MULTI SCALE APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN ECUADOR

By

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MULTI SCALE APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN ECUADOR

By

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Ecuador is notable among Latin American countries for its decades-long efforts to pass legislation and build institutions designed to ensure a life free of violence. Despite these efforts, recent large-scale studies reveal that the rates of gender-based violence (GBV) remain high. This thesis examines legislation, organizational practices, public and private discourses, and professional and personal experiences in relation to GBV in Ecuador. Field research carried out in collaboration with the Quito-based non-governmental organization Centro Ecuatoriano para la Promoción y Acción de la Mujer (CEPAM) included observant participation, in-depth interviews and examination of CEPAM case files.

This thesis pursues three research questions to see what ideas and meanings are associated with GBV among differently positioned actors in Ecuador, what factors are associated with reported experiences of GBV and with the decision to report violence, and ways in which people go about reporting GBV. Findings in response to these three questions come together in my
analysis of how CEPAM practices work to translate and to bridge Ecuador’s official policies and procedures with diverse individual experiences and contexts.

I illustrate how national campaigns draw constant attention to the presence of GBV, and raise questions about how these discourses resonate with some of the meanings and contexts of CEPAM users. Policy and public discourses focus on selected types of GBV (physiological, physical and sexual), distributing meanings that do not always connect well with individual experiences. Recent attention to economic and patrimonial violence seems to connect with CEPAM users’ experiences of economic conflict and exploitation, often intertwined with the other, more widely recognized forms.

Review of sociodemographic characteristics of CEPAM users and factors that are associated with their experiences of GBV suggests various ways in which they connect to the socioeconomic context of Ecuador. Attention is drawn to the multiplicity of forms of abuse and to decisions to take action against them, intersecting with personal and community characteristics and networks.

My analysis identifies several tensions between the experiences of CEPAM users and national policies and legislation. One crucial factor affecting the process of reporting GBV is the legal procedure that requires complex evidence to document how corporeal and mental states transform with the experience of GBV. Thus, by assisting people to work with the system while also finding solutions that best fit their individual experiences, CEPAM plays a critical role in the lives of those who have been disadvantaged by one of more individuals, and often by the system.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Framing of Gender-Based Violence in Different Contexts

Rates of gender-based violence (GBV) in Latin America are among the highest in the world, with serious health consequences for the region’s population (Smart Global Health 2010). Several multi-country surveys have been carried out in the region, revealing that GBV is prevalent in each country studied (Bott et al. 2012). Different scholars, organizations, and feminist epistemic communities have addressed GBV in terms of health problems, violations of human rights, and barriers to economic development (Heise 2011; Bott et al. 2012; Merry 2016). Growing global consciousness around GBV has encouraged many sociopolitical actors to develop policies, resolutions and interventions, intended to reduce its prevalence. Laws that address some types of violence-against women were initially passed in Argentina and Chile (1994), in Ecuador and Bolivia (1995), in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico (1996), and in Peru (1997) (Rioseco Ortega 2005). Finally, a range of scholarly studies in the region have explored different reasons behind the high prevalence of GBV, and suggested strategies to address it (Beske 2014, Friederic 2014, Deere et al. 2014, Schuller 2015, Hume and Wilding 2015).

Some institutions that have brought GBV into public discourse are linked to the United Nations (UN), which conceptualizes GBV in the ‘violence against women’ (VAW) frame that has been employed around the world. This framework defines VAW as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether
occurring in public or private life” (UN 1995: sec. D, 113). While some women’s advocacy organizations define GBV as “any act of gender-based violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately (CEDAW 1992: General Recommendation No. 19),” human rights organizations are less likely to limit the content to women victims. Among UN Human Rights agencies, GBV refers to violence that targets individuals or groups on the basis of their gender (IRIN 2004). This includes the experience of men who are “harassed, beaten or killed because they do not conform to view of masculinity, which are accepted by the society” (Ibid.).

These varied conceptualizations coincide in approaching GBV within a gender framework that recognizes hierarchical relations among gendered groups and subordinate status of certain gender categories in each society. This frame draws attention to the role of GBV in manifesting, as well as enforcing gender inequalities, or—more concretely—gender norms, roles and expectations. While these significant recognitions initially pushed forward debates around GBV, they also created challenges in thinking about GBV across cultural, class, religious and other differences (Bolis 1993). As discussed by Sally Engle (2016, 373), the “conceptions of violence and of the relationship and social structures within which it occurs are highly variable,” which poses difficulties to a growing demand of classifying violence against women. Located in different epistemological and geopolitical backgrounds, conceptualizations of violence travel from practice to

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discourse, from governmental to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), affecting knowledge and governance.

**Situating Ecuador**

Ecuador’s dynamic history has been punctuated by sociopolitical turbulence. During the last decades of the twentieth century, the expansion of neoliberal economic and political models correlated with severe structural transformations, high unemployment, high inflation rates, regional disputes, administrative weaknesses and fragmentation of the ethnoracial systems (Beckerman and Solimano 2002; Whitten 2003; Radcliffe 2012). Women’s participation in the public sphere including engagement in activism, and in economic development, played a significant historical role (Lind 2005; Aguinaga et al. 2013).

The Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA)’s 2011 report posited that Ecuador was becoming a role model for other Latin American countries through its decades of efforts to pass legislation and build institutions, all of which laid the foundation for advancements of women’s rights, gender equity and efforts to ensure a violence-free life (Lind 2005). Throughout the 1980s, and 1990s, an established gender divide between the public and private spheres was challenged through the government’s efforts to institutionalize anti-discrimination laws (Lind 2005; Friederic 2011). More than twenty gender-based legislative actions were taken in the 1995-2000 period alone, including the passage of new laws sanctioning violence against women, the installation of a female quota for political participation, and the repeal of several discriminatory laws (Lind 2005). Many of these were motivated by women’s and feminist activism, which has also
contributed to the establishment of various institutionalized initiatives that pushed towards gender mainstreaming, greater inclusion of GBV in policies and recognition of equity and equality programs and campaigns (Friederic 2011).

One of the crucial changes was passage in 1995 and enforcement of The Law of Violence-Against-Women and Family Violence (Ley 103) which criminalizes physical, sexual, and psychological spousal abuse, and provided basis for the opening of the women-operated police stations (Comisarías de la Mujer y la Familia). Law 103 was repealed in 2014 when the Codigo Orgánico Integral Penal (COIP) went into effect which reformed it in significant ways. During the past decade, other relevant entities contributed to mainstream work towards gender equality and to raise awareness about violence. Two initiatives were a 2009 media campaign that informed about Machismo and a 2011 National Survey on Violence against Women (VAW) with findings demonstrating that GBV is still an issue intersecting with race, education, class, family and marriage structures in Ecuador.

**Methodological and Conceptual Directions**

Anthropologist Norman E. Whitten (2003, 2) posits that it is crucial “to look at Ecuador in its multifaceted particularities and to set its historical and emergent cultural systems in global dimensions,” because it is a country reflecting “the diversity of the national topology in their contrasts, languages, ecologies and cultural and social systems” (2003, 12). Thus, in order to understand particularities of one spatial and temporal context within a country as diverse as Ecuador, this thesis focuses specifically on Quito, the capital city located in the province of Pichincha, highlighting changes over the past decade. The findings
are based on the ten-week field work conducted between May and July 2016, at Quito-based Centro Ecuatoriano para la Promoción y Acción de la Mujer (Spanish Acronym: CEPAM, in the future referred to as CEPAM or The Center) that works with people, especially women from low-income backgrounds, who experience GBV. They offer assistance in realm of social work, legal issues and psychological therapies. There, I collected primary data by participating in everyday activities of their team, comprised by psychologists, lawyers, a social worker, and gender specialists.

**Primary Data**

I conducted 25 in-depth interviews with users who use CEPAM's services and with CEPAM professionals; carried out observant participation at CEPAM headquarters every weekday over the course of ten weeks; and collected as well as analyzed 380 case files that keep records of users who have come to the Center since 2015. In Chapter 2, I also describe my methodological approach drawing on elements from feminist ethnography, postcolonial theory and an intersectional approach. Following these methodological currents, my methods are designed to understand and go beyond the stereotypical and often binarized categories (such as “victims” versus “perpetrators”), to locate individual experiences in sociocultural and political economic context, and to recognize how different systems of gender, sexuality, space, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic position intersect with experiences and practices of violence.

**Secondary Data**

My primary findings are examined together with findings of several large studies carried out recently in Ecuador. A key source in my study is the national
survey *La Encuesta Nacional de Relaciones Familiares y Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres* (A National Study about Family Relations and Gender Violence against Women) that was conducted in 2011 by Ecuadorian Statistical Institute (INEC), and shows how GBV is addressed and quantified on an organizational and national level. I also look at two other studies conducted in Ecuador: *Estudio Cualitativo de la Campaña Reacciona Ecuador, El machismo es Violencia* (A Qualitative Study of the React Ecuador, Machismo is Violence Campaign, 2011) and (more briefly) *Los Costos Invisibles de la Violencia Contra las Mujeres Para las Microempresas Ecuatorianas* (The Invisible Costs of Violence against Women for Ecuadorian Enterprises, 2013). I also consider CEPAM’s materials that were published and/or used in their workshops (including brochures, leaflets, manuals and catalogs).

**Literature**

Finally, while paying attention to the political economy, historical and current context, I draw from a wide range of anthropological literature on gender, violence, critical development studies, as well as scholarship on public health and feminist economics to develop a theoretical framework within which notions of gender, gender-based violence, ideology, culture, power, family and household play a crucial role. I employ these to critically read peer-reviewed literature and grey literature published by governmental, non-governmental organizations and other entities (such as World Health Organization and Pan American Health Organization). Informing about the sociopolitical context of Ecuador and CEPAM, literature helped shape the plan of research process and methods before filed research.
Finally, it informed process of analysis after field research, presented in the following thesis, and the development of the following three research questions: What ideas and meanings are associated with GBV among differently positioned actors in Ecuador? Among CEPAM users, what factors are associated with reported experiences of GBV and with the decision to report violence? How has GBV been addressed in Ecuadorian policies, and how have these influenced ways in which people talk about and report GBV.

**Multiscale Analytic Framework and Original Contribution**

Methods applied to answer the three research questions identified above led to findings including: narratives by people experiencing GBV in interviews and case files; contextual factors and associated with those experiences of GBV; and discourses and approaches manifest in Ecuadorian policies, programs and studies on GBV, as well as in CEPAM. These come together through the analysis of the everyday practices of the CEPAM team that handles many things at once to satisfy the needs of their users, and those of the system.

This study works on three levels to analyze the diverse findings and relations among them. First, on the level of national government, feminist NGOs and society, it aims to understand how GBV in Ecuador is *conceptualized*, *categorized* and *operationalized* in policies, national campaigns and legislations. It also considers the 2011 provincial results of the National Survey that measured VAW. Second, on the level of individual actors, it aims to show the diverse and complex ways in which Ecuadorian men and women who come to CEPAM experience GBV and talk about its different forms. I focus here on the multiplicity of forms of violence and their intertwinements in sociodemographic factors, social
circles (intimate, family, community) and structural conditions (legal framework, employment) that affect individual’s decision to take action. Third, on the level of an organization poised at the interface of national policy and individual experience, this study aims to illustrate how GBV is responded to by different institutions and organizations. Taking CEPAM as my case study, this thesis analyzes ways in which the CEPAM team has responded to their users and to government bodies. Specifically, I analyze ways in which CEPAM practices work to translate across different conceptualizations and narratives, to bridge Ecuador’s official policies and procedures with individual experiences and contexts, and to serve important societal-level objectives and simultaneously help to improve individual lives.

**Thesis Organization**

Following the present introduction, Chapter 2 discusses the methodological approaches, and describes the methods developed and applied, concluded with a presentation of concepts that are applied throughout this thesis. Chapter 3 presents and discusses select theoretical currents relevant for understanding gender and violence globally and in Ecuador. My discussion critically reviews peer-reviewed literature and gray material (such as multi-country studies) that have approached GBV and factors associated with it in different ways. After setting the scene for the following chapters, which focuses on my ethnographic and archival data, Chapter 4 explores how GBV is named and conceptualized in two national campaigns that draw on legal language employed in Ecuadorian legislation and disseminate specific definitions and meanings of GBV. I show that public initiatives frame GBV around physical,
sexual and psychological violence, with a recent attempt to bring in patrimonial and economic violence. Juxtaposing these meanings with the experiences of people who come to CEPAM, I draw attention to challenges in translating between these national initiatives and complex individual experiences, polemicizing the positionality of feminist NGOs in Quito. In Chapter 5, I analyze select aspects of 380 CEPAM’s case files and discuss some of the sociodemographic characteristics of their users, drawing attention to risk factors associated with their experience with GBV, and factors that had lead them to the decision to take action. I discuss the multiplicity of the forms of violence, the category of aggressors, the role of people’s networks, and moments that lead women to report violence. Here I also mention that although violence against women is more commonly reported, case files show that violence against men in a relationship occurs too. Chapter 6 turns to legal, economic and sociocultural obstacles that CEPAM users encountered upon and after initiating a process of reporting GBV. Exploring a recent legal reform that brought changes to the ways in which GBV is addressed and penalized in legal contexts, this chapter highlights challenges of organizations and programs facing discrepancies between theory and practice of human rights. The thesis ends with a final discussion about the multiscale approaches to GBV, reflecting on the contributions of the work of one organization whose practices translate across scales, considering possibilities for the future.

Purpose and Relevance of the Study

Based on qualitative and quantitative analysis of original data, merged with the consultation of secondary data, the findings of this project expand upon
previous and ongoing research on GBV in the region, and contribute to greater understanding of GBV in Ecuador. Drawing on an archive of case files, I expand upon quantitative studies by providing narratives of people who have reported violence at either judicial units or CEPAM, demonstrating ways in which different forms of violence coexist and intertwine with intimate, family and community context. I also provide some testimonies of men that offer a more balanced overview of complexities of GBV in Ecuador that has previously focused exclusively on women. Furthermore, by comparing my data, to those data accumulated and processed by INEC, I show how experiences of people and factors associated with their experience of GBV connect to both national and provincial results, challenging ways in which GBV is addressed and quantified on an organizational and national level. This thesis will have the potential to provide organizations, such as, feminist and advocacy groups, with information that could benefit the people they serve. Furthermore, it is my hope that my findings will benefit CEPAM’s effort to develop a more in-depth understanding of their work and services they offer, benefiting Ecuadorian men and women who endure GBV and seek institutional assistance.
The day of my first successful house visit with the social worker I will refer to as Gloria was one of those sunny ones that made me fall in love with Quito. About a month earlier, Gloria and I had attempted to visit another household in a neighborhood on the outskirts of Quito, where we spent about an hour searching for the street, until Gloria finally decided to call a relative who was listed in her case files as an emergency contact for the woman we were looking for. Instead of receiving directions from the relative on the phone, Gloria was met with angry rebukes about how she thought that the CEPAM team “worked confidentially” – and insistence that she would not help us find the house. When we eventually found the house, nobody opened the door.

With this situation in mind, planning of the second house visits made me somewhat nervous, but Gloria told me not to worry about a thing. We got off the bus and were met by a woman I will call Claudia, one of eight siblings who co-own a large house that was built by their parents who intended it to be a place for all of their children to live in. While the father had already died, the mother was on her death bed, and Claudia originally came to CEPAM to express her frustrations about having to support the ailing mother on her own without any help from the siblings, most of whom do live in the house (and fight over it). Gloria had been suspicious of the credibility of Claudia’s narratives, saying there is algo raro, something off about them. We were welcomed into the house, where we interviewed four of Claudia’s sisters, asking them similar questions about their backgrounds, hoping to find clues about family dynamics. Apart from the fact that some shed tears, harsh words were exchanged, and Claudia was caught eavesdropping on one of the interviews, things evolved pretty smoothly and we left after three hours, feeling like we got a good glimpse into the complicated family situation filled with economic and patrimonial violence, feelings of injustice and jealousy.

Upon returning to CEPAM, I heard a loud knock on the door. It was Claudia and she appeared very upset. After hearing her perspective, it became clear that she expected us to “fix” the situation for her; fix family dynamics and stimulate everyone to take care of the dying mother and resolve the property issues that they originally denied. In her eyes, Gloria interviewed “the wrong group” of siblings. Claudia accused her of “not knowing how to interview properly,” and of letting herself be manipulated by the locas, her crazy sisters. Since Gloria was not at CEPAM, I tried calming her down by assuring her that Gloria would be back soon to explain the standard procedures that we followed during the visit. In the midst of chaos, the director of CEPAM intervened and attempted to “save” me from the situation, urging me to leave for my other meeting right that second. The director was curious and almost amused by what happened. After I explained some of the tensions we encountered. She waved her hand implying that she’s used to these situations, expressing her frustration with las mujeres así, women who seek to turn the situation in their advantage.
With this vignette, I open a discussion about the many power dynamics faced during fieldwork and points of tensions related to my positionality that arose during the time I spent at CEPAM. I examine them through a discussion of methods and methodological and epistemological approaches that I developed, applied and analyzed. In the first part of this chapter, I describe the non-governmental organization that I collaborated with in Quito, proceed with a discussion of feminist methodological framework and reflective writing, developed in relation to the situation discussed above, and conclude with an explanation of the main methods used, clarifying why I consider this research feminist. In the second part, I provide a conceptual toolkit with the main concepts that guide this research, proposing an analytical framework that directs this research.

**The Field Site: Centro Ecuatoriano para la Promoción y Acción de la Mujer**

I conducted primary research in Quito during a 10-week period from May through July 2016, in collaboration with the Ecuadorian Center for Promotion and Action of Women (*Centro Ecuatoriano para la Promoción y Acción de la Mujer* [CEPAM]). I gained access to CEPAM through thesis advisors Dr. Carmen Diana Deere and Dr. Susan Paulson. Through their connection to CEPAM’s director, who had expressed her interest in having a volunteer come and systematically organize their case files, I began developing a project that would allow for an exploration of my interests while also contributing to CEPAM’s practices. While staying in Quito, I spent every weekday at CEPAM’s central office, where I observed and participated in daily activities (e.g. team meetings, project planning, counseling, house visits). I shared numerous conversation with people
in different gender, ethnoracial and demographic positions. My constant presence helped create bonds of trust not only with the employees but also with the men and women who came to CEPAM for assistance and whom I interviewed.

The CEPAM team positions its practice between a conceptual framework established by the United Nations and the one employed by the Ecuadorian legal system (*Sistema Jurídico Ecuatoriano*) (Balarezo 2010, 22). Their work focuses on *una vida libre de violencia* (life free from violence), social development and empowerment that is based on inclusivity, equity and solidarity, where human rights are respected and transparent, and where gender is mainstreamed in public politics – recognized in coordination with local, national and international activists. Founded in 1983 in Quito, founders of CEPAM locate its initial mission among efforts of feminist groups of the period that were trying to seek NGO status. Its aim was to “professionalize or to create a stronger institutional basis for their social movement activism, increased development assistance and aid, global feminist solidarity movements” (Lind 2005, 46). Its initial projects focused on the low-income neighborhoods in southern Quito, while also bringing and distributing information, gender-affirmative trainings and services—prioritizing areas of (reproductive) health, nutrition, human rights, legal assistance and different types of personal development.

Although gender was on the frontline from the very beginning, it took until the early 1990s for violence to become the focal point. Development of CEPAM’s approach to gender based violence was influenced by United Nations positions and declarations as well as by those employed by the Ecuadorian official entities.
Via alliances with the different women’s organizations (e.g. *El Consejo Nacional de las Mujeres*, CONAMU – previously known as UNIFEM – and *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality UN Women*), The CEPAM team lobbied legislators to adopt Ley 103 on gender violence, the constitutional recognition of women’s equality rights in 1998, and finally, contributed to changes in the 2008 Constitution (Friederic 2011).¹

The CEPAM team continuously promotes institutional development, focusing especially on legal aspects in the areas of GBV, which grew stronger after 2001. It established collaborations in different municipalities around Ecuador (Santa Elena, Salcedo, Tena, Quito, Cotacachi and Sangolquí) and started emphasizing work with youth, targeting girls and boys in Quito, Río Verde and Esmeraldas. Through a number of projects that recruited women and children that endure violent situations, as well as support from The Comisarías, the CEPAM team expanded their services and became a recognized center that has been collaborating with numerous organizations (e.g. *La Fundación de Ayuda contra la Drogadicion, el Ayuntamiento de Valencia y la Generalitat Valenciana, Fundación Mariana de Jesús*) in different parts of Quito (especially low-income neighborhoods) and other regions of Ecuador. It is now one of the 17

¹ Gender equality and equity are contested terms that change their meanings when translated from the level of international policies to local contexts (Kabeer 2005; Merry 2006; Verloo 2007; Tolo Østebø 2015). Both are goals of many development initiatives, policy frames and visions, often presented as a “universal norm” (Thomas 2007, 600). In the most general sense, I understand ‘gender equality’ as an effort to achieve equal opportunities, equal rights, equal responsibilities and equal recognition of “interests, needs and priorities” (UN Women). In contrast, ‘gender equity’ usually does not presuppose “the male norm” and is a “notion comprising a plurality of distinct normative principles” (Fraser 1994, 594-595). Thus, as opposed to equality – which calls for sameness, – equity draws on the concept of fairness, where different efforts are recognized as contributing to livelihoods.
so called *Centros de Atención* that – in addition to five *Casas de Refugio* – have an agreement with the government to contribute to the protection of women who are victims of intrafamiliar violence.

CEPAM’s current services encompass: legal advising (after an individual has reported or wishes to report the case of GBV, divorce process, legal rights and obtaining *boletas de auxilio,*\(^2\) psychological counseling (crisis intervention, therapeutic support to victims of violence, including individual, partner and family attention) and the services of a social worker (who makes the first contact, orders house visits, and supervises frequency of visits). The CEPAM team also organizes workshops (individually and collaboratively), covering the themes of violence, health, nutrition, human rights, economic and social empowerment, and development. At these workshops for individuals directly affected by GBV, they also bring in medical personnel, social organizations, police, judges and leaders from different sectors to teach about the ways in which gender-based violence (GBV) can be understood and approached (Balarezo 2010).

**Epistemological and Methodological Framework**

The methodological approach and research design of this project are influenced by feminist ethnography, postcolonial theory and intersectionality. The ideas about what each of these means are complex and wide-ranging (Narayan 2004).

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\(^2\) These would be translated as “help certificates […] which enable victims to obtain the necessary protection provided by the police and have the aggressor arrested” (Friederic 2011, 124).
Feminist Ethnography

Early feminist ethnographers were committed to women and questioning assumptions about scientific objectivity, drawing attention to diverse epistemological stances and pushed for a move away from the objective/subjective dualism. In her essay, Judith Stacey (1988, 23) argues that the idea of a feminist ethnography is fundamentally flawed and no less immune to risks, exploitation and betrayals than any other research, because “the research product is ultimately that of the researcher, however modified or influenced by informants.” In an article with the same title, Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) contributes a more optimistic picture, arguing that there are possibilities of feminist ethnography whose foundations lie in the particularities of women’s lives and in the need to deconstruct theories of power. These dichotomous categories (nature/culture, objectivism/subjectivism, insider/outsider universality of reason, adequacy of women for certain disciplines) have foundations in Western epistemologies and are, according to Ann Oakley (2000), fundamentally gendered and androcentric (see also Ortner 1972; Mohanty 1984; Spivak 1988; Behar 1995; Narayan 1998).

