition violate the identity of subjects and this misapprehension can be the main motivation to start processes of resistance in the public sphere. As I will show here, groups of victims from Eastern Antioquia region have been developing collective communicative citizenship actions as strategy to construct a public identity and fight against this social misrecognition. In other words, victims' groups as AMOR, APROVIACI or ASOVIDA have been struggling for an affirmation of their particular identities in the midst of the armed conflict, and they are trying to engage in a new form of politics that can be framed as 'inclusive politics' (McBride 2005) or 'politics of difference' (Iser 2013). In this chapter I will explore these concepts in more depth.

Second, the concept of recognition is the second main code and theme that emerged from the narrative analysis; underpinning the inherent relationship of this category with the previous concept of memory. These two categories, recognition and memory, had a fundamental role in social identification and collective acknowledgment leading to the development of public forms of collective action as the *March of Light* or the *Walls of Memory*. Finally, the category of recognition is another principal theoretical concept that helps to configure different modes of communicative citizenship; highlighting the relational character between the subject of recognition (the recogniser) and the object of recognition (the recognised) in the development of collective communicative citizenship actions.

The following chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I will present the results of my qualitative analysis using the theoretical framework of *recognition as respect*, which addresses the idea that in order for individuals to be able to achieve self-realization, there must be a system of rights, which enables them to respect each other (and hence to respect themselves); underlining the principles of parity of participation, legal recognition and justice (Sennett 2003; Honneth 2004; Iser 2013). The second section addresses the framework of *recognition as democracy*, arguing that no democracy would exist if it did not provide at least a minimal level of political representation for those over whom it claims authority; in other words, recognition is defined here as a necessary condition of democracy itself (Fraser 2003b; Thompson 2006). Furthermore, I will focus on how AMOR has been developing particular collective communicative citizenship actions to represent victims and involve women in public and political discussions about the war, reparation, truth and justice in the political scenarios of Eastern Antioquia. As a conclusion, I will develop my main argument of how it is possible to establish a particular struggle around politics of recognition in Eastern Antioquia, where movement of victims have been using collective communicative citizenship actions as a way to demand recognition of specific aspects of their socio-political identities, which have been demeaned by the war and the traditional political system of this Colombian region.

7.1 Recognition and the Politics of Respect: Communicative Citizenship Actions against Humiliation, Injustice and Discrimination in Eastern Antioquia

Ever since the idea of universal human rights has been established in the twentieth century, the categories of equal dignity, justice and respect have been developed as central dimensions of recognition; establishing a bond between the demand for human rights in the public sphere and the implementation of autonomous agency for part of counterpublic social actors. Thus, the *recognition as respect* framework underpins the idea that in order to achieve individual and collective self-realization, there must be a system of rights in place that guarantees the principles of parity of participation, legal recognition and justice. According to Honneth (2011), respect is the mode of recognition which has a particular institutional location: within the state and their bodies, because "in the state, man is recognized and treated as a *rational being*, as free, as a person" (Honneth 2011, p. 108). This German scholar makes a link between respect and rights, and he argues that rights are the only means by which recognition can be expressed. In the same way of thinking, Thompson (2006) argues that disrespect suggests what respect would be like. For Thompson "to be respected is to be seen, to be taken into account in matters in which one is directly affected. It is to be treated like and adult, to be allowed to take important decisions about the course of one's life" (Thompson

2006, p.43); defining lack of respect as being treated "like a child" long after one has left childhood behind.

In this context, the term *politics of respect* can be useful to address the relationship between the categories of respect, recognition, human rights and the communicative citizenship field (Taylor 1992; Fraser 2003a, 2003b). The term 'politics of respect' is a category, which gives an important place to issues as equal protection, difference-blindness, state impartiality and individual freedom; in other words, the protection of fundamental human rights, where the state should guarantee their implementation and respect. This approach emphasizes the role that fundamental rights should play in protecting individuals' rational autonomy, because by protecting this autonomy that they are showing and providing respect (Taylor 1992). From a moral responsibility and rational autonomy perspective, the politics of respect can only be implemented through treating others as bearers of rights. In summary: where rights do not exist, respect is not possible. Furthermore, in this context the next four main dimensions of the politics of respect can be established: the reference to the idea of the equal protection by the law, the demand for inclusion, the opposition to any form of discrimination and the impartially of the state (Fraser 2003a; Thompson 2006).

Having in mind these considerations, I am going to focus on three aspects that undermine the framework of *recognition as respect* for the case of Eastern Antioquia: humiliation, injustice and discrimination. Moreover, I will present some examples of how AMOR, APROVIACI and ASOVIDA have been developing collective communicative citizenship actions to claim recognition, respect and protection of their rights in this particular context. It is important to express at this point that the normative expectation of being treated with respect becomes most obvious when we observe extreme forms of humiliation, injustice or discrimination, in which particular groups (in our case the victims) are symbolically and materially excluded from humanity. One of the main consequences of long term armed conflicts as the Eastern Antioquia's case is that in particular moments of conflict different actors as civilians, perpetrators, bystanders, profiteers, soldiers or supporters are treated like animals or objects, in order to justify military actions against them. Those actions of dehumanization deny people their 'humanness', and furthermore, being faced with extreme humiliation or experiencing drastic forms of injustice and discrimination can undermine basic notions of respect (and self-respect), trust and morality. In the Eastern Antioquia context, the operationalization of concepts as recognition and respect also brings questions of justice, because extreme forms of humiliation, injustice or discrimination can underpin the autonomous agency of

individuals. The answer to is this is the restabilising of conditions of citizenship to the victims through discursive narratives and symbolic actions in the public arena.

7.2 Humiliation, Injustice and Discrimination in the midst of the armed conflict in Eastern Antioquia

One of the most common war tactics that legal and illegal armed groups (particularly paramilitary groups) deployed between 1997 and 2007 across Eastern Antioquia were massacres. A massacre is defined as an intentional killing of four or more defenceless people in the same circumstances and manner, time and place; and can be distinguished by the public display of cruel violence. It is perpetrated in the presence of others, or made visible to others, as a public horror show (CHM 2013). At the same time, this act of violence is a product of brutal encounter between the absolute power of the armed group and the utter helplessness of the victims. According to García de la Torre and Aramburo (2011) and the report *Enough Already: Memories of War and Dignity*, published in 2013 by The National Centre of Historical Memory of Colombia (CHM), from 1997 to 2012 Eastern Antioquia was the scene of 71 massacres, having a peak in the year 2001 during which 26 massacres took place. In total, approximately more than 500 people (97% of them civilians) were massacred in Eastern Antioquia in the last fifteen years (UNDP 2010; CHM 2013). The central strategy of this armed conflict action was to control the population and the territory; and this tactic is very effective tool to spread fear and destroy social cohesion inside communities. As a member of AMOR expressed:

> "Before the massacre, in my town we had community groups, youth groups and local committees… but after that day, we decided to stop all of that… I said to them: "Nooo! No way! I would prefer to waste my time than allow these people to know what I'm doing in my own free time!" But the truth is, to be honest, that I cannot trust the people of my town anymore… How can I know that they are not gossiping about me and saying that I'm a paramilitary supporter? How do I know that they didn't support the massacre? " (Personal interview, women from Marinilla, Colombia, November 2012).

Furthermore, this strategy can be useful to send powerful war messages to other armed groups and to target civilians that are supporting another armed group. From a paramilitary perspective, massacres in the midst of armed conflicts are important because this is a form of violence that has high levels of cruelty, an important factor to reinforce power in territories and populations under

dispute (CHM 2013). According to García (2004) and Villa (2007) one of the principal degradations during the armed conflict in Eastern Antioquia were the particular methods of how the paramilitary groups performed the massacres; using them 'to teach' the population about the high cost of supporting guerrilla groups. One of the preferred methods were different acts of victims' public humiliation during the massacres, used to wipe any sense of recognition or human respect. That is how a former member of AMOR, witness and survivor of one paramilitary massacre in Eastern Antioquia recalls it:

> "It was the 22nd of November of 2002 in El Chocó (rural area of San Carlos Town) when a paramilitary squad killed my father and some of my friends in front of me… I couldn't recognize some of them after the massacre because they used axes and machetes to disfigure their faces and bodies… They killed them in public, in front of everybody, after taking them out of their houses… During the massacre they laughed, shouted and said to us: 'and now what; dogs! Go and call the guerrilla; dogs! Go and call your communist friends! Bastard dogs, who will protect all of you now?' The abuse and insults were so nasty that I felt so humiliated… And I couldn't stop crying during the massacre and I couldn't defend my friends and my father either… the humiliation was devastating…" (Personal interview, men from San Carlos, Colombia, November 2012).

This relationship between the act of violence and the intention to humiliate the victim can have significant 'disrespect effect' when the perpetrator choose a symbolic place to commit the massacre as an atrocious strategy. Regarding this topic, a member of APROVIACI stated:

> "The school used to be the heart of our community… We used to celebrate parties, community reunions, weddings, sport activities, religious celebrations; and it used to be my work place… The day of the massacre the paramilitary squad started to read a list in front of the people of the town with the names of those that they decided to kill because, according to them, they were guerrilla supporters… Suddenly one of them shouted: "We know that the school is the place where these fucking *guerrilleros* make parties! Well, now it is time for our own party!"… We began to well up… They took 13 people into the school and they were shot in the head, one by one, in front of us… the place of peace and happiness became suddenly the place of horror, death and destruction…" (Personal interview, women from San Carlos, Colombia, October 2012).

According to Blair (2005) one of the main functions of the massacres in the long term armed conflicts is *theatralisation of violence*, where the excess and brutality of violent actions target the human body to change them into symbols of disproportionate actions of violence. Dismemberments, disfigurements or mutilations of human bodies create symbolic and material messages of cruelty, humiliation and disrespect; targeting the cultural and social significance of the body as place of respect. In this context, it is possible to argue that massacres should be considered as an ultimate method of humiliation, because they are violent actions against people that cannot defend themselves or resist. As a result, in a massacre, the body is the symbol of the horror and the humiliation, where actions of dehumanization take place. In order to understand this relationship between humiliation and forms of *theatralisation* of violence, the narrative of a member of AMOR and the survivor of a massacre of 29th of January, 2005, in El Vergel (rural area of San Carlos town) can be useful:

> "It was raining that night… and there were soldiers of the paramilitary bloc 'Heroes of Granada' who killed eleven people that night… Luz Adriana was pregnant and Griselda was just 13… They killed two babies, one of 10 months and another of 15 months… They took some of the bodies and with a knife they wrote in their arms and legs the letters AUC (United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia)… After that, the paramilitary squad ordered us not to move the dead bodies and one of them said: "Leave all the bodies on the floor; we want the guerrilla to see what happened to their lovely friends!" and suddenly, one of them just cut three fingers of Luz Adriana and put it on Griselda's mouth… that was the moment where I fainted…" (Personal interview, women from San Carlos, Colombia, October 2012).

If massacres can be framed as the ultimate method of humiliation and non-recognition, impunity for war criminals or human rights violations can be the best example of injustice. According to the report *Diagnosis and proposal for criminal policy guidelines for the Colombian State* prepared in 2012 by The Advisory Committee on Criminal Policy of Colombia, the percentage of impunity for crimes related with killing civilians in the midst of the armed conflict was 95%. For cases of extrajudicial executions the percentage of impunity reached 98.5% (Amnesty International 2013), for cases of kidnapping - 92% (CHM 2013); and impunity for sexual violence related to armed conflict was 100% (Amnesty International 2012). Furthermore, according to Human Rights Watch (2013) and Amnesty International (2013) in 2012 the Colombian Congress passed two laws that can exacerbate impunity in the country: *the legal framework for peace*, which allows human rights abusers to evade justice; and *the military reform* which gave military bodies greater control over criminal

investigations involving human rights violations and crimes against civilians. Without doubt, impunity is an example of injustice that apply to the idea of equal protection under the law; having deep consequences for the legitimacy of any state and its actions. Other consequences of impunity are the lack of truth about what really happened in the armed conflict, sense of exclusion of some groups from the society (*e.g.* victims) and a lack of responsibility of the Colombian state regarding their international and regional law obligations. Impunity as an example of injustice was addressed in the next victim's narrative:

> "I have been waiting for justice for more than seven years… That day, a group of armed man came to our house. They beat my three daughters and I was locked in a room. Four of them raped me. Two raped Lorena, the eldest, and three raped Clarisa, my youngest daughter. Seeing this I started crying and one of them kicked me in my chest and I started to throw up blood. They said that I was a *guerrillera whore* and that was the prize for being married to a *guerrillero*. My husband was killed in front of us, was beheaded with a machete and a saw. The next day I went to the hospital with my daughters, and after that to the police station. The policeman didn't believe me when I told him about being raped. He said it was untrue and asked me for evidence. When I showed him the certificate from the hospital he said that I made it, that the certificate was fake. When finally the regional justice court accepted my case, after begging for more than two years in different regional institutions for legal help, they said to me: "We will start an investigation, we will let you know about the findings"… that was seven years ago, and I'm still here waiting for justice…" (Personal interview, women from Abejorral, Colombia, November 2012).

In some cases, being a victim in Eastern Antioquia can be synonymous to discrimination; in particular if you are a victim of forced displacement. According to Human Rights Watch (2010) and the National Centre of Historical Memory of Colombia (2013) between 1982 and 2013 more than 6 million people were internally displaced in Colombia during actions related with the armed conflict, making Colombia the second largest internal displacement country in the world next to Sudan (CHM 2013). In case of Eastern Antioquia, between 1995 and 2012, more than 150.000 people were internally forced displaced within this Colombian region; with the town of Rionegro and the County's capital of Medellin becoming principal refugee destinations. In other words, three in four internal displaced people of this region choose one of those two places to start their life again; leaving their rural life and having to adapt to a new urban environment. For some of the towns the impact of the internal displacement was devastating. For example, between the years 2000 and 2007 Granada

town lost 60% of their population, Argelia - 76%, San Luis - 77%, and San Carlos lost 87% of its inhabitants. The overall Internal Displacement Index for the whole region reached 54%, with each one out of two people of Eastern Antioquia being internally displaced (UNDP 2010; CNRR 2011; CHM 2013). In this scenario the relationship between discrimination and internal forced displacement can be established using the next two examples. The first example is about the perception of some habitants of Colombian cities to associate internal displaced people with criminals or thieves (Villa 2007); demanding local councils not to offer them any governmental help in order to stop the influx of more displaced people to the cities. As one member of AMOR, who is living in Medellin after being displaced from Cocorná town, described it:

> "When I arrived to Medellin from Cocorná with my six children seven years ago, I had to beg for money on the streets to give food to my children. The people on the streets said to me: 'if you are hungry go back to your town! You are just hiring these kids to get some money! You are a vulgar thief!' When I went to the city council to ask for help they told me that they couldn't give me any because they didn't want more internal displacement in the city, they received a lot of public complaints saying that when the council started giving us assistance it encouraged more displaced people to come to Medellin, making the city more insecure and dangerous… At another council they said that people like me just want to make trouble and spread the armed conflict to the city. 'We don't want people like you here, do you understand?' they said…'If you left your town it is because you did something wrong, I guess you aren't really an angel, are you?'" (Personal interview, women from Cocorná, Colombia, November 2012).

The second example concerns the stigma of coming from a town where the intensity of the armed conflict is high, and the resulting urbanites perception that the displaced person is probably a guerrilla or paramilitary supporter. As members of ASOVIDA and APROVIACI who are living in Rionegro town after being displaced from Granada and San Carlos argued:

> "In Rionegro the people said to me: 'Ah! You are from Granada town, right? So you are a *guerrillera*, right? We all know that Granada is a guerrilla's supporter town'… " (Personal interview, women from Granada, Colombia, October 2012).

> "I don't like to tell the people that I'm from San Carlos… The people here believe that we are supporters of illegal groups… I never wrote in my CV that I'm from San Carlos, I am sure that I can't find any job here if they know that

I'm from there" (Personal interview, women from San Carlos, Colombia, November 2012).

In this context, different collective communicative citizenship actions developed by AMOR, APROVIACI and ASOVIDA had invaluable significance for claiming recognition, respect and protection of victims' rights from a counterpublic point of view. In other words, some communicative citizenship actions are an example of the implementation of the framework *recognition as respect* and *the politics of respect* for the Eastern Antioquia's case. In the next part I will focus on presenting two particular communicative citizenship actions and those actions' consequences for the descriptive level (explanatory framework) and the normative level (legal framework). Particularly, I will focus on the experiences of the *Trails for Life and Reconciliation*, collective communicative citizenship actions of recognition, where victims from Eastern Antioquia have been recovering the meaning, significance and uses of public spaces where massacres against civilians happened, organizing monthly walks to places where their relatives were killed or are presumed to be buried. The other experience is the case of the *Garden of Memory* in San Carlos town, a public memorial made in order to claim recognition, justice, non-discrimination and respect from the victims' point of view.

