Resilience from within or without?
An ethnographic study of local mechanisms of resilience in southern Colombia

Master Thesis

Author: Amanda Amigues
Supervisor: Manuela Nilsson
Examiner: Ludwig Gelot
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Abstract

The emergence of resilience in the peacebuilding field shows an important change of paradigm and turn to the local context. So far few ethnographic research has been done to understand how resilience works locally and what are the mechanisms helping individuals to cope and recover from a crisis. This study intends to fill this gap through an ethnographic study of local mechanisms, structures, and understandings of resilience, gathering insights on the perspectives and experiences of women in a conflict-sensitive and post-natural disaster context. It relies on an abductive and inductive methodology using interviews and field-based observations answering the following research questions: 1) How are national and local organizations seeking to enhance the resilience of women in Putumayo? What are the tools and strategies they use? How are these related to their own understanding of resilience? 2) How do the women perceive and act in terms of resilience? How do they manage the consequences of the conflict and the natural catastrophe? What are their strategies of survival?

The study brings forth a frame building on the current state of the literature, underlying factors contributing to the resilience of the local population in Putumayo and shedding light on local perspectives to contribute and deepen our current understanding of the concept.

Keywords: resilience; recovery processes; peacebuilding; post-conflict; post-disastar reconstruction; Colombia
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>AUC</td>
<td>United Self Defense Forces (<em>Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ART</td>
<td>Agency of Territorial Renovation (<em>Agencia de Renovacion de Territorio</em>)</td>
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<td>FARC</td>
<td>Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (<em>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia</em>)</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non governmental organization</td>
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<td>OZIP</td>
<td>Indigenous Zonal Organization of Putumayo (<em>Organizacion Zonal Indigena del Putumayo</em>)</td>
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<td>PDET</td>
<td>Development Program with Territorial Focus (<em>Plan de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial</em>)</td>
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<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and justification

There is a general understanding amongst the international community on the necessity to explore new strategies for the evolution and success of peacebuilding practices. This has been motivated by the rise of criticism towards the liberal peace paradigm that has been dominating the peacebuilding agenda ever since the end of the Cold War (Menkhaus 2013, Johansson 2015, Van Metre and Calder 2016, Richmond 2010, Campbell et al 2011). These critics highlight the limits of a paradigm driven by western-based ideologies that tend to impose long-term solutions without consideration for the complexity of local dynamics and realities (Richmond 2010, Tziarras 2012). Due to the lack of success of this approach, scholars have put increasing emphasis on the need to gain a deeper understanding of local characteristics, capacities, and dynamics for the evolution of international peacebuilding practices. This tendency suggests a greater focus at the local level with the development of new approaches, showing the necessity to reinvent the way peacebuilding is understood and operationalized locally (de Coning 2016, Richmond 2010, Campbell et al 2011, Edwards 2013).

One of the new concepts emerging from the debates around the improvement of international peacebuilding and the means to achieve sustainable peace in conflict-sensitive areas is resilience (Menkhaus 2013, Pouligny 2010, de Coning 2016). The concept of resilience is present in various bodies of research, such as ecology, sociology, and psychology, emphasizing on the adaptability and flexibility of a system to bounce back after experiencing shocks and stressors¹ (Van Metre and Calder 2016). In the peacebuilding field, resilience underlines the endogenous capacities of a social system to overcome the consequences of a crisis, which represent essential components and drivers for a sustainable peace to emerge (Menkhaus 2013, Pouligny 2010, de Coning 2018, Johansson 2015).

¹ Shocks are understood here as being the result of a major event able to disrupt the system, such as floods or armed attacks. On the other hand, stressors refer to underlying factors and conditions that influence the ability of individuals to respond to shocks, which can be for example poverty, income inequality, or infrastructure degradation (GRESB 2018).
1.2 Research problem

Contemporary debates within the peacebuilding field show a stronger emphasis on inclusive, adaptative and bottom-up processes putting forward new innovative approaches such as pragmatic peacebuilding, adaptative peacebuilding, hybrid political orders, all inviting peacebuilders for a greater consideration of local dynamics and structures in order to find ways for a sustainable peace to grow in conflict-sensitive environments (de Coning 2018, Boege et al 2009). For instance, De Coning (2018) conceptualizes this phenomenon as a pragmatic turn into adaptative peacebuilding, suggesting that international peacebuilding is evolving into a new role that implies greater awareness, knowledge, and inclusiveness of local actors and structures that can sustain peace by strengthening capacities embedded in the local context. Moreover, de Coning (ibid) highlights the need for peacebuilders to embrace and adapt to the complex nature of peace and conflict dynamics at the local level, in order to find more sustainable means of consolidating peace while supporting existing local capacities and structures.

As these new approaches focus on the emergence and sustainability of peace locally, resilience comes as the new focus for pragmatic peacebuilding. In fact, this new concept underlines the inherent capacities of a social system to bounce back and return to a state of equilibrium after experiencing shocks. Hence, incorporating resilience in peacebuilding practices refers to a greater ability to identify and learn from local resilient mechanisms in order to support and enhance capacities of local structures to maintain and create peace (Pouligny 2010, Schilling et al 2017, Menkhaus 2013, Johansson 2015, Pol Bargués-Pedreny 2015, de Coning 2018).

Nonetheless, the conceptualization of resilience in peacebuilding practices on the ground is a less-researched area. So far, Pouligny (2014) is the only scholar who developed a framework that identifies a set of characteristics proven to strengthen the resilience of local communities, although still needing additional empirical testing. This leaves a question mark regarding how resilience operates in the field, and also how external actors are able to influence it. Thus, there is a need to investigate further which structures and characteristics influence the ability of individuals and communities to bounce back after experiencing shocks, and in which way external actors can participate in this process in order to foster peace and reconciliation in post-conflict settings.
1.3 Case study: Local perceptions and practices of resilience in Putumayo, Colombia

Colombia has experienced civil war between various guerrilla groups and government forces since the 1950s. Important consequences have spread throughout the nation, with damages caused mainly by activities of illegal arms groups and drug trafficking through armed paramilitary groups transformed into “criminal bands” (bandas criminales), increasing, therefore, criminal activities (Flannery 2017, Mitchell 2017). As a result, civilians have been facing intensified violence with a great number of disappearances, forced displacements, kidnappings, and torture (Mitchell 2017; Writz et al 2014; Sanchez, Del Mar Palau 2006, Felbab Brown 2005). The peace agreement was ratified on November 30th, 2016 by the Colombian government and the FARC guerrilla group after four years of negotiations, marking the end of 52 years of conflict and the beginning of a six months process of demobilization of the FARC guerrilla group. Among the initiatives present in the peace accord can be found a transitional justice system, an amnesty law for the guarantee of protection for opposition political movements and new rural development policies. Nonetheless, the situation is still fragile as dissidence from FARC members and other backlashes, as a reaction to the peace process, can emerge (WOLA 2016). This peace agreement gave rise to new hopes for a long-term peace to emerge in the country. However, scholars have argued that an inclusive peace can only be attained by rebuilding local trust and reconciliation within the civil society (Boyce et al 2002, de Coning 2016). Hence, the peace remains fragile as reconciliation represents a tremendous challenge in a country where the population has experienced violence for several generations.

The context in which this field study is embedded takes place in the region of Putumayo, a department bordering Peru and Ecuador that has been particularly affected by the armed conflict. During the years of the armed conflict, it was known by its weak State structures, high rates of violence, narcotrafficking, and a strong presence of armed actors, such as the FARC guerrilla group as well as the paramilitary group AUC (David and Richardson 2002; Cancimancel Lopez 2014). As a strategic region for many actors of the conflict and one of the principal areas for production and traffic of drugs, Putumayo is one of the departments that has experienced the highest rates of violence in the country, including human rights abuses; kidnappings; forced displacements;
homicides; and disappearances (Felbab-Brown 2005; Sanchez, Del Mar Palau 2006). Additionally, its capital, Mocoa, has recently experienced a deadly landslide in April 2017, affecting hundreds of people with a majority of them being displaced populations from the conflict (Notes research journal).

Regarding the situation of women in Colombia, they remain vulnerable and deeply affected by conflict dynamics. In fact, a large majority of displaced households are female-headed making it more difficult security-wise to reclaim lands. As a consequence, scholars have argued that this dynamic creates poverty-cycles due to a lack of access to asset accumulation, increasing, therefore, financial instability (Ibanez Moya 2010; Meertens Zambrano 2010; Wirtz et al 2014). Moreover, in conflict-prone areas women are often recurring victims of gender-based violence and intrafamilial violence, including cases of threats; rape; sexual and physical violence; abduction; forced labor; and kidnappings (Writz et al 2014).

Nonetheless, as a result of the peace agreement, efforts from the government have led to the incorporation of a gender-based approach into post-conflict strategies targeting the rural development of women in the areas most affected by the armed conflict, such as Putumayo (Government of Colombia 2017, La Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz 2015). In this context, non-governmental local and international organizations present in Putumayo, such as Casa Amazonia and Action Against Hunger, are joining efforts with governmental entities for the implementation of the peace accord through rural reforms seeking to improve livelihood conditions and reconciliation, focusing on the situation of the rural woman (Construccion de Paz 2018). Additionally, an increasing number of regional and local organizations and associations, such as Ruta Pacifica; la Allianza; Casa Amazonia, are weaving a web of actors mobilized for the protection and promotion of women rights throughout the Putumayo region (Notes research journal).

Hence, this context highlights the efforts implemented specifically to improve the well-being of women in Putumayo, an area strongly affected by the armed conflict, as an important factor for reconciliation and peace consolidation in the country (Government of Colombia 2017, La Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz 2015, Notes research journal). For these reasons, the Putumayo department offers a fertile ground for investigating local perspectives and practices of resilience, looking at capacities and strategies of the local population to face shocks and stressors. The field research was
conducted through investigating how national and local organizations’ programs are contributing to strengthening the resilience of women in the Putumayo region, exploring in a second phase the local populations’ own perspectives, practices and strategies of resilience.

*Figure A: Map of Putumayo (Colombia)*

1.4 Aim of the study and research questions

The aim of the study is to shed light on local perspectives and practices used to create or maintain the resilience of women in Putumayo by analyzing resilience-related programs initiated by national and local organizations. For that purpose, a field-based study has been conducted in a conflict-sensitive environment in order to explore how resilience is developed, strengthened and experienced. To fulfill this goal, the existing framework developed by Pouligny (2014) served as a lens and categorizing tool in order to investigate resilience-enhancing mechanisms while simultaneously allowing an
assessment of the extent to which the framework applies to the local context. The study is organized along two lines with, on the one hand, insights based on organization’s development and crisis-management programs, and on the other hand perspectives and experiences of resilience based on the participants to those programs as well as indigenous communities.

Aligned with the research objectives, the following research questions have been formulated to guide the study:

RQ 1: How are national and local organizations seeking to enhance the resilience of women in Putumayo? What are the tools and strategies they use? How are these related to their own understanding of resilience?

RQ 2: How do the women perceive and act in terms of resilience? How do they manage the consequences of the conflict and the natural catastrophe? What are their strategies of survival?

1.5 Research relevance

The necessity to strengthen capacities of societies and individuals globally to face current and upcoming challenges gave rise to the development of international policies such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Agenda 2030, aiming at tackling global issues through cooperation at all levels of society (UNISDR 2015). The resilience of individuals, being a relatively new concept in the development and peacebuilding fields, shows a requirement to deepen our awareness and understanding of existing methods, strategies and attitudes that help vulnerable populations to cope with shocks. This attitude helps to share knowledge and create bridges across cultures to inspire peacebuilders and development workers internationally. Moreover, the gender perspective adopted by this study by focusing on the ability of women to respond and recover from shocks aligns with the SDG number five seeking to improve gender equality worldwide and strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention and risk management (UNISDR 2015). This aspect also echoes to the agenda of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), by exploring the state of development and empowerment of women in Putumayo, through
the investigation of factors impacting their livelihoods and capacities to respond and recover from shocks (UN Women 2018).

1.6 Theoretical and methodological frameworks

This qualitative study uses Pouligny’s (2014) resilient framework as a lens and a bottom-up frame in order to identify structures and characteristics able to strengthen the abilities of women facing precarity and conflict to bounce back. In that sense, this study follows an abductive approach to identify local variables to assess these abilities using the resilient framework developed by Pouligny (2014). This choice of method is combined with an inductive approach based on the empirical findings emerging from the field research, with the aim to investigate variables found to enhance resilient capacities of local populations that are absent in Pouligny’s framework (2014).