Postcoloniality: An Epistemological Shift and Transnational Implications

The epistemological shifts influenced the design of research and those who considered themselves feminist researchers drew attention to reflexivity and awareness of standpoints and positionality, which are also understood in contested ways. I follow Tara Warden’s words (2013, 154) to understand reflexivity as “the critical consideration of the researcher’s self, their biases and how those affect the researcher.” However, I also add participants to the end of
the equation. By positionality, Ketih Punch (2012, 87) understands it through the ways in which the researcher's self-influences the data generated and examines them "in a safe manner by focusing on social categories such as gender, class, ethnicity." I follow his line of thinking, to understand positionality as an epistemological stance purposefully conscious of ways in which gender, race, class, sexuality and socioeconomic background affect the knowledge applied and the knowledge produced in the research process.³

These concepts were challenged by the rise of postcolonial studies that developed along with queer and critical development studies (Paulson 2015) and emphasized the critique and deconstruction of Western feminisms, knowledge production, researchers’ standpoints, globalization and agency, immigration and gender. There are several parallels between feminism and postcolonialism – both address marginalization and the constructions of colonial subjects and ideas, but postcolonial feminism highlights gender component, drawing attention to ways in which different intersecting forms of oppression (racial, class, ethnic) have particularly subjected women. This includes critiques of Western feminisms, knowledge production, globalization and women’s agency (Narayan 2009).

In a collection of essays titled Género y Descolonialidad (Gender and Descolonization), Walter Mignolo (2014, 9) identifies colonial implications that interact with gender systems in Latin America, including the spheres of the

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³ Finally, in terms of standpoint theory, Nancy Hartstock (1983) discusses the situatedness of knowledge that depends on one’s circumstances and impacts them in terms of relative power, and place – not free of objectivity. It originated due “a matrix of domination and intersectional approaches” that established epistemological reasoning which help us unpack women’s oppression (Boles 2016, 89). To me, standpoint theory is both – a social theory and methodology that aims to challenge the legacy of colonial processes.
economic norms that reinforce capitalist markets and hierarchies, and knowledge production that intertwine with a gender system where a specific construction of a woman and a man, heterosexuality and Christian/Victorian family manifest are universally coherent. As noted by Paulson (2015), it was not just historical and economic factors that contributed to the dissemination of these ideas, but also global epistemic communities. This concept is relevant for my work that combines opinions and dimensions of different feminist epistemic communities that have worked towards recognition and eradication of GBV. I define epistemic communities as a network of actors, actions, ideas, alliances and “professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain,” (Haas 1992, 3 in Ewig 2010, 62) that pushes for the recognition of women’s rights to become adopted by policy makers, governmental and non-governmental organizations. Their actions stem from bodies of knowledge and theoretical legacies that have the “epistemic responsibility” (Code 1983) to converge gender-related fields. As discussed by Friederic (2011, 50), this aspect of transnationalism “foregrounds history as relevant to understanding the transnational and engages rather than eclipses questions of power and inequality.”

4 This should be considered in the context of the three paradigms that began emerging in 1970s and became central to these discussions: women in development (WID), women and development (WAD), and gender and development (GAD) The early approaches criticized development model for both excluding women and/or including them merely as passive beneficiaries (Boserup 1970). With the introduction of (WID), women began to be seen as an “untapped source of economic growth” that has the potential to contribute to the efficiency and development (True 2003, 370). Globally and in Latin America, these shifts lead to a number of women-directed programs and NGOs that recognized women’s work and productivity and were equipped to assist women in accessing resources designated for development (Aguinaga et al. 2013, 42; Bernal and Grewal 2014). With the emergence of WAD in the second half of 1970s, the very core of the modernization, embodied in “the consensus between liberal political ideologies and neoclassical economics,” was put into focus (Aguinaga et al. 2013, 43). However, WAD failed to place women within the matrix of the gendered structures of power, or intersect them with race or imperialism (Wilson 2015) and saw domestic work as part of the “private” domain, which
recognition came with the attempt to translate concepts and situate them within the “local contexts of power and meaning” (Merry 2006, 1). This included dissemination of meanings, ideas, concepts and practices by international networks and actors have been studied within the areas of neoliberal governance (Philips and Cole 2009; Talpade Mohanty 2013), human rights (Merry 2006), and gender equality (Thomas 2007; Østebø 2015) among others. Thus, although a wide range of studies conducted by different scholars and activists in the realms of GBV advanced many policies, it also brought its own theoretical and practical challenges.

**An Intersectional Approach**

The efforts to challenge gender and other binaries were followed by the ideas of the deconstructions of the gender itself that have been reproduced by these hegemonic models, which opened space for voices of those living on the margins and considered them “epistemologically valid” (Davis 2013, 27). The deconstruction of an idea that oppression can be studied merely through the gender lens lead to the development of the intersectional framework that allowed scholars and others to spread their research across different spheres of knowledge and realms of power (Dill and Kohlman 2012, 169). One of the pioneers of intersectionality, Kimberlé Crenshaw used the term “to focus attention on the vexed dynamics of difference and the solidarities of sameness in the context of antidiscrimination and social movement politics,” focusing on intentionality and performativity (Cho et al. 2013, 787). Some of the other early
intersectional scholarship combined knowledge from studies of ethnoracial categories, considering them “major markers and controllers of oppression” that focus on predominantly on disadvantaged and marginalized women of color (Dill and Kohlman 2012, 155; Hill Collins 1998). Following gradual recognition of how power and privilege manifested across gender, race, space and time – and the emergence of queer, sexuality, development, globalization and transnational studies – dimensions of intersectionality expanded beyond U.S. context (Narayan; Mohanty 2003; Yuval-Davis 2006; Lugones 2007; Davis 2008) and beyond the focus on women (Paulson 2015, 2016).5

One way in which I see intersectionality useful is through the ways in which it draws attention to, in words of Nira Yuval-Davis (2011, 4), “how the differential situatedness of different social agents constructs the ways they affect and are affected by different social, economic and political projects.” Based on my research experience, intersectional realities are present in everyday practices of people – and of the researchers. I use intersectionality as a methodology, epistemology and as a paradigm to analyze the intersecting social realities. For this project, I consider systems of gender and gender identities (masculinities, femininities), ethnicity, race, socioeconomic position, cultural location and violence to be the most crucial for this study – not only in the ways through which they intersect with each other, but also in how they intersect with the “processes that shaped those emerging social orders and identifications” (Paulson 2016, 400).

5 Scholars have also challenged foundations of intersectional theories, arguing that they reinforce paradigms they are actually trying to deconstruct going “from intersectionality as a moment of resistance to intersectionality as a neoliberal approach that erases inequality” (Salem 2016, 2).
Locating Feminist, Postcolonial and Intersectional Perspectives in Methods

In concluding this section, I will return to the opening vignette, applying the feminist methodological lens I utilize in this thesis. Shulamit Reinharz (1992) identifies three elements of a feminist research: focus on analysis and understanding of gender in a particular context of lived experiences; challenging the relationship between the researcher and the researched as well as researcher’s subjectivity; and commitment to social change. In agreeing that “our methodologies (lens of doing our research) and epistemologies (our knowledge bases) are multiple” (Pillow and Mayo 2012, 189), I also recognize Marjorie DeVault’s words that “concerns about exploitation and misrepresentation come into play whenever data come from human informants” (DeVault 1996, 38).

Nevertheless, I consider my research feminist in all points identified by Reinharz. First, dedication of this project to relational experience, dialogue, deconstruction of dominant discourses, intimacy, representation of individual narratives and reciprocity, is an attempt of “unsettling the boundaries” (Abu-Lughod 1990, 26) in which I move “beyond the dichotomies of victimhood or agency (Aune 2012, 311).” Second, I draw attention to the ways in which power and identity manifests in the field and how the body of a researcher influences the field experience (Yuval-Davis 2011). Being a woman, working in a center mostly dedicated to women (and youth) certainly had critical relative merits. I formed fruitful and friendly relations with the employees and with the users, and any points of tensions were immediately addressed, discussed and resolved. As discussed in the opening vignette, me being European, living in the USA (Gringa), white and blonde, occasionally caused tensions. After the first failed
house visit that we had done with Gloria and the student of psychology who was doing his practicum at CEPAM, we had a long discussion about what happened. Our director had a strong reaction to it: “Of course she refused to open the door! She looked out of the window and saw Gloria, the social worker that knows all of her darkest issues, a guy and someone who looks like a gringa!” Gloria defended our presence, saying that the mujer está loca and that the only reason why this crazy woman refused to open the house (we assumed she was in it because of the voices coming from the inside) was due to her consistently lying about what was going on in their household.⁶ Thus, I was intrigued by the CEPAM team’s reaction to Claudia’s complaints of their methods; nobody at CEPAM drew attention to my presence during the house visit and nobody raised doubts about the ways in which Gloria (and I) employed interviewing methods. On the one hand, CEPAM team’s lack of reflexivity in the relation to the informants in that particular moment reveals several tensions between their methods embedded in the Ecuadorian context with strict rules of how GBV should be approached (Chapter 5), and the local communities who challenge them. This raises postcolonial questions about imposition of western type professional-legal system on other communities. It also raises questions of intersectionality, where class and nationality intersect with gender to differentiate positions of the western researcher, the CEPAM worker and Claudia. On the other hand, CEPAM team also navigates professional and personal terrains where the people they work with might utilize a wide range of techniques to manipulate the situation or turn in

⁶ Gloria and other CEPAM team also expressed their doubts about doing these visits in dangerous neighborhoods alone and voiced their appreciation for us being there.
in their own advantage – especially when financial resources and properties are present (as in the case of Claudia). CEPAM team utilizes different procedures to explore the complexities of family dynamics and relations and evaluate how to proceed with psychological and legal assistance. Thus, drawing on the last point that Reinharz makes about feminist research, I see different ways in which CEPAM – and my involvement with them – in some aspects does decolonize methods: first, by a perpetual and thorough dialogue with the people they work with and with the weekly meeting where they discuss the current cases and the issues they are facing and second, by bringing together an interdisciplinary group of experts who work together to approach GBV in different ways, learning from past mistakes and successes. Finally, I hope that by bringing some of the tensions from the field into focus, I present them as a microcosm of the dialogue between the society’s advance and academic dialogue. With this move, I aim to desalambrar, meaning to remove “fences around our preconceived notions of gender in Latin America” and bring about social change (Behar 2002, x).

Methods

The use of the mixed methods in this research enables a multi-scale examination of violence in the socio-political and economic context of Quito with the emphasis on individual narratives. All of the primary data analyzed in this thesis is presented anonymously, employing pseudonyms. All of the translations from Spanish are mine. In the following sections I describe study methods utilized during my time at CEPAM.

A week later, Claudia and Gloria had a conversation about our house visit and decided to invite all of the siblings to CEPAM.
Interviews

To gain a more in-depth insight into the ways in which CEPAM team addresses gendered challenges faced by their users, I conducted twenty-one in-depth semi-structured interviews with users of the center (three of which included more than one person in the room; with two sisters present or a mother present with her son) and five with the employees or other people connected to CEPAM. Interviews lasted between 15 and 90 minutes and were mostly recorded (I took extensive notes when the participants chose not to be recorded). The research sample of interviewees was limited only to people older than 18 years old. The questions were structured in a way that they provided open-ended answers about their living arrangements, educational and occupational status and how these factors played into their decision to come CEPAM; their experience with GBV; and the difficulties encountered on the way, prior to coming to CEPAM. I also asked questions that would provide insight into the ways in which they think about their gendered identities.

The project’s objective was to collect and illuminate the perspectives and experiences of the participants. I waited about three weeks before recruiting people for interviews, maintaining the positionality of a student volunteer, familiarizing myself with the organization, everyday dynamics, projects and the users of CEPAM. I also started analyzing the case files (discussed later) that were located in a large closet in the reception area. Thus, I was visibly present to CEPAM’s users and slowly began establishing connections with them.
The interviews were conducted in one of the unoccupied offices at CEPAM. Initially, I relied on help from a social worker or one of the psychologists to help me reach out to people for interviews, before or after the appointment they had with one of them. Gradually, people started recognizing me as a researcher from *La Universidad de la Florida*. After two weeks of conducting interviews, I began to approach people in the waiting area directly. The majority of users are women who all agreed to participate in an interview. The negative responses that I received were from two men: from a father who has been in therapy due to his increasingly abusive relationship with his two daughters (who were also coming to CEPAM), and from a man who has been enduring physical violence by his wife. The plan was to get a more balanced ratio between the interviews I conducted with women and men, but I was only able to interview two men in the end.

At times, CEPAM team advised me on when it would or would not be appropriate to conduct an interview. One case was an 18-year old daughter of a woman who was killed in an act of femicide. On the day of the scheduled interview, which was to take place after the girl’s therapy session, the psychologist advised me against conducting it since the therapy had provoked a strong emotional reaction. Although I did not get a chance to talk to her again (but did talk to her grandmother), I felt it would be inappropriate to force an interview in those circumstances.

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8 Their office spaces are relatively small, consisting of a reception (where up to four people can comfortably wait for their appointments and where an administrative assistant deals with the necessary paper work), lawyer’s office, social worker’s office, psychologist’s office, director’s office, a small office usually occupied by psychologist, a pass-through room where I had a desk, and a small kitchen. There is also a conference/meeting room that comfortably sits about ten people.
I always got an informal consent from my interviewing, explaining that I am a researcher and that their identity will be well-protected. Although I never asked interviewees to reconstruct their experience with specific events of GBV, the majority eventually brought up these memories, especially if the interview took place before their appointments with therapists or psychologists. The honest and heartfelt gratitude of people for having been able to share their stories and asking whether they could talk to me again, implies that some of the conducted interviews seemed to have “powerfully liberatory effects” (DeVault and Gross 2012, 206). As expressed by a 72-year-old participant who came because of the femicide of her daughter: “I don’t know who to talk to, whom to go to and share this. I am alone, consumed by all of this. La vida es bien dura …Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share the story. I will keep fighting” (Interview, June 8, 2016). These experiences also opened opportunities to “revisit and revise the narratives they produce together” (DeVault and Gross 2012, 214).

I never engaged in a therapeutic discourse but the conversations tended to become emotionally intense as the participants sometimes confused my roles as a researcher with that of a therapist. As discussed by Owen (2001, 652), this is a common occurrence when doing research with “vulnerable users.” Such research qualifies as sensitive “when the people being studied are powerless or disadvantaged, where there is an opportunity for people to feel exploited or degraded, or where the subject matter relates to personal experience” (Owen 2001, 656). I see elements of the sensitive research in all three aspects, however, I oppose the idea that people I worked with are powerless. I consider the participants in my research to have sufficient power to come to CEPAM
(some even upon reporting the violence to legal bodies of the authorities) for any type of counseling or assistance and show willingness to recuperate from their rough experiences.

**Observant Participation and Group Work**

During the time I spent at CEPAM, I moved along the lines of participant observation and observant participation at all times; from team meetings, everyday practices of staff, and all the other activities that took place at CEPAM. Brian Moeran (2007, 14) employs Ervin Goffman’s (1990) ideas of “front stage” and “back stage” to mark the shift between participant observation and observant participation that differ in the ways in which they are able “to see beyond the social front that informants present to strangers in their everyday life.” This ability to enter that backstage and access more difficult topics depends on the relationship that is built with the participants in a specific context. For the first two weeks, I would consider my role to be more of the participant observer, however, as the bonds of trust were formed and CEPAM team started recognizing me as a part of their team and as someone who would contribute to their work, I got to “move beyond surface appearances” (Morean 2007, 14).

I participated in about 10 several-hour-long team meetings. In attendance were the center director, two to four psychologists who intermittently work at CEPAM, social worker, lawyer, assistant to the director, me, and other people that are connected to CEPAM in different ways. The meetings usually addressed current cases, CEPAM’s upcoming and current projects, current economic crisis in Ecuador and an hour of *autocuidado*, self-care activities lead by a student of psychology who was doing his practicum at CEPAM. Under a supervision of an
experienced psychologist, he drew on the difficult cases that CEPAM team deal with and encouraged everyone to reflect on their work and their well-being. It also gave the team an opportunity to discuss their work from different perspectives and share their thoughts and dilemmas with each other. As put eloquently by the social worker in one of the meetings:

*Me involucro.* I get involved, as a woman, as a therapist, as a person. Sometimes I feel like I cannot do my job well. However, at the same time ... I realize that these problems are on a different level than the problems faced by people who actually come to me for assistance. The situations I see ... *Me parece que mi vida es perfecta* (May 18, 2016).

This quote captures sentiments of many, including myself, with those who experience GBV. However, weekly discussion about the cases contributes to a generative environment where workers feel safe sharing their doubts and concerns about the effects and impacts of the work they are executing.

I also collaborated with the development and conduction of two workshops that CEPAM team carried out with another Quito-based organization that works with women who sell their food and products on the streets and buses of Quito (as well as with their partners and children). During the first one that we conducted in May titled “*Juntando manos contra la violencia de género*” (Joining hands against GBV), I was in the role of an observant participator. Attended by approximately 37 people (18 women, 14 men and 5 children coming in and out of the room), the process was designed with several steps. In the opening activity participants engaged in “*El Pulpo*” (The Octopus) where the leader of the groups (or the “head of the octopus”) was blindfolded and led by other 4-5 people in their group; in the second activity, we projected a short film that provided basis for analysis of differences between men and women and putting them in the context
of IPV. In the activity “Dibujemos la violence” (Let us draw violence), men and women were given large pieces of paper and were ordered to draw what they consider to be violence and later present it. We also streamed video dealt with consequences of GBV and the ways in which it can be prevented. In “El Dadito del Saber” (A dice of knowledge) groups of five were encouraged to throw a large dice where each number corresponded to one question related to the forms of violence and the ways in which they can be addressed. Finally, in “El nudo” (The knot) participants were asked to form a circle and hold each other’s hands then move in whatever direction to form the knot – afterwards they had to undo the knot without letting go of each other’s hands.

During the second workshop titled “Educar sin violencia” (educate without violence) I was in the role of a leader. About 30 people (similar ratio as in previous workshop) attended it and besides drawing difficult family situations and scenes of violence from personal lives as well as encouraging groups to talk about them, we also did the following: demonstrated a slideshow with photos that represent subtle forms of violence in everyday life (from intimate partner violence, violence against children, male-to-male violence, structural violence including poverty, and other forms of violence); projected a film with the ways in which GBV affects children, followed by “Creando un Nuevo Padre” (creating a new parent) where groups were formed to design a fictional commercial that would demonstrate the ways through which the parents can educate without violence; and finally “Emparejar tarjetas” (match cards) where groups were given cut out pieces of paper with clauses that they had to put together in a paragraph, convey a message about GBV that would be meaningful to them.
These workshops were spaces where people were encouraged to talk among themselves and with those of us who conducted them. There were several points of tension as the attendees represented diverse backgrounds and a wide range of ages. One dynamic that caught my attention included a middle-aged man who expressed his frustration with working in another part of the country and coming home for the weekends, expecting some peace in his house but rarely finding it. His confession was followed by a strong reaction from the women, including some of the CEPAM team who were conducting the first workshop (discussed in Chapter 4). Afterwards, women shared lots of laughter, which was mostly based on imitating his words, and cutting him off whenever he wished to participate. However, this was one moment of tension among many other ones that were respectful, noncondescending and collaborative.

Case Files

Besides the descriptive primary data (conversations, narrations, opinions) I also analyzed CEPAM’s database of 380 case files (carpetas). Constructing a database was part of the deal with CEPAM, which then gave me permission to use analyzed data. These case files are the records of all the users who have come to the center for any reason since January 2015 and include: the standardized forms that the social worker, psychologist and/or legal specialist of CEPAM fill out during the first visit (Appendix); a report written by the psychologist on the user’s progress; legal reports from the day violence was reported – including word-by-word testimonies of people that were written down of the court or at a legal institution – and additional material that varied from house visit notes, medical records that indicated the gravity of bruises or school
reports if violence took place in educational institutions. Not every user’s record contains all of the above mentioned documents. My contribution to CEPAM was to write down every case file into an excel spreadsheet and construct a database that contains users’ information on: age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, education, income, work status; number and age of children and who they live with; age and occupation of a partner; types of violence they experienced; reason for coming to CEPAM (voluntary, based on a report they made); and motives and history of violence (sometimes including word-to-word testimonies), assistance sought, number of visits and information of the “aggressor” (age, relationships and occupation are rarely given). The following chapters draw on elements from this database, and critically discuss various reasons why people come to CEPAM, what were the obstacles in the process of reaching this decision and factors associated with their experience with GBV. I consider these “archives of violence” critical elements of this thesis (Brown 1987, 431). Drawing on Schwartz and Cook’s work on archives and memory (2002), I see CEPAM’s case files as a space of knowledge that puts in context descriptive primary data, and is itself placed in the wider societal context. Archival research reveals critical dimensions of GBV in Quito, which I approach critically, with a great deal of reflection.

**Conceptual Framework**

In this section, I draw on a wide range of scholarship to contextualize a personal approach to GBV, family, household, gender, development, heteronormativity, power, culture and ideology – and the ways in which these intersect with each other.
Towards a Broader Understanding of Gender-Based Violence

Understanding and conceptualizing GBV has been one of the most complex parts of this project – due to the epistemological and practical dilemmas that come with studying GBV in Latin America. Scholarship on GBV reveals that the inconsistencies of defining GBV have been around since the beginning. In developing my own conceptualization, I follow the line of Madelaine Adelman’s (2004, 45) argument who situates violence “within cultural-historical context to reveal the intersection between domestic violence and (1) the organization of the polity, (2) the arrangement of the economy, and (3) the dominant familial ideology expressed normatively through state policies.” I depart from the psychological approach and situate this thesis work within those of scholars who argue that violence is socially constructed, as put eloquently by Merry (2003, 943-944), “rooted in structural conditions such as political economy, globalization, the expansion of capitalism, and the growing inequality between rich and poor nations as well as in the dynamics of interpersonal relationships.”

I endorse Susan Paulson (2015, 21) who identifies four elements that work together to define GBV: (1) it is “enacted via gendered relations of power,” (2) it conveys “meaning through gendered symbolic orders,” (3) it contributes “to maintaining structural gender inequalities,” (4) there are gendered patterns in “the identities of victims and perpetrators and the relations between them.” For the purpose of this study, I focus on only one type of GBV, intimate-partner violence (IPV) where intimate partner is “a husband or a cohabiting male sexual partner,” a wife, or a cohabiting female sexual partner or a partner that does not identify with either gender category (Bott et al. 2012, xiii). However, I do not
isolate these cases solely to the series of violence between a man and a woman in relationships. As it became clear through conducting field research, it is crucial that I look IPV as embedded within the family and household units, gender system, power relations and ideology – all of which are manifested in their intersection with a specific place and time.

**Gender-Based Violence at the Intersection of Family and Household**

Although the term “intimate-partner violence” emphasizes the intimacy of the relationship within which the violence occurs, I highlight other violent acts and contexts that are embedded in intimate relationships and the contexts within which they occur. Following Sylvia Chant (2003, 193) who argues that kin relationships “form the core of social organization,” the family might be an “arena of inequality and conflict” or it might be an arena of harmony – both of which might be in tension (Wilson 2015, 806). Analytical difference between family and household “derives from the observation that in numerous societies families do not form households, and in even more instances, households are not composed of families” (Bender 1967: 493 cited in Yanagisako 1979, 162). On the other hand, household is defined as “a residential or economic unit” (Yanagisako 1979, 163) and has been used as the unit of analysis in most social science studies that analyzed the woman’s headship, empowerment and assets in Latin America (Deere et al. 2012; Deere and Twyman 2012; Deere et al. 2014; Deere et al. 2015). Taking these perspectives into account, I pay attention to how GBV intertwines with the economic (and other) factors in the household, with other forms of family violence (involving violence between children and parents, and between extended family), and with the social and ideological constructions
within which it occurs. Sylvia Chant (2002, 546) suggests that some of the biggest shifts in Latin American families have included growing proportions of households headed by women, the rise in single person households, declining fertility rates, the mounting incidence of divorce and separation, increased tendencies for couples to opt for visiting or consensual unions over formal marriage, and the expansion of women's participation in income-generating work. As I will argue in the following chapters, these are reflected in the lives of the people in my study. For this research, family or household are important units providing a(n) (un)safe space where family members experience GBV, or where family members may come in confidence to share their experience.