7.3 Mechanisms of recognition from a communicative citizenship perspective: the case of the *Trails for Life and Reconciliation*

This collective communicative citizenship action informally started in 2003, when more than 120 women of APROVIACI of the towns of Granada, Marinilla and El Santuario decided to go together to *Alto del Palmar* (a place where paramilitary groups committed more than four massacres from 2000 to 2002) to demand the truth about what happened in this rural area. With this collective action, this group of women tried to recover the good name of their relatives, wrongly accused of being a part of guerrilla groups. Specifically, this communicative citizenship action meant embarking on the same journey that their relatives did before they were massacred, carrying pictures of the victims, banners and flowers. During the journey, the participants stopped in particular places to pray for their relatives, read poems, sing songs, and perform public declarations against the armed conflict in the region; recovering the public meaning of places that were stigmatized or labelled as places of horror and sadness. Addressing the importance of this initiative, a member of APROVIACI said:

> "We wanted to break the silence, the fear, be recognized as active citizens and honour our victims… How? Well, this is the story. After the massacres at '*Alto*

del Palmar', where my husband and two sons were killed, I started to think that the victims need to do something to show to others the horror of what happened here and clear the names of people that were wrongly accused of supporting paramilitary squads or guerrilla groups… After various meetings with other victims, we decided to do the same journey that our relatives did as a recreation of the *Stations of the Cross*, because we strongly believe that our victims are martyrs, like Jesus… During the first version of this *Trial for Life* we constantly repeated during the journey things like *Never again!*, *My husband was a good father, not a guerrillero*, *My son was a peasant, not a soldier*, *No more victims, we want peace!…* and the echo of these words spread all across the region; giving us dignity, giving us recognition, giving us hope to claim for the truth… after all, why did they kill my husband and my two kids? I want to know why…" (Personal interview, women from El Santuario, Colombia, November 2012).

Since 2004 other groups of victims of Eastern Antioquia as AMOR, ASOVIDA and *the Association of Victims of Marinilla* (ASOVISIMA), started to develop the same collective communicative citizenship actions across the region. Furthermore, since 1993, the Catholic Church in Colombia has been organizing an annual event called *Peace Week,* where civil society organizations, local NGOs, International Cooperation Organizations and different local churches of Colombia could perform workshops, public demonstrations and academic reflexions about how to achieve peace for the country from a civil society perspective. Eastern Antioquia is a bastion of Catholicism in Colombia, with 95% of inhabitants declaring catholic beliefs (UNDP 2010). Thus, the religious connotations of the *Trails for Life* for the people of the region became really significant, because for them this was a symbolic action to remember their relatives through adapting catholic notions of forgiveness, absolution, suffering and peace. After different meetings between victims' groups and religious authorities, in 2004, the Catholic Church decided to fully support this communicative citizenship action; establishing this public demonstration as an annual activity of the *Peace Week*. As a result, in 2004 more than 4000 women from 23 towns of Eastern Antioquia took part in the first regional *Trials for Life* walk, adding the words *and Reconciliatio*n to the name of this initiative as a symbolic strategy to claim a post conflict scenario for the region. Since 2005 more than hundred *Trials for Life and Reconciliation* has been organised in Eastern Antioquia, mobilizing more than 100,000 women and victims of the region (AMOR 2012). According to Villa (2007) and Estrada (2010) the principal meaning of this collective communicative citizenship action is the public symbolic impact of seeing the victims claiming truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition in public spaces that are associated

with violence; reconfiguring with these actions the meaning and uses of these places for the community.

In 2007, after a regional *Trail for Life and Reconciliation*, AMOR and APROVIACI started performing frequent public declarations claiming for governmental support to help the victims of the region in getting access to the Colombian court system and receive justice. Particularly, these two victims' organizations expressed in their declarations four demands directed to the government: first, to know the truth about the crimes committed against them and their families; second, to achieve justice through prosecution of the perpetrators of violence; third, to receive real forms of material, symbolic and legal reparation (including the return of stolen land and assets); and finally, to get guarantees from the Colombian government of non-repetition of these acts of violence; in other words, to receive assurance that these human rights violations will never again take place in this Colombian region (AMOR 2012). Those public declarations were really significant, because they showed how group of victims started to develop more direct collective political actions to achieve the protection of their human rights from a legal perspective. If the framework of 'recognition as respect' underling the duty of the state to protect human rights and guarantee the principles of justice and state impartially for all the citizens; it became transparent that these political declarations during the *Trail for Life and Reconciliation* were a strategy combining communicative actions with direct political actions. Regarding this relationship between communicative and political actions a member of AMOR stated:

> "I think that the *Trials for Life and Reconciliation* are the perfect place to mix feelings with political actions, emotions with public demands; do you know what I mean? We wanted to bring to life places that previously represented death and injustice… some people of the region said to us that we should leave dead people alone, but we strongly believe that our victims are not going to be in peace after we cleared their names… Our victims will have peace on the day that we can achieve justice; this is the best way to dignify our relatives… What do we really want? Well, we want to express our feelings and demands to the Colombian government in the places that our victims were killed as a way to dignify them; we want to create solidarities between the victims to demand protection from the government; we want to be equals for the government, not just 'simply victims'… we want to be recognized and respected, because we have political rights; and I'm convinced that to know the truth is an important step for reconciliation; and to achieve all of that we need to communicate our

political demands." (Personal interview, women from Nariño, Colombia, November 2012)

As the case of Eastern Antioquia shows, victims' public demands of truth, reparation, justice and non-repetition during *The Trails for Life and Reconciliation* were collective political actions that sent a powerful message to the Colombian state: the victims want to be treated as bearers of rights; and the state should guarantee the protection of their rights. If the framework of 'recognition as respect' address the idea that rights are the only means through which recognition can be expressed (Honneth 2011), and dignity is a central dimension of recognition (Fraser 2003b); it is evident that the consequences of this collective communicative citizenship actions can be considered as a symbolic and material achievement of the social movement of victims. As a result of this process, in 2011, the Colombian government approved a law to compensate victims of the armed conflict, where the four principal demands articulated by the social movement of victims of Eastern Antioquia (expressed during the *Trails for Life and Reconciliation*) became a formal part of the new *victims' law* (BBC 2011). My main argument at this point is that this expression of communicative agency by the social movement of victims of Eastern Antioquia had achieved a normative legal affirmation of their particular political identities as bearers of rights. The future consequences of implementing this new *victims' law* in Colombia will be crucial to the long process of recognizing victims as citizens in the country; starting a socio-political process, where legal recognition of victims' rights can be the key to change institutionalized patterns of injustice and depravation of rights.

7.4 A Symbolic Process of Recognition: The Case of the *Garden of Memory* of San Carlos town

San Carlos town is one of the territories with the highest percentage of disappeared people in Eastern Antioquia, which is a result of a planned strategy of illegal groups to spread fear and terror in the communities of the region. According to official figures, the legal status of more than 350 people of San Carlos town is 'disappeared in relation to the armed conflict'. The Internal Displacement Index of the town is 87%; in other words, just 13% of the population of San Carlos were not victims of internal displacement (UNDP 2010). From 1995 to 2012, approximately 5,000 attacks against infrastructure were organised by illegal groups, targeting bridges, energy towers or pipelines; and more than 200 people are victims of landmines (the highest number in the whole country). Furthermore, in the last ten years, 33 massacres happened in urban and rural areas, and the phrase *If you are still living in San Carlos town you are a guerrilla supporter* was used by

paramilitary groups to spread panic in the region for years (CNRR 2011; CHM 2013). In this context, in 2006, a group of women of San Carlos started to adapt the work methodology of the regional group *Life and Mental Health Promoters* (PROVISAME) to deliver psychological help to the victims of this town; confronting the pain caused by the war through therapeutically workshops with a strong gender dimension. After initial support of AMOR and regional NGOs as Conciudadanía and PRODEPAZ, this collective of women founded the group *The Centre to Approach Reconciliation and Reparation* – CARE – with the main purpose to support victims in different aspects of emotional, mental and psychological recovering.

After two years of intensive healing work with the victims, CARE started to focus on other related issues; adding three more aims to their project. These additions were the creation of strategies to bring social reparation and public recognition to the victims of San Carlos, the development of processes of reconciliation between victims and perpetrators to rebuild social cohesion in the town, and the compilation of victims' and perpetrators' narratives as a mechanism to establish the truth about what was happening in the ongoing armed conflict in San Carlos. Having these new goals, in 2008, the first action that CARE developed was an approach to establish public recognition to the victims through the campaign *planting a seed, cultivate a life*. This campaign wanted to involve all the inhabitants of San Carlos in order to change their psychological relationship with the armed conflict; encouraging them to plant a tree seed in the different places of the town as a symbol of peace and recognition to the victims. Also the former paramilitaries and guerrilla soldiers participated in this campaign; generating a lot of controversy in the town. Those former fighters often declared that their participation was a way to ask publicly for victims' forgiveness; and, on the other hand, some victims said that their involvement was totally unacceptable because it was an insult to all the victims of the region. Regarding this controversy, one of the members of CARE remembered:

> "With our first campaign *planting a seed, cultivate a life* we decided to involve former combatants because we thought that if we as victims want real recognition, one clear step is to be recognized differently by our former offenders; not just in the eyes of the Colombian state… This can sound strange, but I believe that this recognition will bring some reconciliation to our town; it is a little bit weird, isn't it? I think CARE became public thanks to this campaign, and the victims started to be recognized as people with their own voices, people with their own rights… At the beginning it was a lot of controversy, of course! Our families were abducted by these paramilitaries soldiers, but when we started to receive key information about the location of

mass graves where our relatives could be found, we started to think that the use of this information could provide emotional wellbeing to our community; and could be the best way to bring real reconciliation to San Carlos... We all want to find our missing relatives, we want to dignify our victims, and we want to be recognized and respected... is this too much to expect?" (Personal interview, women from San Carlos, Colombia, October 2012).

In 2009, and after the success of their first campaign, CARE started another project: the creation of regional mass graves' cartographies to find the dead bodies of disappeared people of the region. In that year CARE developed a method to systematize victims' and perpetrators' narratives in order to create maps where presumed guerrilla or paramilitary groups had buried the bodies of missing persons. As a result, for some members of CARE this task started to be the principal mission in life. How one of the CARE members stated:

"My daughter Sandra was abducted by the paramilitaries and went missing. I spent eight years of my life looking for her, begging different paramilitary officers for information about where she was buried. In 2008 I found my daughter's body in a mass grave near a river bank in San Carlos. During these eight years I started a life's mission with Gloria, Cristina and other members of CARE that helps people that have missing relatives to find their bodies. Finding Sandra healed my pain, my anger, and my frustration; but when I know that another victim can't find their relative, I feel that pain... you know what? I guess this pain is like a cancer that slowly consumes our bodies... we don't know if we are going to find the cure, our missing, we just know that every day we are dying a little bit more... I'm the mother of the missing people; I want to be the cure..." (Personal interview, women from San Carlos, Colombia, November 2012).

As a result of five years of work, in 2010, CARE started a new ambitious project: the creation of a victims' memorial in the principal public square of San Carlos town. This project was the result of three juxtaposed processes: first, the development of more than 200 mental health healing workshops for the victims of the region; second, the conclusion of different victims' meetings, reunions and public discussions about how to demand from the local council to recognize the victims as citizens of the town; and finally, the implementation of CARE's strategies about how to bring symbolic reparation to the victims and build up processes of reconciliation in San Carlos from a civil society perspective. Demanding financial support to the local and regional councils and with the help of the NGO Conciudadanía, in 2010 CARE started the construction of the victims' memorial called

The Garden of Memory as a strategy to claim recognition, justice, non-discrimination and respect from the victims' point of view. Addressing the reasons behind this initiative, former members of CARE remembered:

> "The reason behind our memorial is to publicly denounce the atrocities that happened here, we want our victims to be recognized so that they are never never forgotten" (Personal interview, women from San Carlos, Colombia, October 2012).

> "We started the idea of *The Garden of Memory* to express to the people of Eastern Antioquia that our victims deserve respect and justice. This is our dream and principal aim: to bring justice to our town. We want to show with this memorial to the whole country that when they recognize our victims and how they were killed; they are dignifying us… If they can understand our pain, our suffering, just for one second, I think it is the best demonstration of respect and love to us, to our victims…" (Personal interview, women from San Carlos, Colombia, October 2012).

With the slogan 'Planting my flower in the garden of memory' on the 28th of July, 2011, in the principal square of San Carlos town more than 2,000 inhabitants went to the opening ceremony of the victims' memorial *The Garden of Memory*. The memorial is made of metal flowers, which recognize and represent the victims of this town. Specifically, in this memorial flowers has different colours to recognize different types of victims. Purple flowers honour those who have disappeared, yellow recognize landmines victims, green symbolizes internally displaced, blue ones are for forced recruitment and child soldiers, and red represents those who were killed. Most of the flowers bear the victims' names, except for the white flowers for victims of sexual violence, which are left blank. Around all these metal flowers metal butterflies in different colours are places to symbolize the people that had been found in mass graves around San Carlos and the region. Relatives of victims can receive a metal flower to put on the memorial for free, and CARE replaces the flower for a butterfly, when a victim that is already in the memorial is found in a mass graves. The importance of the *Garden of Memory* for this community in terms of recognition and respect is explained in the next narrative:

> "The *Garden of Memory* is a way to show that our loved ones still live in our community. I always get a bad vibe walking into this square where the paramilitaries would let people bleed to death after torturing them. But we

wanted to transform this square of horror into a symbol of respect and hope; where the people can recognize that the victims of San Carlos have the right to know the truth and get justice. When people come for the first time to this garden they realise that they're not alone and are not the only ones suffering. They realise that they have rights that should be respected, they realise that they are citizens with rights, not just victims of this bloody war... anyway... but to be honest, the idea of representing victims through flowers is gorgeous! Because flowers mean hope, happiness and love, for me it is a symbol of respect" (Personal interview, women from San Carlos, Colombia, October 2012).

At this point, I want to make four considerations about the relationship between the framework of 'recognition as respect' and the experience of *The Garden of Memory* in San Carlos town. First, this example is important in order to show how local councils can approve legal actions to establish physical places inside the community where the victims can be recognized and dignify; in other words, this is an example of a normative legal approach to bring recognition to the victims by local and regional councils. Second, this collective communicative citizenship action of the *Garden of Memory* is a symbolic action to dignify the victims in public, and claim protection of fundamental human rights from the state, from a victims' perspective. Third, this garden represents the implementation of the legal duties of local and regional councils to guarantee inclusion and non-discrimination to the victims of the armed conflict; bringing notions of symbolic reparation and justice to the survivors. Finally, this victims' memorial helped the victims of the country to demand and claim for recognition and respect from the state using a legal perspective. Victims' achievements such as *The Victims' Law* and the declaration of the 9th of April as the 'National Day of the Victims' for part of the Colombian government are good examples of the impact of different communicative citizenship actions on the normative legal framework of the country. In short, if the politics of respect addresses the idea that citizens should be treated as bearers of rights, it is clear for the case of Eastern Antioquia that the development of different collective communicative citizenship actions such as *The Trails of Life and Reconciliation* or *The Garden of Memory* has been giving different types of agency to the victims to transform their passive victim condition into active citizens condition, allowing them to exercise their rights in the public sphere.

7.5 Recognition as democracy: addressing victims' struggles of political representation in Eastern Antioquia

In the second section of this chapter I would like to address the framework of *recognition as democracy*, framework that principally argue that democracy cannot exist if the state does not provide at least a minimal level of political representation for those over whom it claims authority; in other words, recognition is a necessary condition of democracy itself. According to scholars such as Thompson (2006) and Fraser (2008) democracy and the politics of recognition are intrinsically associated, as both demand for a more inclusive politic culture and a comprehensive public sphere where diverse beliefs and perspectives can interact together and be a part of rational dispute. However, scholars such as MacBride (2005; 2013) argue that in order to implement the politics of recognition in the 21st century democracy, it is necessary to create an alternative model of inclusive politics which involves an emotionally contested political culture (not just rational) and a multiplication of deliberative opportunities from non-conventional perspectives. Thus, an important insight into the relationship between democracy and recognition concerns the ways in which individuals want to be recognized as political actors based on their particular socio-political identities. For example, for the case of counterpublic actors (*e.g.* victims, women, indigenous population, etc.) these individuals do not just want to be respected as rationally autonomous actors who represent particular socio-political identities in the public sphere; they also want to claim particular sets of rights and exercise other dimensions of their citizenship. In short, if these subaltern groups want to be full members of their political community, they should have the agency and autonomy to be part of the formation of public policies in the democratic scenarios of their societies.

Furthermore, this approach highlights a double juxtaposed argument: on the one hand, democratic deliberation determines the content of recognition, and without democracy, recognition is non-specifiable. On the other hand, recognition is a necessary condition of democracy, so without suitable recognition democracy is impossible. In short, the relationship between democracy and recognition is mutual, and this connection is about making collective decisions on matters that may have significant impact on our lives. Thus in this framework the conception of democratic justice is circular: democracy determines justice, and, at the same time, justice is a necessary condition of democracy (Fraser 2008). Moreover, if we can understand democracy as a system of reflexive co-operation in which citizens consciously engage with their fellows in order to solve collective problems and achieve important human goods together (Honneth 2011), it is clear that the political recognition of counterpublic actors such as victims or women is crucial to achieve coherently the values of democracy in egalitarian societies. Succinctly, democracy is the arena in which citizens determine the laws, policies and institutions, which best promote parity of participation; and

individuals such as victims must be recognized in order for them to be able to play an effective role in democratic deliberation.