1.7 Structure of the thesis

The paper is organized as follows. Following this introductory chapter, a second chapter outlines the theoretical foundations through an overview of the debates present in the literature regarding the emergence, evolution, and use of the resilience as a concept in the peacebuilding field, followed by an explanation of the analytical framework. Chapter three is dedicated to the methodology used to conduct this study. Chapter four presents the findings along the lines of the research questions, followed by an analysis in a fifth chapter where a critical assessment of Pouligny’s framework is presented. Lastly, a conclusion will give a summary of the results with a discussion for further research.
2. Literature review and analytical framework

2.1 Literature review

The shift from the liberal peace to the locals

The liberal peace paradigm also called democratic peace theory, is an approach to peacebuilding and post-conflict interventions based on western ideologies that have dominated the spectrum of actions used in international peacebuilding for many decades. However, as a reaction to the failures and counterproductivity of these methods, contemporary debates have been fueled by criticism towards the liberal peace approach to peacebuilding. One of the main critics attributed to the liberal peace paradigm is its tendency to neo-colonialism by imposing an external model that does not adapt to local realities and dynamics, as is it based on the premise that only liberal democracies are able to implement long-term and sustainable peace (Richmond 2010, Campbell et al 2011, Edwards 2013, Tziarras 2012). Hence, scholars have underlined the limits of the liberal peace paradigm to address the root causes of the conflict in relation to the context in which they are embedded, underlying the necessity to find new concepts and practices for international peacebuilding (Richmond 2010, Campbell et al 2011, Edwards 2013).

These new approaches are characterized by a shift from “top-down” interventions to a focus on “bottom-up” and local processes instead. Thus, scholars put greater emphasis on the understanding of local dynamics, characteristics, and capacities in order to understand how peacebuilding operations can be more successful (Van Metre and Calder 2016, Chandler 2013, de Coning 2018). As part of these debates, Boege et al (2009) invite peacebuilders to have greater consideration for hybrid political orders, with an emphasis on local nexuses of order and security, in weak and fragile States, that can help to consolidate and sustain peace. Furthermore, this shift to the local has been conceptualized in approaches focusing on community-based rehabilitation strategies, seeking to strengthen the capacities of the civil society to manage risks of conflict without the need for external assistance (Boyce et al 2002). Boyce et al (2002) also argue that this shift to local capacities is the result of greater ethical and moral considerations for peacebuilding practices. In the same range of ideas,
de Coning (2018) describes this phenomenon as a turn to pragmatic and adaptive peacebuilding practices. He suggests that international peacebuilding is evolving into a new role that necessitates greater inclusiveness of local actors and structures into peacebuilding practices, essentially by strengthening already existing local capacities. Moreover, de Coning (2018) highlights the need for peacebuilders to embrace and adapt to the complex and changeable nature of peace and conflicts dynamics on the ground. In that sense, he highlights the importance to support and learn from local processes and structures that are able to create and maintain peace (ibid).

As a result of the new emphasis on bottom-up processes and criticism toward the intervention of external actors, the role and scope of actions of international peacebuilders are challenged. In this regards, Chandler (2013) highlights the fact that outsiders cannot impose peace since it has to be an endogenous process emerging from within the societies affected by conflicts, in order for it to be sustainable. Furthermore, the literature highlights the role of exogenous actors as being essentially supportive in strengthening already existing capacities instead of imposing externally engineered ones (De Coning 2018; Miliken 2013). Similarly, de Coning (2018) argues that the role of the United Nations is essentially to provide assistance and to support locally owned peace processes by strengthening social cohesion and self-help capacities of local structures (de Coning 2018).

The concept of resilience

Emerging from these debates comes the concept of resilience, which has ever since been central to the approaches focusing on the local consolidation and sustainability of peace. According to the literature, resilience represents the ability of a social system and individuals to bounce-back after experiencing shocks or stressors. In other words, resilience is understood as inherent capacities and characteristics enabling individuals to recover from a crisis (Menkhaus 2013, Johansson 2015, Pouligny 2010, Schilling et al 2017, Chandler 2013). In the peacebuilding context, resilience also refers to self-help mechanisms embedded in local structures allowing a community to cope and adapt to shocks and stressors, as well as enhancing capacities to transform conflict-prone situations into positive peace (Milliken 2013).

Scholars have sought to conceptualize resilience by identifying variables that constitute a resilient system. For instance, Menkhaus (2013) argues that resilience
offers the notion of local capacities to manage conflicts in a constructive way through different attributes such as social capital, local governance, and networks of trust. In that sense, resilience refers to both structural and individual characteristics that influence the management of crisis and the ability to return to a state of equilibrium. As an example, in a post-conflict situation the resilient capacities of a community would refer to their ability to manage security threats, to develop social structures that support the physical and psychological recovery of victims, as well as having the resources and capacities for the reconstruction after damages (Menkhaus 2013). Furthermore, Pouligny (2014) refers to characteristics of resilience as being inherent abilities of a social system and its individuals to cope and adapt to shocks and stressors, stressing how these resilience characteristics are influenced by the social structures in which they are embedded.

Nonetheless, skepticism has emerged regarding the incorporation of the resilience concept into international peacebuilding practices, arguing about the inherent tensions existing between the notion of locally embedded/endogenous processes and international peacebuilding practices by, so-called, external actors (Miliken 2013). In fact, Milliken (2013) highlights a lack of a concrete framework stressing how resilience works in a more practical sense and the necessity for an adequate accommodation between endogenous and exogenous actors, in order to help driving local development and to find a good recipe for a home-grown sustainable peace.

Overall, in the current state of the literature and theoretical debates, it can be argued that scholars do find common ground when it comes to general characteristics and qualities framing resilience. However, there is a lack of research done regarding concrete mechanisms and structures that are found to enhance the resilience capacities of individuals and communities.

2.2 Pouligny’s framework for resilience

Our current understanding of resilience as a concept derives from an attempt of scholars to understand which are the underlying factors making a certain social system more resilient than others in risk and conflict-prone areas. Nevertheless, there is still an important gap regarding its contextualization. The only framework for resilience as a
A categorizing and guiding tool for peacebuilding has been developed by Pouligny (2014), it is organized through six categories identified as resilient-enhancing factors for communities living in conflict and post-conflict environments. The author identifies the following five variables:

- **Psychological recovery of individuals and communities:** This factor refers to the internal resilient capacities to recover from psychological trauma. This is strengthened by the collective recognition and validation of pain and trauma inside the community, and the presence of healing mechanisms. Hence, the psychological recovery, of individual and collective traumas, is a crucial component for the ability of a community as a whole to cope with the consequences of conflict.

- **A shared system of meaning:** This factor is associated with the belief system present within the community that enables individuals to find inner strength, motivation and trust in the future, which is essential for the transition from war to peace. Hence, this aspect touches on the symbolic and spiritual dimensions that influence the psychological abilities of individuals to be more resilient to life-threatening events. Practices such as rituals and ceremonies are structures that can revive the belief system, cohesion, and support among community members.

- **Solidarity among community members and appropriate distribution of resources:** This factor essentially focuses on existing networks and structures of distribution for goods and services inside the community, that strengthen social cohesion and collaboration among community members.

- **Community reintegration and trust:** This factor constitutes the foundation for social cohesion among members of a community and refers to the existing social contract. This aspect is essential for the establishment of collective rules that enable mutual trust among individual and provides tools for social justice.
- **Broad and inclusive forms of governance:** Here it refers to the governance capacities and mechanisms inside the community that supports collective mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict by addressing grievances and other root-causes of future conflicts. Hence, the form of governance is essential for resilience as it embodies the capacities of social and political structures to manage shocks and stressors.

This framework presents factors identified as influencing the resilient capacities of a social system. It can be argued that the variables are referring to two different levels of analysis: the individual level and the community level. Hence, the author looks at both dimensions, the individual and the collective, as relevant to determine the capacities of a given social system and its individuals to deal with shocks and stressors.

The present framework constitutes an important reference point in order to assess resilience, as it covers a wide range of multi-level mechanisms allowing for an in-depth analysis of the state of resilience in the given context. For these reasons, the current study uses Pouligny's (2014) framework as a lens and categorizing tool to identify existing mechanisms and structures influencing the resilience of the studied population.
3. Methodological framework

3.1 Research design

The design of the study follows the objective to shed light on local mechanisms and structures sustaining and/or strengthening the resilience of individuals in conflict-sensitive environments. The collection and interpretation of the data are based on a three months qualitative ethnographic case-study, from April 2018 to July 2018 in the department of Putumayo, southern Colombia.

The case-study design allowed for an in-depth analysis of local and national programs influencing the resilience of women in the Putumayo region, as well as insights regarding perceptions and experiences of the local populations. Three different programs were looked at, where one of them implemented by a local NGO had a clear objective to strengthen resilience, whether the remaining two implemented by the State had resilience outcomes. The study is based on a representative case as it seeks to investigate existing resilient mechanisms and structures in a particular research site, being here women in Putumayo, using the resilience framework developed by Pouligny (2014) (Bryman 2012: 70). Furthermore, it is a longitudinal ethnographic case-study combined with a three months internship at a local NGO, relying on qualitative interviews, surveys and participant observations for the collection of data (Bryman 2012:76). The units of analysis are women in Putumayo and the coordinators of programs seeking the development, capacitation, and recovery of women in the region (Bryman 2012: 68).

Regarding the link between theory and research, the study applies on the one hand an abductive approach analyzing how well the empirical data supports the categories identified in the analytical framework, and on the other hand an inductive approach by seeking to generate additional insights emerging from the findings to contribute to the theory (Danemark 2002, Bryman 2012: 401).
3.2 Primary sources

3.2.1 Semi-structured individual interviews

A total of 18 individual semi-structured interviews have been conducted during the field work\(^2\). These interviews are essentially derived from participants and staff members of women development and crisis-management programs. The primordial focus was to get insights from populations having experienced shocks and stressors, in this case, women in rural and secluded areas victims of the conflict and of the deadly landslide that occurred the city of Mocoa. Staff members of government and NGOs’ entities implementing these programs were key interviewees in order to investigate their understanding of resilience and strategies to strengthen it. In this regard, two extensive interviews have been conducted with the leading staff members of Casa Amazonia, as the main witnesses of local dynamics influencing resilience considering their extended experience and expertise in the field. Another interview with a staff member of the NGO was conducted focusing on the context regarding indigenous communities. Additionally, one interview is based on an encounter with a staff member of a regional organization working for the promotion of women’s rights, in order to deepen the understanding of local and regional dynamics.

Four interviews have been conducted with participants of the resilient women program of Casa Amazonia in Mocoa. These are in-depth extended interviews that required several meetings for some of them. The reason behind this choice of methodology lies first and foremost in an adaption to field conditions as getting access to a larger sample of participants presented difficulties. One of the main reasons being that the group dissolved eight months before the field study took place, which resulted in a lack of reliable contact information. As a consequence, the interview relied essentially on a snow-balling method resulting in a sample of women living in nearby areas. Therefore, in-depth interviews have been prioritized over a larger sample of interviewees which allowed a wide exploration of the participant’s background, current living situation, means and attitude to overcome challenges, as well as feedback from the “Resilient Women” project they participated in. Moreover, this methodology allowed for greater trust between the interviewer and the interviewee, which benefited the

\(^2\) All quotes were translated by the author
quality and validity of the study as it requires time and trust to be able to address sensitive topics.

In the outskirts of Mocoa, the capital of the Putumayo department, four interviews were conducted during a day workshop organized by the State-based organization Unity for Victims for women victims of sexual violence during the armed conflict. Two of them were with workshop organizers and the rest with participants. Considering the time and space available, all interviews were rather short, focusing on the person's attitudes and challenges regarding their past and current situation, as well as insights concerning to the activities led throughout the workshop. The interviews with the organizers focused mainly on the objectives and intentions of the programs. The interviews were not vocally recorded for confidentiality reasons.

Four interviews are derived from four different encounters in the Putumayo region during 1,5 days workshops implemented by the PDET program, gathering female community leaders from rural areas. As the context did only allow for brief interpersonal meetings during lunch breaks, some interviews were more extensive than others. For these reasons, the researcher focused on living conditions and surviving strategies with women who are living in areas highly affected by the armed conflict with a minimal presence of institutions.

Lastly, two interviews are based on encounters with members of indigenous associations and indigenous regional organizations. The intention behind these interviews was to explore the differences in conditions, opportunities, and capacities for resilience in the context of indigenous communities.

3.2.2 Unstructured individual interviews

Unstructured interviews were used during informal meetings and open discussions on different occasions throughout the fieldwork. This method has been particularly useful during PDET encounters as the design of activities focused on group discussions and brainstorming. This gave an opportunity to engage with participants directly and gather information through group discussions. Furthermore, unstructured interviews have taken place while meeting activists and organization's leaders in informal settings, who have knowledge and expertise about gender problematics within the peacebuilding and development field. Unstructured interviews have been used in parallel to semi-structured interviews with women part of the “Resilient Women” project in Mocoa.
Lastly, data has also been collected while engaging in group and individual discussions during a day-long workshop with Unity for victims.

3.2.3 Surveys

Surveys constitute an important source of primary data for this study. The information became available through participating in the PDET program while working for the NGO Casa Amazonia. The PDET encounters took place in four cities in the Putumayo region gathering a number of participants living in rural areas ranging from 30 women to 52 (Notes research journal). Each encounter initiated a SWOT analysis in the form of a group survey, engaging with the participants in order to elaborate a context analysis for the region where the encounter took place. Hence, the four SWOT group analysis are surveys that were used for the purpose of this study as the information produced was helpful in order to assess what represents, in the eyes of the participants, weaknesses, threats, opportunities, and strengths. Thus, elements that can influence the resilience of participants. The strength of using such a method of collecting data is its higher representativeness of the population as it relies on a large sample (Bryman 2012: 11).