**Deconstructing Gender Binaries**

Susan Paulson (2015, 22) recognizes that GBV is embedded into the gender system that includes interpersonal, structural, and institutional inequalities, manifested in different “gendered spaces.” I follow this line of thinking and consider gender on the levels of agency and social system, both embedded within social institutions. First, I use Judith Butler's understanding of gender not as a stable identity or (given, pre-existing) locus of agency from which various acts proceed but rather, as an “identity tenuously constituted (and re-constituted) in time—an identity, instituted through a stylized repetition of acts”

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9 According to Pierre Bourdieu (1996, 19-25), family is “a private reality that is of public origin,” based on “a constellation of words – house, home, household, maison, maisonnee – which, while seeming to describe social reality, which, while seeming to describe social reality, in fact construct it.”
(Butler 1988, 519). In her later work, Butler utilizes the concept of performative as “that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains” (Butler 1993, 2). Her biggest contribution on the sex/gender dichotomy discussed in Gender Trouble (1990), challenges us to think about the social norms that provide fundamental ground through which subject’s agency is realized and completed. Rather than positioning agency outside of power, Butler positions reiterating agency within the structures of power. Second, I draw on Patricia Martin (2004), to look at gender as a social institution, which operates in other institutions that govern social systems, economic systems, cultural systems, political systems, kin systems, and environmental governance. In the context of GBV, it is critical to look at the ways in which gender encompasses “ideology, practices, constraints, conflicts, power,” as well as expectations, norms, beliefs and values that structure gender system (1264). Bringing Paulson, Martin and Butler together, this thesis utilizes gender as a constructed social system that changes in different socio-cultural contexts, space and time, and looks beyond the binary frameworks of men and women. These systems tend to produce, normalize and justify situations where groups of men and women experience different types of family and labor relations, access to resources and a range of GBV (Paulson 2015).

As previously discussed, dichotomous gender structures place men and women within systems where hierarchical regimes of dominant and subordinate masculinities and femininities are constructed on different levels. Cultural elements at play in some Latin American cultures have been widely stereotyped (notably by scholars from global north) to characterize this dichotomy as one of
*machismo* and *marianismo* which I discuss further in Chapter 4. Drawing on the earlier discussion of postcolonial feminisms, I follow Lugones (2007), Connell (2005) to discuss different ideologies that have been imposed on the society, urging the audience to recognize that the woman/man dichotomy, patriarchy and heterosexualism are historically specific manifestations of what Lugones calls a “modern/colonial gender system” (187).¹⁰ These involve heteronormative discourse which, as I argue in Chapter 3, have been central to Ecuadorian governance and development, reinforcing traditional family values, nuclear family models and criminalizing behavior considered gender-inappropriate (such as abortion) (Lind 2012). When conceptualizing heteronormativity, I endorse Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner (1998: 548) who use it to refer to “institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent—that is, organized as a sexuality—but also privileged.” In short, I use heteronormativity to refer to the ways in which heterosexuality, nuclear family and gender roles are purportedly based on biological characteristics are considered universal and morally righteous. Here, I wish to be careful about the concept of patriarchy that has played a big role in the ways in which GBV has been approached, as I demonstrate in Chapter 3. I take a step away from definitions of patriarchy that assume dominance of men over women and rather follow thinkers such as Walter Mignolo (2008) and Jacqui Alexander (2005). Mignolo argues that patriarchy (*patriarcado*) is a dimension of the

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¹⁰ María Lugones (2014, 14-15) furthers postcolonial arguments by positing that we will be able to deconstruct the relationships between the colonial and modern gender system if we recognize that it is a matter of history and not biology, and its instrumentality is subjecting not only women of color, but also men.
colonial/modern system that regulates social relations of gender and sexual
preferences, and is done in relation to authority, economy, but also knowledge:
what can/should be known and who can/should know (Mignolo 2008, 10). This
tangible definition expands my model that rejects a dualistic relationship between
a man and a woman (usually in a domestic sphere), and draws attention to this
force as intersecting through all hierarchies and relations of society, organizing
sexuality and gender through discursive practices and modes of governance, as
well as globalization (Alexander 2005). This line of thinking helps us think about
additional factors that contribute to violence, extending beyond a simplified
patriarchy-violence link. use these ideas to address constructed gendered
categories relevant for studying GBV that have been problematically presented
as inevitable and universal – marianismo and machismo being illustrative
examples

**Culture, Power, Ideology and Gender-Based Violence**

In *Writing against Culture*, Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) counters ethnographic
attempts that result in the *othering* effect of the concept of culture which is used
as static, homogenous and coherent.¹¹ Following her line of thinking, I endorse
Sally Merry Engle’s conceptualization of culture with which she refers
to a set of techniques and practices applied within specific situations rather
than as a description of a society. Thus it is a set of cultural practices,
techniques, and assumptions about knowledge production, embedded in
particular institutional and bureaucratic settings. It is a culture in the sense
of Shore and Wright’s discussion of audit culture: it is not a holistic set of
actions and ideas that define a society but a technology that occurs in a
variety of contexts (2015). It is part of the repertoire of institutional actors

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¹¹ Arguing that culture exists in the embodied experience, Abu-Lughod argues that these past
attempts ignore the particular ways in which people experience culture in their everyday life and
how these connect between different societies in different places and time.
seeking to persuade publics and influence governance decisions (Merry 2016, 9).

In this thesis, culture is placed within the context of power and ideology which are crucial for analyzing gender as a social system that justifies specific forms of violence and is embedded into a larger structural and socio-cultural framework. They are also critical for conceptualizing power relations between people who belong to different gender, ethnoracial and sociopolitical systems. Michael Foucault (1978, 1980) argues that power cannot be understood only within the matrix of domination because it diffuses through all levels of society and life, producing new forms of relations, discourses and desires. These discourses of power construct subjects through these relations, appearing politically neutral but actually socially, historically and politically constructed.

Moving towards the context of GBV, by configuring power and control, the authorities may tend to construct the experience of individuals, with the underlying assumption that they know best what aspect of their experience suits their normative perception of violence (Westlund 1999). Jean and John Comaroff (1992, 28-29) discuss the ways in which power, hegemony and ideology intersect with each other, and how power underlies the construction of culture. I follow their clarification of the subtle ways in which the manifestations of ideologies realize in society, clear from the following passage in which they employ “hegemony” to refer to that order of signs and material practices drawn from a specific cultural field, that come to be taken for granted as the natural, universal and true shape of social being – although its infusion into local worlds, always liable to challenge by the logic of prevailing cultural forms, is never automatic. It consists of things that go without saying, things that being axiomatic, are not normal the subject of explication of argument (cf. Bourdieu 1977, 94) This is why its power seems to be independent of human agency, to lie in

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what it silences, what it puts beyond the limits of the thinkable. It follows that it is seldom contested openly. Indeed the moment that any set of values, meanings and material forms comes to be explicitly negotiable, its hegemony is threatened at that moment it becomes the subject of ideology or counterideology.

The concept of ideology is crucial to the critical understanding of the concepts employed in this thesis as ideological and social constructions that are conveyed and perceived differently across places and time. Following the ideas that institutions send different messages, narratives and actions that influence power relations within society and institutions, I follow Louis Althusser (1970) who argues that institution lend material existence to the ruling ideology that interpellates “concrete individuals as concrete subjects.”12 Although his division of ideology and power contradicts the efforts of this work to deconstruct binarized notions, I find this critical to my understanding of gender system within the social institutions, constructed by and constructing of other institutions or – in Althuserian terms – apparatuses.

12 In his idea of the state, Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) “present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions,” while the Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) function by violence and not by ideology.
CHAPTER 3
CONTEXTUALIZING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN ECUADOR: REVIEW OF POLICIES AND OF LITERATURE

This chapter begins with a brief overview of relevant policy reforms regarding gender-based violence (GBV) globally and in Ecuador. Drawing from diverse bodies of literature, I consider different models developed to address and compare GVB cross-culturally, factors that have been associated with perpetuating GBV and the circumstances within which GBV occurs. Significant governmental and organizational support has been given to GBV. I develop a theoretical and contextual framework that sets the scene for the following three chapters that delve into these aspects more thoroughly.

Institutional Recognition of Gender-Based Violence

Discussions of GBV as a serious human rights issue date back to the early 1980s. According to Sally Merry Engle (2006, 21):

The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women did not mention violence against women, but the committee monitoring the convention developed an initial recommendation against violence in 1989 and in 1992 formulated a broader recommendation that defined gender-based violence as a form of discrimination. The 1992 statement placed violence against women squarely within the rubric of human rights and fundamental freedoms and made clear that states are obliged to eliminate violence perpetrated by public authorities and by private persons.

These conceptualizations originally emphasized physical violence perpetuated by men against their women partners (e.g. assault, rape and murder) but later expanded to include other types of violent acts differentiated by gender (e.g. female genital mutilation, military violence, violence in refugee camps, trafficking and prostitution). The concluding document (Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women) of the 1993 UN Conference on Human
Rights in Vienna where “woman’s right to live free of violence” was formally recognized (Bott et al. 2012, xv), provide two important definitions: one defines violence against women (VAW) in broad terms, including “physical, sexual and psychological harm or threats of harm in public for private life” – and the other defines GBV as a violation of human rights – and is conceptualized as “an instance of sex discrimination and inequality” (Merry 2006, 22). Similarly, the 1994 Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (also known as the Convention of Belém do Pará) employed gender-based violence to acknowledge that the risk factors, consequences, and community responses to violence against women (VAW) are heavily influenced by women’s subordinate social, economic, and legal status in many settings.

The 1995 Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing also included a section that concerned VAW. This conference represented “a milestone in the history of the feminist and women’s movements” (Rodríguez Gustá and Madera 2015, 41) which connected Latin American women with a global political vocabulary and grounds for feminist organizing. Between 1994 and 2000, most Latin American states ratified the Belém Convention, and many countries passed national legislation criminalizing GBV. However, these national laws had a limited focus on the domestic realm and

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2 It also positively affected many of the newly elected democratic governments that finally recognized women “as a constituency that required representation in the state (Molyneux 2000, 64).
family violence, and did not address violence in the sphere of the community or the state (Larraín 1999).

**Towards Ecuador**

Two critical achievements of the 1970s focused Ecuador’s attention on women’s rights: the first UN-sponsored World Conference on Women in Mexico (1975) which “initiated the process of bringing women together to collectively address gender issues” (Adams 2010, 61) and the 1979 Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Deere and León 2001). In 1979, Ecuador participated in the drafting of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and ratified its articles two years later. In 1979, the first National Women’s Bureau (*Oficina Nacional de la Mujer*) was created as part of the Ministry of Social Welfare. During that period, CEPAM team became recognized as a critical actor in the Ecuadorian socio-political scene, and began to collaborate with the Ministry of Social Welfare (*Ministerio de Bienestar Social*) and National Directory for Women (*Dirección Nacional de la Mujer, DINAMU*) which was later turned into a Council CONAMU, and recently replaced with The Transitional Commission towards Gender Equality (*Comisión de transición hacia el Consejo de las Mujeres y la Igualdad de Género*). These institutions contributed to the opening of the first safe shelter for children and women in Quito, *Casa De Refugio Matilde* in 1990.

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3 Much action was happening in the other Latin American Countries. The conference in Mexico concluded with a Declaration on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace that addressed rights of women. Prior to that, women-centered organizations already existed in Ecuador, including *Alianza Femenina Ecuatoriana* (1939), and *La Unión Nacional de Mujeres and La Unión Revolucionaria de Mujeres del Ecuador* (both founded in 1960).
The demand for attention to the problem of violence against women (VAW) was emphasized by Ecuadorian women’s organizations and epistemic communities. During the same period, groups of women began to reshape the political space for themselves by demanding to be acknowledged as relevant socio-economic subjects who deserve automatic access to the social benefits, drawing attention to areas of agriculture, labor policies, poverty, microenterprises, health and education. This created the impetus for some of the states in Latin America (Ecuador included) to revise their constitution, work towards reducing discrimination based on sex and aim for gender equality, and life free from violence (Deere and León 2001; Lind 2005).

During the next two decades, a burst of constitutional and policy reforms, and anti-discrimination laws that challenged the widely accepted divide of public and private domains came into effect. In 1994, the same year that Ecuador ratified the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women, the Ministry of Public health declared intrafamiliar violence to be a public health problem – and later, in 2007 as a state politics concern (Vimos Llanga 2013, 14). Following the adoption of Beijing Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the Law against Violence against Women and Family (Ley Contra la Violencia a la Mujer y la Familia) was signed into effect in 1995 in Ecuador (Roggeband 2016), criminalizing physical, sexual and psychological spousal abuse (Chapter 4).

In this context, feminists took the household as the critical unit and recognized that a critical civil code revision encompassed property rights of women, which rejected the previously accepted rule that husband was the head of household – now providing dual-headed households “where both husband and wife may represent the household and manage its common property” (Deere and León 2001, 32).
Following the adoption of the Ley 103, Women’s Police Stations (*Comisarías de la Mujer y la Familia*) opened in 1997, which allowed women to report VAW at an institution that was supposed to be tailored for their needs. They were a product of legislative changes and feminist efforts that aimed to *romper el silencio sobre la violencia doméstica* (break the silence about the domestic violence), emphasizing services to defend women’s rights and encourage reporting and criminalize VAW on the local and national levels (Jubb 2010, 25).

Following a wave of mixed criticism, Jubb et al. (2010) produced an evaluative report on the comisarías in Latin America in which they argue that although these stations were supposed to be shelters where women could find legal, psychological and social services, women did not always have their needs met. For example, they might not be admitted unless the violence reached extremely risky levels that posed a threat to their or their family’s integrity (Iñiguez et al. 2014). As argued by Sarah Hautzinger (2002), although the comisarías failed to contribute to the elimination of violence or securing justice, they did—especially in Ecuador and Brazil—contribute to the recognition of VAW as a public, instead of private matter. Considering that previously VAW was rarely sanctioned by law since it was considered a “private crime” and therefore not criminalized, this was considered a significant progress (De los Ríos 1993, 11). Hautzinger’s anti-essentialist critique offers a solid explanation as to why normative conceptualizations of categories of crime, space and gender are not always contributing to improvements. In Ecuador, one of the bigger issues was

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5 Ley 103 was drafted by the National Women’s Commission (*Consejo Nacional de la Mujer* or CONAMU).
that the comisarías lacked legal backing to initiate sanctions for GBV-related crimes and were, following thorough evaluations, replaced by Judicial Units (Juzgados de Violencia Intrafamiliar) in 2012 (Chapter 6).

**Recent Developments Regarding Gender-Based Violence**

Over the past three decades, GBV in Ecuador, and especially in Quito, has been established as a social problem, ingrained in many policies, discourses, practices and social actions (Guarderas Albuja 2016). More recently, eradication of GBV became a formal priority of governmental efforts towards more gender equality in the country. As part of its Citizen Revolution (Revolución Ciudadana) that the government of Rafael Correa (2007–2017) claimed to have “woman’s face,” Plan Nacional de Buen Vivir (Sumak Kawsay or SK) was proposed to represent a postcolonial paradigm of development that aims for socioeconomic transformations. In general, Sumak Kawsay is based on the political and cultural history of Ecuador's indigenous movements, biodiversity and its diverse ethnoracial systems.⁶ This political debate on the plan and its outcomes have been critically approached by scholars who discussed its relative merits in several contexts: as a political platform offering different and more inclusive visions of development (Walsh 2010; Ramírez 2010, Gudynas 2011), as a move from anthropocentrism (Naess 1989), and as a link between gender roles and nature (Saunders 2002). Following these gender and feminist aspects, some scholars have emphasized that SK did not meet its desired socialist goals, as it reinforced traditional family values reproduced by institutions, legislation and

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⁶ The name “Sumak Kawsay” originates from Quichua and refers to a fullness of life and conviviality between a community, persons and Nature.
policies – including a traditional stance against same-sex marriage and abortion reform (Friederic 2011; Lind 2012; Radcliffe 2014). While the SK model aimed to move away from the neoliberal notions underpinning previous legislations towards the “post-neoliberal” array of new policy aspects (Radcliffe 2012), the “centrality of heteronormative social reproduction in shaping the contours of the debates and the future(s) of post/neoliberalist” remained (Lind 2012, 549).\(^7\)

Objectives of the *Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir* (PNBV 2009-2013) that are relevant for this thesis include targets to reduce very specific percentages of VAW (physical violence by 8%, psychological violence by 5% and sexual violence by 2%), aggression in schools, and efforts to criminalize reported violence (by 60%) (Plan Nacional para el Buen Vivir 2009-2013). Furthermore, as part of establishing a *Plan Nacional de Erradicación de la Violencia de Género* (2007), a second survey was launched to measure VAW (Chapter 4). Objectives of the current PNBN (2013-2017) include a call for prevention and eradication of all forms of GBV, and visions to reduce the femicide rate, and reduce the rates of cases pending trial (Plan Nacional para el Buen Vivir 2013-2017).

Some of these promises have been fulfilled with 2008 and 2014 constitutional reforms, for example penalizing femicide, an antidiscrimination article on gender identity, sexual orientation and hate crime language (Chapter 6). Finally, a remarkable shift refers to the introduction of *Plan Familia* (2015) which was developed as a result of the high levels of teen pregnancy. Some Ecuadorian scholars and activists have recognized that it emphasizes sexual

\(^7\) Some of the criticisms also claimed that SK did little in terms of moving away from the idea that a woman’s primary role is that of a reproducer and a defender of the revolutionary nation (Lind 2012).
abstinence of youth, nuclear family model where desired values circulate and, in the words of president Correa, instead of “hedonism” places focus on “values” (Estrella 2015).\textsuperscript{8} Public statements uttered by several political actors such as the Secretary of Justice (who said that although some “silent minorities” oppose Plan Familia’s goals, the majority of the state prefers abortion to be illegal, right to pleasure to be denied, and LGBTI marriages to be illegal), and president Correa (who, described practices associated with transsexual people – such as cross-dressing – as barbaric) were also criticized as reinforcing traditional Christian and homophobic values (García 2014; Estrella 2015; Lind 2015).\textsuperscript{9}

What has Gender got to do with Ecuadorian Development?

Bringing the dynamics between heteronormativity, gender, violence and development together, it is critical to briefly touch upon the influences of development initiatives in Ecuador at their intersections, because they raise several postcolonial questions in regards to tensions between western-imposed and local meanings.

In the 2002 World Bank (WB) analysis of the Ecuadorian millennial economic crisis, Maria Correia, a specialist on gender issues, argues that men’s and women’s experiences of these micro and macro-economic consequences are “primarily a result of their distinct biological and societal-based gender roles” (Correia 2002,178). She argues that household can either be a place of refugee


\textsuperscript{9} Full article of secretary’s Alexis Mera words (which also include that a woman must know that it is not only preferable, it is a value that she studies at the university, including postponing sexual activity and acquiring a career which will contribute to “un major desarollo”) is available via http://www.elcomercio.com/actualidad/alexismera-sexualidad-planfamilia-ecuador-educacion.html (Accessed February 10, 2017).
from exacerbating social conditions or a place of danger where IPV occurs. Arguing that it affects men’s health, productivity and violence, she identifies alcohol abuse among men as a primary culprit of violence, a “dangerous behavior” that increased during Ecuador’s late 1990s crisis predominantly due to the high rates of unemployment (Correia 2002, 186). Correia’s analysis offers useful data but a heteronormative approach that does not reveal how violence was changing in relation to legal and political reforms. A different view is presented by Kate Bedford (2012) who highlights Ecuador’s export-oriented economy (based in petroleum, broccoli, bananas and “Panama” hats), and the development of export-oriented floral industry, which – in the words of WB – became “an excellent example […] of successful export entrepreneurship” (World Bank 1997, 3 quoted in Bedford 2010, 101). In developing her argument about the impacts that heteronormative expectations and arrangements instrumental for development of flower industry had on gender relations, Bedford explores the connections between the promotion of floriculture and ways it connects to women’s employment and empowerment, and to the restructuring of intimacy. She analyzes two publications produced by the WB that reinforced two contradictory discourses, but made a few similar points. These are, that flower

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10 The most alarming rates of violence were reported in the coastal city Guayaquil, where a number of factors besides deteriorating economic conditions (El Niño and the influx of migrants) contributed to crime, robbery and other offenses.

11 Flower industry also became an important site for research of gender issues in other Latin American countries. In Colombia, Greta Friedemann-Sánchez (2006) looked through the lens of feminist economics to discuss the ways in which women’s involvement in flower industry affects their fallback position and intrahousehold bargaining power.

12 WB did a study in to regions of Ecuador; Cayambe’s flower plantation and Cotocachi to show ways in which women’s work in floriculture connects. One was written by a WB consultant in English entitled Gender, Time Use, and Change (Newman 2001) and another one in Spanish entitled Mujeres y Floricultura: Cambios y Consecuencias en el Hogar and written by the WB consultant and two specialists from the Ecuador’s state feminist agency CONAMU that has been working within UN framework (Newman, Larrreamendy, and Maldonado 2001).
employment improves women’s sexual autonomy, makes women more alluring to men, that women, who are altruistic, share their income with the loved ones which strengthens families, and that it “domesticates and tames men” who would be more willing to participate in unpaid household activities (Bedford 2010, 102). Some of the relevant points analyzed by Bedford were that women now had more autonomy and were more likely to stand against the sexist, violent behavior of their partners – however, Bedford’s analysis points out that not enough research was made on certain connections between these behaviors and economic and employment aspects, and that the results were very speculative. For example, there was no study on the links between the control over fertility and erotic autonomy, and income earning and decrease in VAW. Furthermore, the WB discourses framed (poor) men as “lazy and unreliable, as drunks, as violent policy problems, as needing to work harder to generate the gender equality being sought by multilateral institutions” (Ibid. 110-111).

Contributing to the debate about the relationships between (heteronormative) development, and GBV, Karin Friederic’s long-term fieldwork in a rural region of Ecuador, Las Colinas, offers a human rights approach to analyze why the rates of GBV have remained high despite a long-term intervention by an international NGO in the region (Friederic 2011; 2014; 2015).13 By studying GBV as a form of structural violence embedded in a larger social, cultural, economic and ideological matrix, she scrutinizes the gender-essentialist approach that this NGO took towards GBV and asks why they ignored the

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13 This area has been especially damaged by El Niño, which has had bad consequences for the low-income people whose homes have been destroyed as well as their assets (Correia 2002).
material and political-economic dimensions of GBV. Friederic reveals the
tensions caused when ideas disseminated by institutions change at uneven
speeds and not necessarily in same direction. In the region, NGOs have been
organizing various workshops to educate men and women about women’s rights,
however, most of them were based on the assumption that “wife battering
resulted from a so-called culture of male dominance or ‘a typical machista
society’” (Friederic 2014, 29). The empowerment initiatives failed to capture
women’s agency or “subjective experience of violence” which had negative
consequences for the gender relations (22). Women found it hard to exercise
newly-acquired knowledge in their community or in the domestic sphere.
Furthermore, as men, who tend to be the most common perpetrators of violence,
were left out of the empowerment initiatives, they were not included as part of the
solution, and suddenly faced harsh and public criticism. Due to the fact that they
were being kept in the dark about their wives’ activities in the NGO’s (they
thought they were simply going there “recreationally”), they began to defend
themselves and their masculinities “through visible frustration with their wives”
(28).

**Studying Gender-Based Violence: Models, Risk Factors and Preventive Actions**

I now turn attention to the ways in which GBV, especially IPV, has been
approached and conceptualized within academic and policy circles (the line
between both is sometimes blurred). Sociologist Martin Schwartz (2005, 8)
begins his article by saying “that violence is gendered and can only be
understood in the context of gender inequality.” However, over the past decade,
some scholars and activists who have focused on family violence in different
fields have attempted to rethink the idea of gender as an intrinsic factor for the explanation of violence (Adelman 2004; Sokoloff and Dupont 2005; Friederic 2014).