In order to address this framework of *representation as democracy* for the Eastern Antioquia's case, in the next part of this section I am going to focus on how AMOR has been developing particular collective communicative citizenship actions to represent victims and involve women in public and political discussions about the war, victims' reparation, truth and justice in different political scenarios of Eastern Antioquia. The case of this social movement of victims has an important particularity, because AMOR wants to represent two related subaltern groups at the same time: women and victims of Eastern Antioquia. As a consequence, this particular example is underpinning the specific dynamic nature of this political community; showing us how long-term armed conflicts can threaten the stated goal of enhancing political inclusion and the wider project of social transformation through democratic contestation and deliberation (MacBride 2005). I will argue that AMOR has developed a model of inclusive political recognition that connects rational and emotional collective communicative citizenship actions, challenging patriarchal political structures; creating deliberative opportunities for women and victims in political scenarios of Eastern Antioquia.

7.6 The struggles for political recognition in Eastern Antioquia: The cases of *From the House to the Square* and the *Constituent Assemblies*

The representation of women and victims in political scenarios in Colombia is marginal. According to the report 'Women in politics: Latin America and the Caribbean' prepared in 2010 by the United Nations Development Fund for Woman (UNIFEM), Colombia has only 8.4% of female representation in public institutions and has the worst record of gender equality in Latin America (UNIFEM 2010). In the same perspective, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) argues that the Colombian Government has only 13% of females in the local governments and 15% in the Colombian Parliament (IDEA 2012). In case of Eastern Antioquia the percentages of women's participation is lower than the national average, with just 6.5% of political representation in public institutions and 12% in local governments. Approximately one tenth of this 12% political participation in local governments consists of members of victims' associations such as AMOR and APROVIACI (PRODEPAZ 2010). Those statistics describe a clear inequality in women and victims' political participation in Colombia showing two patterns: first, that a traditional patriarchal political system is in place; and second, that there is a democratic deficit of political participation of counterpublic actors such as victims.

In this context, since 1996, AMOR has been developing a long-term communicative citizenship action called *From the house to the square* in 23 towns of Eastern Antioquia. This action wants to provide education and training to Eastern Antioquia's women regarding political citizenship and support them in representing both victims and women in local political scenarios. Specifically, AMOR encourages and trains women to move out of the home into the public arena through political seminars and workshops developing organizational skills. The main aim is to teach women about how to get into positions of political decision-making in their towns, to include a gender perspective in the public policies of the region. As a result, since 1997, more than 2,000 women of Eastern Antioquia had participated of this initiative. According to AMOR (2012) they started to implement this action for three main reasons: first, to include a feminist perspective in political and social regional public policies; second, to highlight the importance of women claiming the right to participate in political negotiations with all the armed groups that are taking part in the conflict because they are principal victims; and finally, to underline the recognition of truth, justice and reparation inside the armed conflict context of Eastern Antioquia in order to promote women's rights in the public and private sphere (AMOR 2012). Remembering the beginning of this project, a former member of AMOR stated:

> "At the beginning it was soooo difficult because some women expressed in our workshops that it would be impossible to exercise our political rights in male-dominated towns like Marinilla, Granada, Rionegro and so on… But after all these years, I guess that the principal result of this process is the change of women's subjectivities in things like political participation and recognition. At the end of the day, women are the main victims of this conflict in Eastern Antioquia, and we believe that peace can be only achieved with the participation of women as political actors. I believe that this strategy awakened the women of the entire region to be active in political terms." (Personal interview, women from Marinilla, Colombia, November 2012).

As a result of an international cooperation agreement with The *Canadian International* Development *Agency (CIDA)*, in 2000 AMOR established the first version of the *School of Public Management with Gender Perspective* for the region. After four years of doing gender and political workshops, public demonstrations, and open women's meetings in the towns of Eastern Antioquia AMOR decided to develop a formal educational process where women of the entire region could learn the skills to present projects of public policies for the region. The result of the first edition of this school was the policy paper called 'Women's Agenda'; document that offered a set of political, social and economic policies ideas for Eastern Antioquia from a gender perspective. In 2001, at the time of parliamentary

elections in Colombia, AMOR presented all political candidates of the region with a set of policy papers called *platforms of action*. These policy papers presented ideas for public policies on issues such as women's political participation, education, public health and human rights from a gender perspective. However, the principal goal in those policy papers was to start a regional peace process negotiation with all illegal groups of Eastern Antioquia, idea that was controversial for the regional authorities. In short, these elections were the first political campaign in the region when gender topics were discussed in the public arena, and as a consequence, various candidates included some ideas of these policy papers in their manifestos.

Furthermore, AMOR developed high degrees of social cohesion inside their organization as a result of the initiative *From the house to the square*. Regarding the impact of this initiative inside AMOR, a participant of the first edition of the public management school remembered:

> "The School of Public Management was an important 'life experience' in all senses, because this experience gave us recognition as political actors in two ways: inside AMOR and in the public squares of our towns. This was really significant for the members of AMOR, because it was the first time that we felt recognized as a group of women in political terms, not just as victims. When I see how local politicians ask us now to be part of their political groups, I feel that we can change the political culture of our region; I guess this sounds really idealistic!... but the truth is that this is a long process, I know, but we can express our political voice as a group of women now, and to be honest, this is really exciting!" (Personal interview, women from San Vicente, Colombia, November 2012).

Since 2002, AMOR decided to present women candidates to local and regional elections, and made political alliances with male candidates in particular Eastern Antioquia's towns such as El Peñol, La Unión or Guatapé. In every regional electoral process since 2003, AMOR had focused on developing public meetings, workshops, local debates and regional forums with all the candidates in order to discuss their proposed political gender agenda for that particular year. Within Eastern Antioquia's traditional patriarchal political system, all these activities became a really big challenge for the regional socio-political culture. Scholars such as Croucher (2004) argue that "the gendering of women as mothers and homemakers relates not only to the biological reproductions of nations, but also to their symbolic and cultural construction" (Croucher 2004, p.182); and it visible in AMOR case that their political actions were contributing to generating different cultural practices that have a potential to change the meanings and boundaries of political participation in Eastern Antioquia.

Furthermore, having in mind the actual percentage of women in politics in Eastern Antioquia (12%), those actions are just a beginning of a long term political process that should involve deeper structural sociocultural changes. In can be argued, that in the countries where democratic institutions are still under construction, as in case of Colombia, the importance of political recognition and participation of subaltern groups is fundamental to promote egalitarian values and achieve collective rights and freedoms (Taylor 2002; Deranty 2009). Thus, the initiative of *From the house to the square* can be perceived as an important factor in creating policies and institutions that best promote parity of participation for women of Eastern Antioquia. As a member of AMOR stated:

> "How we are going to change the political culture of Eastern Antioquia? Well, we know that in practice we don't have a huge political representation at the moment; but we have recognition, credibility and you have to remember that Rome wasn't built in a day… The good thing about our initiative is that we are taking political positions that were filled by men before; and when you see women being active in politics, or you see results like the new policies for health and education for women of the region, we know that we can create better institutions for Eastern Antioquia in the future… We are the political future of our region! and men know that… and they are scared!" (Personal interview, women from El Peñol, Colombia, October 2012).

At this point, I would like to add two considerations. First, that the communicative citizenship action *From the house to the square* had generated social capital in terms of building coherent feminist identity inside AMOR. The challenge for this movement of victims in the near future is to achieve political capital in terms of explicit political power; in other words, to receive political recognition in terms of direct regional and local governmental representation. Second, it is important to remember the complexity of the armed conflict context of this political community; and how this kind of initiatives need a long time to develop in order to transform cultural subjectivities surrounding women's political role in Eastern Antioquia. Plummer (2003) argues that to speak of citizenship implies a presence of identity, voice, or subjectivity from which the claim of citizenship can be made; and it is clear for the case of Eastern Antioquia that AMOR have been constructing a connection between citizenship and gender to contest the relationships of power in this particular political environment. Thus, recognition is always fought for in context of existing relationships of power (Honneth 2004), and AMOR's process of reconfiguring their collective identity between 'representing victims' and 'representing women' according to the particular political scenario, shows how political recognition is a very dynamic process rather than a static condition.

7.7 The case of the *Constituent Assemblies* in Eastern Antioquia; creating political recognition and participation 'from below' in the midst of the armed conflict

The *Constituent Assemblies* was a strategy developed by AMOR and other civil society organizations that officially started in 2001 as a consequence of two related processes. First, the escalation of the armed conflict in Eastern Antioquia as a result of the systematic paramilitary actions in the region; and second, the establishment of pioneer peace building strategies for part of local and regional town councils with the support of the Catholic Church, the European Union, and regional NGOs such as Conciudadanía, CINEP and the Peace Program. Specifically, the *Constituent Assemblies* used to have three programmes: the first was the communicative programme, that encouraged citizens to express their political views against the armed conflict, through public demonstrations in silence, wearing white t-shirts, carrying banners and big white flags. The second was the economic programme, a plan to implement economic, health and educational programmes for women from Eastern Antioquia who were living in extreme poverty. Finally, the third was the political programme, strategy to promote regional democracy through the political representation and recognition of social organizations 'from below' in order to reconstruct political participation in the midst of the armed conflict. From 2002 to 2005, one of the main aims of this initiative was to combine synergies of different social organizations of the region to work with local and regional authorities to transform democratic politics at the local level.

Moreover, the importance of the *Constituent Assemblies* strategy was to deepen the democracy in some Eastern Antioquia's towns with an emphasis on civil resistance to structural violence. For example, the structure of the political programme was that every local assembly comprised of 150 delegates representing trade associations, women, political parties, teachers, land owners, peasants, the Catholic Church, the local government and members of civil society organizations. With the main aim of to develop a Municipal Development Plan, all these delegates worked in six thematic groups to bring ideas to the general assembly about how to promote sustainable development and peaceful coexistence to the town. After that, an elected group of seven people supervised the working groups and convened the general assembly for plenary sessions. Having the final document of the Municipal Development Plan as a result of the public deliberations and debates of the general assembly, the delegates elected a person who was committed to present this local process to the region governments; monitoring how the local and regional councils will implement the development plan in the near future. For scholars such as Hernández (2004) the relevance of these *Constituent Assemblies* was to create participative processes for local problem solving; planning participatory development projects and renewed democratic political culture in order to tack clientelism, violence

and corruption (Hernandez 2004). Remembering this local process, a former assembly's delegate and actual member of AMOR said:

> "I participated as women's delegate in the first local constituent assembly of my town in 2004, before I was a full member of AMOR. I was involved in religious groups in my neighbourhood for many years; running the Sunday School and supporting women's charity activities. But after my experience at the first assembly, I started to understand the importance of being involved in political issues. It was at the assembly where I expressed my opinions for the first time! And it was there that I heard about the difficult situation of human rights and poverty in my town for the first time. At the moment, I'm representing AMOR in the local council; and I guess this honour is the result of my participation in all these previous local constituent assemblies. It was there where my political voice was born" (Personal interview, women from El Retiro, Colombia, November 2012).

As a result, the impact of these *Constituent Assemblies* was really significant for the quality of life of the women of Eastern Antioquia. According to PRODEPAZ (2010) after seven years of the implementation of those assemblies the index of women's poverty decreased by 31% in the 23 municipalities, the coverage of women's health services increased by 44%, and the percentage of educational services improved in 63% in the entire region. Furthermore, women started to be elected in regional and local political elections; increasing their political participation from 1.5% to 10% in five years (PRODEPAZ 2010). According to scholars such as Sarmiento (2007) these assemblies "developed novel mechanisms to cope with the disruption and reconfiguration of the logic of power from a democratic perspective and encouraged women political participation processes for development and peace in Colombia from below" (Sarmiento 2007, p. 7).

The *Constituent Assemblies* strategy formally ended in 2009 as a result of two circumstances: first, the beginning of an international cooperation project called *Laboratory of Peace* supported by the European Union. The principal aim of this project was to bring economic support to human rights and local peace initiatives, local councils of the region, and to promote sustainable development projects; replacing the original purpose of the assemblies in the region. Second, the Colombian central government started a campaign to undermine the credibility of this *Constituent Assemblies* arguing that these spaces had replaced the political function of local councils; attempting to rebuild the legitimacy of regional and local democratic institutions.

Nevertheless, the collective communicative citizenship actions that the members of these *Constituent Assemblies* developed to promote civil resistance to structural violence, and express their political views against the armed conflict were crucial to achieve political recognition and participation of women's organizations such as AMOR and APROVIACI in the region. Particularly, the establishment of *peace communities* (symbolic actions of non-violent resistance against legal and illegal armed actors to protect the community's political autonomy through public demonstrations wearing white t-shirts and walking across the towns in silence) helped women's recognition and political visibility in the public sphere. Concerning those *peace communities* Hernández's (2004) argues "these initiatives have their origin in the need to defend and recuperate culture, autonomy and territory. With the escalation and impact of the armed conflict, the women have incorporated civil resistance to the armed conflict into their traditional resistance." (Hernández 2004 p. 27). In short, these initiatives show that local and regional actions of non-violence can protect the life of communities and reduce the impact of the armed conflict on women, stimulating social cohesion and women's political recognition. Addressing this issue a member of AMOR stated:

> "When we declared our town a 'peace community' years ago, it was a strategy to send a direct message to all the armed groups: we can resist together, all the women of this town can resist and act united! We want to demand from the violent actors to respect our town, all the women, and our rights. I'm totally sure that we raised awareness about the role of women in our community, but the big challenge was to make the demand to all the armed groups of Eastern Antioquia that we have the right to live without fear!". (Personal interview, women from Guarne, Colombia, November 2012).

It can be said that in Eastern Antioquia's case these *peace communities* initiatives represented the local peace building efforts to reduce the intensity of the armed conflict; identifying the need to decrease armed conflict violence through processes of democratic political participation and collective communicative citizenship actions. Another example of direct peacebuilding actions was the effort of some women of the region (with the support of the Catholic Church authorities) to carry out local negotiations with armed actors for the release of kidnapped victims and to allow safe passage of foods and medicines during armed blockades.

To finish this part I would like to conclude with three considerations. First, the initiatives such as *Constituent Assemblies* or the *Peace Communities* were really significant in Eastern Antioquia because they highlighted the important role of the women of the region in creating alternative

peace solutions; and also delivering opportunities for women and victims to be involved in formal political scenarios of the region. Second, these initiatives had provided political agency to women's organizations such as AMOR to challenge patriarchal political structures; developing a model of inclusive political recognition 'from below' that connected rational actions (e.g. *Constituent Assemblies*) and collective communicative citizenship actions (e.g. *Peace Communities*) in order to occupy positions inside and outside of the formal structures of administrative power. Finally, it is evident for this case that the women of Eastern Antioquia wanted to be recognized as political actors based on their particular socio-political identities; strengthening the relationship between democracy and issue of recognition.

7.8 The Struggles for Recognition and the Politics of Recognition in Eastern Antioquia; Concluding Remarks

In this final part, I would like to present four conclusions for this chapter. First, after explaining and analysing the collective communicative citizenship actions of *The Trails for Life and Reconciliation*, *The Garden of Memory*, *From the House to the Square* and the *Constituent Assemblies*; it is clear that the social movement of victims of Eastern Antioquia have been developing processes of inclusive politics (McBride 2005) in the region that are contributing to generating different socio-political practices and subjectivities inside their political communities. If one of the main aims of the contemporary politics of recognition is to support models of inclusive politics as a strategy to create a genuinely plural and inclusive public spheres to strengthen the deliberative quality of the democratic institutions and facilitate democratic social transformation; then these collective communicative citizenship actions are shaping the sense of political belonging of women and victims of Eastern Antioquia; generating processes of building democratic public spheres in the region where their identities as victims and women can be recognized. I would argue here, that in countries with long term armed conflicts as Colombia, the development of inclusive politics as an operationalization of the politics of recognitions is crucial in order to create the conditions for future peace processes and post-conflict scenarios. Furthermore, sustainable peace is possible only when all the different groups of the political community feels that they have a stake in the future; and building peace requires processes where all points of view and interests are represented and recognized. Thus these collective communicative citizenships actions can be defined as important factors helping the construction of the future political and peacemaking scenarios for Eastern Antioquia.

The second conclusion is that the case of the social movement of victims of Eastern Antioquia can be seen as a contemporary example of the struggles for recognition; where the set of collective communicative citizenship actions is helping this social movement to configure a dynamic socio-political identity as a strategy to fight against injustice, discrimination and misrecognition. The idea of struggles for recognition characterize various forms of the politics of identity and difference; establishing that every form of political action which is not exclusively economic or redistributive in character, and which involves issues of identity and difference in however indirect manner, is considered to be a struggle for recognition (Thompson 2006). As Axel Honneth (2004) argues, there is a relationship between the experience of hurt and a sense of injustice, therefore we need to take into account that emotions are central for establishing dynamic socio-political identities in order to obtain political recognition in the public sphere. In other words, it can be said that this set of collective communicative citizenship actions that have been developed by organizations such as AMOR or APROVIACI in Eastern Antioquia can play a key role in determining the significance of victims' emotions in the public sphere and, through this, can help them achieve political representation and recognition in their political communities. In this context, emotions constitute an important source of knowledge about the social conditions of the social movements of Eastern Antioquia; evidencing the importance of building a democratic public sphere where emotions can be effectively expressed.