3.2.4 Ethnographic study and participative observations

This is an ethnographic study in regards to the level of engagement of the researcher with the field and the methodology used to conduct the research, as an extended period of time has been spent interacting and working with the local population making extensive use of participative observations and field notes (Bryman 2012: 432). However, it can be argued that this study refers to a micro-ethnographic study rather than a full-scale ethnographic work, as the time spent in the field did not exceed three months (Bryman 2012: 433).

Participative observations were useful in this context as it allowed the researcher to engage more deeply within the field in order to gain insights directly from the studied population (Baker 2006). Furthermore, participative observations were key throughout the fieldwork as the researcher was able to take on a role as an intern at a local NGO, gaining access to the field and active participation along the side of experienced fieldworkers, acquiring knowledge and insights about the local dynamics surrounding resilience. Hence, this ethnographic methodology was used throughout the
fieldwork with continuous interactions with fieldworkers accessing informative documents and workshops that enabled a significant collection of primary and secondary sources of data.

3.2.5 Other types of primary sources

Some valuable material has been available through the help of local contacts at the NGO Casa Amazonia, which has been useful in order to strengthen field-based knowledge. Hence, information has been gathered based on a CD called “In resilience” (En resiliencia) produced by the radio program of the Colombian Center for Historic Memory, gathering voices of survivors of the deadly landslide happening in April 2017 in Mocoa. This source of data presents additional insights regarding local perspectives, experiences, and understandings of resilience.

3.3 Secondary sources

A three months internship at the local NGO, Casa Amazonia, based in Mocoa (Putumayo), presented a crucial opportunity to work with local peacebuilders giving the chance for the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the local context and consequently gave access to information and documents concerning the situation of women victims of the armed conflict as well as former programs and activities seeking to improve the resilience of women in the aftermath of the natural catastrophe that happened in Mocoa last year. Thus, the work with this local NGO has been crucial in the sampling process of interviewees, as the large majority of the studied population include participants of programs implemented by the NGO or in which they were involved in collaboration with agencies of the government. Government reports, doctoral thesis, newspapers articles, and audio interviews were also documents and information support used as secondary sources in the collection of data.

3.4 Coding and use of the analytical framework

The coding and interpretation of the collected data have been done through the use of coding themes in relation to the analytical framework mentioned previously. Hence, the raw data collected through interviews has been recorded, transcribed and interpreted through a set of codes similar to the categories of the analytical framework. This coding
procedure allowed for an analysis of the recurrence of certain codes within and across interviews, providing insights on the link between local resilient structures, the identified variables, and the analytical framework (Bryman 2012: 13). However, it is important to note that four interviews were not recorded and were essentially based on written notes due to ethical reasons, as taking place at a confidential government-led encounter for women victims of sexual violence during the armed conflict.

This coding method aims to highlight the adaptability of the analytical framework to the local context. Hence, this methodology highlights missing elements that are found to contribute significantly to the resilient capacities of local populations. The methodological framework follows, therefore, an abductive approach by interpreting the data through the lens of the existing resilient framework, while also using an inductive methodology where generalizable inferences are drawn from the empirical data to contribute to the theory (Bryman 2012: 26).

Concerning other sources of primary data, gaining access to surveys through the NGO has been valuable in order to gain understanding on participant's living conditions, as well as insights on enhancing or diminishing factors regarding opportunities and capacities.

3.5 Reliability and validity

The external validity of this study is limited by the qualitative and highly context-specific aspect of the case study, which consequently affects its generalization capacity across different settings (Bryman 2012: 77). Hence, considering the nature of resilience being inherently embedded in local realities and dynamics and the research design bound to a specific geographic area and a rather small sample of cases, it limits the generalization of the study to the entire Colombian population and more generally to other contexts (De Coning 2018; Bryman 2012: 390). However, it can be argued that the aim of the paper being to contribute to the general understanding of resilience, as a concept and a tool among the international community, the results give a reflection on structures and characteristics belonging to resilience as an overarching concept, despite the highly context-specific nature of the findings.
The study benefits from a high internal validity through a methodological framework and empirical findings relying on a prolonged stay in the field, which tends to enhance the validity of the researcher's understanding and interpretation of the local context and consequently, strengthening the congruence between theory and findings (Bryman 2012: 390). A valid interpretation of the data was supported by a good proficiency of the local language, and therefore, a deeper understanding of the interviewee's answers as well as a stronger ability to navigate and get in contact with the field. Furthermore, the research respects the prospects of ecological validity as it seeks to capture and reflect the circumstances affecting the daily life of local populations, respecting the perspectives, attitudes, and values of the studied-population (Bryman 2012: 48).

Considering possible bias and assumptions that could have an effect on the generated findings, it is important to acknowledge that the position of the researcher as a white female westerner is subjected to have implications on the interviewees responses and attitudes. Nonetheless, the position as an intern in a local NGO throughout the fieldwork gave considerable access to the field and to the local population, which had the ability to weaken these hierarchical patterns (Bryman 2012: 40). Moreover, in a feminist view, the fact that the researcher is a woman could enhance the ability to engage with women on sensitive topics, such as sexual violence, as stigmas around men and women relations are strong in such a context making women more comfortable when interviewed by a female researcher.

External reliability is weak in a qualitative method of research. Nonetheless, considering that the research design is based on an abductive approach through the use of the resilient framework developed by Pouligny (2014), it could in this matter be replicated in different settings as a categorizing tool in order to assess existing resilience mechanisms. Internal reliability does not apply as there was only one observer on the research team (Bryman 2012: 390).

3.6 Limitations and delimitations

The principal limitation for this study is the time frame, as an ethnographic study requires a large amount of time to gain knowledge and understanding about the local context, in order to correctly understand attitudes and avoid false assumptions tainted
by our own cultural lenses. In addition, spending time in the field is crucial in order to gain trust from the local community and establish contact with interviewees, which can add significant value to the data collected.

Another important limit concerns the access to potential interviewees as travelling in the region was strongly discouraged due to a general lack of security inside the Putumayo region. This aspect strongly limited the capacity to move freely and individually inside the region, restricting travels to the ones accompanied by the NGO only. Consequently, it affected the possibility to get access to a larger sample of interviewees as the workshops’ participants were living in rural or remote areas. Furthermore, access to former participants of programs related to development and crisis-management in Mocoa was limited from a lack of contact information.

An essential delimitation framing this study is the women-focused scope. This aspect has the benefit to offer useful insights regarding the resilient capacities of a group of the population facing certain conditions. Nonetheless, it also limits the ability to analyze and include the broader Colombian population. In addition, the geographical area where the field study took place is delimited to the Putumayo department, the reasons being the time limit as well as research opportunities.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Regarding ethical considerations, it is important to assess the effect of the research on the local context as well as the procedures involved in the methods of collecting data, looking essentially at the integrity, the quality and the transparency of the study (Bryman 2012: 144).

For ethical reasons, all interviewees were asked for verbal consent prior to the interview, presenting the objectives of the study and the use of the collected information, with guarantees for their privacy, integrity, anonymity, and voluntary inquiry with the right to withdraw anytime from the interview. Thus, questions regarding sensitive issues were broad up carefully respecting the will of the interviewee to respond to it or not. In this regard, the researcher was aware of the risks of causing emotional harm by addressing sensitive topics that could revive traumatic events to the interviewee (Bryman 2012: 136). Therefore, particular care was taken throughout the
interview to not make the interviewee uncomfortable, bringing the sensitive questions in a gradual manner. However, there is limited informed consent regarding the use of surveys and participant observations for the purpose of this study. Hence, the surveys represent a primary source of data the researcher had access to through the consent of workshops organizers, in that sense the participants themselves were not directly asked for consent regarding the use of their answers for this study. Concerning issues of confidentiality, the anonymity of all interviewees was respected through the use of neutral labels for reference.
4. Findings

The first section of the findings is dedicated to the empirical findings related to the first research question: the programs implemented by national and local organizations having resilience objectives or outcomes in the region of Putumayo. The second part presents the findings corresponding to the second research question: the perceptions and practices of resilience among the local population, essentially through insights from programs participants’ insights and indigenous communities.

4.1 National and local programs influencing women’s resilience in Putumayo

4.1.1 The “Resilient Women” of Mocoa

This section presents the approaches and methods framing the “Resilient Women” program initiated by the NGO Casa Amazonia, as a response to the deadly landslide that occurred in April 2017 in Mocoa, Putumayo. The aim of this section is to investigate the NGOs’ objectives and strategies, and understandings of the concept of resilience (Notes research journal). It underlines an emphasis on post-traumatic stress relief practices, collective healing methods, self-esteem exercises, and economic capacitation for women to regain autonomy and stability in their lives. Resilience is associated with characteristics and attitudes of inner strength, recovery and resistance, and also with feminine characteristics and collective processes.

Vision and objectives

The city of Mocoa is less affected by the armed conflict in comparison to other areas in the department. Nonetheless, its inhabitants experienced a deadly natural catastrophe in April 2017 causing more than 200 victims and tremendous physical damages affecting dramatically the living conditions of Mocoan citizens (Marcos 2017). In response to this event, Casa Amazonia initiated a two-month program in September 2017 entitled “Resilient women” (Mujeres resilientes), gathering 70 women victims of the landslide (Notes research journal). The objective of the project is to provide
capacity-building in political and women rights, psychosocial support, and economic capacity-building (Notes research journal).

When asked about the intention behind their focus on women, both supervisors of the project at Casa Amazonia underlined the importance and necessity to promote and protect children's and women's rights, as these are the most vulnerable and affected group of the population, especially from sexual violence and forced recruitment, as well as the less attended by the government (NGO Staff 2).

Because these populations are the most vulnerable, also because we position ourselves from a community feminist perspective. Also identifying for example who moved [...] in that time in 2005 the majority [of it] were adult men, and no voices were heard from women, or children, or youth. It was very focused on the leadership of adult men, and with this as well the subject of revendications was very centered in the logic of adult men. What is happening with the women, what are they saying, what are the perceptions of children? These are the most vulnerable populations and most affected by the conflict, and their voices the less heard. (NGO Staff 2). And the less attended by the government (NGO Staff 1).

An important aspect highlighted by the interviewees is the great potential lying in the capacity of women and children to be actors of change and peacebuilders in Colombia, as representing a majority in the country. Furthermore, an important aspect of the context to take into consideration is the prevalence of women victims of the landslide who were also victims and displaced from the armed conflict.

[...] We are a majority of women in the country. And I think [this] is an important force because the principal victims of the armed conflict have been women and children (NGO Staff 1).

What we have seen with the women who came here (to Mocoa) [...] the women victims of the avalanche, who for the majority of them, have previously been victims of the armed conflict and were also victims of domestic violence daily. [...] With them we saw a tremendous inner strength, that potentializes itself essentially when there are spaces for them to meet (NGO Staff 2).

There are some very strong stories in the life of each one of them. [...] Terrible intrafamilial violence. They decided to leave and came here to Mocoa, then came
the avalanche and they lost everything, and they have the capacity to raise the head, smile and go back to live their life again. This is really, very very brave (NGO Staff 1).

Hence, the objectives of Casa Amazonia with the “Resilient Women” project was first and foremost to attend a group of women victims of the natural disaster in Mocoa and, for some of them, victims of the armed conflict, with the intention to fill the gap created from the lack of governmental support and attention given to women’s rights and livelihoods.

Approach, tools and practices

This section seeks to outline the approach and various methods used in the program. It was found that the NGO incorporated a variety of capacity-building practices aiming at helping the women recover from post-traumatic stress and material losses.

Hence, the psychosocial support was presented by the NGO workers as a crucial part of the project with a range of activities aiming at enhancing the self-esteem and self-confidence of participants, greatly affected and diminished through experiences of sexual, domestic, and war-related violence. In that sense, they insisted particularly on the importance to hold a safe space for them to grief and share their pain while being supported by the group (NGO Staff 1).

Through capacity-building, we primarily did an exercise of self-esteem, auto-estimate themselves and (be willing to) create again, because these stories are very cruel. A lot have endured it since they were little, from sexual abuse when they were little girls (NGO Staff 1).

You have to do an exercise and it’s the self-esteem one. That each one of them recognizes themselves as a woman capable of doing many things, because in general these capacities are not recognized. [...] It’s very difficult that women are able to view their qualities. Because they have always been abused, always the useless ones, because they don’t do anything, [they are] no good for anything. It’s been like this historically. [...] When we begin doing a self-esteem exercise, to value oneself, to recognize qualities, things change. [...] This, I think, transforms a little, re-esteem themselves, that also changes life (NGO Staff 1).
Furthermore, the collective aspect of the activities is found to bear an important role. According to the interviewees, it holds the ability to enhance the motivation of each person to participate as well as support one another throughout the process. Thus, one interviewee expresses it as follows:

The collective is clearly able to help. With all the exercise we do, it’s always actions in circles where each person is working on themselves, although find support in the others, because everything is circle, [in this process] the others are helping you (NGO Staff 1).