Focusing less on the intersections of culture, race, ethnicity, poverty and other societal mechanisms, several early studies tended to situate GBV in the model of a heteronormative family, addressing (and sometimes reproducing) stereotypes, cultural essentialism and victim/perpetrator dichotomy (Friederic 2011; Paulson 2015). One of the very first works on intimate partner violence (IPV) by David Levinson (1989) addressed domestic violence in universal terms, and a 1990s publication by Dorothy Counts, Judith Brown and Jacquelyn Campbell discussed GBV and wife beating in different cultural contexts. Other bodies of literature approached GBV from the standpoints of psychology, sociology and criminology – foregrounding feminist explanatory theories and either individual (wife beating because of male’s psychological characteristics) or sociopolitical (gender-inequality originating from historical constructions) explanations for violence (Heise 1998). So-called “feminist explanatory theories” were dominating some of the early studies and claimed that “wife battering is allowed and encouraged by patriarchal societal organizations that mandate

14 The Feminist critique of cultural essentialism that I employ here was introduced in Uma Nayarans essay, in which she argues that “Western feminist texts work to produce the image of an ‘average third world woman” (Narayan, 1998, 91). She also emphasizes the paradoxical problem in which feminists actively attempt to avoid the hegemonic discourses of gender essentialism but actually end up “replicating cultural essentialism” (92) — something that is contrary to the postcolonial feminist agenda. Thus, as opposed to gender essentialism that “assume and construct sharp binaries about the question, abilities, location of men and women,” cultural essentialism “assumes and constructs sharp binaries between Western cultures and nonwestern culture” (88).

15 The collection of studies focused on Oceania, Indian-Iranian region, China, Australia, Central and South America and Africa.
women’s dominance by men, by force if necessary” (Campbell 1999, 266). In the United States the studies of 1990s began to move beyond the human-rights framework, recognizing the health consequences of GBV, focusing primarily on physical injuries, later refocusing on future consequences such as sexually transmitted diseases (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005; Campbell 2002).

**Trigger, Risk and Preventive Factors**

The UN Declaration and the Convention of Belém do Pará acknowledged that the risk factors associated with GBV are associated with an unequal socioeconomic and legal status of women that they see as predominantly subordinate to men (Valdez-Santiago et al. 2009; Bott et al. 2012). In literature, risk and trigger factors are sometimes used interchangeably, however, even though risk factors are associated with a greater likelihood of GBV, they are not direct causes because not everyone “at risk” will end up being subjected to or perpetrating violence (Centers for Disease Control and Preventing 2002).

Early studies identified some risk factors that seemed to appear universally in association with widely-recognized forms of violence (physical, sexual and psychological violence), such as economic inequality and unemployment of women, physical violence to resolve conflict, men’s authority in decision-making, women’s insufficient access to divorce and lack of monogamy to be generative of domestic violence (Levinson 1989). Others included

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16 Direct association between patriarchy, women’s status and violence is complex. For example, psychologist Donald Dutton (1994) rejected the direct link between structural patriarchy and wife assault, and power and violence. Dutton also argued that GBV among lesbian couples is more common that among heterosexual couple. These theories developed with time and for the purposes of this thesis, I find feminist theories more useful to be understood as “the rejection of inequality between men and women as natural, in favor of seeing male dominance as a product of historical and sociocultural processes that produce and sustain patriarchy” (Hautzinger 2007, 44).
dimensions of a woman’s life such as their isolation, lack of alliances among women and sanctioning which lead to lack of safety (Brown 1999). A relevant turn in studying GBV was Lori Heise’s proposal of an “ecological theory” that explored the complexities of VAW, emphasizing that there is no causal link between specific factors that are always associated with violence (Heise 1998; 2011). An ecological model was first introduced in the 1970s in reference to child abuse (Besky 1980) and youth violence (Chaulk and King 1998). Heise drew attention to the interactions between different factors that meet on different socio-cultural levels, and are, in return, shaped by structural factors (e.g. women’s engagement in the formal wage economy, distribution of economic resources between partners, institutional factors). According to Heise (1988, 2011), personal and biological history (childhood exposure of violence, changing gender roles and norms) are the most crucial factors that correlate with GBV, followed by family and intimate relationships; institutional and social structures within which relationships are embedded (social networks such as neighbors, friends); and the socio-economic environment (employment etc.) that interact on different levels of “social ecology.” This model offered an opportunity to make studies conducted cross-culturally more comparable (Garcia-Moreno 2005).

Although the shifting definitions, and complex realities of violence make studies across different cultures difficult to compare (Schawrtz 2000; de Haan 2008; Renzetti et al. 2012; Merry 2006; 2016), recent studies draw attention to several factors that correlated with GBV across the globe.

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17 Focusing on IPV, Heise employed the 1998 ecological model and published a report that overviews empirical evidence of what works in low and middle-income countries to prevent VAW by their husbands and partners.
Two relevant large-scale surveys have been produced in the areas of VAW. The First was a 2005 World Health Organization (WHO) multi-country study that employed the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) to measure IPV (mostly physical and in some cases psychological) between married, cohabiting and dating couples (Straus et al. 1996).\(^\text{18}\) Based on this approach combined with bases of Heise’s ecologic model, the WHO surveys reports high lifetime prevalence of physical and sexual IPV in all settings where it took place (24097 women completed interviews).\(^\text{19}\) The survey focuses on the violence over the past 12 months. Japan reported the lowest prevalence for all forms of violence included in the survey, while Ethiopia (59% in sexual IPV), Peru (61% of physical IPV), Bangladesh and Tanzania reported the highest. Generally, sexual violence was less prevalent than physical, but there was a substantial overlap between the two (between 30% and 56% of women who reported to have experienced violence said to have experienced both sexual and physical) (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006). It considers risk factors as individual factors of VAW (level of education, financial autonomy, social support, level of empowerment, history of violence); partner factors (level of communication that partner has with her, physical violence was defined in terms of slapping, pushing, shoving, kicking, dragging, beating up, choking, burning on purpose and threatening with a weapon, while sexual was defined in terms of physical forcing to have sexual intercourse against her will, having sexual intercourse out of fear of what might happen if she refuses to have it, forcing to do something sexual that is found degrading or humiliating (Garcia-Moreno 2005, 5).

\(^{18}\) Although this approach has received some criticism because it assumes “that family violence is a means of managing interpersonal conflict” (Adelman 2004), assumes that “men are much more violent than women” (Schwartz 2005, 8), and assesses violent acts and not its intensity or damage (Gottman 1999) it has nevertheless become the gold standard in doing survey research and quantitative analysis around risk and preventive factors. It has been used because it offers comparability and standardization (Gottman 1999) and gives women a wide range of opportunities to talk about IPV in terms of specific acts (choke, slap, hit, burn, etc.) (Bott et al. 2012).

\(^{19}\) Physical violence was defined in terms of slapping, pushing, shoving, kicking, dragging, beating up, choking, burning on purpose and threatening with a weapon, while sexual was defined in terms of physical forcing to have sexual intercourse against her will, having sexual intercourse out of fear of what might happen if she refuses to have it, forcing to do something sexual that is found degrading or humiliating (Garcia-Moreno 2005, 5).
controlling behavior, employment status, his history of violence during childhood, physical aggression towards other men); immediate social factors (levels of women’s autonomy and mobility attitudes towards gender roles and VAW, intervention of family and friends in the incidents, male-to-male aggression and social capital) (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005, 8). While the report doesn’t discuss all of these in detail, they do offer analysis for the countries, where studies were carried out. They show that younger women are at higher risk of violence, suggesting that violence is more likely to start early in a relationship. Furthermore, their survey suggests that it is more likely that women who had gone through separation or divorce will have reported more violence (excluding Bangladesh and Ethiopia). Finally, in terms of education, their study recognizes education to be a preventive factor, correlating with less violence (see also Vyas and Watts 2009).

A 2012 PAHO study focused on VAW in the Latinamerican and Caribbean region, offering a comparative analysis of population-based surveys from 12 countries. Bott et al. employ a similar approach to the WHO study and demonstrate that both life-time and recent (in the past 12 months) IPV is present in every Latinamerican country where the surveys were carried out (although the prevalence varies within each country). Acknowledging methodological limitations of such large-scale surveys (e.g. nuances within communities), the

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20 The surveys on which study based were conducted in Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Japan, Namibia, Peru, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand, and the United Republic of Tanzania.  
21 The surveys on which study based were conducted in Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay.  
22 They follow a UN framework where physical violence and sexual violence refer to the same acts as the previous WHO study, while emotional abuse refers to insulting, belittling, humiliating, scaring, intimidating, destroying her personal things, threatening to harm, withholding economic support.
authors of the report emphasize that the results reported are likely lower than the true prevalence. The lowest rates of life-time sexual and physical IPV were reported in Dominican Republic (17.0%) and highest in Bolivia (53.3%), Columbia (39.7%), Peru (39.5%) and Ecuador (32.4%). As for the recent sexual and physical IPV, the lowest prevalence was noted in Jamaica (7.7%) and the highest in Bolivia (25.5%), Columbia (22.1%) and Peru (14.9) – followed by Ecuador (11.3%). The survey also shows that emotional abuse and controlling behaviors are widespread in those countries – many times linked to physical abuse.

Some of the factors related to IPV identified in their study are similar to the WHO one, adding the residence factor (urban women report less violence than rural), ethnicity, numbers of marriages or cohabiting unions, reproductive health indicators (number of births women have had, unintended or unwanted pregnancy), age at first union, specific details from the history of violence (whether they witnessed wife beating during their childhood, punishment of their children). The study also emphasizes that in addition to economic dependence on their partners and gender inequality, certain forms of VAW are often condoned by institutional and legal norms within communities. Furthermore, they find that risk factors associated with VAW (perpetrated by those that are intimately close to them) are generally different from those associated with violence against men (criminal acts, armed conflict). Their study shows that the trigger factors included drugs or alcohol (Guatemala and Ecuador), jealousy, problems at work, refusing sexual intercourse, economic problems, women’s disobedience, or other. Recognizing studies that have suggested that VAW can
be higher in communities that promote male toughness and dominance, as opposed to women’s chastity and subordinance (Levinson 1989; Counts et al. 1999; Heise 1998; Heise 2011), Bott et al. (2012) warn that these vary not only among but also within countries.²³

In sum, both of these studies identify factors associated with VAW, categorized as those prior to a relationship (including a history of abuse and education for both partners) that might lead to acts of violence; demographics and relative status (household structure, woman’s age and age gap between her and partner, educational status and employment); attitudes (reasons for physical violence); consumption of alcohol; other relationships (having children from former relationships or infidelity); having experienced non-partner violence (violence during childhood and adolescence) and the type of union (married, cohabiting, duration of marriage).

Drawing on Heise (2011) and the two studies (WHO and PAHO), a number of preventive actions that have been found to eliminate or reduce violence, such as: more attention to violence against children and adolescents (since childhood exposure to violence seems to play a big role, exacerbated by an unsafe school environment); attention to mental health (alcohol addictions); establishing more compassionate and confidential spaces for women who seek assistance (including legal and justice systems); more education on how GBV is connected to reproductive, prenatal and sexual health; addressing multiplicity of

²³ For example, a from a study in Bangladesh which finds that while societies with less flexible gender norms are less tolerant of women earning their own income outside of home, those that are considered more conservative tend to consider women’s independent income generative of conflict at home (Koenig et al. 2003).
violence, and promoting human rights, gender equity, equality and women’s (economic) empowerment. To advance these recommendations and implement policies, both studies urge a wide range collaboration of sectors (education, health, criminal justice, governmental and nongovernmental sectors).

Although Heise (2011, x) rightfully recognizes specific complexities related to economic empowerment (for example, context-specific perceptions of the “ascribed bread-winner,” culturally-specific gendered division of labor and tensions between the short and long term effects of economic empowerment strategies), she nevertheless suggests that women’s control over and access to resources could reduce risk of IPV. The link between the women’s ownership of assets and IPV (over the past 12 months) was the subject of study in Ecuador and Ghana, where women’s asset ownerships is associated with lower rates of physical violence (in Ecuador, where women who are married or in consensual unions own 44% of gross couple wealth) and emotional violence (in Ghana, where those women own 19%) (Oduro et al. 2015).24

Recognizing other Forms of Gender-Based Violence

The recognition of the intersection of different factors associated with different forms of GBV represents an important shift that also pushes away from the dichotomous conceptualizations that have been used as powerful tools to reproduce gender and power ideologies (for example putting marianism and machismo as the main culprits for GBV in Latin American families). In theory and in practice, this ideology remained present. For example, when studying GBV

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24 The study draws upon the 2010 Ecuador Household Asset Survey (EAFF) and the 2010 Ghana Household Asset Survey (GHAS), nationally representative household assets surveys carried out as part of the Gender Asset Gap project. They find that compared to Ghana, more women in Ecuador consider IPV to be a common phenomenon in their community.
among Latino populations and immigrant communities from Latin America in the United States, women’s subjective role in a family and men’s entitlement to autonomy framed within the notion of machismo has had a crucial role in finding explanations for the high rates of violence (Perilla et al. 1994; Adames and Campbell 2005; Ramos-Lira 2007; Moreno 2007, Kim-Goodwin and Fox 2009). While “presence of a masculine ideal that emphasized dominance, toughness or male honor” (Heise 1997, 427) remained a relevant factor, the early 2000s studies began to recognize the complexity of these relationships, emphasizing ways through which gender, power and violence intersect with the system, including certain forms of violence that have not previously found place in the constellation of GBV. Some works brought political economic analyses to illuminate impacts that the transnational structures have had on local-level gender and power relations (Bourgois 2001; Farmer 2003; Wies 2010, Paulson 2015; Kwiatkowski 2015), the ways in which states utilize different strategies and ideologies to influence gender system and how culture and gender have been over-simplified (Adelman 2004; Merry 2006).

Structural, Patrimonial and Economic Violence

Adelman (2004), and Natalie J Sokoloff and Ida Dupont (2005) drew focus on the intersecting oppressions that influence violent aspects of the lives of marginalized women. Within their “structural framework”, Sokoloff and Dupont (2004, 59-60) argue that studies of domestic violence “must emphasize both

25 Some of these forms of violence include topics such as human trafficking (Petillo 2015), prostitution (Katsulis 2010; 2015), femicide (Carey and Torres 2010), gang violence (Hume and Wilding 2015), human rights and development (Engle 2006; Schuller 2010; Friederic 2014), property rights (Deere et al. 2014), military (Theidon 2007) and the state institutions that intersect with class and race (Hautzinger 2007).
individual and structural analyses of race, class, and gender inequality and marginalization in culturally diverse communities” in order to be emancipatory. One of the most widely used definitions of structural violence was coined by Farmer (2004, 8) who defined it as a “broad rubric that includes a host of offensives against human dignity: extreme and relative poverty, social inequalities, ranging from racism to gender inequality, and the more spectacular forms of violence that are uncontestably human rights abuses.” Although, various phenomena are omitted from his conceptual framework (such as genocide, prostitution), his model nevertheless brings together relevant aspects that call for debinarization of structure and agency, local and global, and culture and political, evoking societal mechanisms that oppress certain groups.

This is critical for several reasons. First, already established, is its shift away from essentialized notions of gender and culture in relation to violence. Second, as I discuss in detail in Chapter 6, it is crucial to consider structure, violence and institutional support when analyzing the reporting of GBV. Third, it is of particular relevance to Latin America to consider structural violence manifested in the form of economic and patrimonial violence – sometimes used interchangeably (Deere et al. 2012; 2014).

**Economic and Patrimonial Violence**

While the previous mentioned PAHO and WHO studies mentioned economic factors, they did not frame it within the “economic violence” framework, but rather suggested it being part of emotional abuse (Bott et al. 2012). The Women and Development Unit of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) defines economic violence as a “form of a series of
control mechanisms and monitoring of the behavior of women in terms of the use and distribution of money and the constant threat of denying economic resources” (ECLAC 2009, 32 cited in Deere et al. 2012, 4). ECLAC’s definition also suggests that strategies such as threats and manipulations are employed as a way to reinforce traditional gender roles where men are the providers and woman are relegated to the domestic space without earning their own income. Economic violence may also be connected to a failure to provide financial support for children (Ramos Runova 2010). As opposed to economic violence that illuminates ways in which a woman is unable to earn or control her own income to support herself and/or families, patrimonial violence focuses “on violations of women’s property rights, their ability to own and manage the individual and joint property to which they are entitled (Deere et al. 2014, 146). These factors are very relevant for Latin America where, as argued by Sylvia Chant (2002, 546) some of the biggest shifts have included growing proportions of households headed by women, the rise in single person households, declining fertility rates, the mounting incidence of divorce and separation, increased tendencies for couples to opt for visiting or consensual unions over formal marriage, and the expansion of women’s participation in income-generating work.

Going back to property rights, although in many Latin American countries, women’s rights are stronger than elsewhere in the world, women’s knowledge of property rights is still lacking (Deere and Doss 2006; Deere et al. 2012). Based on their extensive study of women’s property rights (and the ways in which property is accumulated) Carmen Diana Deere, Jacqueline Contreras, and Jennifer Twyman highlight the extent of patrimonial violence that occurs in
marriage, consensual unions, separation, divorce and widowhood, showing that patrimonial violence affects especially women who undergo separation, divorce or widowhood. According to their study, women in Ecuador are not sufficiently familiar with their property rights and urge that patrimonial violence be added to the constellation of recognized forms of VAW.  

**Contextualizing Gender-Based Violence in Ecuador**

The study of Deere et al. (2014) study foregrounds unique forms of violence that only recently began to be considered within the GBV framework. Prior to that, GBV in Ecuador has been recorded in various studies, particularly in the urban, coastal and sierra regions of Ecuador – and, as noted by Friederic (2011) and Camacho-Zamora (2014) – less so in very rural areas on the coast or in the frontier provinces. These studies and policies have been utilizing a wide range of concepts related to GBV: from “violencia de género;” “violencia hacia la(s) mujer(es);” “violencia doméstica;” “violencia intrafamiliar” (and its manifestations in forms of psychological, physical, sexual and patrimonial violence); “acoso sexual;” “femicidio,” and more (Guarderas Albuja 2016).

In some early studies in the context of the Latin American and Caribbean region, violence was considered to be either preventive (with the aim to keep

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26 They identify six situations that most commonly lead to patrimonial violence: (1) when women, who have acquired assets while single, assume that they belong to “the family,” and do not claim them if they undergo separation or divorce; (2) when women, who don’t earn their own income, assume that their failure to contribute to the household income implies that assets purchased during marriage or consensual union belong to their husband; (3) when the relationship ends and the land women inherited is considered community property; (4) when men fake a signature of their partner to discard assets, secure loans or, in the name of a third party, purchase assets to avoid being considered part of the joint property of the couple if divorce is anticipated (5) when men, in the case of separation/divorce put pressure on their spouses to sell the family home, despite the fact that women have custody of children; (6) when widowed mother are pressured by their children to sell the family home because they want to secure “their full inheritance while she’s still alive (Deere et al. 2014, 161).
women in a position subordinate to men and fulfill the roles they are supposed to as women), or punitive (aimed at punishing women’s resistance against these demands) (Fries and Hurtado 2010). One of the first studies that explored violence in the Andean world was Kristie Anne Stolen (1987) who argued that there is more violence at the beginning of a relationship, which decreases with time. Stolen attributes this behavior to men’s jealousy and possessive attitudes which get less intense when their wives and children get older. In search of grounds for GBV, notions of “la buena mujer” and “la mala mujer,” together with so-called “marianismo” as crucial ideologies that contribute to VAW (Stolen 1987). Other early research in Ecuador analyzed GBV in relation to the notions of patriarchy, which was considered to be the reason for the perpetual reinforcement of men’s power over women (Moscoso 1996; León Galarza 1997).27 These works also touched upon the ways through which some institutions (e.g. the church, the state) grant and reinforce power and authority to men who abuse women in many ways. Drawing on purity of women and promiscuity of men, some works also studied GBV in relation to bodies and sexuality (Rodríguez 1998; Betancourth 2010), most commonly in terms of domestic violence involving an intimate partner (Cuvi et al. 1989; Vega and Gómez 1993).

27 Here, I wish to draw attention to Lynne Philips’ warning that “[p]atriarchal relations and ideologies are neither consistent nor homogenous throughout Latin America, and scholars need to know much more about how patriarchy as a process is created and maintained in the Latin American countryside. For example, we still understand little about women’s role in maintaining patriarchy (in the household and in the community) in which contexts (as individuals or in groups) and for what purposes (long- or short-term gain)” (Philips 1990, 92).
Silva (1988) emphasized that women's sexuality was negotiated within the dualistic framework of a good woman who was pure, dedicated to her home and faithful to her husband, and a bad woman who seduced, provoked and engaged in sexual relations outside of marriage (women who failed to meet these expectations were likely to be punished) (Stølen 1987; Silva 1988; Vega and Gómez 1993). Ecuadorian men were considered to be intrinsically and biologically more active, characterizing "a real man" (verdadero hombre) as one who seduces more than one woman (Silva 1988). María Cuvi and Alexandra Martínez (1994) began to inquire about the ways in which motherhood and chastity play into this matrix, employing the notions of a woman-virgin (mujer-virgen) and Mater Dolorosa – both of which alluded to the sin of sexual pleasure which can only be eradicated through suffering (sufrimiento) (also part of marianismo). The notions of a bad a good woman were also investigated by Gloria Camacho who has been a crucial investigator in the realms of GBV in Ecuador, and who interpreted them in a relation to Mary and Eve, emphasizing that a punishment is a constitutive mechanism that is legitimized when a woman averts from her ideal role of a good woman (Camacho 1996; 2003). In a more recent study in Ecuador, Zaida Betancourth (2010) explored the ways in which sexual exploitation relates to "bad women" who pretend to become "good women" by becoming mothers by force. Cuvi and Martínez (1994) touch upon expectations within relationships, emphasizing that marital disputes sometimes start when a man begins a relationship with another woman – who is identified as a bad woman and becomes the source of conflict. They also drew attention to the ways in which men might use GBV as a way to punish women and transmit their
warnings (*advertencia*), achieve control over women’s sexuality, and reinforce their right to sexual liberty, constructed within the frameworks of honor and shame. Vega and Gómez (1993) draw on Stølen (1987) to discuss that violence is triggered when a woman suspect her partner’s infidelity, arguing that VAW in domestic circles usually arises from women’s refusal to accept the role she was assigned based on their sex and feminine identity. More recently, debates around the relations between GBV and gender system draw on the notion of citizenship, presenting family as a patriarchal and authoritarian unit that reflects ideologies of the country (Ernst and Ardaya 2000; Camacho 2003). Ardaya and Ernst also draw attention to the ways through which men impose their presence through violent acts – hypothesizing that this is mostly because they feel left out of domestic sphere where women usually play the main role.

The majority of these studies concluded that VAW is predominantly perpetuated by women’s partners and originates from the ways in which notions around gender have been constructed and reproduced by the institutions in society. These attribute different roles to women and to men in specific contexts, particularly drawing the biological and cultural differences between the two, reinforcing hegemonic ideologies and meanings that are associated with feminine or masculine. These notions have influenced institutions of the state (schools, churches, media), institutions of the family and other aspects of social life in public and private sectors which has contributed to the naturalization and subordination of women and their bodies in Ecuador (Camacho-Zambrano 2014, 32-31).
More recently, studies have also been conducted exclusively with indigenous women, highlighting the importance of taking into consideration socioeconomic situation of a country, especially since indigenous women live in economically disadvantaged position, are generally unemployed with limited access to state services and benefits (especially health and education) (Larrea and Montenegro, 2005; León, 2005; Ponce and Martínez, 2005). As previously noted, GBV has also been connected to neoliberal development and violence (World Bank 2000; CEDAW 2002;), structural conditions and development (Friederic 2011; 2014), and psychosocial interventions and violence (Guarderas Albuja 2014; 2016). The latter will be critical; within the psychology framework, Guarderas Albuja (2014, 99) analyzes the current interventions in response to GBV that work with the governmental initiatives, arguing that they not only maintain, but also reproduce, “discursos y prácticas hegemónicas hétéropatriarcales” (hegemonic and heteropatriarchical discourses and practices). These reinforce inequalities, showing how certain ways of responses assign previously established woman/victim-man/perpetrator categories and they homogenize women and men’s experience which leads to exclusion of anyone who does not fit into these binaries (for example LGBTI participants or people with unique experiences and individualized contexts).
CHAPTER 4
CATEGORIZATIONS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN ECUADOR: GENDER IN POLICIES, STATISTICS AND EVERYDAY PRACTICES

Una Reunión - May 10, 2016

About an hour into our meeting with the feministas ecuatorianas [Ecuadorian feminists], the debate starts heating up. A group of eight women who work with gender-sensitive topics have been discussing a four-year plan that involved strategies for institutions to approach gender-based violence in Ecuador. A psychologist from a respected Safe house in Quito who has been leading the discussion asks the group: “Should we develop a model that typifies separate forms of violence in order to know what type of service would be best for each?”