The third conclusion is that collective communicative citizenship actions such as *The Trails for Life and Reconciliation* and *The Garden of Memory* are examples of the importance for the social movement of victims in Eastern Antioquia to be treated as bearers of rights and achieve political recognition and representation in the midst of the armed conflict (Fraser 2003a, 2003b; Honneth 2011). Following Honneth's (2011) ideas that rights are the only means through which recognition can be expressed, and Fraser's (2003a; 2003b) arguments that political representation is the central dimension of recognition; it became apparent for the Eastern Antioquia's case that organizations such as AMOR and APROVIACI had achieved a normative legal affirmation of their particular political identities as bearers of rights in the last years. The changes in the Colombian legal framework (*e.g.* victims' law) and the demands toward local authorities to support legally and politically victims' initiatives of public recognition (*e.g.* the Garden of Memory) are examples of how victims can achieve political recognition through normative and descriptive frameworks. In other words, these collective communicative citizenship actions have been giving different types of agency to the victims to transform their passive political condition into active citizens who can exercise their rights in the public sphere. The final conclusion of this chapter is that AMOR, APROVIACI and other victims'

groups such as ASOVIDA and CARE are exercising another dimensions of their citizenship (for this case a communicative dimension) and claiming for particular sets of rights (for example, the right to know the truth about what happened in the midst of the armed conflict or to know where their missing relatives are buried) and through this are shaping the formation of public policies in the democratic scenarios of their communities. One important insight into the relationship between democracy and recognition are the ways in which individuals are recognized as political actors based on their particular socio-political identities; and for the case of Eastern Antioquia it is clearly visible that these groups of victims are helping to build political spaces where victims can determine political aspirations and define their political representations.

CHAPTER 8

8. Solidarity, social cohesion and public sphere: empowering victims through communicative citizenship actions in Eastern Antioquia

The aim of this chapter is to analyse another set of collective communicative citizenship actions that have been developing amongst Eastern Antioquia's victims groups such as AMOR, ASOVIDA and APROVIACI, using the theoretical framework of solidarity. The principal argument is that the performance of particular collective communicative citizenship actions is creating processes of social and civic solidarity inside those groups of victims, encouraging high degrees of social cohesion and empowering victims to exercise their rights in the public sphere. This chapter focuses on the category of solidarity as a main framework for three reasons. First, the concept of solidarity emerged as a third main code and theme in the qualitative narrative analysis. As with previous concepts of memory and recognition, solidarity helps to constitute different modes of communicative citizenship, underlining the relationship between solidaristic actions as expression of high levels of collective social cohesion, and communicative agency as expression of victims' empowerment. Second, from a socio-political perspective the way that we conceive the category of solidarity reveals the understanding of other ideas such as community, liberty, inclusion, loyalty or justice for particular contexts (Wilde 2007; Kapeller and Wolkenstein 2013). For the Eastern Antioquia case it is clear that some collective communicative citizenship actions developed by victims' groups such as AMOR, CARE or APROVIACI are based on willingness to help other victims without immediately getting something in return. Thus the analysis of those expressions of solidaristic actions are key to understand in holistic terms how those groups of victims have been constructing their egalitarian political ideas from a sociological perspective.

Finally, the concept of solidarity is intrinsically connected with the category of recognition, highlighting the idea that solidarity can work as a cover term for recognition and justice. In Axel Honneth's words (1996) recognition is understood as the general precondition for human prosperity, self-realization and for the possibilities of leading a good life. Thus the concept of solidarity must deal with the good life for all and it is about coordinating social and cultural life chances in a socially just way (Honneth 1996; Juul 2010). However, the distinction between solidarity and recognition in this context can be established, differencing recognition as a long term process to exercise socio-political rights in the public sphere (which involves struggles and defeats), and solidarity as the exercise of individual social identities to increase the level of social cohesion inside particular collectives in order to achieve communitarian goals. In short, the development of social and civic

solidaristic actions is crucial to the empowerment of victims in their struggles for recognition and justice in the public sphere of armed conflict contexts.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on the collective communicative citizenship actions establishing a set of regional mass graves cartographies by victims groups such as AMOR and CARE as example of social solidarity in Eastern Antioquia. I will argue in this part that these solidaristic actions contribute to high levels of social cohesion amongst victim collectives, resulting in attitudes of affective solidarity between victims and perpetrators for this particular armed conflict context. In the second section, I will analyse a collective communicative citizenship project called *Life and Mental Health Promoters (PROVISAME)* as an example of victims' civic solidarity in particular towns of Eastern Antioquia. My main argument here is that this project is empowering victims to claim human rights in the public sphere, revealing high degrees of social cohesion for the survivors and developing processes of inclusion and justice from a solidaristic point of view. In the last section I will present the main conclusions of this chapter, emphasising two main aspects: the crucial relationship between collective communicative citizenship actions, levels of solidarity and construction of social cohesion for the victims' movements of Eastern Antioquia, and the development of social and civic solidaristic actions as a main strategy to empower counterpublic communities and victims in their struggles for recognition and justice in the public sphere.

8.1 Extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, and mass graves: communicative citizenship strategies based on social solidarity to search for missing people in Eastern Antioquia

From an international legal perspective, Colombia is a party to the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols thereto, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. In the context of armed conflict, customary and conventional International Humanitarian Law (IHL) also applies. The Article 93 of the Constitution of Colombia incorporates those international treaties within domestic law. In this legal context, the recognition of the existence of an armed conflict in the country by the Colombian government is crucial in order to effectively implement this international legal framework into Colombia's legal system. The importance of this legal governmental recognition highlights the significance of recognizing the rule of international law in the midst of armed confrontations in Colombia; opening the door for judging military operations against guerrillas and paramilitary groups from an international humanitarian law perspective in the future. The official position of the Colombia government is that guerrilla groups such as FARC-EP and

ELN are terrorists (not belligerents under IHL), and that admitting the existence of an armed conflict would signal a failure of Colombian security policies and negate their successes (Vasquez 2010; OHCHR 2010). However, despite this governmental rhetoric that names guerrilla groups as terrorists, the Colombian state applies the International Humanitarian Law framework in practice; demanding from the Colombian army forces to respect the rule of international law in their military operations. It is important to remember that respecting the International Humanitarian Law in Colombia is not optional; it is compulsory; and applies when the defining objective elements of non-international armed conflict are met (Article 3 and Protocol II of the Geneva Conventions). As a result, respecting the rules of the International Humanitarian Law should be considered mandatory in the context of military operations against the FARC-EP and ELN in Colombia. Therefore, it is a serious international legal violation and human rights offence if the Colombian Government is involved in actions such as summary executions or enforced disappearance as an armed conflict strategy.

According to the report on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions in Colombia, presented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the United Nations Human Rights Council in March of 2010 (OHCHR 2010), since 2004 in the Colombian armed conflict we can talk about a phenomenon of so-called 'false positives' (*falsos positivos*). Basically, this is an unlawful act of killing civilians staged by the security forces of Colombia to look like lawful killings in combat of guerrillas or criminals. International NGOs such as Amnesty International (2013), Human Rights Watch (2013) and Colombian research centres such as CINEP (2011) have been arguing that evidence exists of this phenomenon since 1980, and it is an example of an intentional and deliberate *State policy* of killing civilians in the midst of the armed conflict (HRW 2013; CINEP 2011). Following the evidence presented in the report 'Debt to Humanity II: Twenty-three years of False Positives 1988-2011' (CINEP 2011), the general pattern of those governmental action was that civilians were trapped under false pretences (for example the promise of a job) by a paid "recruiter" (a civilian, demobilized armed group member or former soldier) and moved to a remote location in the country. Once there, victims are killed by members of the Colombian army, often within a matter of hours or days since when they were last seen by their family members. Civilian victims are presented to militaries as criminals or guerrillas by "informers" (civilians, demobilized armed group members or former soldiers) who "identify" the victims in exchange for money. Once these victims are killed, military forces set up the scene to make it appear like a lawful combat killing; involving placing arms and weapons in the hands of victims, firing weapons from victims' hands, changing their clothes to clothing associated with guerrillas or putting combat boots on victims' feet. Furthermore, the civilian victims are reported by the Colombian army in press conferences as guerrillas or criminals killed in

combat. Victims are often buried without being identified and some are buried in communal mass graves (OHCHR 2010; CINEP 2011).

It is still not clear how many 'false positives' have taken place in Colombia and existing statistics are subject to some controversy. For example, the report 'Human Rights Violations and sociopolitical violence in Colombia' presented by the Colombian NGO Commission of Jurist in 2009, reported 2,276 victims of extrajudicial executions and forced disappearances by state agents from July 1996 to June 2008 (CCJ 2009). On the other hand, The Ministry of Defence of the Colombian Government stated that there were 1,391 cases of homicides allegedly committed by members of the Armed Forces between 2000 and 2008 (Ministry of Defence 2009). The Office of the Attorney General of Colombia reported that the International Humanitarian Law Unit is pursuing 1,708 homicides allegedly committed by state agents since 2000, and the National Prosecution United is pursuing an additional 315 cases (CINEP 2011). In other words, 2,025 cases of extrajudicial killings made by the Colombian army are under investigation by the Colombian legal system. For the case of Eastern Antioquia, the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR 2010) stated that 322 victims euphemistically labelled as 'false positives' were from the county of Antioquia; and 240 particularly from Eastern Antioquia (74.5% of the county's cases). The towns of Granada, Cocorná, San Francisco, San Carlos, Argelia and Guarne were the municipalities most affected by extrajudicial executions and forced disappearances committed by the Colombian army; 87% of the cases happened in these territories (CINEP 2011). In this context, one of the principal consequences of extrajudicial killings committed by the Colombian army is that these actions violated state's responsibility for protecting citizen's human rights, particularly the right to life; undermining the social contract between citizens and the state. Regarding this topic a member of APROVIACI stated:

> "My son was abducted on 31st of August 2002 by the fourth division of the Colombian National Army when he was on his way to work on a local farm close to Guarne town. They killed him and changed his clothes for a guerrilla camouflage suit. After that, the Colombian army introduced him as a *guerrillero* in a press conference in Santa Ana; a rural area close to Granada town. How can I trust the government and the army after that? How can I claim justice when the legal system always protects the Colombian army? The worst thing is that in the eyes of the state my son is another *guerrillero killed in an operation against FARC*, when the truth is that he was just another normal working peasant from Guarne and the father of two kids... After that how can I believe

in the legal system in Colombia? Who can protect me from the state?"
(Personal interview, APROVIACI member, Guarne, Colombia, November 2012).

According to Amnesty International (2013) one of the main reasons for those extrajudicial killings was pressure that the Colombian government placed on the military units to "present results" to the public and demonstrates that the government is winning the armed conflict against the guerrillas. As a result, for Colombian military forces success was often associated with enemy *body counts*; in other words, the number of guerrilla members killed in combat by military units. Ironically, for organizations such as United Nations (OHCHR 2010) the reason of extrajudicial killings performed by state actors was to improve the security in Colombia since 2002. The United Nations report argues that 'false positives' are the result of the retreat of guerrillas from populated areas, making it more difficult to some military units to engage in combat. As a result, "In such areas, some units were motivated to falsify combat kills. In other areas, the guerrillas were perceived by soldiers to be particularly dangerous and soldiers were reluctant to engage them in combat. It was "easier" to murder civilians. In still other areas, there are links between the military and drug traffickers and other organized criminal groups. Local military units do not want to engage in combat with the illegal groups with which they are cooperating, so killing civilians falsely alleged to be part of these groups make military units appear to be taking action" (OHCHR 2010, p.12).

Furthermore, some Colombian NGOs such as MINGA (2009) and CINEP (2011) argue that these summary executions are contributing to the targeting of social groups such as human rights defenders, trade unionists, peasants, indigenous communities or Afro-Colombians. The reason is that these groups are "the usual suspects" to associate with guerrilla groups by part of the Colombian army. Thus, since 2002, the public narrative developed by the Colombian army in their press conferences was to present members of those organizations or collectives as members of illegal groups to reinforce right-wing positions in the public sphere. Member of CARE commented those assumptions:

> "I have been thinking for all these years why the Colombian army always killed and abducted peasants and poor people of my town to then present them as 'false positives'... Why not the local politicians, or posh people or people with money? You know what? These soldiers just want to receive promotions, money or medals for killing *guerrilleros*, don't they? So I assume that my husband just represented to them other 200,000 Colombian pesos for their pockets or a holiday at the sea side... Why do the people in my town don't believe that my husband was a peasant and not a guerrilla supporter? Easy,

because he was a peasant; not a politician… His only sin was to be a peasant, a land worker, and during this time the Colombian army is trying to convince everybody that all the peasants and *campesinos* of Eastern Antioquia are *guerrilleros*… and you know why? Because it's more money for them; for the Colombian army every peasant of Eastern Antioquia is a cheque for $200.000 Colombian pesos" (Personal interview, CARE member, San Carlos, Colombia, November 2012).

Nevertheless, it is really important to express at this point that the Colombian state is not the only actor that is performing extrajudicial executions or taking part in making civilians disappear in the midst of the armed conflict. The report 'Enough Already: Memories of War and Dignity', published in 2013 by The National Centre of Historical Memory of Colombia, argue that between 1980 and 2012 paramilitary groups had abducted 8,360 people; out of which 3,551 still missing and 4,809 have been found in mass graves across the country (CHM 2013). For the case of guerrilla groups such as FARC-EP and ELN the report 'Human Rights Violations and socio-political violence in Colombia; the right to live', presented by the NGO Colombian Commission of Jurist in 2011, argue that 106 cases of extrajudicial executions and "disappearing of civilians" can be attributed to those two guerrilla movements (CJJ 2011). In other words, paramilitary groups are the principal actor performing extrajudicial executions and disappearances in the Colombian armed conflict. According to the Unit of Peace and Law of The Office of the Attorney General of Colombia in 2010 there were still 32,348 people missing or disappeared in relation to the armed conflict in Colombia, and this Unit estimates that more than 9,000 victims are buried in communal unknown mass graves (Leon 2010). As a consequence, one of the principal practical problems of these extrajudicial executions is that some of the missing people are buried in communal mass graves without being identified first. Another problem is that victims and victims' relatives cannot access accurate governmental information about where those mass graves are and there is no information about how many missing people are buried in these unknown mass graves.

8.2 Collaborative Cartographies and Social Solidarity in Eastern Antioquia: the *Cartography and Identification of Mass Graves* project

Antioquia is the Colombian county with most missing people in the country. According to the Unit of Peace and Law of The Office of the Attorney General of Colombia 8,271 people from Antioquia are missing in relation to the armed conflict at the moment (CHM 2013). To short, one in four (25.5%) of the total missing people of the country are from this region. Furthermore, since 2007 more than 744

people have been found in mass graves across Eastern Antioquia, as all the legal and illegal armed groups of the region had developed this action as an armed conflict strategy against civilians in some point of the confrontation (Monroy 2011). In this context, in June of 2007, the victims' association of *The Centre to Approach Reconciliation and Reparation* (CARE) from San Carlos town started to develop a collective communicative citizenship action to involve the population of Eastern Antioquia in the identification of places and mass graves where presumably missing people could be buried. Their initial strategy was simple. After months of work and research, the victims' association established that more than 94 people had been missing in relation with the armed conflict in recent years in the town. In order to find some information about those missing people, CARE distributed more than 200 detailed maps of the municipality (including rural areas) across the town; asking the people of the community to give information about those missing people or the location of mass graves. To provide anonymity to the future informants, CARE suggested to bring the filled maps to the church or to the local council in closed envelopes or leave them under the door of the houses of the victims' association leaders. Remembering this first initiative, a member of CARE recounted:

> "We distributed maps all around San Carlos, and I remember that at the beginning people of the town looked at us with fear and mistrust. We said to the people: 'you don't have to give your name, if you have any information just mark a cross on the map and done! Simple as that!' We just wanted to have clues, bits of information, a trace, and bring some hope... we wanted to know where to start our search, we wanted to find the places where our dead relatives are waiting for us" (Personal interview, CARE member, San Carlos, Colombia, October 2012).

After this initial action, different members of CARE started the initiative of creating and developing banks of maps of local and regional mass graves based on the information brought in by the community. After receiving help for organizations such as UNDP and Conciudadanía, in 2009 this organization of victims formally established the communicative citizenship project *Cartography and Identification of Mass Graves* with the main aim to find the dead bodies of missing people of the region. In the same year, CARE developed a method to systematise victims' and perpetrators' narratives in order to develop better cartographies. The association wanted to have more information from different sources (civil society, paramilitaries and guerrilla groups, the Colombian army, etc.) and to establish the places where those groups buried the bodies of missing persons. Moreover, it was a complex and difficult process to track and check pieces of information that these different sources delivered through the maps. For example, just checking the physical places involved walking for many hours across the region, meeting illegal groups, avoiding landmine fields,

digging in the earth for long periods of time and, in the end, finding the bones or clothes of missing relatives or friends. Regarding this difficult process a member of CARE recalled:

> "We found the mass grave in El Jordán, a rural area of San Carlos, after six hours of walking and searching. I was in charge of digging and I remember saying to myself all the time 'please God, give me the energy and braveness to keep doing this; please Holy Spirit, give me the strength and resistance to not faint or throw up'. And suddenly, after two hours of digging and digging, I found the clothes and some bones of Luz Aida.... I started crying and saying 'Thank God, thank God, thank God'. You know what? I think that you have to have a huge and open heart to do this; seriously… you have to make a lot of sacrifices. My uncle lost a leg in a landmine field trying to find this mass grave; my cousin is accused of helping guerrilla groups just because we crossed a guerrilla camp in the search. But the good thing is that we could give to Luz Aida a proper funeral and now we can visit her in the proper grave… this grave in the cemetery is a huge relief for us after all these years of uncertainty and pain". (Personal interview, CARE member, San Carlos, Colombia, November 2012).