This aspect echoes to activities present in the program that are inspired by indigenous cultures and practices, such as the temazcal (steam bath with medicinal plants) and sacred peace dances. When asked about the meaning behind the use of such spiritual and symbolic practices, one interviewee explained that “a lot of spiritual and emotional healing make them think in a different way” and therefore, contributing to foster change mainly through positive thinking (NGO Staff 1).

In the sacred peace dances [...] we all dance looking in each other eyes, it is the support of the other, it is the embrace of the other, it is the affection of the other. With the temazcal it’s the same, everyone sitting inside the temazcal, I think about myself, but if I don’t want to say something someone [sitting] at the other end will say what I wanted to say, it is reflected there. We really did a nice exercise of self-esteem (NGO Staff 1).

Aside from the activities focusing on the psychological and emotional recovery, another essential part of the program is the economic capacity-building approach. This approach aims to work with each participant on a personal life project: a lucrative activity that will allow them to be autonomous and to sustain their family (as the majority of participants are single).

[The project] is called “livelihoods”. It is about having your own business to not depend on anyone economically. This gives them incredible tranquility. This helps them to lift up the soul, that their families will not go hungry, that their children can buy the uniform and other basic necessities. The work that has been done needs to be acknowledged, that today they’re fine, continuing with [their] projects. Some changed it, others haven’t. [...] Projects here don’t work because organizations coming from Bogota or Europe or from another place in the world come to
implement projects that the (local) people are not fond of. [It is important that] they propose what they do best, what they enjoy and that it is supported (NGO Staff 1).

Hence, an important element in the approach of Casa Amazonia is to enhance financial autonomy and stability of participants through an income-generating activity, which is found to be an important stress-relieving factor. Here is also highlighted the importance to consider and support already existing skills and aspirations of participants, in order for a project to be sustainable.

Understandings and contextualization of resilience

This section aims to explore the organization's understanding of resilience and how it influences the implemented program. Hence, the underlying questions are: What definition of resilience lies behind the tools and practices described above? What are the characteristics of a resilient woman in the views of the organizers of the program?

Through the interviews, resilience is found to be associated with attitudes and qualities in relation to conflict dynamics that strongly affect women's livelihoods.

People need to recognize that these are women that suffered tremendously and continue to smile, to fight, to carry on. There are some women who did a lot of resistance and never left. Women who resisted and found themselves confined in their farms, without the possibility to leave. They were stigmatized for living in farms, they were called “guerillas” when they went to the village [...]. Many of them resisted and survived to this. Here is the topic of resilience (NGO Staff 1).

Regarding the topic of resilience, to take it from there, requires strengthening. Because for us, affects us the strength women have despite having gone through so many complex situations. Victims of the armed conflict, victims of sexual violence, victims of the State, victims of everything really. And nowadays women are becoming leaders but there is a lack of political information and capacitation in order to have strong bases (NGO Staff 1).

These narratives underline the link between resilience, strength, and recovery from conflict-related experiences. The strength is then found in the ability of individuals “to smile, to fight, to carry on” despite the pain and complex situations in conflict zones (NGO
Moreover, it emphasizes on attitudes of being willing to step into greater roles of leadership in political spheres (NGO Staff 1).

Furthermore, resilience is closely related to the collective nature of the activities held throughout the program in Mocoa. Hence, as one interviewee expresses it, the ability of individuals to gather and share their experiences is where lies a great amount of their inner strength as they are able to unite, showing a willingness to protect current and future generations from experiencing the same traumas. Moreover, resilience through the collective is found in the unity and well-being of the victim’s families.

*When the victims decide to talk and organize themselves, [there is] the intention that what happened to me will not happen to anyone else. And therefore what needs to be done is raise awareness, inform, denounce, support, so that these things won’t repeat themselves. I think this gives them strength, like the strength to be resilient having gone through these experiences of violence, like an ethical sense that this shouldn’t happen to anyone. Resilience is exactly in the fact that they don’t want it to happen again (NGO Staff 2).*

*When there are spaces that allow them to recognize these painful stories, to validate this pain, this frustration, this anger, all the sensations that it generates, including the consequences on their physical and emotional health. And think of themselves collectively, the majority of them being mothers, hence their center and motivation lies in their families, their children basically. Here is found a great part of their resilience (NGO Staff 2).*

Thus, the interviewees put emphasis on the ability of collective processes to foster strength, support, motivation, and resilience by addressing physical and emotional suffering.

Furthermore, in both interviewees’ narratives, resilience and resistance are terms that find much resonance with each other. Hence, resilience is closely related to stories of women resisting to the occupation of armed actors and surviving in conflict zones through strategies of silence and neutrality (NGO Staff 2). These attitudes have been identified by Cancimance (2014) as survival strategies for people living in rural areas of Putumayo during the armed conflict. Thus, the relation between resistance and resilience is associated with qualities of strength and courage, necessary for individuals to survive as well as protecting their family and territory when facing conflict dynamics.
The experience to stay (and remain neutral), generating the evidence of not being on one side or the other. And the women especially for the protection of their children and their land. There are experiences and testimonies of women who went alone talking to the armed actors for them to stop harassing schools or that they return people who disappeared or to not threaten innocent people. [...] Putting themselves at high levels of risks and courage (NGO Staff 2).

Lastly, when asked about a possible female type of resilience, the interviewees mentioned a feminine type of consciousness emphasizing on cultural and gender factors that create differences in attitudes and behaviors among men and women, influencing their willingness to express pain and suffering.

I think that there is a cultural disposition that validates more the fact that women can talk about emotional suffering, appear more vulnerable and tell for what they have suffered. In contrast to men where it is always a matter to appear courageous as if nothing affects them. I think there lies the difference. And also that women never think of themselves in the center but always other persons. I think this characterizes a feminine (type of) consciousness (NGO Staff 2).

It can be argued that their understanding of resilience, being qualities and attitudes such as courage; emotional and psychological recovery; mental strength; and resistance find resonance in the choice of approach and practices used to enhance the resilient capacities of the participants. Hence, many activities are directed towards stress release and emotional recovery through a range of collective practices touching the participants at a psychological, emotional and spiritual level. Furthermore, resilience is also seen as the ability to resist and survive through complex situations. Hence, for the interviewees, the vulnerability that represents the situation of the victims of the armed conflict and the landslide requires a strong emphasis on capacity-building in order for them to gain financial autonomy and security, which contributes positively to their psychological health (NGO Staff 1 and 2).

4.1.2 Psychosocial and economic assistance with the State-based organization Unity for Victims

The following section presents the findings from a day-long encounter in the city of Mocoa, organized by the public organization Unity for Victims for women victims of
sexual violence during the armed conflict. The program resulted from the peace agreement and presents measures undertaken by the government to repair and heal the wounds left from the armed conflict in order to consolidate reconciliation and peace in Colombia (La Oficina del Alto Comisario para la Paz 2015: 24). The program is called “Attention to Victims” (Atención a Víctimas) offering tools for psychological and emotional recovery, as well as economic and political capacitation in order to build a more secure future for the participants and their families (Notes research journal). The program has therefore important resilience outcomes as it seeks to improve conditions for the recovery of victims as well as building new foundations to adapt to the challenges they are facing.

Approach, tools and practices

The findings are issued from the last encounter of a total of three, lasting one and a half day each. It gathered a group of thirty women coming from different areas of the department of Putumayo. The large majority of the participants coming from the south of Putumayo, where conflict dynamics were of high intensity during the years of the armed conflict. One of the organizers explained how the objective of the program is to create a safe space for these women to find support and to heal the wounds left from psychological and physical abuses that occurred during the armed conflict (Workshop organizer 1).

In this regard, the activities varied from a range of artistic expression, discussion groups, symbolic acts, and trauma-releasing exercises. In regard to the symbolic and artistic activities, the participants were asked to perform a dance with gestures and colors representing symbolically the transition from war to peace. War was represented with black clothes, expression of sadness and suffering. On the other hand, peace was represented by white robes, birds and expressions of joy and happiness. This symbolic act was performed so that participants could act the positive transition happening in their life, the change from conflict to peace, seeking to foster positive thinking and psychological health (Notes research journal). Another activity called “life path” required them to make a representation of the events that occurred during their life with a thread, punctuated by rocks for difficult and/or painful experiences, and flowers for the more positive and joyful ones. A similar activity required them to draw on a
human figure representing themselves where the pain and trauma were located in their body (Workshop organizer 1, Notes research journal).

These activities, as one of the organizers explained it, are seeking the emotional and psychological recovery of participants using mechanisms to enhance attitudes of confidence and forgiveness towards life events (Workshop organizer 1). One of the workshop organizers also stressed the importance of the group dynamic, especially during sharing and group discussions, as it has the ability to strengthen unity, support, motivation and self-esteem of participants through the realization that “what happened to me happened ever stronger to another” (Workshop organizer 1). Moreover, these spaces of encounter and socialization are seen as crucial in post-conflict settings, as it allows people to address psychological issues, to build a social network and to create community bonds among locals (Workshop organizer 2).

Another important objective of the program is the political education and economic capacity-building. Hence, the education workshop focused on raising awareness about women sexual rights, for them to have knowledge about their constitutional rights in this matter and juridical tools to protect them (Notes research journal). Moreover, one of the staff members underlined the need for the creation of capacitation centers to enhance women’s competences in political and economic spheres, as well as giving them the necessary tools to start a business or engage in the political life of the country (Workshop organizer 2).

Regarding economic capacity-building, the strategy used is mainly based on the formulation of a life plan with help and advice from program facilitators, focusing on the creation or consolidation of businesses or other types of income-generating activities. Additionally, participants were offered financial indemnity when they attended the three encounters. Thus, this approach is essentially seeking to strengthen the financial autonomy of participants (Workshop organizer 2, Notes research journal).

4.1.3 Post-conflict development plans for women in rural Putumayo

The Development Plans for Rural Areas (Programa de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial) also called by the acronym PDET, is a program run by the State-based
Agency for the Renovation of the Territory (ART) for the implementation of post-conflict policies in the areas most affected by the conflict (Construccion de Paz 2018). The ART’s objectives through the PDET is to engage women living in areas highly impacted by the conflict in their own development process, in order to foster economic and social progress as well as consolidating peace at the local level (Construccion de Paz 2018). These objectives have therefore resilience outcomes as they influence the conditions in which the resilience of rural women is either strengthened or weakened.

The NGO Casa Amazonia worked closely in collaboration with the ART during four encounters of one and a half day each, as co-facilitators for the PDET program (Notes research journal). The following findings are based on participative observations and unstructured interviews during these encounters taking place in major cities of the Putumayo department. Each encounter is based on surveys and discussion groups, gathering women from different background and ethnicities living in nearby rural villages or secluded communities.

To improve women’s inclusion and livelihood will improve society, which will improve the conditions for peace and the success of the peace agreement (Notes research journal).

Nonetheless, such an approach faces many limits and is not enough in the eyes of the facilitators to strengthen the resilience of rural women. Hence, the findings shed light on the need for further locally based initiatives to improve women’s political and economic capacities in rural areas (Research journal).

Approach, tools and practices

The PDET seeks to initiate developments initiatives which are divided into eight categories: Rural property and land use; Infrastructure and adequacy of land; Rural health; Education and primer infancy; Rural households, Drinking water and basic rural sanitation; Economic reactivation and agricultural production; System for the progressive guarantee of alimentation rights; Reconciliation, conviviality and peace (Notes research journal). The workshops were designed in the form of surveys synthesizing the information emerging from group discussion, each group focusing on one category of development.
Each encounter was initiated with a group activity for the participants to socialize and sometimes activities seeking to raise self-esteem and cooperation among them. For example, on one occasion the participants were asked to write down their names and qualities on a piece of paper and put it in the center of the circle created by the group. Each participant picked up a paper and found the person who's written it to welcome her. This dynamic, as explained by one facilitator, is designed to enhance self-esteem and create bonds among the women (Notes research journal). Furthermore, the facilitators also put a strong emphasis on the creation of a central mandala made of local and regional seeds, that symbolically represents the resources of the region and the objective of the program, being the co-creation of development initiatives.

In a second phase, a SWOT analysis is established on the basis of surveys filled in by the participants themselves, in order to make a context-analysis of the livelihood conditions in the targeted area. The rest of the workshop is then dedicated to the mapping of development initiatives emerging from discussion groups, according to the eight categories mentioned previously. Hence, the women are called to address and voice all issues they observe in their area in order to propose concrete short and long-term solutions.

Facilitator’s perspectives and analysis

What are the facilitator's perspectives and critical assessment of this program? How do they view the impact on the situation of rural women in Putumayo? How is this linked to their understanding of resilience? The following findings are issued from a group discussion with the facilitators of the PDET program as a feedback session at the end of the four encounters.

Concerning the overall objectives of the program, the facilitators highlighted the importance of this process in order to find locally-based solutions to respond to high rates of gender inequality and female poverty in the Putumayo region. Moreover, it was raised that the PDET program has the ability to increase conditions for peace at the local level by bringing more tranquility and hope to the local population, as they become actors of their own development. Hence, it is argued that the bottom-up aspect of the process enhances the independence, autonomy, and capacities of women living in rural
areas to initiate productive processes that will improve their livelihoods (Notes research journal).