“We cannot do that,” immediately argues the director of CEPAM, “we just had a girl come in who was violada sexualmente [sexually violated] by her father and manipulated by her mother who eventually abandoned her. The girl ended up in a foster home where she was sexually abused again, and eventually gave birth to a baby that she cannot take care of because she is broke. See, you need time with these people. You cannot simply design nice categories and think you know how to treat las victimas [the victims].”

A prolonged silence ensues.

A self-identified gender specialist interrupts the intense moment by drawing attention to a large title on the Power Point slide that says ¿Para Quién Trabajamos? [Who do we work for?] She interrogates impatiently about who the target group is. The majority agrees it is women and children but that organizations, institutions, and corporations also need to be informed about the continuous violence in the community.

“Well what about men?” asks the social worker from CEPAM who has been quietly taking notes all this time. While a few women in the room exchange looks, the executive director of another gender-centered organization looks her straight in the eyes and sharply says: “They aren’t the focus. You all can read a study about masculinidades in Ecuador to learn about that." Their fight is not ours to fight. Their justice is not our justice.”

One of the legal specialists strongly agrees and, before excusing herself from the meeting to go pick up her eight-year old son, adds: “We will not be their advocates. We have been fighting violence against women for too long and achieved too little to take up another one that will take them into account.”

This vignettes highlights two issues addressed in this chapter; typologies of GBV, and the positionality of feminist NGOs and their ways of working with men.

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1 They were referring to a 2011 collection of essays Masculinidades en Ecuador, edited by X. Andrade and G.Herrera.
address the two through an analysis of how GBV is understood and thought about by differently positioned social actors. I focus on two large-scale campaigns that utilized visual, quantitative and other discursive forms to ask how meanings of GBV travel across the national public sphere and translate onto “the ground” – among the imaginaries and perceptions of people experiencing GBV. I analyze GBV in Ecuador on two levels, state and NGO.

First, I look at measures taken by a wide range of Ecuadorian institutions that have drawn considerable public attention to GBV, and argue that they work to narrow the scope of only recognizing and understanding GBV within three limiting forms: physical, psychological and sexual violence against women. Modest recent attention to patrimonial and/or economic violence may be a hopeful attempt to broaden the scope. Furthermore, although official reports that analyze these campaigns recognize the limitations of narrowly defined forms of violence, the discourse that is disseminated fits the dominant narrative that is also employed by the legislation (Chapter 6).

Second, I look at empirical data gathered at a feminist NGO CEPAM, to analyze how these initiatives and concepts play out in the practice of specific people and programs. In general, I find that although people who come to CEPAM describe multiform experiences with GBV, they still tend to only explicitly recognize those named forms that are circulated around the public sphere. Furthermore, although CEPAM workers pay close attention to these narratives and aim to find strategies that best fit individual circumstances, they tend to categorize these experiences in distinctive categories because they must use standardized forms to document the visit. I analyze how meanings and strategies
Numbers, Binaries and Categories: Politics of Translation

While I pay attention to semiotics, the focus of this chapter is on ontological aspects of translation that have become central to feminist theory and practice in the realms of human rights, empowerment, gender equality, development, citizenship and GBV across theoretical and geopolitical borders (de Lima Costa and Alvarez 2014). In looking at the ways through which translations occur in relation to projects, ideologies and interests within a specific space and time, I follow Susan Gal (2015, 229) who recognizes that the politics of translation is concerned with how discourses “move’, ‘travel’ and ‘circulate’.”

Translation has several implications for the discourses and ideas circulating within the transnational network of epistemic communities, development practitioners and international activists (Mohanty 2010; Østebø 2015). One aspect of translation politics that is relevant for this chapter is that associated with translating social phenomena into quantitative categories. In her book *The Seduction of Quantification* (2016), Sally Merry Engle challenges the ways in which social phenomena (human trafficking, human rights violation and GBV) are translated into simple, quantified terms, or “indicators” that allow individuals, organizations, governments or other actors establishing policies to compare social lives (Merry 2016, 13). With the intention of creating images that are able to travel across class, cultural and national borders, this kind of quantification might obscure or distort many factors and conditions within which
GBV occurs. Some of Merry’s arguments resonate with previously introduced work by Susan Paulson who questions the refusal to include in GBV frames of reference those phenomena such as homicides, suicides and accidents that—in Latin America—show extreme statistical inequalities disfavoring men, and that could illuminate how gender meanings and forms of violence affect men and women differently. By emphasizing how gender development models have focused on women’s issues, Paulson argues that this reproduced gender trouble for that broad range of actors and experiences lumped into the category of men, whose experiences are homogenized in statistical trends, obscuring uneven trends within hierarchies of masculinities (Paulson 2015). In reference to one critical form of GBV—occupational violence—Paulson makes a connection between societal expectations for certain types of men, including the idea that they are naturally strong and tough, and thus able to carry out painful labor in difficult and dangerous conditions, resulting in unique forms of occupational violence.

As discussed in Chapter 3, GBV in Ecuador is usually framed within the matrix of Violence Against Women (VAW) (in terms of victimhood and perpetratorhood) (Rodríguez 1998), emphasizing the intersections of gender, patriarchy, and body with domestic violence (Cuvi et al. 1989; Vega and Gómez 1993), and with unequal expectations related to sexuality (Betancourth 2010). Recently, critical notions of hegemonic masculinities have entered a few academic studies in Ecuador that expand the framework within which machismo studies have been done. A collection of essays edited by Xavier Andrade and Gioconda Herrera titled *Masculinidades en Ecuador* (2001) aims to rethink
gender equity by bringing new ideas to interventions in areas related to
citizenship, politics and GBV in which gender, sexuality race and class intersect.
Andrade’s research on masculinities is also advanced through a study of an
Ecuadorian political journalist, Pancho Jaime, where he employs the notion of
machismo to describe “a political form of public masculinity” and draws attention
to the negotiations of hegemonic masculinities and representations of political
power (Andrade 2005, 282). Through media, Jaime utilized a “machista lexicon”
and negatively portrayed certain politicians with characteristics related to
“subordinated masculinities” including those related to sexualities that he
constructed as perverse (e.g. homosexuality, bisexuality, effeminacy, and
transexualities) (298).²

Public Efforts to “Eliminar” Gender-Based Violence

In this section, I take a look at organizations that worked toward the
eradication of GBV through two public campaigns, and ask how those campaigns
have worked to maneuver the constructions of GBV and its forms in Ecuador. I
specifically focus on how they talk about the three dominant forms of violence as
used in the Ley 103 (sexual, physical, and psychologic) and the employment of
the concept of machismo. Special attention to machismo is critical not only
because of the long dominance of this term and idea in academia and public

² Another US-based attempts to analyze machismo in Ecuador was a 2014 multi-author study in
which Goicoela et al. addressed the ways through which young men engage to promote gender
equality and reproductive rights in Ecuador. Taking public health perspective, they find that
“machismo appears to represent a hegemonic masculinity in the Latin American region” and is
still strongly connected to heterosexuality, GBV, honor and protection (Goicoela et al. 2014, 400).
Their research sample of 40 encompasses men from all provinces of Ecuador (which is subject to
critique because of the generalization of their data) who are part of groups that advocate gender
equality and negotiate machismo by aspiring to feminist ideals, making them stand out of the
hegemonic ideal model.
policies, but also because it came up in my interviews and is worthy of critical analysis. The intention of discussing both is not necessarily to compare their outcomes, but to draw attention to how one employed different gendered images to disseminate specific meanings, and the other – relevant for the next chapter – how it approached violence against women that produced influential statistical results.

¡Reacciona Ecuador! ¡El Machismo es Violencia!

Between 2009 and 2010, and as part of the National Plan for Eradication of Gender-Based Violence against children, adolescents and women, *(Plan Nacional para la Erradicación de la Violencia de Género en Niñas, Niños, Adolescentes y Mujeres)*, The Transitional Commission towards Gender Equality carried out a campaign around machismo that was supported by alarmingly high statistical evidence on GBV.\(^3\) It attempted to raise awareness of the presence of machismo, and the ways in which it is materialized in society, and perpetuated in different public spaces. An extensive report disseminated by the campaign defines three categories of violence: physical (hitting, beating), sexual and psychological abuse (verbal insults such as shouts, insults, threats), and relates all of them to lack of respect, love, communication, cowardice, fear, ignorance, machismo, and lack of education, culture and morals (Estévez et al. 2011). The report also foregrounds that this campaign aimed to appeal to those men who are influenced by expectations of hegemonic masculinity and to raise awareness about la violencia machista, challenging its cultural patterns (Estévez et al. 2011,\(^3\)

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\(^3\) The statistical data were based on a 2004 survey, conducted by the *Encuesta Demográfica y de Salud Materna e Infantil* (ENDEMAIN),
Lili Carolina Salcedo Valleja’s master’s thesis of the perceptions of this campaign categorizes these images as those displaying statistical numbers, those that ridicule machismo, and those that draw on the reversed gender roles (Salcedo Valleja 2012). These gendered symbols that communicated the message that children and women are the main victims of machismo consisted of public advertisements, and were disseminated through television commercials.\(^4\) The creators of the campaign who issued the report define “machismo” as being a structural problem and should therefore not be considered neither as a cause, nor as a mechanical relationship between cause and effect. Misogyny is striking because machismo does not only pervade ideological reproduction, but also economic, professional, and domestic spaces in which women have a subordinate position dependent on men’s will and power (Estévez et al. 2011, 112).\(^5\)

This definition implies that although machismo is framed within an ideological framework in which women take a subordinate position in a patriarchal society that justifies men’s authority, it nevertheless calls for a careful consideration of the term that is neither a cause nor effect of violence in the society. The extensive report also draws on a separate qualitative study and considers a plethora of implications concerning machismo. It utilizes phrases like *mujer violada* (violated woman), emphasizing the importance of recognizing the materializations of machismo that might contribute to taking the blame away from

\(^4\) Some of these can be accessed via these links: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTxUWQ2IE6s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTxUWQ2IE6s) (Accessed March 2, 2017); [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lQICPCyDTY&list=PL0E6136DD9F2FEA69](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lQICPCyDTY&list=PL0E6136DD9F2FEA69) (Accessed March 2, 2017).

\(^5\) An original in Spanish goes: “un problema estructural de nuestra sociedad y, por tanto, no debe atenderse como una casuística ni como una relación mecánica de causas y efectos. Efectivamente, si las piezas visuales emplazan a la misoginia es porque el problema del machismo atiende no solo a la reproducción ideológica, sino que tiene que ver con los espacios económicos, profesionales y domésticos en los que la mujer tiene una posición subordinada y dependiente de la voluntad masculina.”
women (e.g. for not reporting GBV). This marks another important step in advancing an idea that violence is not a private matter.6

However, the messages displayed by the advertisements that were dissembled to the public were less sophisticated than those presented in the publicly-available 180-page report. The symbols and methods that the campaign utilized included highly stereotypical symbols, including those that are widely recognized as feminine (e.g. a purse, stepped over by a man’s foot; a flower, that needs to be treated “con cuidado” (carefully); a white sheet that seeks to emphasize the private nature of sexual violence; a doll, a girl’s toy that refers to violence against children which, as it falls down when a person wearing a man’s shoe walks up the stairs, reveals a message with alarming numbers of sexual abuse written on a tag of a bag). Women were not represented as particularly active agents but rather as individuals who sent more (and less) transparent messages. Men, however, are considered to be those who should act upon stopping the violence from happening and no longer ignore it (hence the slogan “No lo ignores más”). Implying that it is during childhood where masculinities are “deformed” and machismo is born, one aspect of the campaign utilized stereotypical images of switched gender roles to ridicule machismo. According to both users and workers at CEPAM, those messages were frequently circulated – even in more remote regions (Friederic 2011) and some visual material (TV

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6 The report does not seriously address ways in which machismo hurts and constrains men and boys in general, nor specific categories of men, such as those identified as homosexual.
commercials) was especially effective; for example, a caveman who acts in a way that was considered “primitive.”

Another image involves a series of men who perform roles usually associated with women saying: “I wash, iron and cook/ I am faithful/ My wife earns more than me? I don’t drink/ I sometimes cry...” These statements conclude with them looking directly at the camera, saying “So what?” (Y qué) which the report explained as an attempt to deconstruct the idea that reproductive and “feminine” roles are only associated with a woman. According to Salcedo Vallejo’s study, this slogan left its mark in people’s minds as a scornful synonym associated with the popular campaign, which has remained a commonly used joke among people in Ecuador (Salcedo Vallejo 2014).

La Encuesta Nacional: Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres en el Ecuador

A prominent national survey (in the future referred to as The Survey, further discussed in Chapter 5) was undertaken in 2011, followed by a series of reports analyzing the results for individual provinces in 2014. The aim of The Survey was to gather data about the magnitude and incidence of different forms of violence against women, which would affect policy, and draw attention to the intersecting sociocultural and economic factors on the national, regional and provincial levels.

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7 This commercial can be accessed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LV3Am5rl7Uc&t=1s; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8-fzhAmISs (Accessed March 2, 2017).
8 Although I recognize that my research stay is not sufficient to justify this assessment, it is still remarkable that I heard the mention of this campaign very rarely within the GBV circles, and never outside of them.
Encompassing 18,800 households in all 24 provinces of Ecuador, the survey focused on violence against women from diverse ethnoracial background (indigenous, afroecuadorian, montubian, mestiza, white). They recruited women aged 15 years and older, and asked whether they had been subjected to physical, sexual, psychological or patrimonial violence by a current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months, and over a lifetime. Definitions employed in Survey were adopted from Ley 103, with the critical addition of some of the elements of patrimonial violence, adopted from a Costa Rican law. The definitions employed in the Survey questionnaire were as follows: (1) Physical violence, any act of force that causes harm, pain or suffering to the person affected regardless of: the means employed, its consequences, and the time required for recovery; (2) psychological violence, any act or omission that causes harm, pain, emotional distress, psychological disturbance or decreased self-esteem to the woman or the victimized family, including acts of intimidation or threats that instill fear) and (3) sexual violence, considered to constitute abuse when it imposes or forces a person to have sexual relationships or other practices with the offender or others through the use of physical force, intimidation, threats or other coercive means (INEC 2011). However, the report of

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9 One woman of the household was recruited for one of the four questionnaires that were adapted differently to single, divorced, widowed, single, married women and women in relationships, and addressed sociodemographic questions, family history, conflicts, tensions, decisions and opinions about women’s and men’s roles.

10 The definition of patrimonial violence is “El daño, pérdida, transformación, sustracción, destrucción, retención o distracción de objetos, instrumentos de trabajo, documentos personales, bienes, valores, derechos o recursos económicos destinados a satisfacer las necesidades de las víctimas” (“damage, loss, transformation, subtraction, destruction, retention or distraction of objects, working tools, personal documents, goods, valuables and rights or economical resources meant to satisfy the victim’s needs”).

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the Survey emphasizes that instead of the intrafamiliar violence (*violencia intrafamiliar*) framework,\(^\text{11}\) the focus is on GBV against women (*la violencia de género en contra de las mujeres*) which emphasizes that they live in a “sociedad patriarcal que las discrimina y subordina, que ha hecho que el factor de riesgo sea ser mujer” (patriarchal society that discriminates and subordinates women, whose risk factor is being a woman) (Camacho 2014, 21).

The extensive reports provided comprehensive graphs, calculations, analysis and explanations that attempt to provide a transparent representation of the some of the demographic factors associated with lifetime violence and the contexts within which it takes place. Numbers surrounding VAW circulate widely, affecting public discourse and occasionally causing panics that trigger communities to take action based on them. However, the results that are the most circulated in the media usually refer only to a short “6 out of 10 women suffer from GBV in Ecuador” (*6 de cada 10 mujeres sufren [Violencia de Género en Ecuador]*), which draws constant attention to the current state of violence in the community, but collapses some of the complex and region-specific nuances.

**The Role of CEPAM in Translating Experiences of Gender-Based Violence**

Thus far, I have discussed ways in which public initiatives that address GBV utilize concepts and ideas related to GBV in Ecuador. These initiatives, especially the survey, have been widely circulated to the public, through the

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\(^{11}\) Intrafamily violence is considered an act or omission which consists of physical, psychological or sexual violence enacted by a member of the family against women or other members of the nuclear family (Article 2). Members of the nuclear family are considered to be spouses, parents, children, siblings and relatives to the second degree of affinity. Protection afforded by this law shall extend to former spouses, cohabitants, ex-cohabitants, persons with whom they maintain or have maintained a consensual partner, and those who share the home of the perpetrator or the victim (Art 3).
media, and among academic and non-academic communities. As a critical social actor, CEPAM team plays a vital role in transmitting messages, deconstructing as well as contributing to the dominating narratives that present a matrix of violence as constructed within the forms of sexual, psychological, physical, and sometimes patrimonial/economic VAW. By looking at CEPAM team’s work as well as their users, I draw attention to the understandings and perceptions of different forms of violence, and the ways in which their experience overlap with the public messages discussed above.

**What is Gender-Based Violence?**

Although in practice the CEPAM team does not operate with any clear-cut definitions of violence, the rhetoric employed in their everyday practices, documents and educational materials position GBV within the VAW and violence against children. In one of CEPAM’s collaborative three-part projects titled *PIDE: Programa Integral de Desarrollo Educativo* (Comprehensive Program for Scholarly Development) (2009-2010) that focused on the empowerment and human rights of families and youth in domestic and educational environments, violence is associated with the disproportionate distribution of power that subjects and humiliates those most vulnerable, who are assumed to be women and children. The manuals recognize that violence can be perpetrated by society, family, or an individual in different spaces. They also add “identity damage” to the generally recognized forms of violence. Violence in general is differentiated from GBV (defined as that manifested specifically between a woman and a man) and intrafamiliar violence (including aggressions, neglect, and failure to report violent domestic situations). Furthermore, the reports also point out that
intergenerational (mostly parent-child/professor-student) and intracultural violence (exclusion or humiliation of a person that belongs to a different culture or community) occur (PIDE 2009, 17), which was also mentioned in the Survey (in the context of economic and patrimonial violence, elaborated in Chapter 5). As opposed to the previously discussed initiatives, the definition utilized by CEPAM leaves space for families that are not traditionally considered “nuclear.” The relatively loose definitions still appear to have clear boundaries but recognize forms of violence not generally connected to GBV or VAW in public discourses.

Generally, the lines between different forms of violence are blurred in the everyday practices of CEPAM’s workers and in their interactions with the users, as demonstrated in the opening vignette. As the meanings and experiences of violence shift and intertwine, CEPAM pays close attention to individual circumstances, spending as much time (or as many weeks) as needed for the person to work through their experience. However, CEPAM must meet an institutional requirement imposed by the Ministry of Justice (that makes them eligible for financial support to the strengthen their services and efforts to eradication of GBV) which involves the use of standardized forms that they are required to fill out upon the person’s first visit (Chapter 2). These forms specify categories of GBV, dividing them into those of physical, psychological, sexual, patrimonial/economic violence, attempt at femicide and establishing the identity of the aggressor and the victim. These standardized forms (Appendix) require that the distinctive lived experiences of people who come to CEPAM be translated into a limited set of categories of violence, generated by the normative discourse in Ecuador. One result of this bureaucratic move is to limit the extent to
which flexible and complex practices and meanings of violence travel outside of CEPAM circles.

**Complexities of Gender Roles and Violence: The Case of Machismo**

Considered as a characteristic, concept, ideology, force, cause, effect or violence itself, machismo is a complex notion. During my interviews, I noticed that people did not use the word “machismo” often, but often mentioned characteristics that seem to be associated with it. When “machismo” was uttered, it usually came after a long and complex story of violence, and served almost like a conclusion that justifies it: “Eso es machismo en nuestra sociedad” (This is machismo in our society). On more than one occasion, this simplistic summary of the complicated experience caught me off guard which must have shown on my face, as the women made sure to ask whether I knew what it means. I would say, that I do, in theory, and asked what it meant to them. Dayana, a mother of three who had, prior to her abusive marriage, experienced severe sexual abuse from her father explained:

> It means he is *un hombre muy prepotente*, a very overbearing man. That he puts his wife down and that he does not let her grow as a person. That he controls her. My husband has been controlling me all life, just because he is a man. *Es nuestra cultura*, it is in our culture. It is backwards. But it is because his father was like that. It’s because he lived in this machista environment all his life (June 18, 2016).

Most of the people I interviewed did not bring up the childhood of the aggressor very often, and thought about it for a second if I asked about it, saying that it is not something that their men would like to talk about. CEPAM’s worker agrees with these aspects and brought up the statistics to support the prevalence of machismo:
Violence is not something that happens only to a few. And Ecuador is a very machista country. Statistics show it! Which means that men do what they want and think they are owners of women and have all the authority. And the majority of women supports that! Just today I talked to a client [woman] who came in with her 12-year old son who defends her mother always because their father hits her and him with a belt and a cable! And she refuses to report! (Personal Communication, June 16, 2016).

Her words contradict the objective of the previously mentioned campaign on machismo that aimed to emphasize that it is not women who are responsible for violence – but the entire society in which machismo is materialized. Nevertheless, laying responsibility for machismo on women is something that was implied by other users of CEPAM as well. A story of Amanda who chose a divorce rather than reporting violence, in order not to lose her house and custody of her children, blames machismo for everything related to her experience with GBV:

Violencia de género es enfermedad, GBV is a disease that our society has and that the women are not aware of. Lamentablemente, unfortunately we live in a machista society. And it is us, women, who suffer because of it. And one of the reasons why, is because they don’t recognize the value of the work. You ask them – trabajas? They say no, I don’t work. My husband doesn’t let me. But they DO work –wake up, prepare breakfast, send kids to school, run errands all day and go to bed last. We have to change this. Men abuse these women; it is machismo which spread out. This is violence for me I was not only abused by my husband; I was also abused by my mother-in-law. And by children from my ex-husband’s previous marriage. Everyone tortures us (Interview, May 30, 2016).

Vague efforts of women users to conceptualize machismo that causes sufrimiento (suffering) by extending it to their entire personal history of violence could be juxtaposed with another CEPAM worker who says that it is “complex, because expectations are imposed upon men but also hurt women.” This striking statement reveals many complexities in regards to expectations that I further elaborate in chapter 5, but its systemic implications are relevant for this chapter.
and stood out among other opinions. This statement stayed with me and while attempting to reveal more parts of the mosaic of machismo, I was reminded of deeply engraved gender ideologies that were manifest during the first workshop we conducted in Quito.