After five years of the implementation of this communicative citizenship project eight mass graves have been found in the region as a result of the information gathered through those collaborative cartographies. By 2014, CARE has developed more than 45 accurate maps and cartographies where presumably 166 missing people of the region are buried. The National Committee of Repair and Reconciliation of Colombia (CNRR 2011) argued that CARE's project is an important strategy to bring the issue of missing people into the public sphere in Colombia. Thus the elaboration of these collaborative cartographies can help the victims' process of healing and mourning, and it is a crucial step to know the truth in the midst of the armed conflict.

At this point, I want to make four arguments about this collective communicative citizenship action regarding the framework of solidarity. First, one of the main consequences of secretly abducting, detaining or enforced disappearance as an armed conflict strategy is the destruction of social cohesion in local communities. The development of collective feelings of distress, mistrust, guilt and a permanent breakdown in trust of neighbours and friends can deeply undermine communal living and mutual respect (Villa 2007; CNRR 2009). My first argument here is that in case of Eastern Antioquia the cooperative construction of mass graves cartographies are helping to restore the sense of social cohesion through informal solidaristic actions of sharing information with the victims

from the given community. Scholars such as Beer and Koster (2009) have argued that if the members of a community act out of solidarity, then it is a proof of some degrees of social cohesion and example of direct involvement and sympathy to others (Beer and Koster 2009). Regarding how the collaborative construction of these cartographies has helped the social cohesion in San Carlos town, a member of APROVIACI recalled:

> "I like to think that when somebody in town gives us a piece of information knowing that it could be really risky for him or her, it is because this person realises that, at the end of the day, we are a united community that is kind and help their fellows. When a member of your family needs help I guess that you go immediately to offer some support, right? Well, in my opinion all these cartographies are expressing the support of our town to the people that can't have a normal life here because they are trying to find their missing relatives every day, and they need our help right now… You know what? I strongly believe that when people of our town exchange information, mark crosses on the mass graves maps and help us in the construction of these cartographies, it is a way to say to the *guerrillas*, to the Colombian army and to the new paramilitaries groups of the region that people of San Carlos will survive this war and we are united. We will survive because we are a strong big family and these legal and illegal groups are just despicable temporal visitors". (Personal interview, APROVIACI member, San Carlos, Colombia, October 2012).

Addressing the topic of mistrust and how the construction of mass graves cartographies is helping to restore the sense of community in San Carlos town a member of CARE stated:

> "In my humble opinion, one of the most terrible impacts of the war in San Carlos is that we can't trust anybody… sounds horrible! I know! But it's true; we are always suspicious of each other… That is the reason, in my opinion anyway, that the work that we are doing in CARE is sooo important for the community! All these cartographies are saying to the people of the town that we can do something together to overcome the war and be a solid community again; and when we share personal and private information with the community I think it is a way to say out loud: hey! I would like to trust in you again!" (Personal interview, CARE member, San Carlos, Colombia, November 2012).

Looking from a legal perspective, Colombia, as most of other countries in the world, includes in its Constitution the right to not disappear by force. Article 12 of the Colombian Constitution states that

"no one will be subjected to forced imprisonment, nor submitted to torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment" (Republic of Colombia 1991). With the introduction of the Law No. 589 in 2000, forced disappearance became an autonomous offence in Colombia and is regulated in the Articles 165, 166 and 167 of the Colombian Penal Code. Article 14 of the Law No. 589 provides that "offences under this law shall not be made subject to any amnesty or pardon"; a relevant and crucial aspect to discuss in peace process negotiations. Thus the provisions about forced disappearance in the Colombian penal code offer a broad definition of possible perpetrators, as they include non-state actors, if they are individuals belonging to an armed group, or public servants or individuals who act under the determination or the acquiescence of a public servant (Kerschbaumer 2005). Furthermore, another consequence of extrajudicial executions and forced disappearances of people is that those actions break several human rights such as the right to life, the right to be free from arbitrary detention, the right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to humane conditions of detention, to security and dignity of a person, and particularly the right of victims' families to know the fate of their relatives. Article 32 of the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Convention, established the right of families to know the fortune of their relatives in the midst of armed conflicts actions and also defined the right of the victims to be informed of "the circumstances of the enforced disappearance, the progress and outcome of inquiries and the fate of the disappeared person" (ICRC 1977).

The actions of enforced disappearances induce extreme suffering inside the communities because of the uncertainty and the incapacity of families to find closure and come into terms with the disappearance of their loved ones. According to scholars such as Boss and Dahl (2014) this emotional incapacity can produce collective and individual processes of 'ambiguous loss', that it is the process of unresolved grief and the inability to move forward that can occur when there is no verification of a missing person's status as alive or dead. Furthermore, without knowing if the missing person will come back, the grief process is "frozen" and so is the mourning process. The uncertainty can last for years or decades, leaving victims' families in a kind of limbo, hoping against hope and unable to say goodbye. Regarding this issue of uncertainty a member of CARE expressed:

> "I have been waiting for Marcela's return for five years. During this time I have been waking up early every morning to cook her favourite food because I hoped that today can be the day that she finally comes back home. My friends say that I'm a loony, that I'm wasting my time; that I have to move on with my life and get another wife. But I can't, definitely I can't. What if she comes back tomorrow? What if she is still alive? When we got married I promised her in

our wedding ceremony that I will take care of her 'until death do us part' and I don't know if she is dead or not. My life is an abyss of sadness; totally empty… the only thing that I want is to find my wife". (Personal interview, CARE member, San Carlos, Colombia, October 2012).

In this context, my second argument is that for the case of Eastern Antioquia the cooperative creation of mass graves cartographies can facilitate the processes of collective and individual grief; providing emotional healing to the victims through actions of mutual affective solidarity. According to scholars such as Beer and Koster (2009) affective solidarity is founded on a feeling of care, responsibility and duty towards another person (in our case the victims); closely related to values like altruism, humanity, benevolence and community spirit. Analysing this case, I came to the conclusion that social solidaristic action of sharing information and helping other people from the community to find their missing relatives can have positive emotional consequences for the victims and victims' families. Social bonds matter in this context and those particular solidaristic actions are the cement which holds groups of victims together in this Antioquia's region. Furthermore, it is possible to establish the right to know and to express private suffering in public, to democratize the pain within the local community, and to support victims that are suffering total uncertainty as main motivations for some citizens of Eastern Antioquia to participate in those actions of affective solidarity. Remembering how these solidaristic actions can provide emotional healing, a citizen of San Carlos town stated:

"I spent many years trying to find her without any luck. I thought that my daughter had run away because she was upset with me. But the truth was that the guerrillas abducted and killed her because they thought that Cristina was part of the paramilitaries groups in the region, what stupidity! But you know what? I have feelings of gratitude to the people of San Carlos that brought pieces of information to CARE, because thanks to this information I found my daughter in a mass grave and I could stop my own suffering. I know now that she is dead and for me it's an enormous relief… The moment that I received her bones and ashes in a plastic bag two years ago all my pain and sorrow disappeared, because finally all the uncertainty finished. It's a huge relief that I can go to the cemetery every day and pray for her, and guess what? I don't have nightmares anymore". (Personal interview, citizen of San Carlos, Colombia, November 2012).

However, to completely overcome the psychological and emotional impact of suffering the enforced disappearance of a relative or friend is not a simple or straightforward process. In some cases, through passing the knowledge where the bodies are buried, these cartographies can catalyse multidimensional emotive reactions in victims and victims' families. The next narrative is a good example of the complex relationship between knowing the truth and those emotional reactions:

> "My sister disappeared four years ago. She was thirteen years old. I have spent all this time begging God to find her alive. I went every day to the church to say to God 'Please, my Lord, bring my sister back safe; please my God, bring her back to me'. I have prayed with all the forces of my heart and soul during these years. But suddenly, she was found in a mass grave a month ago thanks to the information on one of these cartographies. People in town said to me all the time that I have to feel happy and relieved now; but I think that these words are just bollocks! I have a huge and deep pain in my heart, and I'm still feeling anger and frustration... All these fucking prayers for nothing! All this faith and begging just to get my ass kicked by God... I didn't want to find the dead body of my sister in a mass grave; I wanted her alive! Fuck off the truth and the reasons why the Colombian army killed her! I don't care, I really don't care, I just want her alive!" (Personal interview, Citizen of Granada, Colombia, November 2012).

According to Kapeller and Wolkenstein (2013) reflexive solidarity is the main condition to establish the value of solidarity as a moral principle for particular communities. This conception defines actions of solidarity as a matter of public responsibility and determines social conventions and public general restrictions. Moreover, the idea of reflexive solidarity can be traced back to David Hume's ([1739] 2006) philosophical arguments that passion and reason are both necessary elements of any moral consideration which in turn may guide individual actions; explaining actions of social solidarity as an emotional impulse to help one's fellow men, centred on mutual understanding, sympathy, and empathy. Following this approach, my third argument is that the cooperative construction of solidaristic regional mass graves cartographies is an expression of different facets of reflexive solidarity that constitute Eastern Antioquia's citizens. In other words, the emotional individual impulse to bring public information about the location of mass graves in the territory is related with the construction of collective moral values associated with solidarity, friendship and kindness. Moreover, to provide information in order to find the location of mass graves would constitute an individual moral action expressing collective responsibility and reflexive solidarity in the public sphere. As a result, these individual solidaristic actions are the consequence of the ability to imagine

ourselves in someone else's shoes and understand how difficult it can be to remain unable to find closure and come in terms with the disappearance of a relative or a loved one. Addressing this topic, a member of APROVIACI stated:

> "I guess that I gave information about the location of the mass grave in El Jardín (rural area of San Carlos town) because I have a moral duty with the victims of San Carlos and particularly to Pastora (One of the leaders of CARE). Can I tell you something? I have been thinking recently that it could be absolutely awful if one member of my family disappears and I can't get any information for years; awful isn't it? Somebody in the town told me recently that when a family member disappears that the family is totally devastated; and I can't imagine all the pain and suffering that these people have to go through. I think that it is my duty to help these families if I can; it's my responsibility, my obligation. In my opinion, if we want to be happy in San Carlos again, if we want to improve as a community, the first step is to start helping each other again". (Personal interview, Member of APROVIACI, Colombia, November 2012).

Revisiting conceptual formulations of the theory of solidarity presented by Emile Durkheim in *The Division of Labour in Society* ([1893] 1969), particularly his concept of organic solidarity, and analysing Alex Honneth's (1996) reflections on recognition and social solidarity; it is possible to argue that the context of recognition crated by processes of organic solidarity can be the key to promote social inclusion and social cohesion in fragile communities. If we address the concept of organic solidarity as a state of interdependency, in which individuals and institutions become acutely dependent on each others in a complex system of labour division (Durkheim [1893] 1969), and agree that recognition claims tend to promote group differentiation but also organic solidarity because they also proclaim unity in diversity (Wilde 2007; Thijssen 2012); it means that processes of organic solidarity in particular contexts can serve as the catalyser of the development of new forms of social cohesion and recognition for specific communities. When Honneth addressed the term of social solidarity in his work he clearly pointed to the solidarity that is connected to and bounded by the normative framework of society; taking into account social inclusion as a criterion of collective progress. As a result, this intersubjective process may activate a struggle for recognition (in Honneth's terms), but, on the other hand, it is important to remember that organic solidarity is the result of two dialectically related solidaristic forms (*general* and *particular*, in Durkheim's terms). In this approach social solidarity originates from a particular experience of a person recognizing his neediness in an intersubjective encounter with another group member. As a consequence, this

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intersubjective agonistic process results in redistribution, which strengthens the attractiveness and the cohesion of the group (Honneth 1996; Thijssen 2012).

Addressing this way of thinking, my final argument is that the collective communicative citizenship action of creating solidaristic regional mass graves cartographies are generating a double social process of social solidarity, recognition and inclusion in some communities of Eastern Antioquia. On the one hand, the person who shares information about the location of the mass graves with the community is recognizing the traumatic experience of others; and this process of recognition is generating social cohesion inside the community as a result of this individual solidaristic action. In other words, this member of the community is recognizing that the other member *is different* (in this case is suffering from a process of *ambiguous loss*), that needs assistance; and the solidaristic action of sharing information is a way to recognize his private pain and help. More fundamental, in those particular cases, victims and perpetrators are generating an intersubjective process of social solidarity (in Honneth's terms); and they are recognizing their neediness for forgiveness and support in an encounter with one another. In order to comprehend this particular process of communicative citizenship, social solidarity and recognition for the case of Eastern Antioquia, this narrative of one of the members of CARE can be illustrative:

> "Creating these cartographies, my first big surprise was to start receiving help from some former members of paramilitary groups in the region. Can you imagine my surprise? The people that kidnapped and killed our loved ones trying to help us now! But, at the end of the day, these are the people that know where the mass graves are; and we needed them for this task. At the beginning I couldn't tell anybody in town about this; but after a couple of months, and finding two mass graves thanks to this information, I started thinking: 'well, this person is finally doing something good for us!' One day I asked him the reasons for helping us, and he said that he was looking for forgiveness and a place in our community; a kind of second chance I guess. But after that conversation I realised that it was a win-win situation, I can recognize him as part of our community now and he is finally doing something good for the wellbeing of our town". (Personal interview, Member of CARE, Colombia, October 2012).

On the other hand, the victim that receives information about the location of the mass grave is recognizing the solidaristic action of the people of their community; and can recognize the solidaristic attitudes and empathy of his/her fellow citizens through their acts of support. Thus this

exchange can improve the social cohesion of the community as a whole, and can be crucial to start processes of reconciliation, justice and inclusion in fragile communities such as Eastern Antioquia. As a result, this double social process of communicative citizenship, social solidarity, recognition and inclusion are highlighting Honneth's (2007) ideas of understanding solidarity as a synthesis of instrumental and empathic solidarity in particular contexts; where recognition and inclusion are the result of humanistic emotions rather than instrumental considerations. "Solidarity constitutes a necessary counterpoint to the principle of justice inasmuch as it furnishes the affective impulses of reciprocal recognition in a particularistic manner" (Honneth 2007, p. 125). In short, the cooperative construction of mass graves cartographies between victims, no victims and perpetrators is not just a simple instrumental action of solidarity, it is a solidaristic process that is shaping an underlying forms of recognition and inclusion in some Easter Antioquia's communities.

8.3 Civic Solidarity from a Communicative Citizenship perspective: the case of the project *Life and Mental Health Promoters (PROVISAME)* in Eastern Antioquia

In this second section I am going to analyse a victims' communicative citizenship project called *Life and Mental Health Promoters (PROVISAME)*. I will argue in this part that this collective project is a relevant example of civic solidarity between victims; particularly in key towns of Eastern Antioquia such as Argelia, Sonsón, Nariño, Abejorral, San Luis, Cocorná and Granada. The main argument in this section is that this project is empowering victims to claim human rights in the public sphere; revealing high degrees of social cohesion in part of these survivors and developing processes of inclusion and justice from a solidaristic point of view. I will argue that this initiative has been constructing transformative characters of collective solidarity in the region; shaping new relations, linkages and connections between victims across Eastern Antioquia. Furthermore, this particular project of *Life and Mental Health Promoters (PROVISAME)* has a strong link with gender issues. For this reason, I would like to address in this section the category of solidarity from a political perspective using Featherstone's (2012) idea of solidarity as a process forged through political struggle, which seeks to challenge different forms of patriarchal oppression. This approach highlights the importance of acts of civil solidarity as a set of human relationships that involve the transformation of existing identities and gender power relations. Following these ideas, I will finally argue that this particular communicative citizenship project is helping Eastern Antioquia's women victims to contest exclusionary patriarchal social practices, reconfiguring women identities in order to claim for reconciliation from a gender perspective.

Between July and December of 2003 the Colombian NGO Conciudadanía developed the project *Training of women community leaders in territory of armed conflict* in order to offer training to thirty women of AMOR in how to help other victims to confront the emotional pain caused by the armed conflict. At first, this project focused on the municipalities with highest levels of violence, and it was based on practical and therapeutically workshops in fifteen towns across Eastern Antioquia. After this initial process, in 2004, the Colombian NGO CINEP/Peace Program (CINEP/PPP) established a similar initiative called *Emotional First Aid* to train sixty-four women of Eastern Antioquia in emotional care. The aim of this project was to train women victims how to offer emotional support to other victims in order to confront the pain caused by the war from a psychological and feminist perspective. The final result of those two related processes was the creation in 2006 of an autonomous victims' support group called PROVISAME, also known in the region as *Las Abrazadas* (Embraced Women). The principal aim of this group is to make available the training in emotional care to other women victims across Eastern Antioquia and certificate them as *Life and Mental Health Promoters*. The same year, and after they received support from Javeriana University (a Catholic University based in Bogotá) seventy four women of PROVISAME graduated in psychological training and emotional care. It is important to express that some woman of PROVISAME belong to other victims' groups of the region such as AMOR, APROVIACI, CARE and ASOVIDA; covering the 23 towns of Eastern Antioquia.