However, important limits to the success of the program have been stressed. Hence, the facilitators observed general mistrust in political institutions among the participants, also related to fears related to the upcoming change of government. Secondly, the lack of political and economic capacitation prior to these workshops is viewed to limit the ability of participants to formulate effective and sustainable initiatives that will improve their livelihoods in the long run. Thirdly, throughout the encounters, the facilitators observed how unaddressed grievances and un-healed suffering affect directly local processes of development, as several women used the space offered by the PDET to voice underlying issues of fear and pain. In that sense, it is clear for the facilitators that if grievances stay unaddressed, political and economic processes will remain fragile.

Moreover, in their views, in order to strengthened resilience in this particular group of the population, there is a need to build sustainable initiatives that will promote their autonomy and independence. In fact, they argued that these initiatives to be sustainable it requires the creation of spaces for political and economic capacitation, aside from the PDET process, in order to foster real structural changes. Moreover, they highlighted a special need for workshops concerning land and property rights, as being the root causes of major economic problems for women living in rural areas.

4.2 Perceptions and practices of resilience based on the local population

This section presents forms of resilience based on insights from the local population, essentially by investigating the experiences and opinions of participants from the three program mentioned in parts 4.1.1, 4.1.2, and 4.1.3, with additional insights from indigenous communities. It was found that post-traumatic stress release, healing exercises, and economic capacity-building strongly helped the recovery process of participants. Spirituality and faith also played an important role in fostering attitudes of acceptance and motivation, helping individuals to find meaning and cope with difficulties. By investigating local understandings of resilience, interviewees put
emphasis on inner strength and motivation to carry on despite difficult circumstances, with some associating it with feminine attributes.

4.2.1 Resilience in Mocoa

The following findings present perspectives and experiences from participants in the “Resilient Women” project implemented by the NGO Casa Amazonia in Mocoa. The presented findings seek to explore how these women managed the consequences of the landslide; what are their opinions regarding the project and the concept of resilience.

4.2.1.1 The “Resilient Women” of Mocoa

The following findings are seeking to shed light on factors influencing the participant’s recovery process and their perceptions of resilience. For this purpose, four individual semi-structured interviews were conducted in Mocoa with former participants. The interviewees are women aged from 35 to 75 years old, three out of four are single mothers and the majority of them lost most of their material belongings in the landslide, with one interviewee who also experienced loss of family members and is in charge of a discapacitated child (Woman A, B, C, D).

When asked about the type of help they received in the aftermath of the landslide, the majority of the interviewees underlined a general lack of help and support coming from the State, except for housing facilities which required several months of waiting after the landslide happened (Woman B, C, D). Two interviewees mentioned strong solidarity among the citizens in Mocoa (Woman A and C). Although the main support came essentially from local and international organizations, as well as donations from foreign countries (Woman A, B, C).

*The only thing is that people were very supportive from all parts of Colombia, they gave us material donations. Also, support [from organization] like Casa Amazonia and Oxfam, they helped us [...] to restart our businesses* (Woman B).

*The State institutions said the only thing they will help us with is housing* (Woman B).

Nonetheless, all of them stressed the absence of economic and psycho-social support from the governmental entities or other organizations in the present days, insisting on the presence of victims of the landslide still facing critical and unstable situations.
Feedbacks from the project

Regarding Casa Amazonia’s project, “Resilient Women”, all interviewees acknowledged the benefit of the program on their psychological health. However, the effects were different depending on each individual case. For instance, some interviewees put a stronger emphasis on healing methods than others, depending on their needs (Woman A, C, D).

*I saw a psychologist, and it helped me enormously to recover. I became better, I could sleep with more tranquility [...] (Woman C).

This was a very nice process, they became like sisters for all of us. [...] They helped us with different natural medicine and therapies, [and other activities] to raise our self-esteem and give us the strength to overcome the pain (Woman A).

Moreover, one interviewee stressed out the positive impact the collective activity with families had for her, as it strengthened unity and helped to solve problems in the family nucleus, which “changed her way of thinking about life in these moments” (Woman B).

Another aspect that was emphasized in some of the women’s narratives is their relation to the divine, that is found to strongly influence people’s motivation and inner strength to face difficulties.

*He’s testing us in many different forms. [...] It’s a form of getting beyond the pain and [accept] God’s will. I think it was something horrible, but if God didn’t want it to happen it would not have happened (Woman A).

*Who strengthened me to carry on? God. Because other than that, nobody (Woman B).

When it comes to the economic capacity-building exercises, the effects were nuanced through the differences in each individual process, although all interviewees agreed on the vital necessity of having an economic activity in order to have financial stability. The differences across cases are marked by personal opinions regarding the capacity-building training, as one interviewee showed only interest in the financial indemnity while others strongly recognized the benefit and necessity of such approach.

*The team of Casa Amazonia was the crucial point for us, for our children. Emotionally as well as psychologically. I had the opportunity to be capacitated during four months in order to start a business again. It was for me a very special,
very logic way to help the persons, that they first get capacitated and from there, they receive help. Because many times I have seen people receiving help, but if the persons are not capacitated and are going through a traumatic event, as we did here in Mocoa, many times the person [only thinks in the material donations] and don’t think of how they will sustain themselves [in the future] (Woman B).

On the other hand, one interviewee underlined how the financial indemnity she received through Casa Amazonia’s project was the most helpful in her recovery process, insisting on her willingness to stay independent from any program or institution.

*Having an economic project is the most important thing. [...] This is how I work. Nobody helps me. Nothing from the government. And neither do I seek help because programs always require conditions. I am the slave of nobody, for that reason, I like [to] work individually* (Woman A).

Thus, these differences in attitudes can be explained by the differences and variations across circumstances and personal needs. However, all interviewees who experienced important material losses and post-traumatic choc recognized the importance of having an economic activity. As an example, in the case of a single mother and her daughter, initiating a weaving handicraft business was crucial in their economic and psychological recovery.

*My mother was very sick mentally. She spent all her time crying and had memory losses. [...] So I came back with the (weaving) material so she could remember what she used to do when she was younger. [...] My mom became happy again and we started to make hats, purses... This activity helped us to survive economically. [...] From this, we created a group to teach weaving techniques* (Woman D).

*Concerning the hats, I [learned] when I was a little girl, my mother taught me. And after the depression when we didn’t have anything, no work, no food to eat. After four months my daughter went to Nariño [...] she came back and said to me “mom look I brought you a surprise” and when I saw the iraca³ I felt happy, I came running towards her and did two [hats] which I sold 50 000 pesos each. What I did as a child, I’m coming back to it now* (Woman C).

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³ Vegetal fiber used to make handicrafts
Furthermore, the importance given to the economic activity in the participant’s recovery process was strongly linked to capacities of autonomy and independence (Woman A, B, C).

*It’s difficult for those who have a lot of children. But there is a lot of strength in women to carry on. [...] When you work independently you become independent. [...] You know that with your own strength and motivation you will be able to carry on, without the need to ask the husband* (Woman B).

**Understandings and opinions about resilience**

It was found that not all interviewees had a clear understanding of the meaning behind the word «resilience». Nevertheless, some characteristics associated with resilient capacities of women were inner strength, the ability to carry on and solve problems, to recover from pain, and altruism (Woman A, B). However, to one interviewee resilience in this context did not relate to qualities but more so to the availability of external assistance and support regarding women’s economic projects.

*It would not be qualities but more support. To me what did Casa Amazonia is really good, each person had a clear idea of what they will work with [economically]* (Woman A).

When asked about their perspectives regarding a female type of resilience, two out of four women underlined existing differences between women and men regarding attitudes when facing this type of crisis (Woman A and B).

*Women are stronger than men. Men work and [are] very capable. But when it comes to [this type of] pain, the women is stronger because only she understands that there are other people to help […], men do not* (Woman A).

Here the interviewee highlights what represents for her a female aptitude to respond to a crisis that contrasts with men. She argues that women tend to have a greater sense of responsibility and altruism when it comes to taking care of other people, such as family members, in the midst or aftermath of a crisis. On the contrary, one interviewee did not think there were particular differences in resilient capacities across different genders, and that it is different for each person (Woman C). Still all interviewees referenced to abilities to «carry on» when reflecting on their recovery process (Woman A, B, C, D).
4.2.1.2 Resilience among Mocoan citizens

The following findings were gathered from an audio transcription entitled “In resilience” issued by the radio program of the Colombian Center for Historic Memory, that was accessed through the local NGO Casa Amazonia. This audio transcription presents voices of citizens in Mocoa regarding their form of resilience and recovery process in the aftermath of the deadly landslide that happened in April 2017 in Mocoa (Notes research journal). It highlights the importance of beliefs in individual recovery processes, help from institutions regarding material reconstruction and present resilience as a Colombian quality and characteristic enabling the citizens of Mocoa to overcome these difficult challenges.

Hence, shreds of evidence unerlined how the theme of spirituality is recurrent in the narratives of Mocoan citizens, emphasizing on the role played by spirituality and religion in the recovery process of individuals, often by helping them to find meaning in life despite challenging circumstances.

A lot of prayers and strength in order to accept God’s will and get over these difficult moments (Notes research journal).

My major motivation is first and foremost God, then my children, then my family.

It is a message from nature, we need to respect the space around the rivers, find harmony with nature (Notes research journal).

Furthermore, some interviewees stressed out the important help and assistance coming from institutions for the reconstruction after damages, as one interviewee explained:

The support from some institutions was crucial for the reactivation of services and infrastructures (Notes research journal).

Concerning the local understanding or resilience, it was observed that some interviewees associated it with “special characteristics of the Colombian population [...]. It is the power to carry on”, or even a process of “transforming the pain in feelings of joy and hope” (Notes research journal).

4.2.2 Psychosocial and economic assistance for victims of sexual violence

The following section outlines experiences of participants in the workshop led by Unity for Victims for women victims of sexual violence during the armed conflict. Participants underlined the benefit they received from capacity-building exercises and economic
capacitation. Individual attitudes highlight their process and state of recovery, with insights on local productive networks as important economic and financial support.

Feedbacks from participants

Regarding experiences during the workshop led by Unity for Victims, one participant, a middle-aged woman raising three children on her own in the southern part of the department, explained how these encounters helped her to “liberate areas of darkness and pain” that she would have kept unexpressed and unreleased otherwise (Workshop participant 1). Moreover, she expressed how these activities were truly therapeutic as she felt strengthened by the collective dynamic of the process and the solidarity that emerged from it, bringing her support and a deeper sense of self-esteem (Workshop participant 1). When asked about the main sources of recovery and motivation, she underlined the solidarity and unity among the women, as well as qualities of tolerance, perseverance, and gratitude. But most of all, she expressed how it is her faith in God that gives her the greatest hope and motivation for the future (Workshop participant 1).

Despite the difficulties, I am smiling and I am grateful. Smiling means that the soul is all right (Workshop participant 1).

Another participant highlighted the importance of capacity-building exercises, especially the tools to defend themselves in case of sexual aggression. She added the benefit of a process that enables a change of attitude towards life and a collective effort to forgive (Workshop participant 2).

Peace is first of all in each individual and family (Workshop participant 2).

Being the third and last meeting, the last activity of the day reassembled all the participants for a general feedback session about their experiences along the process, and how they envision the present and future. Some recurring feelings and expressions emerged from the participants’ interventions. The qualities that were expressed the most throughout the interventions were: higher strength, courage, and braveness. Regarding individual processes, expressions such as “a more manageable pain”; “fighting for the same cause”; “we are women fighters”; “insecurity transmuted into strength” were frequent (Notes research journal). Many interventions also mentioned
the psychological and emotional benefit received from being able to share, grief and be heard among other women who experienced similar traumatic events.

*We learn to value feelings and to listen to stronger stories from other women.*

*Remembering that we are not guilty of what happened to us, we receive strength. I am a free woman and I love myself* (Notes research journal).

Furthermore, some women underlined how voicing negative feelings and experiences was very therapeutic as it enhanced attitudes of strength, tranquility, self-esteem, as well as hope and gratitude.

*The terror, fear, and sadness are transformed into braveness, capacity to forgive and to carry on with life* (Notes research journal).

Some participants also mentioned the importance of the spiritual in their lives, which was associated with feelings of support, health, and gratitude (Notes research journal).

Although not all participants were willing to speak up during this last session, there was a great resonance to be found across personal experiences. Overall, it was noticed that many positive adjectives and attitudes came out of these stories (Notes research journal).

**Local forms and strategies of resilience**

One participant, a middle-aged woman living in El Tigre, a place where a deadly massacre happened in 1999 (Grupo de Memoria Historica 2011), mentioned her work in a local association for women victims of the conflict and peace defenders gathering a total of fifty members. They organize workshops to help the victims to “move forward” with their life, emphasizing on projects strengthening economic autonomy, psychological care. They receive funds and occasional support from international organizations (Workshop participant 2).