**Un Taller (A Workshop)**

During a very dynamic workshop we conducted in Quito (I describe the workshops in Chapter 2), a moment came when a few mothers began to talk to each other about the frustrations they face when their children “get difficult.” One of them explained that her partner solves those aggressions “with more aggression.” This sparked outrage from a man in the room whom I will call Walter and who seemed to be able to relate to the situation the woman was talking about: “Well, what can I do when she [wife] shouts? Me pongo macho! I don’t know any other way to protect myself in this the situation.” This sparked backlash against him from women who said that Walter (and men like him) does not do anything except eat breakfast his wife prepares (which was followed by a round of applause). At that point, Walter stood up saying: “But what if I can’t do something the second my wife asks me?” which encouraged another man to contribute to the debate, defending himself by saying they [men] do help around the house: “But I work afuera de la casa (implying he was a construction worker) and am extremely tired after a long day at work. Sometimes I can’t help it that I get impatient.” By this moment, everybody was engaged in the situation and one of CEPAM workers intervened by taking the women’s side, declaring that women do everything in the house and can’t travel the way men do: “You come home and hang out with your friends while she is alone at home with kids.” While the stereotypes were being
thrown around the room, I heard two men sitting close to me whispering, “Yes, it’s hard working afuera de la casa.” From another room I heard something that could be interpreted as adding fuel to the fire or as an attempt at a balanced inclusive view that everyone faces challenges related to their identity: “I am not saying everything is easy for men and everything is hard for women. All I am saying is that working afuera is no harder than what women do around the house during the day.” A group of three mothers sitting next to me agreed with each other: “This is machismo in the society, you see. We raise them, we have them,” to which her friend responded: “as if I was listening to my husband. Now he is the victim? No!”

As the situation was coming down, another CEPAM worker whispered to me that she refuses to blame machismo for violence and said she is not fond of “this whole ‘men are raised machista’ narrative. It implies it is mother’s fault when it is actually so much more complicated.”

The complexities of this event indicate the remarkable power of gender ideologies embedded in the socio-economic system and cultural expectations that affect all actors: men, women and children. Considering the fact that the workshop was conducted with a population from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, this aligns especially well with Paulson’s argument for attention to the processes and expectations through which “subordinate masculinities shape the horizons and experiences of men positioned as poor, rural, indigenous or black” (Paulson 2015, 3). While two men who appeared to be in their 40s struggled to express their frustrations with the experience that members of their household refuse to understand their hard work, numerous women struggled just as hard to articulate their side of their story, that also involved feeling lack of
acknowledgment of their gender-specific burdens. Each group—that of men and that of women---found points of connection and solidarity that brought them together. However, instead of finding common points in their shared challenges struggling to endure gender-related labor burdens, the two groups became as antagonists fighting for the right to claim more gender-based suffering. Thus, contrary to the belief expressed by feminists in the opening vignette who discuss the future of GBV in Ecuador, men and masculinidades are highly critical to understanding and implementing in GBV policies and actions, and more solidarity and dialogue would be welcome among them.

**Categories of Violence: Theory and Practice**

Language and the practice of systematization are common aspirations when addressing GBV in the institutional circles, which is a challenging task. Ana, who lost all of her property during a divorce process, expressed her gratitude to CEPAM where she “got legal support but with their help realized that [she has] been suffering from psychological violence, not just physical and economic one.” Ana’s case was not an isolated one in the sense that she did not unpack what these categories mean to her – but, thanks to CEPAM, she seemed to have a clear idea of what patrimonial or economic violence meant to her – losing her house (that she reports to have co-owned with her husband).

Previously mentioned Dayana, whose life has been, in her own words, “one big circle of violence” (she aborted her father’s child) is currently cohabiting with an estranged husband, a relationship without any cariño, any affection. Dividing her experience temporally, she said:

> [b]efore this psychological violence started, I had wanted to separate from him more than once but I always came back because my children were
attending good, expensive schools and it would be hard for a single mother to maintain this standard.

While Dayana’s understanding of psychological violence coincided with the popular definition represented in the survey, she did not use the term “economic violence” to refer to the reality of her financial dependence that many women share, and manipulation through funds (“if you leave me you will be left with nothing” narrative). She gave me a confused look when I mentioned the idea of la violencia economica.

A story of a house visit from Chapter 2 reveals a complex family situation involving many forms of (intergenerational) violence, where eight siblings were cohabiting in a house that their parents build for all of the children that have been fighting over it. Claudia, one of the eight siblings, has been coming to CEPAM because she was upset about the “psychological violence” she has been experiencing, which in her world meant that she has received no help for taking care of their dying mother. The house visit, however, revealed serious economic and patrimonial issues:

Yes, we have many problems in this house. But they are all because of the house. It is a house of conflicts, casa de los conflictos. It has always been the source of conflicts. I wanted to report my aunt because she was psychologically manipulating all of us. She called my brother maricon and attacked him. (June 21, 2016).

When I was discussing the situation with three of her siblings, all of them complained about the violencia psicologica in the house – and all of them had different ideas of what it meant (“she had problemas psicologicas,” “she manipulated us,” “she never brought anything from her travels,” “she got divorced 4 times and burdened us with her problems”)…). The culprit in those narratives, however, was always Claudia, who herself perceived to be the victim of
psychological violence from the part of her siblings. The contested meanings of different types of violence related to property issues have been causing conflicts.

Ways through which people relate their experience with violence through the different stages of life was also present in a 28-year old Juliana’s narrative who recently filed for divorce from a husband who she claims is a very powerful man in Quito:

Psychological [violence] was during our marriage. We were married for 8 years, we got along well. He supported me, helped me get promoted at work. But then the physical violence started. This happened when I became more critical of how he treated me. And after a while he took my car away (me quitó el auto) and prevented me from accessing my bank account so I couldn’t buy anything (June 28, 2016).

When I interrogated whether he has taken any of her other assets she thought for a second and nodded: “He took my biggest asset – my job. And now I can’t get a new one because he has so many connections.” Economic violence came up during interviews when women began to complain about the characteristics of their husbands – and not as a form of violence they previously recognized or named.

**Intrafamiliar Violence as Gender-Based Violence**

The workshops we conducted in Quito also provided intriguing insights into the ways in which people perceive GBV, and think about the categories of victims and aggressors. The constructions of categories of an aggressor and victim represent a complex challenge which is relevant to this thesis in the sense in which men are often considered indisputable perpetrators or aggressors (as demonstrated in the opening vignette). This is important after the story of Claudia in which everyone thought they were a victim of violence by someone else. Now I
show how these notions are almost always related to multi-directional tension, reduced to one universal script of unidirectional blame.

Some people in the previously mentioned workshop believed that GBV is *desobedencia* of children, teenagers discussed the lack of support at home and in schools, and lack of respect in the home. While some mothers argued that *el agresor* can be a father, brother, or cousin, some younger girls agreed that it is their *mami* who finds herself at the risk of being hit by one of these men if she does not say the right words. Particularly vocal was a 19-year old girl who said she has seen many cases of violence of women against men – especially on the economic level: “*Gender roles shouldn’t matter in GBV,*” she said in front of the entire room, “*It shouldn’t matter who cooks or cleans – they should help each other.*” Younger generation seems to be telling a different story, and Jennifer sings the praise of her father who has moved to Europe:

Here in Ecuador it’s all about the mother. If a person is bad, what matters is the mother. There is no gender equality here. The father is the bad one, and *just* someone who gives you life. Mine was always very far but I felt as if he were here. He always asked me how everything was. And my mother? Never! I wanted to be with him but my mother wanted me with her. Eventually she tried to get him arrested because he refused to pay his part through the bank. Instead, he just sent the money straight to me. He knew she could not have been trusted (Interview, June 10, 2016).

This form of violence would generally become framed within the “*violencia intrafamiliar*” or “*violencia domestica*” framework that implies physiological, physical or sexual violence in a family that is a result of unequal power relationships between a father and a mother. Jennifer clearly indicates how her experience intertwines with gender roles where a mother does not fulfil what is culturally expected from her (to be a good mother) and what consequences that had for her as a teenager.
Discussion: Translations of Meanings and Positionality of Different Actors

In this chapter, I introduced two initiatives that have drawn public attention to GBV which has too often been regarded as a private concern. I explored socio-cultural aspects of the constructions and perceptions of meanings associated with GBV within the general public, CEPAM and people in my study, focusing on tensions between widely-applied and circulated categories of violence and assignations of blame, on the one hand, and diverse multi-faceted experiences on the other. This exploration complements an in-depth analysis of the factors associated with GBV, and with the decision to report violence that I explore in the following chapters, and the legislative discourses that reinforce ideas about experiences with GBV. Through the process of interviewing and analyzing case files, it became clear that although people generally talk in terms of widely recognized, popularly discussed forms of psychological, physical and sexual violence, their experience is often connected not only to economic or patrimonial violence, but also to occupational violence and forms of intrafamiliar violence not perpetuated by an intimate partner like that reinforced by the dominant discourse. The lines between different forms of violence are blurred at CEPAM, where professionals try to address each unique and multifaceted experience. However, due to the institutional requirements, CEPAM needs to translate the experience of their user into standardized forms that then travel to legislative bodies (Chapter 6).

Returning to the two campaigns presented at the beginning of this chapter, it seems like the meanings surrounding GBV only emphasize the presence separate forms of violence without emphasizing the ways in which they tend to
intersect or even overlap with each other. This might contribute to the narrative about categorizations seen in the opening vignette. As I have been arguing throughout this chapter and will elaborate in chapter 5, factors that contribute to violence and perceptions of violence are complex, intertwined in the matrix of societal mechanisms, ethnoracial backgrounds, gender ideologies and family dynamics.

These initiatives have been an important step towards publicizing GBV, but it seems that these efforts raise questions about its implications. One example is implied in the comments made by the President Correa (who is known for his unpredictable public remarks) during one of his trips around the country in which he addressed the citizens. On November 25, 2015 (which is UN-established International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women), Correa brought up the Survey, initiated by his administration, and expressed his doubts particularly in relation to psychological violence which was reported by 54% women nationally (INEC 2011). What he found particularly problematic was the question “Have you been ignored,” one of the questions employed in the questionnaire to measure psychological violence. Taking the question out of the context, Correa argued that this “no puede ser” because these are “subjective

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13 This question is repeated in the questionnaire utilized by the survey; in the relation to the school and professional environment, in a relation to the figures of authority, director, professor or personal administrator in school or university ignoring a woman “de menos por ser mujer”; within the family context, where the question refers to the lack of attention.
questions.” He vaguely called for “more objectivity” that will develop clear indicators to inform policy.\(^{14}\)

In the context of any large-scale survey (and campaign) such as the ones presented in this chapter, there needs to be a deal of caution and attention to the methodologies (Ellsberg 2001; Andersson and Cockcroft 2012; Paulson 2015; Merry 2016). This applies to Ecuador, where standardized questionnaires and numerical evaluations have become a trend, applied across the country’s extremely diverse ethnoracial and cultural provinces that spread across a wide-range of ecosystems. It is important to consider not only their overall message (rates of GBV are high) but also the very tools (e.g. questionnaires, representations) used in the process in order to avoid reducing diverse backgrounds and experiences to categorizing practices (such as the proposal in the opening vignette). CEPAM generally avoids this well by paying attention to every person’s circumstances. An issue brought up by Ellsberg et al. (2001, 2) might be the “nonresponse bias” which suggests at that women might not be willing to reveal their experience which will lead to the underestimation of incidence.\(^{15}\) It is also notable that definitions that limit conversation to legally recognized forms of violence have the potential to belittle those experiences that might be ambiguous to respondents. However, despite these possible drawbacks

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\(^{15}\) Doubts have been raised in regards to the survey result for the coastal province of Manabí which show very low rates of GBV among the women there (INEC 2011). CEPAM worker said to me that she cannot understand how that is possible, because “\textit{todo el mundo},” the entire world knows that that is the most machista – and thus the most violent region. Based on Friederíc’s study among rural manabitas, many women in that region have normalized violence and paradoxically appears to have the some of the lowest rates. Friederíc also emphasizes that her study shows that women have different understandings of what is domestic and what intrafamiliar violence, in relation to the definitions employed in the laws (Friederíc 2014).
that might obscure certain factors at play, calling into questions the very rates of violence (like done by president Correa) is alarming – not only because they seem to take elements of the Survey out of the context, but also because doubt was cast on the very high rates of violence that should provoke response.

Pointing out drawbacks of the survey and calling for more objectivity suggests that subjective experiences of violence are irrelevant (or even nonexistent) and that systemic violence is nonexistent. Surveys that affect public perceptions and discourses are still critical tools to introduce social phenomena into a public discourse with the legitimacy of official statistics, “providing a vehicle for feminists to introduce issues of sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism and other social justice concerns into mainstream” (Miner et al. 2012, 243). One way in which this seems to be working especially well in Ecuador is by introducing economic and/or patrimonial violence into the public discourse, which has been problematized and recognized by CEPAM – and is now becoming part of people’s knowledge. While quantitative data are extremely important in the support and design of policies and programs—as is demonstrated by President Correa’s fixation on objective data about GBV—it is not always sufficient to understand complex factors and diverse perceptions that are associated with violence. Without taking these into account, categorizations of violence might not apply neatly to complex, interrelated dimensions within the experiences of GBV. In the following chapter, I explore these circumstances.
In this chapter, I draw on the CEPAM case files and my interviews to identify intersecting factors that contribute to people’s decision to come to CEPAM for assistance. These decisions sometimes follow years, if not decades, of GBV. In some cases, the decision appears to be made in a moment, prompted by a climatic event (such as an episode of very serious physical violence) that serves as catalyst to say basta and take action against violence. To introduce this analysis, I first describe the sociodemographic characterizes of CEPAM’s users, showing who comes to CEPAM, the forms of violence they are reporting, and by whom it is perpetuated. In other cases, the decision is more complex. Then, I discuss the triggering factors that they report. Finally, I draw on the narratives in the case files to show how they understand how they came to CEPAM. Before proceeding to CEPAM case study, I illuminate the 2011 National Survey to provide an overview of violence against women in Ecuador.

In the Chapter 4, I introduced the National Survey that encompassed all provinces in Ecuador and intended to measure lifetime and recent (last 12 months) occurrence of physical, psychological, sexual and patrimonial violence among Ecuadorian women over 15, including violence for separated, divorced or widowed women, women who are married or in a cohabiting union, single or under 18 years old. The survey shows that 60.6% of the interviewed women reported to have suffered at least one of the above listed forms of violence. As Table 5-1 shows, on the national level, women reported the highest incidences for lifetime psychological violence (54.9%), followed by physical (38.0%), sexual (25.7%) and patrimonial violence (16.7%). The respective incidences for lifetime psychological, physical, sexual and
patrimonial violence reported by women in the province of Pichincha were 62.9%, 45.1%, 33.9%, and 18.5%. One the provincial level, Pichincha places third in the reported incidences of violence in the country. On the national level, 76.3% of women report that violence was perpetrated by their former or ex partners, while in Pichincha the perpetrator was him in 77.0% of the cases (the remaining 23.0% of the cases report that the perpetrator was “another person”). On both the national and provincial level, the highest incidences of violence are reported by the separated, divorced or widowed women.¹ The Survey also shows that on the national level, 49.8% of women does not think about or does not want to separate from their partner (the perpetrator). In Pichincha, there were 54.9% of women who had the same response. As for the younger women, 14.1% of women reported having suffered sexual abuse before they turned 18, 49.2% of those experienced it by their close family member (father, brother, father-in-law) (INEC 2011; Zurita Quintana 2014). The Survey considers the following general factors associated with different profiles of GBV in Ecuador: geographical area (whether a woman resides in a rural or urban area), household income, ethnoracial identity, education level, disability, family situation, relationship cycle/length of a woman, her marital status, and the number of children (INEC 2011).

¹Furthermore, the highest incidence of violence is reported by indigenous women (67.8%), followed by afroecuadorian (66.7%), montubian (62.9%), white (59.7%) and mestizas (59.1%) (INEC 2011). According to the Censo Población y Vivienda 2010, 73.21 percent of women over the age of 15 identify as mestizas, followed by montubian (6.92%), afroecuadorian (6.80%), indigenous (6.49%), white (6.24) and other (0.35%).
Figure 5-1. Factors that trigger violence against women by their current or former partners (%) (INEC 2011)

Figure 5-1, adapted from the 2011 Survey shows some of the most common factors associated with triggering violence against women (VAW) on the national level. The most common factors reported by women that triggered violence were jealousy, consumption of alcohol or other substances, his romantic relationship with another woman, economic problems, loss of employment, and woman getting a job. Other factors that are much less frequently reported include a birth of a child, pregnancy, a woman having another relationship, another person came to live in the house, or not getting pregnant.

**General Overview of CEPAM’s Users**

In this section, I use data from 272 case files of users who are listed as "women" and 48 case files of men in the final section. I focus specifically on lifetime IPV, as that appears to be the form most commonly reported by women, as well as its intertwinenment with the extended family members. I follow the Survey’s division of age groups to offer an interpretative overview of the case files. A few observations need to
be raised before continuing to the next section. There is a good amount of sociodemographic information missing from the case files which could make the comparison by cohort difficult. I do not take into consideration reported “marital status” because the categories reported do not seem to correlate with other evidence in a consistent way. The distinction between legal spouse and domestic partner is not clear in the narratives. Many women list their current status as “married” although they are in the process of separation or have recently separated, and others talk about their former or current partners interchangeably (many would also say they are "solteras" because they have been living alone due to a recent separation, but are in fact still married or in a cohabiting relationship). Furthermore, in terms of education, the data are not always clear whether a person has completed a certain level of education, or stopped their studies while obtaining secondary or university level of education either. The understanding of “trabajo” (employment, job) also varies among CEPAM users. CEPAM’s standardized forms categorize “employment” as a paid job (trabajo remunerado), regardless of its status (full-time, part-time, occasional…). Thus, it is not uncommon that women report to not have “trabajo” but have an income (which may or may not be continuous). Others also identify directly as “housewives” and name it as “trabajo” (which is important because it challenges the idea that household work has less value than having a job in a formal working sector). I also talk about different forms of violence reported, but emphasize that they intertwine too much to be taken out of

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2 Some of the sources of income according to the narratives and to the 2014 report of INEC Survey could be cleaning houses, selling in the market, conditional cash transfers or remittances.

3 This is not a given option in the standardized form, but a CEPAM worker said that they write down whatever their user identifies (in another case, the listed profession is “hija de dios”).

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context in isolation. Additionally, some case files have missing information for some sections (education, employment, income, “aggressor”).

I represent what is written in the case files where narrative representations must be treated not as quantifiable empirical reality, but as a representation of individual stories. Thus, it is important to make a few final remarks in terms of “reliability” of the data. During my time at CEPAM, I heard testimonies of people with different perceptions of their own demographic data (“I am not sure when my birthday is, I would need to see my ID for that, “Don’t ask me what part of Quito I live in because don’t know”), and ethnoracial identities (“I am what I am,” “My brothers call me negrita but I guess I am a mestiza”). All of these stories “come into life” in CEPAM offices where workers write down testimonies of people whose lives have in one way or another involved a scenario of violence. Some of these people have prior to CEPAM already visited one of the Judicial Units (JU) with the attempt to take legal action against the individual who is perpetrating violence (elaborated in Chapter 5). These bring written stories as recorded on the court that are part of the case file. Thus, I want to point out that although the majority of the stories are written down word-by-word, they have still been collected by another person in a specific context. With this note, I wish to draw attention to the fact that CEPAM data, like any archive, needs to be considered critically. The aim of examining this data are not necessarily to establish prevalence, but rather to tease out specific details about the manifestations of violence that allow for a thorough explorations of the factors that are associated with violence and ways in which women, and men, respond to it.
First, I will describe sociodemographic characteristics of different age cohorts, including number of children, level of education, ethno racial profile, employment status and income level (at the time of their visit). Then, I discuss the incidences of different type of IPV reported by women in different age cohorts, and highlight the multiplicities of different forms of violence. Finally, I bring all of these characteristics together and transition into the second part of the chapter that draws on narratives collected in the case files.

**Overview of Sociodemographic Characteristics (by Age)**

An average age of a woman who comes to CEPAM appears to be between 40 and 41 years with two children. Women between the ages of 30 and 39 represent the largest age cohort among those who come to CEPAM (33.5%), followed by 20-29 year-olds who represent 26.5% of CEPAM users. The smallest cohorts are represented by women between 40 and 49 years old (17.3%), and women under the age of 19 (7%) and above 65 years old (1.7%). Across all cohorts, the majority of women identifies as mestizas, and almost none identifies as indigenous, afroecuadorian, white or montubian. Thus, I will not emphasize this in the subsequent analysis of age cohorts.\(^4\) The majority of women that came to CEPAM have attended or completed secondary education (61% reports to have attended or completed high school and 5.8% for university), and only

\(^4\) Although I do not have sufficient data to interrogate this, it is worth mentioning that the National Survey suggests that women who identify as white generally belong to higher socioeconomic classes which gives provides them with better access to education, and other symbolic and material capital which could act as a preventive factor for GBV. On the other hand, the creators of the report on the Survey suggest that women who identify as indigenous or afroecuadorian generally experience more socio-economic discrimination, and thus have less access to previously mentioned institutions (Camacho-Zamora 2014, 34).
1.8% report to have received zero education (Table 5-3).\textsuperscript{5} Thus, CEPAM database generally has slightly less education than provincial average.

The average woman in the largest age cohort (30 to 39-year-old) is 34.7 years old and has 2.2 children (Table 5-2). The majority of women in this group (62.6\%) has generally either completed or enrolled into a secondary school. There is an equal percentage of women who have attended or completed primary school and those with incomplete education, which makes it hard to draw any conclusions. According to the case files, among the reasons that women do not report primary or secondary school is getting pregnant before they are 18. My interviews with women in this age cohort suggest that women had to drop out of a postsecondary institution because of their controlling partners, unexpected pregnancy or both. In terms of employment, Table 5-4 shows that 38.5\% of women who belong to this age cohort were unemployed when they first arrived at CEPAM, and 51.6\% of the women in the same cohort had paid jobs. Some of them identified as nurses, domestic workers, cleaners, manicurists and waitresses. Five of them recognize their work as “ama de la casa” (housewife).

The average age of a woman in the second largest age cohort (20-29 year olds) is around 25 years and has one child (Table 5-2). The majority of women here have attended or finished secondary school, with a low percentage having reached university. According to the case files, four women in this age group (5.6\%) identified as current students (at the time of their visit enrolled in a secondary or postsecondary institution).\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{5} This slightly differs from the 2011 Survey results for Pichincha region, where 41.5\% percent of women who participated in the survey have enrolled in or finished high school or technical school, and 27.6\% university education.

\textsuperscript{6} While more women in this age group are unemployed (45.8\%) than those over 30, there are also less of those in this age group who reported to be employed at the time of their visit (38.9\%), which could be due to the 6.9\% of no available information the case files cases (Table 5-4).
Case files for this age cohort do not include much information on the type of employment, apart from two who, at the time of their visit, worked as cleaners and one who works as a professor.

Moving on to the third largest age cohort represented by women between 40 and 49 years old, the average age is 44.2, of these women have two children (Table 5-2). Almost no women in this age group report are childless. As Table 5-2 shows, 66.0% of them report having attended or completed secondary school. No women in this age cohort report to have attended or completed university, but there is no information for 17.0% of women in this cohort. One woman reports in her case file to have terminated her secondary studies early due to a pregnancy at the age of 19. Another one barely finished primary school due to an unwanted pregnancy at the age of 15. The rate of employment of women appears to be much lower for women those between 40 and 49 years old than for younger cohorts, notwithstanding that there is no information for 6% of cases. Some of the occupation that the women identified at the time of their visit include being a housekeeper, taxi driver and a small business owner.

The fourth largest age cohort is represented by women between the ages of 50 and 64, who 56 years old on average and have between two and three children (Table 5-2). This cohort reports the highest percentage of women (68%) who have enrolled in, or finished secondary school – and, at the same time – the lowest percentage of primary education enrollment or attendance (3.2%) (Table 5-2). As I demonstrate later, some case files—and my interviews—suggest that some of the younger women had to stop working because of their husband’s manipulations and threats, and were
determined to get back on the job market after taking action against violence which might have some correlation with the employment statistics.