Since 2007, PROVISAME has been developing regional and local workshops and 'one to one' sessions in order to offer psychological, emotional and social assistance to women victims in Eastern Antioquia. The methodology of this emotional support is based on recognising the subjective dimensions in women victims that can catalyse an individual and collective process where solidarity, love, care and affection are the clues to recover emotionally and mentally. This methodology is called 'from steps to hugs', where the victims have to develop a set of consecutive twenty five steps to change different aspects of their emotional lives. The particularity of this method is that the implementation of those steps should be only oriented and guided by another victim. The reason for this is that the person who delivers the process of emotional healing must be able to fully understand the suffering and pain of their fellow, because she was in the same situation before. More important, this dynamic of individual support is a solidaristic action in itself; creating a process where women victims can feel dignified and recognized and where they can share their individual grief in a safe environment. Regarding this relationship between solidarity and recognition a PROVISAME from Argelia town stated:

"I guess that the best thing of being a part of PROVISAME is that we can talk to other victims in the workshops without keeping secrets. I can understand their suffering because I was in the same situation years ago; and I want to offer them affection, hugs and smiles and express my solidarity as a victim. But not say in a patronising way 'you poor, poor thing; I want to give you a hug and listen to your sad story'. Not at all, I want to help them with total respect and solidarity because they are helping me as well… at the end of the day we are all victims; the only good thing is that I can understand what they are feeling at the moment. I can listen, give hope and cheer them up because I know how difficult is to be in that dark place; and how difficult is to share your pain when, apparently, nobody cares". (Personal interview, women from Argelia, Colombia, November 2012).

This PROVISAME's project of *Life and Mental Health Promoters* has important expressive, communicative and symbolic elements. According to Villa (2008) one of the distinctive characteristics of this emotional and mental healing method 'from steps to hugs' is that it is not focused on theoretical or traditional therapeutical approaches. This methodology is focused on how to express individual emotions of pain and suffering in private and public, to generate individual mental health recovery, collective discussion and public socio-political actions. During the process, the victims, in order to enunciate their traumatic emotions, can take part in a set of collective communicative actions that are at the centre of the healing dynamic. They have the possibility to pronounce their traumatic experience through cryptograms, performative actions, gestures, role playing games, paintings, speeches, rituals, symbolic activities and other expressive actions such as dance or theatre. Those actions are the base to generate processes of collective civic solidarity between the group members. In these activities the main aim is to help women victims to enunciate and recognize their emotions through other modes of expression; creating individual and collective conditions to represent, remember and name traumatic experiences. Remembering this expressive element of the healing process a member of PROVISAME argued:

"I always remember the *bonfire activity* in my first PROVISAME workshop. Speaking with a PROVISAME victim, my therapist really, of the unspeakable pain that I used to have in my heart after the loss of my father, my husband, my five children and an uncle in a paramilitary massacre in 2001; she told me to write all these negative feelings on a piece of paper. After that, we went with all the people in the workshop to the place where the massacre happened. We made a hand circle and we started a small bonfire there. The PROVISAME leader said to me: 'Take your paper to the bonfire and let the pain go; take all

these negative thoughts to the fire and let them go'; and she started talking about the importance of solidarity, love and memory; to keep going with our lives as victims but, more importantly, as a part of our families and communities. You know what? That day my new life started, surely that day my soul started healing". (Personal interview, women from Nariño, Colombia, November 2012).

Regarding the importance of expressing traumatic experiences through symbols, another member of PROVISAME remembered:

"How you can express something that is unnameable and unspeakable? The horror and sadism that I saw in the massacre of *La Placita* (rural area of Cocorná town) is something that I can't describe. I couldn't speak for three weeks after witnessing a paramilitary member playing football with the head of one of his victims. When I went to my third PROVISAME workshop, I finally realised that just through making rituals and creating symbols you can express your feelings of sadness and gloom after seeing all this madness... In that workshop, one member of PROVISAME suggested to me to do a symbolic ritual to honour the victims using candles and creating collective poems regarding the massacre of *La Placita*. During that ritual I started to think that silence, gestures and imagination can heal the pain, and can be the best method to express something that is unspeakable". (Personal interview, women from Cocorná, Colombia, October 2012).

During those workshops victims give an important place to symbolic and non-expressive elements; recognizing victims' solidarity as the first step to exchange and share their fears and traumatic experiences (in private first and in public after) for the first time. Thus this PROVISAME's project has identified two different types of private and public symbolic rituals according to the dissimilar victims' emotional dispositions. First, private symbolic healing rituals to generate hope, confidence and faith to the victim and the victim's family; and second, public symbolic restorative rituals where remembering the pain suffered in particular traumatic moments is an excuse to heal individual soreness and sadness (Villa and Tejada 2007). In summary, this process of individual and collective healing using collective communicative actions has the main purpose of giving back and restoring the individual and public voice to the victims, building social cohesion and generating open processes of communicative citizenship, collective action and civic solidarity. Some main regional communicative citizenship actions such as *The March of the Light* and *The Walls of Memory* are the result of some collective discussions between victims and victims' families that happened during

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those healing workshops. Moreover, PROVISAME's project of emotional and psychological healing has helped the development of other victims' initiatives in socio-political issues such as reconciliation, truth, forgiveness, human rights and social memory. At the end of 2013, more than 2,500 women of the 23 towns of Eastern Antioquia had been certificated as *Life and Mental Health Promoter*, and they are the base of victims' groups of the region such as AMOR, APROVIACI, ASOVIDA and CARE.

At this point, I would like to make three arguments about PROVISAME's project regarding the framework of civic solidarity. According to Jeffrey Alexander (2006) civil solidarity understands the civil sphere as a project, where the formation of strong civil society groups to claim rights in the public sphere could be the key in order to develop inclusive and free societies with real possibilities to develop justice, inclusion and recognition. Alexander's approach to civil solidarity is underpinning the idea that the civil sphere is a specific community that articulates cultural discourses; conceiving societies as imagined communities based on communication, socio-political actions and modes of individual and collective incorporation to transform particular contexts. Following these ideas, my first argument is that PROVISAME's project is an example of a two way process of civic solidarity. On the one hand, some victims can develop individual solidaristic actions in the private sphere (through workshops and 'one to one' sessions) in order heal and empower other victims. On the other hand, some individual victims can exercise and claim their rights in the public sphere as a consequence of acts of civil solidarity performed by particular victims' groups such as PROVISAME. The result of this interaction between individual and collective acts of civic solidarity is the empowerment of women victims, the conformation of strongest victims groups, and the development of a civic agenda in order to affect positively the victims of Eastern Antioquia. The implementation of a regional PROVISAME's project for reconciliation and forgiveness from 2007 to 2012 as an outcome of private and public victims' discussions about how to claim their rights after the demobilisation of some paramilitaries groups in the region is a good example of the repercussions wider impact of this two way process of civic solidarity. Addressing the empowerment of victims as a result of PROVISAME's projects, a woman from Argelia town remembered:

> "I never imagined being a part of such a movement of victims. But after all
> these workshops and talks with other victims, I started to realise that my voice
> as a victim is important; and I don't want another person to suffer the pain that
> I have suffered. The idea to develop our reconciliation project happened during
> one of our workshops, you know? I was talking with other victims about what
> should we do to be stronger and have an impact in our communities after all

these paramilitary's demobilisations. The funny thing is that I never imagined being involved in all of these things! But the solidarity of the group and their care and love are the reasons for me to still demonstrate in public and trying to change things for the better in my town. I'm not alone in doing this; I'm part of something bigger". (Personal interview, women from Argelia, Colombia, November 2012).

Another important repercussion of the project *Life and Mental Health Promoters* is that it was the catalyser for individual and collective processes of victims' inclusion and recognition in the regional public sphere. The acts of civil solidarity that happened during the development of the 'from steps to hugs' methodology have shaped new relations, linkages and connections between victims across Eastern Antioquia; transforming their socio-communicative agency to consider non-violent actions as an ethical and political alternative to the armed conflict. In this context, my second argument is that this PROVISAME's project has been defining transformative characters of collective civil solidarity across victims; building a new victims' agenda where issues such as justice, truth, and reparation have been discussed from a solidaristic and inclusive point of view. The existing victims' agenda is the direct result of the relationship between healing and reconciliation, where topics such as acknowledgment and justice cannot be separated from the political relations that victims have established in the healing groups. Furthermore, victims' individual and collective civic solidarity acts that have happened during the workshops are helping to break the culture of silence that is common in armed conflict contexts. In short, this PROVISAME's project highlights one important aspect of solidarity: the process of individual healing occurs not just through the delivery of emotional and psychological interventions, but also through the collective social process that takes place around it. Regarding this process of healing and reconciliation from a solidaristic point of view a women from Abejorral town stated:

"After all these years of experience in PROVISAME I can finally say that I recognize and feel the victims' suffering as if it is my own. Seriously, I really don't care if it's a *guerrillero* or paramilitary victim, if it's the wife of a Colombian army soldier or a *guerrillero's* son. For me all the victims have the same value and you have a duty of solidarity with them. I guess all our new projects about reparation and reconciliation are the result of expressing our solidarity with all the victims; and when you can express all this support in public it is the best method to bring hope and a better future for our communities. We are all together in this, you know? And the people of Eastern Antioquia can recognize this unity; they can recognize the nature of our

feelings". (Personal interview, women from Abejorral, Colombia, November 2012).

Finally, my third argument is that the project *Life and Mental Health Promoters* is helping Eastern Antioquia's women victims to contest exclusionary patriarchal social practices, reconfiguring women identities in order to claim for reconciliation from a gender perspective. An important part of this project is to create symbolic mechanism to encourage women to externalise the personal effects that the armed conflict has had upon them, in order to transform the victim status into a citizenship condition. In this context, women's identity is a precondition to democratize the pain in a traditional masculine public sphere, creating new narratives for inclusion, reconciliation, and reconfiguring the social imaginaries of women in Eastern Antioquia. In this respect, the Colombian NGO Women's Peaceful Route expressed three arguments in their research *Effects of the Paramilitary Forces (De) mobilization on the life and body of women in Colombia* (2005) about the importance of the participation of women in processes of reconciliation in exclusionary patriarchal societies such as Eastern Antioquia. First, it is important for women to claim the right to participate in public negotiations with all irregular groups because they are the principal victims; second, it is crucial to include a feminist vision in political and social government policies because it is a way to promote social cohesion in fragile communities; and third, the construction of values such as truth, justice, and equality from a gender perspective in war contexts is a good strategy to promote women rights in the public and private sphere from a solidaristic perspective (Women's Peaceful Route 2005). Regarding the importance of PROVISAME's projects to contest exclusionary patriarchal social practices in Eastern Antioquia, a woman from Cocorná town expressed:

> "Eastern Antioquia is the heaven of the *macho culture* in Colombia, you know? Traditionally in this town the Catholic Church and men used to make all the decisions in our community. But not anymore; after experiencing all this process with PROVISAME I realised that women are the real protagonists in this region, because we are fixing all the problems created by men. Who are in charge of children when men are fighting this stupid war? The women... Who are leading the process of reconciliation in Eastern Antioquia? The women... Who are fixing the emotional impact of the war in the children? The women... So, at the end of the day, we are in all this mess because of the stupidity of men! So please give me a break when they say that Eastern Antioquia's women have to be in the kitchen cooking and taking care of children... really? Are you serious? I think it is time for the women of the region to be in charge now". (Personal interview, women from Cocorná, Colombia, October 2012).

In short, it can be said that this PROVISAME's project is impacting the shape of regional social structures, transforming traditional passive victims' condition into a gender active condition. More important, this project is showing the inadequacy of the patriarchal model in Eastern Antioquia, overpassing the traditional dichotomy between feminine (private space) and masculine (public space), and reaffirming victims' gender as a primary condition for the exercise of civil, political and social rights.

8.4 Conclusions. Solidarity, collective communicative citizenship actions and victims' empowerment; a transformative long term process in Eastern Antioquia

In this last section I would like to present three conclusions for this chapter. According to Juul (2010; 2013) there is an urgent need for the development and implementation of new forms of solidarity to create social cohesion in societies that have been suffering from armed conflicts or wars. In his work, Juul highlights the importance of recognition and justice as the precondition for human self-realization and inclusion; arguing that solidaristic acts should be treated as the general prerequisite for the reestablishment of individual and collective trust in fragile post-armed conflict communities. My first conclusion is that in the Eastern Antioquia case the communicative citizenship projects such as the *Cartography and Identification of Mass Graves* and the *Life and Mental Health Promoters (PROVISAME)* are generating a new dynamic in the crucial relationship between collective communicative citizenship actions, levels of solidarity and construction of social cohesion for the victims' movements of Eastern Antioquia. These two projects are developing and implementing new forms of affective solidarity between victims; integrating the recognition of victims' social interdependency as a tool to generate process of social cohesion and reconciliation. Violence and armed conflict actions destroy the individual's self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem; producing feelings of shame, anger, indignation, confusion and mistrust. In this context those two particular communicative citizenship projects are developing new forms of solidarity in Eastern Antioquia, fulfilling a moral obligation to dignify the victims, even if those victims does not share our political or ideological views. We can argue that the development of acts of solidarity is about moral recognition, and for the case of Eastern Antioquia the implementation of solidaristic actions between victims and citizens initiated processes of social cohesion as a way to claim justice and reconciliation.

My second conclusion is that these two communicative citizenship projects are highlighting the importance of the development of social and civic solidaristic actions as a main strategy to empower

victims in their struggles for recognition and justice in the public sphere. In line with Honneth's (2007) theory of recognition, acts of solidarity can empower counterpublic communities if these solidaristic actions are based on a distribution of possibilities for recognition and are a precondition for social cohesion inside the communities. Thus the empowerment of victims through collective communicative citizenship actions facilitates news forms of recognition, and the possibility of developing a positive relationship to oneself through the certainty and continuity of affective ties. As a result, in armed conflict contexts such as Eastern Antioquia, the empowerment of victims is crucial in order to recover the social cohesion of communities and establish different forms of formal and informal solidarity between victims and non-victims as a consequence of this new social dynamic. Thus the relevance of victims' groups shaping new forms of solidarity stress the importance of existing identities and power relations in the struggles for inclusion and recognition in armed conflict contexts, underpinning the category of solidarity to think about empowerment in political terms. This approach emphasizes that solidarity is an attitude characterized by identification with victims, and underpins the emergence of solidarity as a genuinely productive, equal and transformative empowerment process.

My final conclusion for this chapter is that communicative citizenship projects such as the *Cartography and Identification of Mass Graves* and the *Life and Mental Health Promoters (PROVISAME)* are generating a transformative long term process of solidaristic practices between victims across Eastern Antioquia; reshaping power relations and involving women to become politically active in a patriarchal context. In other words, the formation of solidarities between women victims is challenging patriarchal social relations in Eastern Antioquia; underpinning the idea of solidarity as a transformative process, which works through the negotiation and renegotiation of different forms of gender and socio-political identification (Honneth 2007: Featherstone 2012). This approach stresses the transformative potential of solidarity as a catalyser of contested gendered social practices in order to start a long term process of socio-political change in particular contexts. Those victims' projects are creating solidarity 'from below'; constructing solidaristic actions that are contesting existing arrangements of social and material relations such as the public and private expression of suffering or the social construction of processes of reconciliation for this Colombian region. Moreover, this context of recognition and solidarity is the key to generate processes of social inclusion; defining solidarity as a positive bond between victims that can produce deliberate solidaristic behaviour. In short, victim's focus on solidarity is constructing a communicative citizenship agency that emerges 'from below', generating new solidaristic practices that are shaping new relations, linkages and connections between victims across Eastern Antioquia.

CHAPTER 9

9. Conclusions. The rise of communicative citizenship: a new agenda for collective social action

The following chapter will present the main conclusions for this doctoral research. The aim of these conclusions is to address principal ideas and arguments of previous chapters in order to highlight the significance of theoretical constructions and empirical results. The conclusion is organized in five sections: communicative citizenship field theory, memory, recognition, solidarity and final remarks. I will also propose directions for further research in this field and I will introduce new arguments about the importance of victims' communicative citizenship collective actions in armed conflicts and post-armed conflict societies.

This doctoral research was focused on debates about the relationship between collective action and victims' social movements, particularly analysing communicative and expressive dimensions of victims' collective action as a mechanism to restore a sense of citizenship, collective belonging and construction of processes of memory, recognition and solidarity in the midst of armed conflicts. For this reason, another aim of this concluding part is to revisit the contribution of each chapter to these debates and present how this field is underpinning a new agenda to research collective social action in fragile societies. The research question of this doctoral research was: how can we understand and explain the communicative and expressive dimensions of social movements and, in particular the collective actions of victims of armed conflicts?