Another participant mentioned a local women network for agricultural production in the south of Putumayo. She underlined the importance of creating programs to help victims of the armed conflict build local productive programs that can benefit several families, considering the lack of investment and financial support coming from the State (Workshop participant 1).
4.2.3 Forms and strategies of resilience by PDET participants

The following findings aim to shed light on the conditions influencing women’s livelihoods and their resilience in areas strongly affected by the armed conflict, in rural Putumayo. The SWOT analysis presents an overview of challenges and difficulties, as well as strengths and opportunities identified by participants. Insights from interviewees highlight the consequences of conflict dynamics and the lack of government support, and also feelings of hope due to greater inclusion in the regional political debate. Strategies of resistance and threat management have emerged from the findings as reactions to shocks and stressors experienced by the local population, which was found to foster local security and solidarity.

SWOT analysis

The following SWOT analysis summarizes the predominant and recurring elements identified in the surveys from the four PDET encounters across the Putumayo region.
**Figure B: PDET SWOT Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Local women organizations and associations for human rights protection</td>
<td>➢ Participation in the PDET process and peace process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as well as economic cooperatives</td>
<td>➢ Create and consolidate a social network,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Mobilization, solidarity, and strength to protect their rights</td>
<td>through the use of modern social medias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Support from international organizations for the protection of Human</td>
<td>➢ Be actor of their own development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights</td>
<td>➢ Productive projects with native seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Capacity to resist, survive, and protect of their territory from the</td>
<td>➢ Community-based organizations, as the Women Comity, and other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the armed conflict, the violence, and fumigacion of illicit crops</td>
<td>women associations to help strengthen and empower women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Rural community-projects for women in education and handcrafts</td>
<td>➢ Build new initiatives and find forms of survival in the post-conflict context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Productive agricultural projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>Threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge regarding Human Rights and the peace agreement:</td>
<td>Patriarchal society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affecting their capacities and means to claim their rights</td>
<td>Dissidence and activity of illegal armed groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of economic, social, political empowerment to deal with the</td>
<td>Weak support from State entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consequences of the armed conflict</td>
<td>Forced displacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination among women</td>
<td>Child recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of confidence, self-esteem, and psychological health</td>
<td>Sexual abuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination between rural and urban communities and ethnic groups</td>
<td>Oil extraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic labor, patriarchal discrimination from the household, and lack</td>
<td>Illicit economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of recognition of women’s work and opinions</td>
<td>Fumigation of illicit crops by the State: health problems and encourage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No trust in political authorities</td>
<td>the displacement of households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear to denounce sexual or physical abuses, fear of failure of the peace</td>
<td>Corruption of the political system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreement</td>
<td>Culture of violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of resources for economic capacitiation</td>
<td>Weak resources, vulnerability and poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack opportunities in education</td>
<td>Weakening of local organization and mobilization due to rising threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative experiences in the implementation of productive projects</td>
<td>from armed actors and targeted assassinations of social and political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>due to the imposition of a foreign model disregarding local realities</td>
<td>female leaders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The SWOT analysis highlights participant’s perceptions about main challenges and opportunities. The negative consequences of the armed conflict are clearly noticeable as having an important impact on their security, health, political and economic systems. Identified strengths and opportunities converge on the presence of regional and local organization empowering women in economic and political spheres.

Moreover, based on discussion groups and unstructured interviews during the PDET workshops, many participants stressed out the great needs for psychosocial support in a context where most of the women have experienced trauma from sexual abuses, violence, and loss of family members due to the armed conflict. Some participants also underlined difficulties from the lack of support from the State. This is essentially attributed to a weak presence of institutions with no or very little support to victims of the conflict in these rural areas. Moreover, participants also mentioned their skepticism due to issues of corruption among political elites, fearing the effects of upcoming presidential elections which could change or end the implementation of the PDET (Notes research journal).

Stories of resistance and resilience from participants

The following information is derived from semi-structured interviews with participants during the PDET process.

One interviewee presented herself as the president of an economic cooperative for women under the name “Female entrepreneurship” (*Emprendimiento feminino*), located in the south of Putumayo. Her goal is to empower women politically and economically through productive projects. The cooperative gathers a group of thirty women, the majority of them being single mothers. She receives no help from the State mentioning the “abandon of the State”, but receives small contributions from regional women organizations as well as the United Nations, constituting her main financial support. She also mentioned the fact that since the State is absent, “*hope is in foreign countries*” and wish for more presence and support of international and foreign organizations. Nonetheless, the PDET process brings hope as it aims to empower them, foster change and renovation of the territory (PDET participant 1).

_Things have happened because we let them happen, for fear to speak up, we remained silent [...] And we, the women, let it happen in our home and let it happen for fear that they will hit us. [...] The violence killed my husband [...] but anyway,
[the problem] is always sexism, intimidation, the patriarchal society. Today I feel that we, the women, have a bit more freedom, participation, [the PDET process] gives us confidence, strength. [...] Thanks to God and to “Colombia transforma”, now the State entities come to visit us often (PDET participant 1).

Hence, regarding the situation of women in this context, she claims that women are weakened due to cultural factors and traits of a patriarchal society. However, she underlines how the peace process brought more peace and tranquility in her area as violence has diminished and the presence of the State is stronger, which can be observed with initiatives like the PDET that increases spaces for women’s political participation.

What asked about the greatest needs and challenges for women nowadays in these territories, she mentioned the lack of psychosocial support as it’s only been one year since the violence from the armed conflict ceased. Shen then added the importance to create spaces of meeting for women dedicated to the assistance and protection of their rights.

[Due to the effects of the war] there is very little psychosocial support, it’s only been one year. [...] When we gather, [we always express] the need to build an office for special assistance for us and our rights (PDET participant 1).

Lastly, she expressed how she overcomes difficulties thanks to the strength she receives from her work with women, seeing empowerment through autonomy and economic stability as a life mission:

What gives me strength is my life mission, my mission from God (PDET participant 1).

Moreover, she has hopes for new regional productive projects emphasizing on the use of native seeds and the importance to build initiatives to empower women economically for them to be able to sustain themselves and their families (PDET participant 1).

Another interview was conducted in Puerto Asis, one of the municipalities most affected from the armed conflict, with high rates of dissidence, violence, production of coca crops and narcotrafficking (Notes research journal). The participant is a local leader of her community who started by mentioning the strong presence of violence and conflict between various armed actors in her daily life, noticing a change in recent days.
Before there was a lot of conflicts, today there are fewer confrontations, there are no confrontations as it used to be. It was excessive, it was every day. [...] In this situation, you stay still and quiet in the house (PDET participant 2)

Nonetheless, despite the decrease in violent confrontations, she highlighted the remaining lack of security, threats, and assassinations of women leaders.

Yes [I received] threats, I have three from the government [...] for terrorism. [...] [For having demanded justice regarding] the environment, the Amazon, for having said no to more oil exploitation. [...] Therefore one starts to have mistrust in the government because if someone is fighting for the wellbeing of the community, why should this person be threatened [by the State] (PDET participant 2).

Hence, the mistrust in the State described above is rooted in the threat to livelihoods that represent the activities of oil extracting companies, denouncing the lack of protection and support from State entities. According to the interviewee, the absence of support from the State also led to a majority of families depending on the local production and sale of coca crops.

Concerning the coca, people are planting coca not because they want to, people plant coca because of the abandon of the State. It’s the only alternative for survival.

If there was support from the government for rural farmers, an investment, I think the coca would not exist (PDET participant 2).

Nonetheless, through mobilization, the local community has developed strategies to protect and defend their rights. One of them is the creation and consolidation of a network of mobilization for rural farmers, aiming at defending and protecting land rights. Their resistance against the actions of multinational companies resulted in fruitful cooperation that benefited the entire community.

It was about mobilizing through demonstrations, all united, walking to close the road, until the government is willing to hear what is going on here. There starts the topic of protection of human rights for the protection of our communities. And we succeeded, [...] knowing that the multinationals stopped the exploitation, that at least [demonstrates that] it is not how they want but how we say. [...] We demanded that the multinational do improvement of housing for the whole community, and everyone received help. This was beautiful (PDET participant 2).
Furthermore, despite great difficulties, the interviewee invited women of the community to unite in order to act for change. In her view, the peace process brings opportunities to implement sustainable projects able to improve women’s livelihood conditions and wellbeing in the long run.

*It's difficult but I tell the women: You are brave [...]*, able to carry on, and *that together united we are going to do great things, achieve [conditions], not as it used to be, but better. And we started working [...]. Many have seen changes, many have their lands, it all starts with the efforts of oneself [to] change the mentality of poverty, to the one of richness they have now, of knowing they are able to move forward and do many things* (PDET participant 2).

Hence, a crucial point for the interviewee is to enhance the motivation and self-esteem of women living in areas strongly affected by the conflict and the lack of institutions.

4.2.4 Insights from Indigenous Communities

The following findings are issued from interviews with members of indigenous associations and organizations, as well as NGO workers expert in the topic. It was observed that indigenous communities have a strong organizational and value system that strengthen cooperation among different indigenous groups. Pacific resistance is found to be the main strategy when facing issues due to conflict dynamics, although their principal struggle is the protection and preservation of the territory. The role of women in this context seems to have evolved with greater gender equality, however, there still are important limits due to domestic duties and issues of sexual violence.

Life in the community

A representant of the Community House of the NASA people in the capital of Putumayo, Mocoa, presents the main aspects of life in the community. She highlights how the NASA people represent the second largest indigenous group in Putumayo and are very present in the Cauca region as well, bordering Putumayo. She explains how the community is organized on the basis of pacific resistance to external threats, the “indigenous guard” an internal justice system, and an elected political authority being the voice of the community combined with the ancestral authorities (Indigenous association). These different elements organize life in the community, a clear emphasis being on the protection of the territory.
[...] That all is in harmony with the land, all should be so that it does not affect the land. Because if we are doing fine and the land is not, then there is no harmony. All should be in the defense of our territory (Indigenous association).

Furthermore, the community has celebrations during the year, an important one is the “Seput” being the exchange of native seeds among different NASA communities in order to promote the utilization of native seeds instead of modern modified ones. (Indigenous association). Another interviewee underlined the strength of natural and ancestral medicine as an element of strength, union, and solidarity among indigenous communities (Indigenous regional organization).

Political and economic activities

Women have opportunities to be part of the political organization of the community and also in the indigenous guard. But more importantly, women have a crucial role in the fabric of handicrafts.

There are women leaders. [...] It is a very important role for the women leader to teach values. [...] There needs to be education about the principles of living in harmony (Indigenous association).

According to the interviewee, the division of labor along gender differences is strong, as women are usually working close to the household, taking care of children and making handicrafts, as well as gardening. (Indigenous association). However, the OZIP representant highlighted a strong presence of single mothers, but that there is a strong evolution of gender roles and gender equality, with “a lot more empowerment of indigenous women than before” among indigenous communities (Indigenous organization). Nonetheless, this view highly contrasts with the intervention of an indigenous woman at a PDET workshop, stressing important issues of sexual violence inside indigenous communities during the years of the armed conflict, adding that women’s rights are “far from being recognized” (Notes research journal).

Moreover, opinions regarding economic opportunities and financial autonomy inside the communities are nuanced. Hence, the interviewee from the NASA community highlighted the scarcity of resources and difficult living conditions due to a lack of housing, basic sanitation, and drinking water. According to the interview, the lack of
support from the government has resulted in the increase in the production of illicit crops.

*The State abandoned farmers. It’s the reason for the importance of the coca, people have a hectare only to eat, dress, and buy medicine* (Indigenous association).

On the other hand, the interviewee from the OZIP underlines effective economic systems inside indigenous communities relying essentially on a collective and circular system of shared resources, giving greater autonomy to the community (Indigenous organization).

**Conflict, security, and peace**

The principles of nonviolence and pacific resistance are crucial aspects of the NASA peace culture, making the NASA people active promoters of peace at the regional and local level. One interviewee also mentioned that initiatives for the well-being of indigenous communities present in the post-conflict policies should be implemented in the future (Indigenous organization).

*We support the peace process, suggesting, giving visibility to the realities in our territories. [...] In order for peace to thrive, there is a need to bring awareness to each family for love to be replicated* (Indigenous association).

*Hopefully, it’ll be a good peace process [...] It is a long process, of permanency and resistance* (Indigenous association).

Aspects related to the indigenous peace culture was also strengthened by members of the *Camentsa* indigenous tribe, presenting their practices of sharing and gathering for an annual “Forgiveness celebration” (Notes research journal).

Nonetheless, both interviewees highlighted the violence and presence of armed groups as well as the poor or no presence of the State affecting communities. In this context, their culture of pacifism is transcribed in the defense practices of the indigenous guard armed with a symbolic wooden stick as their only weapon.

*The situation is difficult, every day there are more armed groups and we don’t know who is who* (Indigenous association).

*Here the conflict has not stopped, there are a lot of dissident groups* (Indigenous organization).
The weapon of the guard is a stick. It is an indigenous symbol, it is our only weapon (Indigenous organization).

Aside from conflict-dynamics, both interviewees underlined how the biggest challenge for indigenous communities is the protection of their territory and natural resources, which resulted in mistrust and confrontation with the government.