Finally, the smallest cohorts are represented by the youngest and the oldest CEPAM users. Women who belong between 15 and 19 years old represent 7% of CEPAM users, while women over 65 years old represent 1.7% of them.\footnote{A small portion of older women presents challenges to us making any definite conclusions about their characteristics, but also suggests that perhaps their absence speaks louder than their presence would.} Table 5-2 shows that 47.4% of women in the youngest cohort attended or finished primary and secondary school. Only 5.3% of women in this age cohort report having a job (Table 5-4). The oldest cohort is on average represented by a woman who is 68-year-old, who either completed primary school or reported no information in this regard (Table 5-2). As Table 5-5 shows, women over 65 also report 60% employment, but it’s hard to draw definite conclusions due to the 40% of missing information. Furthermore, this age cohort is only represented by five women. It is important to draw attention that the narratives suggest that there are several representatives in both the youngest, and the oldest cohort, who do not come as “victims” but as the relatives of those who are experiencing violence. For example, one older woman is a mother of a daughter who was killed by her own husband, and several teenage girls come as “passive” victims of intrafamiliar abuse (e.g. their parents have been fighting for years).

In terms of income, my data are hardly representative enough, but offer a few interesting analytical points. It is difficult to contextualize income within the context of 2011 results for Pichincha (that suggest that 54.7% of women in the province have their own income), because 68% of case files have no information on earnings (and because perceptions of “work” varies). However, it is still worth mentioning that from the data
available (Table 5-5), 45% of women earn between 310 and 600 dollars – and, considering that 90% of them has one or more children, they struggle to make ends meet. As discussed in the second part of this chapter, this has the potential to lead to economic conflicts.8

**Incidence of Gender-Based Violence Experienced by CEPAM Women (By Age)**

The following analysis focuses on the reported instances of violence by women who come to CEPAM. It is impossible to distinguish whether women report recent (last 12 months) or lifetime violence, but the testimonies in the majority of the case files suggests that it is lifetime violence they are reporting. In this and next section I use data from the standardized forms (Appendix), combined with the testimonies from the court or those collected by the psychologist.

Psychological violence appears to be the most frequently reported form (56.3%) by women who come to CEPAM which coincides with both national and Pichincha results on the most frequently experienced form of IPV (Table 5-1) (INEC 2011). This is followed by the rates of physical violence (44%), which is similar to the provincial (45.1%), and slightly higher than the national results (38.0%). Women who come to CEPAM report sexual violence in 15.1% of the cases, which is lower than both provincial (33.9%) and national results (25.7%). Finally, patrimonial or economic violence is reported almost as frequently as sexual violence at CEPAM (14.7%), which differs from what women reported on the national (16.7%) and provincial level (18.5%). Although the frequency of reporting this form of violence is similar, the difference

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8 There are three cases of women who report working as professors or doctors and earn over $4000 (monthly) which suggests that VAW occurs across all social classes, which is also suggested by the Zurita’s 2014 report on the results of the Survey (2011).
between patrimonial and between other forms of violence in the national survey is much bigger than among CEPAM users.

In Table 5-6 I show the above described cases of the reported violence by women who come to CEPAM. To illustrate the importance of drawing attention to the multiplicity of the forms of violence, I show in the second column, how often women report psychological (16.5%), physical (2.6%), sexual (2.6%) and patrimonial violence (0.7%) separately. The incidence of individually reported forms of violence is much lower, and suggests that women who arrive at CEPAM almost always experience interrelated forms of violence. A common combination is psychological and physical (23.2%), followed by a combination of psychological, physical, and patrimonial or economic violence (7.7%), and psychological, physical and sexual violence (7.4%). Less common combinations of violence are psychological, physical, sexual and patrimonial or economic violence (3.7%), psychological and patrimonial or economic (2.6%), physical and sexual (1.1%) and physical and patrimonial or economic (0.7%). Psychological violence appears to occur less often in combination with patrimonial or economic and sexual violence, and almost never occurs in a combination with attempt of femicide (which is reported relatively rarely). It was also included in the National Survey. The importance of the multiplicity of the forms of violence is also critical when looking at physical violence, which alone seems to occur rarely.

Two critical points need to be raised here: first is that women mention not only an attempt but also a threat of a femicide, and second, some of the case files involve not those directly involved with the threats or attempts of femicide, but are related to women who have died of an act of a femicide (two cases), and it was their relatives who were
coming for a therapy to CEPAM. Usually accompanying other forms of violence, the acknowledgment of femicide in CEPAM's case files is an important addition in the wake of a 2014 legal reform that now criminalizes violence. In the case files, an attempt of femicide also appears to be present more often than women recognize it, most notably during the moments or events of extreme aggression that might follow to taking action (for example “he was chasing me around the living room with knife,” or “he blocked me with a car threatening to kill me”). Due to the small number of cases, I do not analyze it further.

**Gender-Based Violence Reported by CEPAM Users by Age**

Analyzing the frequency of different forms of violence, the largest age cohort represented by women aged 30-39 years, frequently reports psychological violence (55.%), followed by physical (41.8%), and patrimonial or economic and sexual violence (each 12.1%). Younger women between the age of 20 and 29, most frequently report psychological violence (55.6%), followed by physical (48.6%), and sexual violence. The latter is reported in 15.3% of cases, which is more than for women over 30 and less than women under the age of 20 (Table 5-7). The third largest age cohort (aged 40-49) of women report similar rates of physical violence as women between 20 and 29 years, and slightly higher rates of psychological violence. This is similar to the reports filed by women over 50 years old. However, this age cohort most frequently reports patrimonial or economic violence. The youngest cohort (age 15-19) reports no patrimonial or economic violence. As Table 5-7 shows, the patrimonial violence appears to be reported most frequently by women between 50 and 64 years old, which I attribute to

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9 As discussed in Chapter 4, this seems to in some cases be perpetuated within the family circle (e.g. fights over inheritance).
two factors: one is lack of awareness that this is of this form of violence (recognized in my interviews as argued in Chapter 4). Furthermore, young women may have fewer possessions at the time of their coming to CEPAM. Excluding the oldest cohort over 65 years old who seems to report no incidence of sexual violence, women in between 50 and 64 years old report sexual violence least frequently compared to younger women, similar to the oldest cohort (women over 65 years). While the frequency of reporting psychological violence is similar in all age cohorts, physical violence stands out for older women, reported in 66.7% of the cases (Table 5-7). What is also interesting is a high rate of reported sexual abuse among the youngest group of women who come to CEPAM (36.8% of all women within the age group), which connects to the previously discussed 2011 Survey results.

A Few Notes on the Reported Aggressors

Due to a large amount of missing data, we cannot do an analysis of the reported aggressors of violence by CEPAM users (women). What I have, still offers a few interesting points for the analysis. In Table 5-8 shows, we see that 53.0% of women who come to CEPAM report their current or former partner to be the perpetrator of IPV. For those women who have gone to a one of the Judicial Units prior to CEPAM (Chapter 6), this information usually coincides with whom they reported there – but this information is unclear in most of the cases where “other” people are reported as aggressors. However, a thorough analysis of the case files shows that in some cases, even though the reported perpetrator (to a CEPAM worker) was a current or former

\[\text{\textsuperscript{10}}\] However, this information should not be taken as a definite indicator of violence, because of the size of this cohort.
partner, the aggressors were multiple (as I elaborate in the second part of this chapter). In some cases, although a “father” or one of the other relatives is accused of violence they were in fact reported because of the abuse towards their child (for example, a psychologist’s report will read: “She reported a partner because of the aggressions against their x-year-old daughter”). Women also report experiencing violence by other family members such as their in-laws and their children, which appears to be especially common among women over 40 years, who frequently report their siblings or other relatives to be the perpetrators (especially of economic and patrimonial violence).

Among younger women, some report their uncle to be an aggressor. Some of these women also report that he has been abusive towards them, but refuse to report IPV and rather focus on the child abuse. The available information in the case files also suggest that older women report more violence by the “other relatives.” As I highlight in the second part of this chapter, many instances of sexual violence among young girls involve their parents and cousins. The narratives of their testimonies, however, suggest that over many of them came because of the violence between their parents, and were sent to CEPAM by a Judicial Unit (Chapter 6).

**Multiple Dimensions of Violence: Triggering Factors and Decision to Take Action**

In this section, I draw on testimonies of women and some of their partners from the case files to consider the precursors of violence and the trigger factors that seem to be most commonly associated with perpetuation of GBV, and some of the factors that contribute to their decision to take action. Although they intertwine in empirical experience, I divide them at certain points into categories for purposes of analysis, to

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11 Thus, a few of these girls arrive to CEPAM with their parents who have been experiencing IPV, and one case is of a teenage girl whose mother was killed by her husband (girl’s father).
understand how people make sense of them. There are certain trends in the case files that suggest events or situations associated with the decision to report violence.

Continuous manipulations to control a woman’s behavior appear to exist side-by-side with jealousy, controlling behavior, and threats – which are also the most commonly identified precursors of physical violence. In some of these cases, physical violence seems to be an act of punishment and frustration by a partner who feels he was not able to exercise sufficient control over the women. More commonly, threats revolved around women’s everyday practices (e.g. going out, working). In the case files, I read stories of jealous spouses coincide with explicit descriptions of threats and insults, and them report them in relation to children (e.g. "If you’re [wife] not careful, I'll tell our children what kind of a woman you are."), and manipulations in regards to a woman’s everyday life. Dolores, a mother of four in her late fifties, who has been suffering from diabetes (“por el estres”) and loves art and traveling says:

Although I loved working a lot, I never reached the peak of my career. He never let me. See, I usually left work at 6.30 pm- but sometimes I left a couple of hours after. I had good friends at the office! But he told me that I must have a lover at the office. And if I stayed for someone’s birthday, you know, una fiestita, he would call, making sure that I'll be coming home soon … And when I came home, he hit me. And when he hit me, my eyes were red and I had bruises on my face and I was ashamed so I didn’t go to work. So I lost lots of jobs like that – but the thing is that I could always get another job, and a good one. So I believe that’s why he let me work for a while you know, because I earned good money. But he would manipulate and manipulate, and when I broke the rules, he hit me.

In few case files, this shows as a controlling behavior as controlling phone calls, interventions into a woman’s social life, raising conflicts over work and taking and/or damaging personal belongings. A case file of Celia, who opened a juice bar with her partner about five years ago, tells a story of her experience:
I was there, making some juice and there was a man who was looking at me, asking for my number. That happened eight, maybe nine times. And other men were also coming to see me, asking for my number. ... So he [husband] told me he'll cancel my number. He was so jealous. He tried taking my phone but I didn't let him. Then he began to pull my hair and I was shouting 'let me go!' He didn't let go and in that moment I just didn't want to even involve police. But that moment I said, enough. I took my two daughters and left. I stayed with my friend.

This story shows the conflicts that can arise when women are employed or even run their own business. Celia eventually took action when her husband broke some of her things and bar equipment, and accused her of sleeping with four other men.

Another interesting case concerns Maribel, a 38-year-old mother of four who took action against her husband because of violence and “conflictos por dinero.” However, her extensive testimony shows a more complex picture, drawing on a moment when their 11-year-old daughter got her period. This event caused tension in the family, as the father considered it “suspicious” that the girl started her period this “early.” Following this event, Maribel said that the conflicts got worse, since he began making an issue about the money she spent. Her idea of what was at the bottom of this was his jealousy, not only against her (he repeatedly accused her of seeing other men), but against their daughter as well who began rejecting him. Her testimony brought her to the court, which then brought her to CEPAM.

**Trigger Points: Marriage, Children, Alcohol**

Many elements connected to GBV experienced by women who come to CEPAM that I discuss in this chapter appear to be sometimes exacerbated by the abuse of alcohol and other controlled substances which is a second most commonly identified factor that trigger immediate aggression (INEC 2011). In most CEPAM case files, women’s testimonies suggest that alcohol caused men to lose their temper and sometimes lead to physical aggressions. Some case file narratives indicate that
violence started after the birth of a baby, when a partner would begin to exercise control and possessive behavior. Sofia’s story identifies her pregnancy (unclear whether wanted or unwanted) as the breaking point in their relationship. At the time of her visit she was 32 years old, unemployed without any income, with a 12 and 13-year-old children, referred to CEPAM by a Judicial Unit. Her testimony was not collected first-hand, but summarized by a psychologist:

Sandra grew up with a father and a step-mother, both of whom were physically aggressive towards her. The aggressions started after Sofia’s pregnancy and got worse with time. Whenever they fought, he made her ask forgiveness from his family. He was usually aggressive when drunk, but also when sober, when he would search for her around the house to beat her up.

This story also suggests that alcohol may have started aggressions but cannot confirm whether the was drunk or not during the violent episode. Some testimonies also suggest that alcohol triggered physical aggressions so serious that they put the women’s life in danger (referring to the previous debate on the attempt versus the threat of femicide).

Pregnancy or birth of a baby are also common milestones that people identify as breaking points for emergence of violence. One case file suggests that pregnancy might lead to an abortion (when physical aggressions present) which also exacerbates emotional pain.\textsuperscript{12} One of the case files includes a testimony of a 21-year-old woman whose husband, upon the announcement of their pregnancy, told her that he does not want a child, saying that “it’s going to be unhappy because I will make you unhappy. You’re going to be unhappy. I’m not going to make you happy.”

\textsuperscript{12} Since abortion in Ecuador is illegal, I was told by CEPAM workers that women find many ways in which they do abortion, be it with natural herbs that they insert in their vaginas, certain pills that they get on “black market” or with physical objects such as a hanger.
stay with him is unclear, but he kept his promise and became physically abusive after she gave birth, which is when he began to date his secretary.

Finally, the marriage itself seems to be a trigger. In about five cases, women directly identify marriage to be the point when GBV started. Katherine’s case file says: “Violence has been present desde inicio del matrimonio. But this is the first time I reported him.” Her case file suggests that they were married for about 10 years during which time he also attempted to kill her.

**Threats to Kill: “Cuídate de mí, Corre, Escóndete!”**

Rosa is a 31-year-old mother of three who was married for 15 years during which she experienced severe physical abuse (broken nose and arms that left her left hand immobile). Her husband repeatedly threatened her to kill her, or their daughters, if she left him, and when she sought help (unclear from whom), her husband’s mother protected him, and threatened to kill Rosa as well. The careful reading of the extensive case file suggests the complexities of labeling one as an “aggressor,” because they were multiple, and included partner’s family members. Thus, although threats are commonly made by the partners, the case files suggest that this situation is not exclusive to them.

Another striking case concerns Evelin, a 30-year-old mother of three, who was experiencing psychological, physical and economic violence by different members of her family. Her case file suggests that she refused to take action for a long time because of her religious beliefs that reinforced the idea that a family needs to stay together, which meant that she was willing to endure hardship and cause no further

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13 “Beware of me! Run! Hide!”
problems. Although she experienced psychological violence from her partner (whom she eventually reported) it was her in-laws that were perpetuating psychological and physical violence. Following her case file, during the 8 year-marriage, Evelin faced threats on daily basis, some of which were carried out when she took action. For example, they threatened to build a gate at their family home so she would not be able to enter, and did so upon reporting her reporting the violence.

Telling are examples of 40-year-old Ximena and 30 year-old Nathalia, whose partners were very drunk when they began shouting insults and threatening to kill them. While in Ximena’s case, her drunk husband destroyed her car while she was in it (she called the police for help), waiting for their son to come downstairs, Nathalia’s husband was drunk in the house with his brother who was sober, and began to insult her immediately upon her arrival. After he asked his brother to pass him a knife to attack her, Nathalia grabbed her 3-year old child and hid in her neighbor’s house. For both of these cases, alcohol was a trigger factor not only for violence but for reporting it as well.

One of the rare cases that gives a detailed account of sexual abuse is that of 28 year-old Linda, mother of two young girls, who reported her violence because continuous sexual abuse. Although her case file reports that she repeatedly tried to repair their relationship, her partner kept obliging her to have sexual relations whenever he pleased which began to cause her pain and infections in her “partes intimas.” Should she refuse, he threatened her in different ways (not specified in the case file).

Infidelity

A particularly striking example of infidelity were two case files with testimonies of a woman I will call Catalina in her 50s and her husband who I will call Luis who was 60 years old. In her testimony, the wife shares that during their 30-year marriage, she
spent more than ten years supporting him to obtain a medical degree. Due to his work, Luis moved to the coast and was coming home only every few weeks. When their children started school, Luis began to date his coworker – which is when the abuse got worse: “I would cook for him and his friends, and when I served the food, he would throw it in my face and start insulting me. Then he would hit me; tell me the food is filthy and that he is not going to eat it.” In his testimony, Luis shares his side of the story and recognizes he was aggressive:

   Every little thing annoyed me. Whenever I came home from the coast, I realized that I was not being a good father. I hit her, a lot. I know I betrayed her with my coworker but there was not a second in our marriage that I thought of separating from her. I love her – she has been with me in bad and good, but unfortunately, I am a demanding, explosive man who likes to see quick results. Since she’s been coming to CEPAM she’s been much happier. All of these problems caused our family to distance from each other. It makes me sad.

This story was frequently talked about among CEPAM workers who also raised issue with his claim the money going to the coworker. Although Luis’s words suggest that he realized that his problem is his anger, which might be associated with his feelings of guilt, this anger is displaced on his wife when he comes back home. Generally, at least one case file more or less explicitly implies that a woman knew of her husband’s second relationship but refused to consider a divorce.

**Economic Conditions as a Source of Conflict**

The following assessment and excerpts show how economic issues appear in the interviews and in the case files. I draw on interviews because the details about the economic conflicts within the house are less commonly available in the case files, most commonly summarized with “there were conflicts over money,” or “there was economic abuse” which does not say much explicitly, but still suggests that the levels of income indeed do not suffice for economically secure life. In my interviews, I also asked women
whether there were any conflicts in the household over money, and the answer was nearly always yes. One of the women I interviewed described marital tensions around decisions on how to divide their expenses:

He tells me I need to pay for our children’s school. 'You are the mother!' He says. He doesn’t pay for groceries. He doesn’t pay for electricity and he never pays for water. He tells me that I need to pay because I get more tips and refuse to collaborate more with him. He has an extra job! ¿Y yo? ¡No tengo dinero ni para comer! (Interview June 28, 2016).

She was one of the interviewees who expressed her struggle with balancing her well-being and GBV.14 Furthermore, Paulina, a 28 year-old woman who I interviewed articulated her experience with these forms of violence: Her ex-husband was physically very aggressive, which was one of the reasons she filed a report. However, when I asked whether that was why she left him she responded with:

There are many theories. The one I realize now to be the more likely one is that he only wanted me for money. We took a trip to the US once and he expected me [to pay] for everything. We spent over $2000 that I had saved. When we returned, we had no money left. And he got even more aggressive. Se acabó la plata, se acabó el amor (June 8, 2016).

She also shared that some of their (algunas amigas) friends have been going through a similar situation where the women are more educated or earn more than their partners, which triggers manipulations and insecurities on the part of men.15 Considering her

14 A recent study added another dimension to this matrix. Combining data from The Survey and from Censo Económico (2009), a study called Los Costos Invisibles de la Violencia Contra las Mujeres para las Microempresas Ecuatorianas (Invisible Costs of Violence against Women for Ecuadorian Microenterprises) emphasized the ways in which patrimonial and economic violence affect women who work in micro-enterprises and with that, the economic development of Ecuador (Brendel 2013). The study draws attention to the ways through which VAW affects women’s working performance in their micro businesses (e.g. missed working days and opportunities, lack of initiative, and – while recuperating from emotional damage – decreased economic stability due to costs of medical exams and reporting violence) which affects decapitalization of their businesses and its overall productivity.

15 A similar situation was identified by Juliana who, prior to making a decision to undergo a divorce process from her husband (who appears to be a powerful political Figure in Ecuador), seemed to have been in denial about her relationship problems. During an interview, she mentioned that it was her group of friends who helped her understand what was going on. «All feminist, you know,» were here words.
profession (lawyer), I speculate that her friends may have also been college-educated women, which is not very common for women who come to CEPAM

**Family: Intergenerational Violence and Complicit Observers**

Numerous testimonies in the case files show that either the women or men reporting violence grew up in violent circumstances. The perpetrators of violence are in many cases the women’s family members, and some case files suggest that women married at a very young age in order to escape *el circulo de violencia* (the circle of violence) of their childhood homes, only to find themselves in another one. Other case files also suggest that the relationship of either the man or a woman with their family “siempre ha sido mala” or that “his relationship with his father was bad.” Since most of the case files only have vague accounts of the history of violence, it is hard to draw any definite conclusions.

I interviewed a mother and a daughter whose stories briefly appear in the case files, but the interview revealed many micro-manifestations of violence. Liliana is about 30 years old and has been coming for therapy because she attempted to commit suicide by overdosing on pills she has been taking for her nerves. The relationship with her husband has been abusive for over a decade, and he recently got involved with another woman but did not move out of their shared home. Liliana had been stressed and upset about him – and about their daughter, who was refusing to go to school at the time. I interviewed her daughter first, who told me that at the time of attempted suicide and disputes, she was living with her parents and, because of their fights, never got her

From the rest of the interview, it became quite evident that her friends are educated women who understand the process of reporting violence and taking action against someone. (Interview, June 28, 2016).
homework done. She talked about how much the situation with her parents was affecting her, and she began to reveal another layer to the story:

Well … Something else was going on too. My dad was always beating me up, he is a construction worker you know. A very strong man. And then my cousin … Well, he wants to be a policeman. And he was coming to my room …. he came to my room about three times. And once to the bathroom. He lived in the same house with us. I didn’t want to tell my parents at first because they had their own issues. But my mother was always sharing all her problems with me so I decided to tell them both. My father beat me up when I told him. And my mother … well, she ate those pills [to commit suicide], but I found her in time and called the ambulance. But she did not want to get involved [with the cousin situation]. I guess someone said something because my cousin stopped and moved out. But she did not say anything (May 18, 2016).

In my interview with Liliana whose words were filled with pain regarding her relationship with her partner, as well as from the conflict with her daughter, which she says, exacerbated bher ad relationship with her husband. After a while, she brought up her daughter’s sexual abuse:

She told us both, me and my husband. He said he would talk to him [the cousin] and tell him to stop. But I am not sure whether that made the situation better. I hope it did … I trust that my husband said the right things. She was not a baby when that was happening. I didn’t want to get involved (Interview, May 18, 2016).

This rare view into family conflicts shows how inextricably different kinds of violence are linked: IPV between a mother and a father, child abuse by their parents and sexual abuse of a daughter by her cousin. Liliana chose not to interfere with her daughter’s abuse, who was at the time of the incident 15 years old and who received no support from her parents during the time of abuse. The father did intervene to stop the abuse by cousin, but Liliana remained an observer.16

16 Another case was an interview I conducted with Sabina, a high school teacher and a mother of a 15-year-old girl and got a first-hand glimpse into the ways mothers may be complicit in violence enacted by fathers. Sabina has been suffering lots of physical and verbal abuse by her partner, who has also been aggressive towards their daughter. I asked her about the expectations that she and her husband have
Another case file suggests a different picture in terms of a mother’s role. Karina, is a 32-year-old mother of three children aged 9, 12 and 13. Her daughter (unclear which one) told her that the father (Karina’s husband) has been sexually molesting her. Although Karina was scared at first, they eventually went to a Judicial Unit to seek justice. Karina’s testimony reveals that she chose to believe her daughter and confronted her husband who said he would never be capable of doing such a thing. The results of a medical exam showed that she was no longer a virgin, to which Karin’s husband reacted with “you shouldn’t believe those exams, it is a lie.” She continues:

I asked my daughter about it and she didn’t look me in the eyes, she just said that it was her daddy. But she has also been seen with this boy who is 15, and he is doing drugs and is a bad influence. I asked her whether they’ve had sex and she said no but she always comes home with marks on her neck and other parts of the body. My friend he saw them together and she was crying so there might have been abuse, but the psychologists say she shows no signs of either sexual or physical abuse. They say she might just be lying a lot.

This testimony implies many difficulties surrounding family relations within which violence might have occurred. However, the crucial point here is that despite the fact that there has been a lot of doubt cast on their daughter’s words, Karina still overcame fear of talking to her husband, and took action to protect their daughter (it is not clear how the case ended). Notably, Karina is a high school teacher with a decent salary.