9.1 Communicative citizenship field theory; concluding remarks

In chapter two and three, I have argued that civil society's collective actions are central for formulating the demands for respect of human rights in the midst of armed conflicts, facilitating processes of democratization in post-authoritarian societies, and supporting processes of construction of political and cultural memory, recognition and solidarity during and after the armed conflict. I have argued that collective action plays a key role in mobilizing civil society in times of conflict, taking over part of the tasks normally performed by the state, inducing the formation of strong political identities and socio-political scenarios for conflict resolution. Furthermore, one of the principal arguments in these two chapters was that the development of a set of collective actions for part of victims' social movements is crucial to restore a sense of citizenship inside victims' groups, and to promote processes of national reconciliation and transition to democracy from a civil

society perspective. I have highlighted the idea that in armed conflict and post-armed conflict contexts people organize to defend common interests or work to achieve social and political transformation, this has an important role in four particular areas: preventing violent conflict and military operations against civilians, working with local communities in zones of high violence to deliver humanitarian aid, supporting peace negotiations, and endorsing social reconstruction and reconciliation in post conflict societies. In short, I argued that civil society groups and victims' social movements are decisive for the continuation of anti-war efforts and they are key actors in developing sustainable peace in the long-term.

In chapter three I also introduced the theoretical construction of the communicative citizenship field and particularly the concept of communicative citizenship, an interdisciplinary concept that can be understood as the capacity of citizens to vocalize and express their demands and claims involving emotions and acts of communication in order to perform collective actions in the public sphere of armed conflict and post-armed conflict societies. I have argued that communicative citizenship is the capacity of citizens to exercise their communicative agency, addressing affections and significant dimensions of collective action in order to mobilize and organize new types of collective action in fragile societies. Furthermore, I have argued that the communicative citizenship field focuses on analysing the operationalization of communicative citizenship actions of victims of armed conflicts in the public sphere as a way to restore the sense of citizenship and collective belonging for this counterpublic social actor. As a result, social movements of the victims of armed conflicts and post-armed conflict societies, addressing expressive dimensions of collective social action through practices, dispositions and mobilizations, can re-establish social, political and cultural bonds with their local communities, transforming their victim status into an active citizenship condition.

After reconstructing and systematizing the socio-historical evolution of Eastern Antioquia's victims' groups for a specific context and period of time (the regional and local public spheres of Eastern Antioquia, Colombia, from 1995 to 2012) from a communicative citizenship theoretical perspective, using an inductive/deductive reasoning process (the case study method), it is possible to draw five main theoretical conclusions. First, it is clear that the embodiment of communicative citizenship actions for part of armed conflict victims' groups in the public sphere is an example of a contemporary form of agency and communication, this highlights the importance of emotions and affection as a catalyst to generate collective actions for part of counterpublic groups in armed conflict and post armed conflict societies. One of the main purposes of the communicative citizenship field is to understand different socio-communicative actions associated with the

construction of social memory and the contemporary struggle for recognition and solidarity for different actors in the public sphere. The described case study shows the crucial role and importance for victims of armed conflicts to claim human rights from non-conventional communicative perspectives, competing with other social actors for power, communicative resources and the reconfiguration of symbolic regimes in the public sphere of fragile societies.

The second conclusion is that it is evident that the apprehension of communicative citizenship agency for part of different victims groups can generate processes of construction of social memory, recognition and solidarity from a counterpublic perspective. As a result, this understanding of communicative citizenship agency can establish three possible modes of communicative citizenship: first, the *communicative citizenship social memory mode*, that concentrates on the socio-communicative actions that different social actors can develop in order to construct cohesive collective identities and social narratives of memory through communicative citizenship actions; second, the *communicative citizenship expressive action mode*, that focuses on how citizens and civil society groups are taking direct actions seeking recognition in the public sphere; and finally, the *communicative citizenship solidaristic mode*, that underpins the importance of the implementation of communicative citizenship actions by civil society groups in order to create processes of social and civic solidarity inside counterpublic groups, encouraging high degrees of social cohesion and empowering those groups to exercise their rights in the public sphere. As a consequence, those three modes of communicative citizenship are pointing to the necessity of establishing inclusionary public spaces, a diverse, equal and participative public sphere and a strong civil society in contexts of armed conflict and post armed conflict.

The third conclusion is that the communicative citizenship concept aims to create a bond between the categories of memory, recognition and solidarity that crosses the disciplinary borders of social movement studies and communication theory. This approach is relevant to analyse the particular role of civil society, citizens and victims in the construction of democratic public spheres in armed conflict and post armed conflict societies. This doctoral research understands the civil sphere as a project, defining the formation of a strong civil society in the public sphere of armed conflict and post armed conflict societies as the key to create inclusionary practices of reconciliation, reparation and equality in fragile societies with real possibilities for justice. For this thesis, Jeffrey Alexander's (2006) notion of civil solidarity is important in order to understand how expressive dimension of collective action can restore a sense of social belonging and citizenship in armed conflict and post armed conflict societies.

During my doctoral research I have established that one of the final goals of the communicative citizenship field is to start a long-term process of communicative emancipation, where citizens can develop a more active role in the configuration of their communicative and symbolic regimes and compete with other social actors for power and communicative resources in the public sphere. The fourth conclusion here is that there is an opportunity to explore other ways to promote and claim universal rights from a communicative citizenship perspective, providing communicative resources to other social actors and, through that, achieving civil society demands. For this thesis this is the starting point of a two way socio-communicative process where an active communicative citizenship is the base from which to claim other sets of rights, and to exercise other types of citizenship dimensions at the same time. Thus, it became apparent that one crucial aspect of the communicative citizenship field is that the most common scenario of the development of collective communicative citizenship actions for victims of armed conflicts and post armed conflict societies is the public sphere. In other words, the victims display 'in public' expressive dimensions of collective social action through practices, dispositions and mobilizations, to restore the sense of citizenship and collective belonging. As a result, one of the main aims of developing communicative citizenship actions in the public sphere is to help the reconstruction of democratic societies after armed conflicts or make the demands, claims and rights of victims visible in the midst of armed conflicts.

Finally, the last conclusion is that this theoretical frame recognizes the public sphere as a structure where different positions of agents are expressed by practices and narratives constituted by power relations and conflict, opening the door to consider communicative citizenship actions as an agency that can affect the macro level of local and regional public spheres. These collective communicative actions have the ability to change power relations between social actors, historical institutions and political concepts. In this context, we can conclude that the communicative citizenship field privileges the public sphere as a structural space inhabited by state institutions, individuals, groups, civil society organizations, agents, etc., where processes of internal inclusion, marginalization and exclusion play an important part in their struggles for visibility, access and recognition in different public arenas. For this thesis it is clear that socio-historical contexts determine particular conditions of exercising different types of communicative citizenship agency in the public sphere, and therefore analysing social structures and the development of this particular agency in these fields is crucial to understand how the struggle for power can determine this socio-communicative process in particular contexts.

9.2 Memory and the communicative citizenship field; concluding remarks

As I have stressed in chapter six, for the case of Eastern Antioquia, the construction of social, historical and cultural memory from a victims' perspective is a tool to claim truth and reparation in the midst of the armed conflict. The effort of victims' groups such as AMOR, APROVIACI, ASOVIDA and CARE to constitute plural discourses of memory in the public sphere of Eastern Antioquia is crucial in the architecture of the collective memory of this Colombian region, helping the development of a more active role of individuals in the configuration of their socio-communicative and symbolic regimes. I had argued that in this context the category of memory highlights the idea of the challenge for victims to construct subjectivities, narratives and values to address the relationship between symbolic power and the construction of memory regimes in Eastern Antioquia. As a result, the construction of memory as a social process in this Colombian region is a struggle over power and the exercise of this power to shape collective representations and meanings of the past, with important connections to the creation of subjectivities, narratives and values in the present. This thesis has argues that for the particular case of Eastern Antioquia, victims' social movements had developed a strong tie between collective memories of the armed conflict as a form of communitarian identity, and memory narratives as a process to create sense of social belonging.

The conclusions that address the relationship between memory and the communicative citizenship field are five. The first conclusion is that it is clear for the case of Eastern Antioquia that these groups of victims are memory communities; putting distance from official narratives about the actions of particular regional social actors, creating another version and narratives of what happened in this territory since 1995. Furthermore, those victims' groups are involved in helping the future establishment of commissions of truth and reconciliation for this region, and through their memory narratives and collective communicative citizenship actions are contesting power relations in the collective construction and (re)construction of the horrors of the war. As a consequence, it is clear for this case study that the construction of memory narratives in the midst of armed conflicts can be the perfect scenario where different social actors (particularly victims) can struggle to approach the past and the present, contesting versions of the past and the power relations around the construction of collective remembrance. This thesis had expressed that this particular tension between *official* and *non-official narratives* shows for the case of Eastern Antioquia how collective constructions of memory, collaborative constitution of narratives and particular reconstructions of the past are set in place by agents, actors or institutions that have their own political, social, and cultural agendas. I have argued that this is why memory can be understood as a battlefield for the case of Eastern Antioquia, because the final aim of these actors is to promote and establish into

Eastern Antioquia's collective memory a particular set of views about what have been happening in the war in this Colombian region, shaping particular social contexts, sites of memories and meanings according with their values, narratives and identities.

The second conclusion is that victims' collective communicative citizenship actions such as *The march of the light, The walls of memory* or the *Trails for life* have been affecting the construction of social frameworks of memory in the region and the practices by which this Colombian community has been building their shared past. I had highlighted the idea that victims' groups of Eastern Antioquia have been socially constructed and reconstructed by these counterpublic acts of political memory, remembering the victims and developing symbolic cross-connections between meaningful constructions of individual remembering and collective conceptions of public memory. In short, while the ideology was used as a war strategy in different periods of time, some particular constructions of official and non-official narratives are the result of this operationalization of ideology into public collective narratives of Eastern Antioquia. Regarding this second conclusion, and after my field work in Granada town, I described how initiatives such as the *Never Again Museum* are crucial for building up the road to sustainable peace in Colombia in the future. This collective communicative citizenship action is affecting the everyday life of people in Eastern Antioquia, through symbolic communicative acts that are transforming personal experiences of loss into common knowledge for reconciliation of local social bonds. As I had stressed in this chapter, victims' communicative actions are confronting the apathy that has facilitated the expansion of terror in the Colombian armed conflict, and these victims' memory narratives are breaking the years of forgetting and silence, producing collective recognition of the victims' suffering from a socio-communicative perspective.

The third conclusion for this chapter is that after doing the research I can argue that the production of different modes of remembering and recognition in Eastern Antioquia context goes beyond '*what* is remembered or publicly recognized' (facts, data, number of civilians killed, etc.), and focuses more on '*how* it is remembered and recognized' (quality and meaning of these communicative citizenship actions in the public sphere, uses of symbolic metaphors in order to reconstruct public memory, engagement of civil society groups around the idea of reconciliation, truth and dignity, etc.). This production of local memory narratives shows the importance of constructing different modes of remembering in contexts or armed conflict, building most reliable ways of reconstructing the past where civil society is at the centre of this dynamic. I have argued that the focus on *how* cultural memory is constructed in this particular context scrutinizes the double role of public spaces as a

communicative externalization of memory, and the trace of the past, to emphasize public recognition as a memorial practice. In other words, it is evident that victims' groups have understood cultural memory as a social and generational institution, because they had developed mnemonic institutions such as the *Never Again Museum* or *the Walls of Memory* to provide senses of memory to generations that do not have a formalized memory as a consequence of a lack of fixed links with the past. Therefore, for this case study, collective action and remembering are realizations of socio-cultural belonging, affection and assimilation, even a social obligation that shapes the dynamics of association and dissociation in particular towns of Eastern Antioquia. Furthermore, I have stressed the idea that for the Eastern Antioquia's case it is important to emphasize the role of memory as a tool of truth, and how this is a good strategy to make a future transition to democracy, to the establishment of truth and reconciliation commissions (when the conflict is finished), and to develop new democratic institutions and orders in the future.

The fourth conclusion is that the narratives, representations and constructions of the conflict that the victims' groups such as AMOR, APROVIACI and ASOVIDA have created for different actors and perspectives (victims, perpetrators, bystanders, profiteers, warriors, etc.) are establishing historical truth about what happened in these confrontations, providing some degree of reparation and symbolic restitution to the victims. I have argued that the efforts of those victims' groups are addressing the idea of the public sphere as a place to disclose memories, identities and narratives in the communicative activity, corresponding with the human condition of plurality and freedom through visibility, recognition and representation in public spaces. It became clear for the case of Eastern Antioquia that questions of power, ideology and authority do not "evaporate" just by giving voice or visibility to the victims, the poor, or the powerless in society in order to construct plural political memories at different levels. I have argued that the construction of memory as a social process in this Colombian region is a struggle over power and the exercise of this power to shape collective representations and meanings of the past with important connections to the creation of subjectivities, narratives and values in the present. The challenge in this armed conflict context is to understand how victims can access or exercise different levels of symbolic power in order to shape new meanings of the past that can affect memory narratives of the present. In short, the thesis argues that the question of how to change power relations between social actors, historical institutions and political concepts from a political memory perspective is the key to understand the relationship between symbolic power and memory regimes in Eastern Antioquia.

The final conclusion of this sixth chapter is about the relationship between trauma theory and constructions of traumatic memory as a tool to contest the past in Eastern Antioquia for part of victims' groups. After doing this doctoral research, it is clear that in Eastern Antioquia this aspect of traumatic memory is crucial to understand how particular groups of victims can apprehend and create narratives about their past after witnessing traumatic events such as massacres, displacements, or other experiences of violence. I have argued that the development of collective communicative citizenship actions is a clear example of how construction of memory is a healing process for victims in contexts of armed conflict, and the development of collective communicative citizenship actions to construct memory narratives is based on *expressive activism* as an instrument to exercise political and social actions in the public spheres of this Colombian region. In short, I had highlighted the idea that the case of Eastern Antioquia's social movement of victims is an example of how subjectivity, emotions and expressive dimension can create the social agency to generate collective actions of memory in armed conflict contexts. As this case shows, feelings such as pain, suffering, fear, anxiety, or rage can be the main motivators to encourage collective action, to mobilise resources or to take advantage of political opportunities. The construction of memory narratives is not just a rational or formal victims' collective action, it can combine, at the same time, different formal or substantives levels of rationality and non-rationality. As a result, the case of Eastern Antioquia is a good example of the importance and relevance of emotional reasons and expressive dimensions as a key element behind social constructions of memory and how, through this way, human rights can be exercised from non-conventional perspectives in armed conflict scenarios.

9.3 Recognition and the communicative citizenship field; concluding remarks

In chapter seven I have underlined that for the case of Eastern Antioquia, victims' groups such as ASOVIDA, AMOR and APROVIACI are developing collective communicative citizenship actions as a way to demand recognition of some particular aspects of their socio-political identities, which have been demeaned by the armed conflict. I have argued that the case of the social movement of victims of Eastern Antioquia is a contemporary example of the struggles of recognition, where the implementation of a set of collective communicative citizenship actions are helping this social movement to configure a dynamic socio-political identity as a strategy to fight against injustice, discrimination and misrecognition. As a result, it is clear for the case of Eastern Antioquia that victims' public demands of truth, reparation, justice and non-repetition during collective communicative citizenship actions such as *The Trails for Life and Reconciliation* are collective political

actions to send a powerful message to the Colombian state: the victims want to be treated as bearers of rights, and the state should guarantee the protection of those rights. If the framework of 'recognition as respect' addresses the idea that rights are the only means through which recognition can be expressed, and dignity is a central dimension of recognition, it is evident that the consequences of collective communicative citizenship actions into the Colombian legal framework can be considered as a symbolic and material achievement for part of this social movement of victims. In this chapter I have highlighted the idea that the development of communicative agency for part of victims of Eastern Antioquia allows for achieving normative legal affirmations of their particular political identities as bearers of rights. As a particular example, I argued that the future consequences of implement the recent 'victims' law' in Colombia will be crucial to the long process of recognizing victims as a citizens in the country, starting a socio-political process where this legal recognition is the key to change institutionalized patterns of injustice and depravation of rights.

The second conclusion is that communicative citizenship actions such as the *Garden of Memory* represents the implementation of legal duties of local and regional councils to guarantee inclusion and non-discrimination to the victims of armed conflicts, bringing notions of symbolic reparation and justice to the survivors. I have argued in this chapter that if the politics of respect underpin the idea that citizens should be treated as bearers of rights, it is clear for the case of Eastern Antioquia that the development of different collective communicative citizenship actions are equipping victims with diverse types of agency to transform them into active citizens that can exercise their rights in the public sphere. One important insight in this relationship between democracy and recognition is the way in which individuals want to be recognized as political actors based on their particular socio-political identities. I have argued in this chapter that for the case of counterpublic actors (*e.g.* victims, women, indigenous population, etc.) individuals do not just want to be respected as rationally autonomous actors and represent particular socio-political identities in the public sphere, they also want to claim particular sets of rights and exercise another dimensions of their citizenship. In short, I stressed that if victims of Eastern Antioquia want to be full members of their political community, they should have the agency and autonomy to become a part of the formation of public policies in the democratic scenarios of their local and regional societies.