*What we want the most is the non-exploitation of our natural resources.* [...] *This resistance is difficult because the government wants to exploit the territory. Sometimes we mobilize with the indigenous guard in order to defend it, that they don’t sell the land. [...] The government does not consult the people [...] There is nobody to start a dialogue* (Indigenous association). *People are discouraged because they feel there isn’t trust between the government and the population* (Indigenous association).

*The main difficulty is not economic but more the preservation of their land [...] it is what we protect in the first place.* [...] *It is a nonviolent resistance in order for the government to come to listen to us, to what we really want* (Indigenous organization).

This aspect was strengthened by an NGO worker in Mocoa, working in Putumayo with issues concerning indigenous communities for an extended period of time, stressing out how “resilience” in the case of indigenous people rather means “resistance” as they need to resist external threats for the protection and preservation of their culture, identity, and their territory. The interviewee also added the disastrous effects of the armed conflict causing a large number of indigenous communities to leave their ancestral territory, impacting their culture and identity. It was also added that the very weak presence and support from State structures increased the need for them to resist (NGO Staff 3).

Crisis management in Mocoa

As a response to the deadly landslide happened, the NASA people association offered their office as a temporary housing facility for the affected families during several months. The interviewee also highlights how the majority of the victims of the landslide were previously victims of the armed conflict came to seek refuge in Mocoa. The reason being that the displaced populations settled near the river, in a high-risk area, resulting in a total of 1200 damaged households (Indigenous association). Similarly, the OZIP
organization didn’t receive help from the authorities but relied on the solidarity network of indigenous communities for donations and opened spaces for 900 people to take refuge in the aftermath of the natural catastrophe (Indigenous organization).
5. Analysis

5.1 Abductive analysis

This first section aims to analyse the empirical data using the categories presented in Pouligny's (2014) resilient framework, as a tool to identify resilient mechanisms and structures that emerged from the findings. Hence, it will shed light on local mechanisms, structures and practices associated with the identified variables of the framework.

5.1.1 Psychological recovery of individuals and communities

Looking at local projects of organizations seeking to influence the resilient capacities of women victims of the armed conflict and the landslide in Mocoa, it appears that psychological support and trauma relief exercises are essential components of the recovery process of participants. Hence, the “Resilient Women” project from Casa Amazonia puts a great emphasis on the psychological and emotional recovery for women victims of the landslide in Mocoa. This aspect is underlined through their use of exercises, such as collective healing mechanisms, aiming at creating and strengthen the self-esteem and self-confidence of participants. In this regard, the NGO explains how these practices hold the ability to release post-traumatic stress as well as raising the motivation and inner strength of individuals, which are crucial elements for them to recover and find stability in their life again (NGO Staff 1 and 2). Furthermore, this approach is also very present in the activities organized by Unity for Victims for women victims of sexual violence due to the armed conflict. Although there are variations in the form of exercises between both programs, the objectives of influencing emotional healing, psychological attitudes and natural abilities of participants to regain self-esteem, motivation, and confidence by using post-traumatic and collective healing exercises are similar (Workshop Organizer 1 and 2). Moreover, the collective nature of these processes is regarded by both organizations as an effective tool to foster unity, solidarity, motivation and mutual support among participants, fostering the psychological recovery of individuals (NGO Staff 1, Workshop Organizer 1).

Regarding participants experiences and opinions of participants, it can be argued that considerable attention is given to psychosocial health and assistance across cases. Thus, for participants of the “Resilient Women” project in Mocoa, psychological
assistance has enabled some to overcome and heal from traumatic experiences, strengthening their self-esteem, sense of support and confidence (Woman A and C). Moreover, participants in the workshop led by Unity for Victims expressed how the activities meant to address emotional healing were therapeutic and made her feel stronger, supported and raised her self-confidence. The collective nature of these exercises also seemed to have an impact on the sense of solidarity and unity, fostering attitudes of tolerance, perseverance and gratitude (Interview participant 1). Some participants in the PDET for women living in rural Putumayo also stressed the importance and lack of psychosocial support for the amount of women victims of sexual abuses during the armed conflict (Notes research journal).

Hence, psychological recovery is seen as a crucial factor in the immediate and long-term recovery of individuals facing traumatic experiences. The findings highlight a correlation between psychological recovery of individuals and abilities to regain confidence, motivation and inner strength in order to adapt to life circumstances.

5.1.2 A shared system of meaning

This factor is attributed to the influence of individual’s beliefs systems on the capacity to recover from a crisis. It was found that all three programs implemented by local and national actors make use of symbolic acts in order to foster the resilience of participants. Hence, Casa Amazonia used activities inspired by indigenous cultures, such as sacred dances and temazcales (steam bath with medicinal plants), in order to heal, unite, and also influence the mindset of participants to foster positive thinking (NGO Staff 1). Moreover, this aspect is present in the workshops led by Unity for Victims, through the use of artistic and symbolic acts to influence participant’s mental transition from war to peace, from grievance to healing (Notes research journal). The use of symbolic mandalas by facilitators of the PDET workshops also bear the intention to unite and connect participants through the representation of local resources, such as local seeds, symbolizing their connection and inter-dependency to a shared land and its natural resources (Notes research journal).

In regard to individual experiences of participants, it can be noticed that in both programs for victims of the conflict and the landslide in Mocoa, the relation to the divine is strongly related to feelings of support, gratitude, motivation, and inner strength (Group discussion, Woman A and B). Additionally, this aspect was very present among
interviews of Mocoan citizens by the Colombian Historic Memory Center, as many linked their resilience and recovery capacities to their faith, helping many to find meaning and motivation when facing such crisis (Notes research journal).

Overall, this factor is proven to enhance the resilience of individuals as it can foster positive thinking, psychological recovery, and reconciliation. Thus, faith and spirituality seem to influence individual abilities to find inner strength and motivation in life despite traumatic and life-threatening events.

5.1.3 Solidarity among community members and an appropriate distribution of resources

This category is referring to structures of distribution of goods and services, and networks of cooperation and collaboration fostering social cohesion. Particular attention was therefore given to existing structures and mechanisms which are found to enhance solidarity, social cohesion, and access to goods and services.

Regarding programs implemented in Mocoa and in the Putumayo region, it was observed that the majority of interviewees recognized the importance of strengthening networks of solidarity and social cohesion. For instance, workers at Unity for Victims and Casa Amazonia acknowledged the importance of strengthening solidarity among participants as a mean to foster emotional healing and support among individuals, especially by opening a spaces for them to grief collectively and relate and find support in one another (NGO Staff 1 and 2, Workshop organizer 1). Furthermore, the PDET program was seeking to strengthen solidarity and cooperation among participants by using group exercises to foster self-esteem, unity, and cooperation in order for them to think collectively and develop initiatives that will improve their livelihoods (Notes research journal).

This aspect was present in individual’s experiences and perspectives of PDET participants, as one interviewee stressed the necessity to consolidate local networks of farmers in order to protect and defend land rights (Workshop participant 2). This example also shows how networks of cooperation and solidarity among the local population hold the ability to foster social change, as collective mobilizations helped to improve the well-being of the whole community (Workshop participant 2). Furthermore, another participant stressed her dedication to local economic cooperative
networks as a crucial tool to improve the livelihoods of rural women (Workshop participant 1).

In regards to the participants of programs in Mocoa for victims of the armed conflict and of the landslide, the importance of solidarity is mainly found when addressing collective healing mechanisms where individuals found support, strength, and healing by being united with people who experienced similar events (NGO Staff 1, Workshop Organizer 1, Interview participant 1). Moreover, some victims of the landslide in Mocoa mentioned the role of solidarity and humanitarian assistance in their material recovery in the aftermath of the landslide, contrasted by another interviewee who mentioned a lack of local solidarity but essential help coming from foreign organizations and countries (Woman A and C).

The importance of networks of solidarity is then found in indigenous communities. In fact, they were crucial in the aftermath of the natural catastrophe in Mocoa offering emergency housing for the victims during several weeks after the landslide happened (Indigenous organization, Indigenous association). This aspect can also be seen in the indigenous communities’ internal economic system as it is based on a circular system of exchanges of goods produced inside the community, increasing their autonomy and independence (Indigenous organization, Indigenous association). Moreover, the indigenous culture of ancestral medicine creates bridges among communities and thus, strengthening social networks that enable them to connect and unite (Indigenous organization).

Thus, the dynamics englobing networks of solidarity and social cohesion seem to be an effective tool in order to strengthen healing, recovery and also foster unity and cooperation. It can be argued that this aspect was particularly emphasized by participants of the PDET in rural Putumayo, stating the importance of the development and consolidation of economic networks of local productive initiatives that enable rural women to sustain themselves and improve their livelihoods.

An inclusive distribution of resources is not found to be a determinant aspect in the course of this study. In fact, this aspect was not relevant in the findings which can be explained by the context on this study where the majority of interviewees experience a lack or absence of support from Government institutions (Woman A, B, C; NGO Staff 1 and 2, PDET participant 1 and 2, Workshop participant 1).
5.1.4 Community reintegration and trust

The use of social contracts and collective rules fostering trust and social justice among individuals in conflict-sensitive environments were found to be important components ruling the life of individuals in indigenous communities. However, this variable was not found to be predominant throughout the findings, especially outside indigenous communities.

Thus, principles of nonviolence, pacifism, collectivity, are very present in the social contract and value system ruling the organization in indigenous cultures. For instance, the NASA indigenous group put a strong emphasis on their use of an internal justice system and pacifism for security, protection, and promotion of nonviolence inside and outside the community (Indigenous association). Therefore, the organization and social rules inside indigenous communities are found to enhance trust among community members and local peacebuilding as it promotes principles of nonviolence. Their internal justice system also regulates individuals behaviors inside the community which can facilitate the reintegration of members. However, further research is needed to assess the real influence of this factor on individual resilience within indigenous communities.

5.1.5 Broad and inclusive forms of governance

In order to assess this variable, the researcher gave particular attention to existing forms of governance, social and political structures influencing the resilience abilities of individuals.

This aspect is found to be predominant in the approach of the PDET program as it seeks to foster local capacities and livelihoods of rural women by encouraging their participation in the formulation of regional development plans, therefore improving inclusive governance in the region. Moreover, it was mentioned that inclusive governance practices were able to improve local peacebuilding as it gives greater tranquility and hope to the local population (Notes research journal). Furthermore, the lack of external support coming from State entities was frequently associated with diminishing local capacities and opportunities from rural women (Notes research journal, PDET participant 1 and 2). As a consequence, despite the motivation and hope that was expressed by participants during the PDET workshops, it was noticed that the
lack of presence and support from State institutions brought general mistrust and skepticism in the actual implementation of the PDET development plans in the eyes of the studied population. This mistrust is visible through participants mentioning problems of corruptions; lack of support and services for victims of the armed conflict; absence of protection of land rights concerning mining and oil companies threatening local livelihoods; and lack of means of protection against activities of local armed groups (Workshop participant 1 and 2, Notes research journal, Woman A, B, C, Notes research journal). Hence, the mistrust and skepticism in political institutions limit the development of an inclusive and participative type of governance, especially in rural areas highly impacted by weak institutions and the presence of armed actors (Notes research journal, PDET participant 1 and 2). Regarding participants to the “Resilient Women” project in Mocoa, it was mentioned that the help from the State was exclusively focused on housing, highlighting a need for further actions by local institutions for economic and psychological support (Woman A, B, C).

Overall, the findings show how the quality of local governance has a crucial impact on individual’s resilience as interviewees frequently highlighted the negative consequences of the lack of presence and support from institutions, limiting their capacities and abilities to recover from the landslide and to face shocks and stressors due to conflict dynamics.

5.2 - Inductive research

The analysis of the empirical data shows that the resilience framework developed by Pouligny (2014) was not entirely applicable to the local context, as all variables were not found relevant for the analysis of the data. Therefore, the researcher chose to continue with an inductive approach in order to shed light on additional elements that emerged from the findings and found to influence the resilience of women in Putumayo. The section puts an emphasis on financial security, political capacity-building, and protection of the territory as important resilience-enhancing mechanisms, with additional insights regarding local understandings, tools, and perceptions of resilience.
5.2.1 Local means of resilience

Financial security and autonomy

An important aspect emerging from the findings is financial security and autonomy through the development of individual economic projects and local networks of cooperation and production in agriculture. It was found that these initiatives allowed individuals to sustain themselves and their families, increasing their capacities to respond and recover from shocks.

This aspect was highlighted through the economic capacity-building exercises present in both programs implemented by Casa Amazonia and Unity for Victims. For instance, Casa Amazonia puts emphasis on the formulation of a “life plan” where the aim is to help participants develop their own economic initiative, as an income-generating activity, based on their aspirations and skills (NGO Staff 1). This approach is seen as crucial as it holds the ability to bring more tranquility and a sense of security and independence to women in vulnerable situations, as it gives them means to sustain themselves and their families (considering that a large majority of the participants are single mothers) without depending on external financial support or assistance (NGO Staff 1 and 2). In that sense, financial security and self-sufficiency are essential in order to strengthen the resilience of individuals facing post-traumatic shocks, from both human and material losses. In a similar way, one of Unity for Victims’ objectives is to give tools for women to build a life plan by initiating a business, or other types of income-generating activities, in order to reach financial and food security (Workshop organizer 1 and 2). Furthermore, the PDET program for women living in rural areas encouraged participants to formulate suggestions of economic initiatives that will enhance their economic prosperity and therefore their livelihoods (Notes research journal). Nonetheless, facilitators strongly emphasized on the need for further economic capacitation in order for the local populations to gain skills to initiative sustainable productive projects that will improve their autonomy and livelihoods on the long run (Notes research journal).

Regarding the perspectives of the studied population, the economic capacity-building workshops were seen as important mechanisms to gain financial security and stability. Hence, women victims of the landslide in Mocoa underlined the fact that having an economic activity is “the most important thing”, and that economic
capacitation needs to be combined with post-crisis support programs in order for the victims to have means to sustain themselves and their families in the long run (Woman B and A). Moreover, having an economic activity was also associated with psychological recovery, as some interviewees mentioned how their family handcrafts business is the only thing that allowed them to respond to basic needs in the aftermath of the avalanche, bringing them confidence and motivation for the future (Woman D and C). Several interviewees participating in the workshops organized by Unity for Victims and the PDET expressed the vital necessity of local economic initiatives to help strengthen women’s capacities to care for themselves and their families by providing them higher financial autonomy (Workshop participant 2, PDET participant 2). For instance, one interviewee mentioned a women network for agricultural production in the southern region of Putumayo able to sustain multiple families facing the consequences of the armed conflict and the lack of support from the State (Workshop participant 2). Furthermore, the strengths and opportunities identified by the PDET participants in the SWOT analysis strongly highlight the predominance of economic factors with initiatives such as: economic cooperatives, rural community-projects for handicrafts, and productive projects with native seeds (See paragraph 4.2.3).

Thus, financial security and autonomy through economic capacitation and productive projects seem to strongly influence the resilience of the studied population as it affects their ability to sustain themselves and their families, to find meaning in life, and to strengthen their capacities to improve livelihoods conditions. For these reasons, this aspect is found to be an essential part of the resilience of individuals in the context of this study. Nonetheless, it can be argued that put into context this aspect is influenced by the lack of institutions and economic support coming from the State, increasing therefore the necessity for individuals to find alternatives to cover for their basic needs in a sustainable way.

Political awareness and engagement

Another aspect that was found to influence the resilience of women in Putumayo is political capacity-building, in the sense of individual’s awareness of human rights, legal means of protection, activism, and engagement in political and public spheres.

Workshops upon human and sexual rights are present in both programs by Casa Amazonia and Unity for Victims, with the aim to raise awareness about their rights but
also about legal tools to respond to aggression (Workshop organizer 2, Workshop participant 2, Notes research journal). Hence, an NGO worker mentioned a growing number of women leaders in their communities, putting emphasis on the need for further political education in order to strengthen their voices and capacities to become bridges between the local population and the authorities (NGO Staff 1). This aspect is also present in the facilitator’s perspectives in regard to the PDET program, as they highlighted the necessity to empower women locally through spaces dedicated to political capacitiation and to the spread of information on land and property rights (Notes research journal).

Considering the SWOT analysis initiated by PDET participants, the following elements were identified as strengths:

- Local women organizations and associations for human rights protection as well as economic cooperatives
- Mobilization, solidarity, and strength for the protection of their rights
- Support from international organizations for the protection of Human Rights

Hence, knowledge about human rights and associations protecting those rights constitute an important aspect of their resilience as it fosters support among their community and also from international actors. Additionally, participation and engagement in the PDET and the peace process were identified as opportunities, strengthening their capacities to be an actor of the regional and national development (Notes research journal; See paragraph 4.2.3). Furthermore, participants in the PDET program also mentioned how stronger participation in political processes brought them motivation and hope in the future and was also crucial in the development of social and economic networks (Notes research journal).

In another range of ideas, political education and activism are ground principles in the indigenous peace culture. Thus, political and peace activism is for them essential in order to educate the community but also to be able to voice their needs, protect their interests, and give visibility to issues in their territories. In that sense, raising awareness about local issues and promoting a culture of peace among indigenous and non-indigenous populations is seen as essential for peacebuilding, essentially because it helps to strengthen peace locally, enhance therefore their security and well-being (Indigenous association). Thus, it can be argued that political education and peace activism is an important part of the resilience of indigenous communities as it
constitutes a strategy of response and resistance to shocks and stressors arising in conflict-sensitive environments.

These findings underline how political capacity-building, through raising awareness about human, political and economic rights, form an essential part of the resilience of the studied-population as it influences their means of protection and mobilization in order to protect or promote their interests, their livelihoods, strengthening their capacities to respond to a crisis.

Protection and preservation of the territory

Lastly, a noticeable aspect that emerged when addressing sources of resilience for indigenous communities, is the importance given to land and natural resources preservation. In fact, it was mentioned that threats to the preservation of their territory directly affects their culture, their economy, and therefore their livelihoods and well-being in general (NGO Staff 3, Indigenous organization, Indigenous association). Additionally, considering the importance of the territory in the indigenous culture, threats to its preservation is considered a direct threat to the community and resulted in mistrust and even alienation to the State (Indigenous organization, Indigenous association). Hence, it can be argued that the protection and preservation of the territory and its natural resources are crucial characteristic of indigenous resilience.

5.2.2 Insights from local understandings and perceptions of resilience

This section aims to answer the following questions: How do local perceptions of resilience differ from the current understanding among the international community? What insights can contribute to our understanding of the contextualization of this concept?

Qualities and characteristics attributed to resilience

To get a sense of the local understandings behind the concept of resilience, it is important to assess which qualities and characteristics are associated with it and with the mechanisms enabling individuals to face shocks and stressors.

Some characteristics were recurrent throughout the interviews conducted with members of organizations as well as with the studied-population. For instance, when addressing the meaning of the word resilience behind the “Resilient Women” project,
qualities such as strength; braveness; positivity; self-esteem; capacity to move along with life despite tremendous challenges, were frequent adjectives used by the interviewees (NGO Staff 1 and 2). These characteristics were also present in the narratives of participants from the “Resilient Women” project and in the Unity for Victim’s workshop, using expressions such as higher strength; ability to carry on; recover from pain; courage; braveness; ability to solutionize problems (Woman A and B, Workshop participant 1, Group discussion).

Resilience as a transformative process

Across a variety of cases and settings, interviewees mentioned the transformative nature of individual processes of recovery and adaptation in the post-crisis phase. Thus, a large number of interviewees referred to the ability to “move along” (Seguir adelante), suggesting a capacity to overcome challenges and adapt to new life circumstances (Notes research journal, Group discussion, PDET participant 2, Woman A and C, NGO Staff 1, Notes research journal). Furthermore, several interviewees mentioned a process of transformation of mentality and emotions, for example: from pain to joy; from a lack of self-esteem and depression to self-confidence; insecurity transmuted into strength (Notes research journal, PDET Participant 2, NGO Staff 1, Workshop Organizer 1, Group discussion). These examples are here to highlight an important aspect of resilience which is the process of change and transformation that is inherent to any crisis situation and determines the capacities of individuals to adapt to the consequences of shocks and stressors.

Resilience as Resistance

Throughout the fieldwork, it was noticed that resilience was frequently associated with the theme of resistance. Thus, interviewees have referred to resilience as attitudes and capacities of resistance and survival in the midst of the conflict, using strategies such as neutrality and silence (NGO Staff 1 and 2, Cancimance 2014). This link was highlighted by the following statement: “many of them resisted and survived, here is the topic of resilience” (NGO Staff 1). Hence, in the perception of the interviewees at the NGO Casa Amazonia, the resilience of women in Putumayo during the years of the armed conflict

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4 The term resistance refers to the capacities of individuals to remain on their land despite high levels of violence and threats from armed actors.
is strongly defined by their capacity to resist and survive to conflict dynamics and consequences. Thus, the capacity to resist was associated with strength, braveness, courage, enabling individuals to survive, protect their family and their land (NGO Staff 1 and 2, Group discussion). Furthermore, resistance was also associated in the SWOT analysis of PDET participants with strength and the capacity to resist and survive from conflict dynamics, the fumigation of illicit crops, and threats to their territory (Notes research journal).

Tools and practices

Lastly, it was found that collective exercises were used extensively in order to foster individual resilience. In fact, in both programs implemented by Casa Amazonia and Unity for Victims, collective dynamics were seen as crucial in order to address individual issues, such as grief and depression, also helping to strengthen mutual support and self-esteem among participants (NGO Staff 1, Workshop organizer 1). Moreover, in the view of Casa Amazonia, there is an intimate relation between activities done collectively and resilience as these group processes enable victims of war and sexual violence to gather, relate, and find support and strength in each other essentially by sharing stories and emotions. In that sense, collective processes are found to be a crucial tool to enhance the self-esteem, motivation and inner strength of individuals facing vulnerability and post-traumatic stress (NGO Staff 1 and 2). Moreover, participants in the program coordinated by Unity for Victims stressed out the emotional and psychological benefit they acquired from hearing, being heard and express themselves among a group of women who experienced similar traumatic events, which increased their strength, tranquility, self-esteem, and attitudes of forgiveness (Group discussion, Workshop Participant 1).

5.2.3 Adapted framework

This section aims to summarize in a frame the main findings of this study, in order to identify the resilience-enhancing factors in the context of this study. The following framework is therefore based on Pouligny’s (2014) framework and enriched with my own data.

- Psychological recovery of individuals and communities
• A shared system of meaning
• Economic security and stability
• Solidarity among community members and appropriate distribution of resources
• Broad and inclusive forms of governance
• Political awareness and engagement
• Protection and preservation of the territory
6. Conclusion

To conclude, this field study brought light into essential components driving and strengthening the resilience capacities of women in the southern region of Colombia, facing the consequences of natural disasters and decades of conflict dynamics. Overall, by investigating what are the roots and the nature of their resilience, it was found that from having survived many years of conflicts or a tragic natural disaster individuals ground their resilience and capacities to overcome difficulties in their ability to respond to basic needs and necessities. Thus, first and foremost: individual capacities to sustain themselves and their family through financial security and autonomy. Although this aspect is essential for their material survival, it is strongly correlated with abilities to recover from psychological trauma, influenced by the system of meaning and access to healing mechanisms. Then, aside from individual capacities, many factors attributed to the broader environment come to strengthen the ground of their resilience: support, protection, and inclusion from State institutions; community solidarity and economic cooperation; land preservation and protection. Nonetheless, the importance given to these factors varies greatly depending on the conditions experienced by the individual. Hence, resilience is close to resistance when individuals are facing threats from activities of armed actors or multinationals without any help from State entities. Moreover, resilience is different for members of indigenous communities as the political and economic organization as well as their system of meaning differs from non-indigenous people.

Thus, the findings align with the literature concerning the qualities and characteristics attributed to the concept of resilience, essentially constituting the capacities of individuals to recover from a crisis and adapt to shocks and stressors (Menkhaus 2013, Johansson 2015, Pouligny 2010, Schilling et al 2017, Chandler 2013, Miliken 2013). However, the study brings new elements by showing how resilience does not only refer to inherent abilities of individuals but can be strengthened by actors using techniques, such as healing mechanisms, to enhance the resilience capacities of individuals and contributes to reconciliation. Furthermore, the study contributes to our general understanding of the resilience concept, but also allow a deeper awareness of the conditions women in Putumayo are facing, shedding light on tools and actions that
could help improve the livelihoods of women facing similar conditions in the world, with actions to prevent and manage the consequences of gender violence, and allow for a stronger empower of women as peacebuilding actors.

Thus, resilience is a wide and multifaceted concept that would require further research regarding resilience-enhancing tools that could be used across contexts despite cultural differences. Moreover, the study shows a possible feminine type of resilience, although the findings are not sufficient to make an in-depth analysis of it, therefore inviting researchers to do further investigation upon that theme.
References


Annexe I : List of interviewees

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Annexe II : Sample interview questions – Participants in the « Resilient Women » program

All interviews were semi-structured and the questions were adapted to the situation of each interviewees. Here are the sample questions used during the interviews with the participants in the « Resilient Women » program led by the NGO Casa Amazonia in Mocoa.

- What is your name and where do you live currently?
- I am aware the situation was very difficult when the landslide happened, is it the first time this kind of event happened?
- What was your reaction? Did you receive any help in the aftermath of the landslide? From who?
- Did you receive help from the State or any other public entity? From other organizations than Casa Amazonia?
- Are you worried something similar might happen again?
- What is your main source of worry and fear?
- What process brought you to your current living situation?
- How did you manage your material reconstruction?
- Do you experience post-traumatic stress? What helps you the most in your recovery process?
- Did you find the program with Casa Amazonia helpful? In what way?
- From your experience, how can a person become more resilient to overcome the consequences of something like the landslide? What is most important in order to be able to carry on?
- What do you think are the characteristics of a resilient women?
- From your perspective, are there differences between the resilience of men and women? What are they?
- What gives you hope and motivation for the future?
- What evolution you would like to see in your life and for your family?