The third conclusion for this chapter is that victims' social movements of Eastern Antioquia are developing a model of inclusive political recognition connecting rational and emotional collective communicative citizenship actions and challenging patriarchal political structures, mainly through creating deliberative opportunities for women and victims in political scenarios of this Colombian

region. As a result, these actions are developing processes of inclusive politics in the region, contributing to the generation of different socio-political practices and subjectivities inside their political communities. I have argued that one of the main aims of the contemporary politics of recognition is to support models of inclusive politics as a strategy to create a genuinely plural and inclusive public spheres and to strengthen the deliberative quality of democratic institutions and facilitate democratic social transformation. The development of collective communicative citizenship actions creates the sense of political belonging for women and victims of Eastern Antioquia, initiating processes to build democratic public spheres in the region, where their identities as victims and empowered women can be recognized. As a consequence, I have argued that the social movement of victims of Eastern Antioquia is a contemporary example of the struggles for recognition, where the development of a set of collective communicative citizenship actions is helping this social movement to configure a dynamic socio-political identity as a strategy to fight against injustice, discrimination and misrecognition.

The final conclusion for the seven chapter is that the set of collective communicative citizenship actions that are being developed by victims' organizations as AMOR, CARE or APROVIACI in Eastern Antioquia are playing a key role in determining the significance of victims' emotions in the public sphere and, through this, grant them political representation and recognition in their political communities. I have stressed the idea that emotions constitute a source of knowledge about the social conditions of the victims' social movements of Eastern Antioquia, which is in a sense a result of particular political conditions, showing those groups of victims the importance of building a democratic public sphere where emotions can be effectively expressed. As a consequence, we can say that victims' groups of Eastern Antioquia are exercising another dimensions of their citizenship (for this case a communicative dimension) and they are claiming a particular set of rights (for example, the right to know the truth about what happened in the midst of the armed conflict or to know where their missing relatives are buried) that are shaping the formation of public policies in democratic scenarios of their communities. One important insight in the relationship between democracy and recognition are the ways in which individuals are recognized as political actors based on their particular socio-political identities, and for the case of Eastern Antioquia it became clear that those groups of victims are helping to build political spaces, where victims can determine political aspirations and define their political representations.

9.4 Solidarity and the communicative citizenship field; concluding remarks

In chapter eight, I have argued that the development of particular collective communicative citizenship actions is creating processes of social and civic solidarity inside the groups of victims of Eastern Antioquia, encouraging social cohesion and empowering victims to exercise their rights in the public sphere. Particularly, in this chapter I had underlined the relationship between solidaristic actions as expression of high levels of collective social cohesion, and communicative agency as expression of victims' empowerment. I have stressed that the development of solidaristic actions contribute to high levels of social cohesion amongst victims collectives, showing attitudes of affective solidarity between victims and perpetrators for this particular armed conflict context. I had highlighted the idea that projects as *Life and Mental Health Promoters (PROVISAME)* are empowering victims to claim human rights in the public sphere, providing high degrees of social cohesion for part of these survivors and developing processes of inclusion and justice from a solidaristic point of view. Furthermore, I have addressed in this chapter the crucial relationship between collective communicative citizenship actions, levels of solidarity and construction of social cohesion for the victims' social movements of Eastern Antioquia, and the development of social and civic solidaristic actions as a main strategy to empower counterpublic communities and victims in their struggles for recognition and justice in the public sphere of fragile societies.

I would like to draw five conclusions regarding this relationship between solidarity and the communicative citizenship field for the case of Eastern Antioquia. The first conclusion is that the common construction of mass graves cartographies is helping to restore the sense of social cohesion through informal solidaristic actions of sharing information with victims of the community. In other words, the cooperative development of mass graves cartographies is an example of collective communicative citizenship actions supporting processes of collective and individual grief, providing emotional healing to the victims through actions of mutual affective solidarity. I have argued that this social solidaristic action of sharing information and helping other people to find their missing relatives' graves can have positive emotional consequences for the victims and victims' families. I have stressed through this chapter that social bonds matter and that those particular solidaristic actions concerning the mass graves cartographies are the kind of social 'glue', which holds groups of victims together in this Colombian region. The second conclusion is that it is possible to establish the right to know, and to express private suffering in public to democratize the pain within the local community, and to support victims that are suffering total uncertainty is a main motivation for delivering actions of affective solidarity. I have argued that the cooperative construction of solidaristic regional mass graves cartographies is an expression of the different grades of reflexive solidarity that constitute Eastern Antioquia's citizens. As a result, it is clear for this case that the

emotional individual impulse to bring into the open the information about the location of mass graves in the territory is related with the construction of collective moral values associated with liberal theoretical frameworks, where solidarity is associated with friendship, kindness and liberty. I have addressed the idea that providing information in order to find the location of mass graves constituted an individual moral action and a sign of collective responsibility and reflexive solidarity. As a consequence, individual solidaristic actions are the result of the empathic ability to imagine ourselves in someone else's shoes and understand the difficult position of being unable to find closure and come in terms with the disappearance of a relative or a loved one.

The third conclusion for this chapter is that processes of social solidarity in particular towns of Eastern Antioquia are serving as the catalyst for the development of new forms of social cohesion and recognition for specific communities. I have argued that collective communicative citizenship actions as *Life and Mental Health Promoters (PROVISAME)* and the *Cartography and Identification of Mass Graves* are generating a double social process of social solidarity, recognition and inclusion in some particular communities in Eastern Antioquia. On the one hand, the person that shares information with the community recognizes the traumatic experience of one of its members, and this process of recognition is helping to generate social cohesion inside the community as a result of individual solidaristic action. The member of the community is recognizing that the other member 'is different' (in this case is suffering a process of *ambiguous loss*) and needs assistance, therefore the solidaristic action of sharing information is a way to recognize his private pain and offer some help. More fundamental, in this particular case, victims and perpetrators are generating an intersubjective process of social solidarity, and they are recognizing their neediness in an encounter with one another. I have addressed the idea that these communicative citizenship initiatives are constructing transformative collective solidarity behaviours in the region, shaping new relations, linkages and connections between victims across Eastern Antioquia.

The fourth conclusion is that the development of communicative citizenship actions in the region creates transformative collective civil solidarity among victims, building a new victims' agenda where issues of justice, truth, and reparation are discussed from a solidaristic and inclusive point of view. I have highlighted the idea that the existing victims' agenda is the direct result of the relationship between healing and reconciliation, where topics as acknowledgment and justice cannot be separated from the political relations that victims have established in the healing groups. Furthermore, I have stressed that victims' individual and collective civic solidarity acts that have happened at the victims' workshops are helping to break the cultures of silence that is common in

armed conflict contexts. In short, I have argued that the development of communicative citizenship actions in this context addresses an important aspect: the process of individual healing occurs not just through the delivery of emotional and psychological interventions but through the collective social process that takes places around it. During the fieldwork in Eastern Antioquia I observed how the victims' collective actions are developing new forms of solidarity under a moral obligation to make an individual and collective effort to dignify the victims, even when these victims do not share the same political or ideological views. In other words, the development of acts of solidarity and the implementation of solidaristic actions between victims and citizens are creating processes of social cohesion as a way to claim justice and reconciliation in Eastern Antioquia. The relevance of victims' groups shaping new forms of solidarity asserts the importance of existing identities and power relations in the struggles for inclusion and recognition in armed conflict contexts, engaging the category of solidarity to re-think empowerment politically. This approach emphasizes that solidarity is an attitude characterized by identification with victims, and forecloses the emergence of solidarity as a genuinely productive, equal and transformative empowerment process.

The final conclusion for this eight chapter is that the development of some collective communicative citizenship actions in the region is helping Eastern Antioquia's female victims to contest exclusionary patriarchal social practices, reconfiguring women's identities in order to claim reconciliation from a gender perspective. I have underpinned the idea that the described collective actions are symbolic mechanisms to encourage women to externalise their personal losses in order to transform the victim status into a citizenship condition. As a consequence, women's identity became a precondition to democratize the pain in a traditional masculine public sphere, creating new narratives of inclusion, reconciliation, and reconfiguration of the social imaginaries of women in Eastern Antioquia. One of the principal arguments in this chapter was that victims' collective actions are generating a transformative long term process of solidaristic practices between victims across Eastern Antioquia, reshaping power relations and involving women to become politically active in a patriarchal context. I have addressed the idea that the formation of solidarities between female victims challenges patriarchal social relations in Eastern Antioquia, underpinning solidarity as a transformative process which works through the negotiation and renegotiation of existing forms of gender and socio-political identification. As a result, I have highlighted the idea that this focus on solidarity as a victims' attitude allows for emergence of communicative agency 'from below', generating new solidaristic practices that are shaping new relations, linkages and connections between victims across Eastern Antioquia.

9.5 Final remarks: the beginning of a new research agenda to analyse collective social actions in fragile societies

In this last section I want to draw two final conclusions from this doctoral project. First, this research has presented how a set of collective communicative citizenship actions can positively affect contexts of armed conflict, and how communicative and expressive dimensions of victims' collective action are mechanisms to restore a sense of citizenship, collective belonging and construction of processes of memory, recognition and solidarity in the midst of armed conflicts. However, I want to stress that as a result of the dynamic of the armed conflict in the region, this case study (victims' social movements of Eastern Antioquia) has intricate structural problems. This is a highly volatile context in which victims address different everyday challenges in order to improve their social living conditions. In other words, their activism is a long-term process and one of the principal learnings here is that the social movement of victims of Eastern Antioquia is a good example of how to start restorative social processes through collective actions in the midst of armed conflicts. As I have argued before in the thesis, the Colombian case is one of the most complex armed conflict confrontations of the XXI Century, and these victims' initiatives are helping us to understand effectively how the relationship between communication, memory, recognition, solidarity and emotions are shaping new forms of collective action and conflict resolution in fragile societies.

The second final remark is about how this theoretical and methodological field is underpinning a new research agenda to better understand, analyse and describe contemporary processes of collective action of victims' social movements in armed conflicts and post-armed conflict societies. In short, this case study of Colombia should be treated as the catalyst for different geographically localised research studies in order to fully comprehend the relationship between victims' collective action, the communicative citizenship field, counterpublic social movements and processes of conflict resolution. Different victims' initiatives as *The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo* (Argentina), *Woman in Black* (Serbia), *IM-Defensoras* (Central America), *May our Daughters Return Home* (Mexico), or *The Trauma Centre* (South Africa) are just a few examples of future comparative research case studies that could use this doctoral research as a starting point, to develop comparisons between victims' groups and draw some wider conclusions. Moreover, the future rise of the communicative citizenship field as a tool to study the expressive dimensions of victims' groups across the world would create an opportunity for a more holistic understanding of contemporary civil society's initiatives and collective actions from an academic perspective. This is an emergent research field, and future considerations of the struggles for memory, recognition and solidarity by different victims' social movements would be an important contribution to comprehending the

limitations and achievements of the communicative citizenship field. Thus these future research initiatives can provide more academic resources to improve the shape of conflict resolution models and peace process approaches in the context of fragile societies. Where the communicative citizenship field argues the relevance of autonomous and resourced civil society organisations and victims' social movements in the public sphere, it is still necessary to develop more specific and situated case studies of other victims' groups in order to better understand and operationalize the communicative citizenship field in other contexts and realities.

APPENDICES

Picture 1
'The March of Light'- La Unión town (Eastern Antioquia)

Picture: Erika Diettes (2011)

Picture 2
'Never Again Exposition' – Guatapé town (Eastern Antioquia)

Picture: Erika Diettes (2011)

Picture: Camilo Tamayo Gómez (2012)

Picture: Camilo Tamayo Gómez (2012)

Picture 5
'Never Again Museum'- Granada town (Eastern Antioquia)

Picture: Camilo Tamayo Gómez (2012)

Picture 6
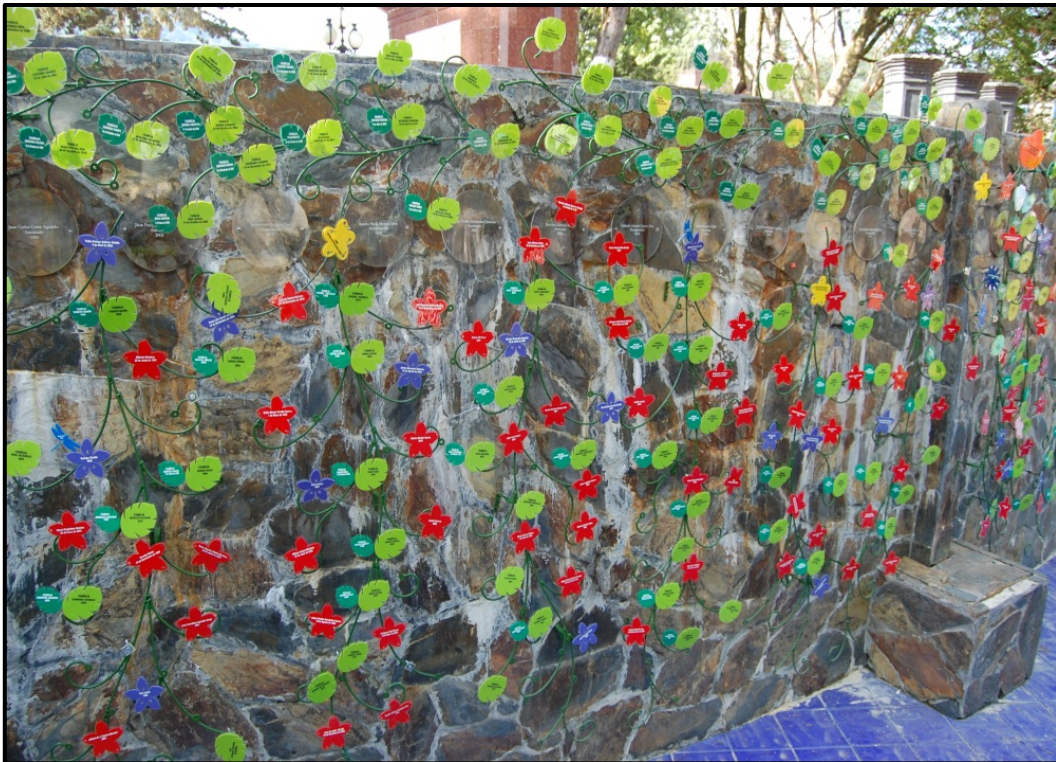**'Trails for Life'- San Francisco town (Eastern Antioquia)**

Pictures: ASOVIDA (2011) - Camilo Tamayo Gómez (2012)

Picture 7
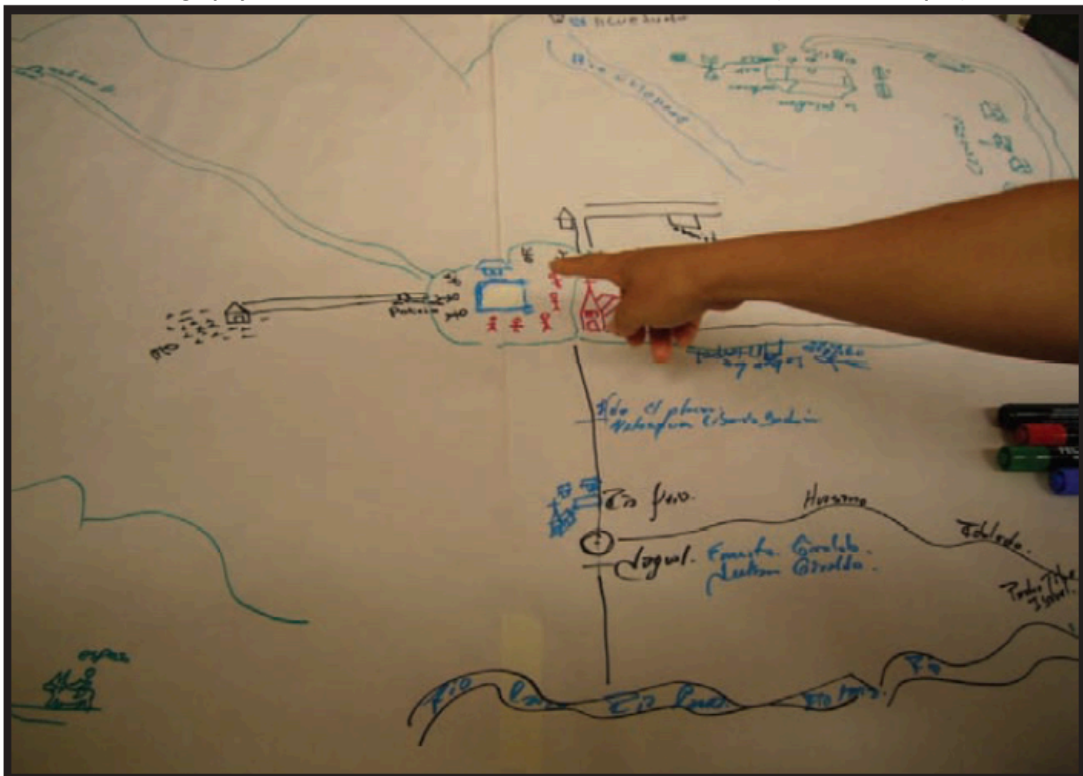**'The Garden of Memory'- San Carlos town (Eastern Antioquia)**

Picture: Camilo Tamayo Gómez (2012)

Picture 8
'The Garden of Memory'- San Carlos town (Eastern Antioquia)

Picture: Camilo Tamayo Gómez (2012)

Picture 9
'Cartography and Identification of Mass Graves'- San Carlos town (Eastern Antioquia)

Picture: CARE (2012)

Picture 10
'Drifting Away Exposition'- Carmen de Viboral town (Eastern Antioquia)

Picture: Erika Diettes (2011)

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