When to say Basta? Paths to Seeking Help

This section considers narrative representations of a moment or event that led users to take the first steps towards seeking help, which in these cases means either coming directly to CEPAM or going to a Judicial Unit that directed them to the Center.

from their children and she got visibly confused. Eventually, she said that it depends, but that the father needs to be obeyed and respected, so when their daughter disobeys him, it is not surprising that he reacts physically. She continues: “That day when we decided to report him … Well she really disrespected him. She is very rebellious and she needs to watch her step” (June 6, 2016)
When thinking about why to report violence, the answer might seem obvious – to stop it from happening. As expressed by most of my interviewees, the decision is – unsurprisingly – very hard, "because by the time you reach it, you have already experienced so much abuse that when you reach the point when you say ‘no más,’ you are exhausted. But the fight has only begun" (Interview, June 23, 2016).

In this section I examine how users think and talk about the triggering factors and process that lead up to "el punto cuando no se puede más." Although the case file narratives suggest that the decision to seek violence is sought in, or immediately after an episode of extremely violent physical abuse that sometimes borders on an attempt of a femicide (e.g. being run over with a car, chased with a knife, beaten up with a hard object, hit in the stomach while pregnant), the stories are very complex.

"On That Day …"

For some women, situations that triggered the decision to seek help seem to be very specific, and more or less clearly narrated in the testimonies included in the case files. This moment seems to rarely be an isolated event but seem to follow months or years of different forms of partner or intrafamiliar conflict. For Mercedes, a recently separated a 39-year old mother of two daughters, this moment came after almost a two-decade marriage with her husband Rodrigo who has been physically aggressive and jealous (she reported him). After their separation, he kept coming to her house, until one day he broke in, yelling at her and saying that she has been buscando hombres en la calle (looking for men on the street), giving a bad example to their daughters which is when she decided to report him (unclear whether because of the violence or breaking into the house). The casefile includes a short testimony of Rodrigo who says that the reason for his aggressions was his hate for one of their daughter’s boyfriends who had
been “abusing sexually.” However there is no information on whether it was really abuse, or whether he was upset because his daughter was becoming sexually active.17

A different case is represented by 64 year-old Teresa who has experienced violence over three generations: in her childhood, her mother abused her verbally and her father abused her sexually; during her marriage, her husband has been physically violent since the beginning, and he has also beaten up their four children. She eventually reported violence and said that “on that day” (when she reported) everything was normal until her husband began to hit her so hard that one of her daughters had to interfere – and encouraged her to report. Due to her unemployment, however, she is forced to remain in the same house with him.

Another case is that of Marta who is 36 years old and has been married for 17 years. The breaking moment also occurred in the home, in front of the children. Her husband has hit her several times in front of their son and daughter but on that day he asked her to bring him a shirt and she said that he could at least say please. First, he insulted her and then he told her that from that moment on, she was his empleada. Insults did not stop and her testimony suggests that it was a woman who helps her around the house who went out of the house with the children to call the police (after that, the reporting process began to unfold). She concludes that “he is a very cruel person who only cares about his ego pero si por dentro se siente una basura porque él sabe lo que es (but deep inside he feels that he is feels and knows he is trash).”

17 Her testimony suggests that their daughters eventually confronted Rodrigo, reminding him that it was him who had left them for another woman, to which he responded with physical aggressions (resolved with the arrival of police). Her casefile includes a short testimony of Rodrigo who says that the reason for his aggression was his hate for one of their daughter’s boyfriends who has been “abusing her sexually.” However, there is no information whether it was really abuse, or whether he broke down because his daughter was becoming sexually active.
Networks of Support: Friends, Family, Strangers

The previous story already mentions a third person who played an important role in the moment of violence. In all the cases where CEPAM users suggested that more people were present or interfered during the violence, played a big role in the users’ decision either to report violence or to come voluntarily to CEPAM. Parents sometimes play a crucial role in women’s seeking help. “After years of violence, mocking and suffering,” said Ana, a mother of two who has successfully divorced, “my father helped me the most. He told me to go to CEPAM. He told me I deserve better and gave me some money to seek help” (Interview, June 20, 2016). In her experience, her mother was absent, even upset, because her daughter chose to terminate “the holy institution of marriage.” The holiness of the marriage and the “hasta la muerte nos separa” mentality are listed in a few other factors that affects women’s decisions to act upon. A 21 year-old Emma, mother of two, tells a story: "It took me a while but I finally decided to get out of this relationship. My mother said that I need to find help and I knew it was true because she said it” (Interview, May 27, 2016).

Siblings rarely came up as major agents who triggered the decision to seek help to end violence, but were mentioned as those who offered shelter or support upon making the decision. I consider this an important factor because it seems to be common for people to have to continue cohabiting in the same house as their aggressor – thus making escaping violence harder. Siblings, along with aunts, offered rooms in their house, either to the victim or to the victim’s children for a certain amount of time. This social network strengthened women’s fallback position and provides them with personal, emotional and economic support that gives them the capacity to take action.
Finally, according to the case files, sometimes strangers are the ones to witness an episode of violence. An example is a neighbor, who hears the shouts and intervenes, usually inviting the victim to their home and talking to them about their options. Thus, a connection between a victim who has previously refused to seek social support, and an external actor might happen spontaneously and trigger important action. In about twenty case files I identified a neighbor (who was overhearing the noise and called the police). In nine cases a policeman who came upon a request of a victim caught in the middle of an act of IPV, and suggested that the victim file a formal report. A 25-year old woman's case file tells a story of such an event:

That day, I returned home with my children and my husband had been drinking since yesterday. He entered the living room and began telling me that he doesn't want us to live in this house. At some point, my husband grabbed the TV, threatening to throw it at me, which is when I called the police who came immediately and calmed the situation down. One of the officers began talking to me, telling me I should report violence and that he will help me start the process.

Although there were a couple of cases that suggested that the police never came when called, the general impression from the case files is that they are reliable actors. Their presence, however, does not always bother the aggressor. Two case files discuss the ways in which aggressor got even more aggressive upon the arrival of police, mocking them and saying they are unable to do anything and that they can try all they want, he won't stop the aggressions.

**Well-Being, Self(ish)Care and Expectations**

Few women name personal well-being as the reason to take action against violence, especially if a woman has children who, in many cases, appear to play a crucial role when deciding to seek help. Numerous case files discuss the moment in which women decided to denounce their partner, as when the violence against them
took place in the presence of their children. Some women do not seem to want to admit that they decided to report violence because of reasons that, to them, seem “selfish,” falling out of the perceived expectation to be a good wife. One of the women interviewed who said that her husband kicked her out on the street with their two children, explained that in her deciding to break free from the circle of violence, she realized that:

The biggest challenge is women’s self-esteem. I one day woke up and thought, *yo valgo!* It’s the self-esteem of a woman that we need to work on. We need to learn how to love ourselves, because if not, nobody will. We need to know we are *personas valiosas*, who can live life of our own. (June 16, 2016).

These words resonated with those of many mothers I interviewed who shared that what they truly wish for their daughter is for them to respect themselves.¹⁸ The wish to “feel better” and learn self-respect seems to be associated with a wish to be a better mother. Twenty-one-year-old Diana whose husband once tried running her over with a car, identifies a moment that made her realize that she and her daughter need to come first:

I was failing …. All my life I felt like I have no value as a woman. I thought that perhaps by staying faithful to my husband, I’d feel better but I didn’t. The fact that I was working also made me feel bad, because I could not watch my little girl. And then one day my little girl got her hand trapped with the door, when my mother was watching her. That moment made me so depressed that I decided to kill myself. But after I drank poison I realized that I need to stay strong for my daughter. And for myself! So I went back to live with my parents, I separated from him. They helped me and now I’m calm. I feel at peace with myself.

¹⁸ Sometimes women shared that they felt like their femininity was being damaged through experiencing GBV. To some women, “verdadera felicidad” came in the form of having completed the education. Other women shared stories of having started University (which was expected from their parents) but were forced to stop due to pregnancy or violence which deeply influenced their self-esteem.
Diana’s words also resonate with some women who refused to report their husbands because they did not want their children to grow up without a father, even if he is being abusive in anyway.

Another case is represented by 46 year-old Beatriz, mother of three. Over the past three decades, she has been subject to extreme physical abuse by her partner who once hit her so hard that her face went numb for several days. In her childhood, she was also subjected to intrafamiliar violence that was, according to the case file, just as bad as the one she is experiencing now. When Beatriz finally began to think about seeking help, her mother in Beatriz’s own words, “took an easier route and believed the aggressor instead of me. Mi propia madre! And she has been through the same abuse herself.” In Beatriz’s case, it was exactly the fact that her mother did not believe her story and made her take action and report violence, because she realized that if her mother refused to break the family circle of violence, she would: “I was waking up in the middle of the night, listening whether he [partner] will do the same to my daughters that he did to me, and that my father had done to me. I refused to live in silence no more,’ were the final words of her court testimony.

What About Men?

My initial hope to analyze some of the men’s case files of men failed when I realized that the majority of them does not have many details on neither their sociodemographic characteristics, nor their experiences with violence. It seems that many of them came as the accused of violence who were, by law, required to attend a few meetings at CEPAM. Others, as was the case with women, who are younger than 15 years old are children who experience domestic abuse – or, also common appears to be violence in educational institutions. Thus, I learnt about them through the stories of
women or stories of the psychologists who report on the victim’s progress. Few testimonies, and one of the interviews that I conducted, however, do suggest that violence against men the relationship occur too. Due to the lack of studies of the same scope as the national survey, it is unclear whether the low numbers of case files suggest that violence against men is underreported, or that it does not occur as much.

One case file stands out in including a story of a 46-year-old man who reported suffering physical violence from his wife, with whom he has one daughter. His wife’s expectation for him to complete a certain gender role clashed with his idea of a more solidary relationship where both contribute to economic stability of the marriage:

Our marriage has always been bad, but my wife has never hit me before, this is the first time [a moment that triggered report], but verbal aggressions have always been present. We used to live with her parents and she would throw my clothes on the street. I didn't want to report her to avoid any problems but now I have no patience left. On that day, my wife was in our living room with her friends and when I walked in, she immediately began to yell at me ‘You have time to drink with your little friends but no money to pay for rent [for the house],’ and I told her that I was celebrating my friends' birthday and that I have the right to do so – I pay for the rent, food, and all the other stuff, you know. She screamed at me 'You are el hombre de la casa, of course you do [have to pay for this]' But see, I disagree, we are a couple and she also has to help pay expenses so I stood up to her because I have been feeling very low you know, I felt very unhappy and I wanted to feel better. That is when she punched me in the face and broke my nose.

Another case of a 27-year-old father of three, whose children reportedly live with him, tells that his (now former) girlfriend Alicia has been asking him for money and got aggressive when he refused to give it to her (unclear whether she has her own income). His case (summarized by a psychologist) shows that this is what lead them to separate (and the insults didn’t stop). Finally, 41-year-old Javier, a police officer and a father of three who reported his wife for psychological violence that included manipulations and threats, supported and encouraged by her brothers. When she began to cheat on him,
violence became physical (and mutual) which is why he sought legal help (and was appointed to a psychologist) to find ways in which he can get a divorce and not lose his children.

**CEPAM Data and Broader Implications**

This chapter explored the factors associated with GBV for people who come to CEPAM, and the hardships they experience during their experiences that lead up to reporting violence (either at a Judicial Unit or at CEPAM). Factors associated with and triggering of IPV in Ecuador identified by the 2011 survey coincide heavily with those identified by CEPAM users. They most commonly include elements of controlling behavior (jealousy, threats and manipulation) that function as means by which men seem to express their frustrations, reinforce authority or exercise control over women. Psychological abuse of is multidimensional and appears to coexist with other types of violence, especially with physical, and – in fewer cases – sexual, and patrimonial or economic. These multiplicities of types of violence are critical to the analysis of CEPAM case files. A common across many cases of GBV are economic hardships that suggest women’s dependence on their husband’s provision of resources, while they carry out part-time jobs (or not even that). However, despite the dominance of women from more disadvantaged economic backgrounds, there are a few examples in CEPAM database that suggest that women belong to the middle or upper socioeconomic class (which relates to the 2011 Survey results that suggest that violence occurs in all contexts).

Factors connected to IPV are also embedded in the cultural ideologies of gender that have been identified in previous studies (Chapter 3). Some women share that they thought that being obedient or so called “good women” would make them happy, only to find themselves on the edge of a suicide. The situations within which some women
identified these gendered expectations also involve members of the family other than their partners (including the in-laws, siblings and parents). This calls for a careful considerations of the category of the “aggressor;” whereas the reduction of the relationships among those involved in violence to a universal binary model obscures complex dynamics among members of extended families and households, the practice if placing the blame on one individual could draw attention away from what Neil Whitehead (2004, 56) calls “the structuring factors of society, culture, and history.” Thus, what is needed is awareness to the fact that it is not only a partner (who is not always a man) who threatens or manipulates, but also family members (who might refuse to intervene). However, besides family, other networks could strengthen a woman’s fallback position and play a critical role in her decision to take immediate action, which is sometimes taken in the moment or a series of events that lead up to a point when the women say enough. These moments or events are often vividly narrated in some case files and provide glimpses into the intense physical abuse, and also into the network of people who are close to the victim at that time. Thus, these difficult moments can also be seen as an opportunity to look at some of the other circumstances that draw attention to the presence – or lack of – solidarity between those attacked, and those who are close to them, or who just happen to be nearby. In the next chapter, I reveal another piece of puzzle which takes off from where this chapter ends – reporting violence
Table 5-1. Frequency of Lifetime IPV of Women in the Province of Pichincha and in Ecuador

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Violence</th>
<th>Pichincha (%)</th>
<th>National (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>53.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrimonial</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Encuesta Nacional sobre Relaciones Familiares y Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres, 2011

Table 5-2. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of CEPAM Users by Age (Women)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
<th>Average Age (Year)</th>
<th>Average Number of Children</th>
<th>Primary Education</th>
<th>Secondary Education</th>
<th>University Education</th>
<th>No Information on Education</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CEPAM case files
Table 5-3. Level of Education of CEPAM Users (Women)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Number of CEPAM Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CEPAM case files

Table 5-4. Information on Current Employment of CEPAM Users by Age (Women)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
<th>Number of Women Employed</th>
<th>Other*</th>
<th>Number of Women Unemployed for Pay</th>
<th>No information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 +</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CEPAM case files

* This includes reported occupation such as housewife (ama de la casa).
Table 5-5. Distribution of Income for CEPAM Users (Women)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Value (USD)</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
<th>Number of Women Employed</th>
<th>Other*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>110-300</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>310-600</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610-900</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>910-1210</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1210 and more</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CEPAM case files

*This includes information such as “having pension,” or undefined part-time jobs.
Table 5-6. Frequency of Lifetime IPV of CEPAM Users (Women) by Type of Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Violence</th>
<th>Frequency of Reported Cases*</th>
<th>Frequency of Individually Reported Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrimonial or Economic</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat of Femicide</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological and Physical</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological and Sexual</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological and Patrimonial or Economic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and Sexual</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and Patrimonial or Economic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological and Physical and Sexual</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological and Physical and Patrimonial or Economic</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological and Physical and Sexual and Patrimonial or Economic</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CEPAM case files
*The first column shows the overall frequency of psychological, sexual, psychical, patrimonial or economic, and the threat of femicide – and the frequency of these forms being reported together. The second column shows the five most commonly recognized forms of violence being reported separately.
Table 5-7. Frequency of Lifetime GBV Reported by CEPAM Users by Age (Women)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
<th>Psychological</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Patrimonial or Economic</th>
<th>Sexual</th>
<th>Treats of Femicide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 +</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CEPAM case files
*Women can report several forms of violence to the workers of CEPAM. This is not necessarily reflexive of the violence they report to the Judicial Units.

Table 5-8. Perpetrator of Violence against CEPAM user by age (Women)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
<th>(Ex)Partner</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Sibling</th>
<th>Other Relative</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>No information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only one perpetrator is reported to the CEPAM worker.
**Other relatives include: mother-in-law, father-in-law, uncle, aunt, cousin. Only one perpetrator is reported per case.
CHAPTER 6
REPORTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: SOCIO-CULTURAL, LEGAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

Reporting violence is an urban topic. The police are conscious of the violence that is happening and the people know about it too. They are big problems and they appear to be a normal part of everyday life [...] But it is not an easy process. That’s why people think women aren’t going to report violence. To find help, to understand the process … It’s not easy because you need to have so much evidence. And the evidence needs to be presented to the system that is, I think, in its very core perpetuating systemic violence (CEPAM’s Legal Specialist, Personal communication June 29, 2016).

This statement by a legal specialist at CEPAM suggests that violence is more recognized and talked about in urban areas of this diverse country – at least in public and by the policies, which I consider in this chapter. Ecuador has taken several additional steps towards addressing and eradicating GBV, most prominently the 2014 Comprehensive Criminal Organic Code (Código Orgánico Integral Penal or COIP).¹ Following a review of studies that have touched upon barriers to reporting violence, I proceed with a critical examination of legislative reforms in the areas of GBV, and ways in which some institutions approach it, to then address the everyday experience of reporting violence and going to a specialized institution, such as CEPAM. I raise questions about inconsistencies between the theory (in which the new legislation is considered very progressive) and practice of utilizing these new laws to penalize GBV. I argue that, although CEPAM works within the framework of the governmental structures insofar as it translates the realities of people going through GBV into the reports that fit

¹ Recent structural and ideological shifts regarding GBV have been documented in a few master’s thesis and doctoral dissertations produced in Ecuadorian Universities mostly in the fields of law, social psychology and social work (Coronel Valencia 2014; Salcedo Vallejo 2014; Quishpe Jacho 2016).
required criteria, it also aims to assist people’s individual needs, because it guides them through official processes in search of solutions that best fit their individual needs.

The Ecuadorian Ministry of Justice (2014) reported that 20.6% of women who have suffered GBV have reported their experience with violence; 53.6% (64,630) of women have gone to the Comisarias de las Mujeres in 21 provinces in Ecuador. The majority of reports (12,509) happened in Pichincha, where Quito is located. Data from 2014 show that the twenty-two specialized centers that include CEPAM have reported working with 71,917 cases of violence in 2013, and 63,400 in 2014 (Ministerio de Justicia 2014).2 The National Survey (2011) also briefly presents information about the ways in which Ecuadorian women search for help. The results posit that only 1 in every 10 women who has experienced violence has presented a denuncia (report) (11, 5%) and that only 20% of those have taken the case to the court where their aggressor might be sanctioned. The Survey suggests that only 1% of the accused are legally sanctioned. Camacho-Zamora (2014) suggests that some of the obstacles encountered prior to or during a long judicial process are related to feelings of shame and fear.

Conditions Influencing the Reporting of Violence: Global Silences and Struggles

Failure to seek help and report violence occurs globally (Kishor 2004; Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005; Du Mont et al. 2005; Hyman et al. 2006; Andersson

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2 According to the 2014 report by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Justice, ever since Unidades de Violencia contra la Mujer y Familia have replaced Comisarias (located in 18 provinces in the country), the numbers have not changed significantly.
et al. 2009; Casey et al. 2011; Bott et al. 2012; Palermo et al. 2013). Studies have identified a number of obstacles across the globe that have led to failure to seek help. The WHO multi-country survey described in Chapter 3 reports a number of factors that appear to deter women’s help-seeking process (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005). In countries like Namibia and Bangladesh, women have reported not having shared their experience with anyone because of stigma and shame. This study also identified the threat of losing children and fear that the aggressor would take revenge as obstacles to take action (see also Kishor et al. 2004; Rodriguez 1996). Other multi-country surveys also showed that women were scared to put the aggressor into trouble (Dutton et al. 2006). The WHO study also addressed women’s failure to report GBV because they have normalized their experience or do not consider it serious enough to be worth reporting. Normalization of a “culture of gendered violence” has also been analyzed in a rural Ecuadorian region that is characterized by high rates of violence (Fridereic 2014, 20). The analysis of data gathered from the Chicago Women’s Health Risk Study suggests that the perceived seriousness of the violence or situation plays a crucial role in women’s decision not to seek help, since women sometimes think that manipulations or threats are not as serious as physical aggressions (Fugate et al. 2005). The findings of this study also support those of the WHO research team in suggesting that legal contexts can sometimes be perceived as the sites of discriminatory and stereotypical practices against victims when they finally decided to report violence (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005).

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Another study reports that women in East Timor expressed their beliefs that domestic problems of this kind should be solved in family circles and that their aggressors would be immune to punishment (Hynes et al. 2004). Based on her study with immigrants in Canada, Wolf (2003, 123) also identified “cultural beliefs” about the appropriateness of seeking help or trying to resolve abuse within the kinship network, unless it’s putting women’s lives at risk. Wolf et al. (2003) identified economic dependence of women in Seattle as a crucial barrier that prevents women from leaving abusive relationships, and hence, in reporting it. Another relevant critical factor posing a barrier to reporting is also lack of awareness of the services available in the region, exacerbated in the case of immigrants in Canada (Du Mont 2005), women in Democratic Republic of Congo (Casey et al. 2011); and remote rural regions of Ecuador (Friederic 2014). Kishor (2004) and Wolf (2003) have also identified access to these services as a barrier. Lack of trust in health care system and works has also been identified in a multi-cultural study conducted by Rodriguez (1996). Few studies have focused on the very process of reporting violence in Latin America, which is what I do in this thesis.

**Experiencing the Reporting and Reporting the Experience of Gender-Based Violence in Quito, Ecuador**

As a response to calls to unify criminal legislation in Ecuador, adapt legislation to current socio-legal realities (e.g. the high rates of VAW), repeal obsolete laws and incorporate new criminal deeds, COIP came into effect in August 2014 (Quishpe Jacho 2016) and is designed to guarantee a life free of violence by penalizing violence against women, adolescents, children, elderly people, and people with disabilities, and any other person with disadvantages or
vulnerabilities – in public and private sphere. People can report sexual, psychological or physical violence (all in the intrafamily context) and may be issued medidas de protección (measures of protection), request boletas de auxilio (“help certificates”) that will protect the “victim” (and potentially lead to an arrest), or start a process of juicio de alimentos (alimony and/or child support).

While the public acknowledges that COIP now guarantees women’s rights, repealing Ley 103 brought a few changes that have been subject to positive and negative critiques (Venegas Pallo 2016; Quishpe Jacho 2016). As opposed to Ley 103 that aimed to protect physical and psychological integrity of a woman or members of her family,⁴ COIP puts emphasis on punishing the forms of violence specified in the code as a means of their prevention, aiming to incorporate GBV as follows:

Se considera violencia toda acción que consista en maltrato, físico, psicológico o sexual ejecutado por un miembro de la familia en contra de la mujer o demás integrantes del núcleo familiar. Se consideran miembros del núcleo familiar a la o al cónyuge, a la pareja en unión de hecho o unión libre, conviviente, ascendientes, descendientes, hermanas, hermanos, parientes hasta el segundo grado de afinidad y personas con las que se determine que el procesado o la procesada mantenga o haya mantenido vínculos familiares, íntimos, afectivos, conyugales, de convivencia, noviazgo o de cohabitación. (Art. 155).

Thus, COIP penalizes only those forms that are considered to fit within the prescribed descriptions of sexual (Art 158), psychological (Art 157) and physical violence (Art 156). An important addition includes criminalization of femicide violence (with 22-26 year of prison sentence) (Art 141-142). According to the

⁴ The aim of Ley 103 was defined to “… proteger la integridad física, psíquica y la libertad sexual de la mujer y los miembros de su familia, mediante la prevención y la sanción de la violencia intrafamiliar y los demás atentados contra sus derechos y los de su familia. Sus normas deben orientar las políticas del Estado y la comunidad sobre la materia (Art. 1, Ley contra la violencia a la mujer y a la familia, 1995).
Ministry of the Interior, in 2014 54% of women who were murdered died from an act of femicide (Ministerio de Interior 2014). As clarified by CEPAM’s legal specialist:

femicide is when they kill her por el hecho de ser ella and only because of that (fact that she is a woman). If they rob you or attack you on the street, that would not be femicide. But when she was killed por que era ella, that is femicide. Your life is over. It is a very very serious sanction, we are talking about decades in jail. Se te acaba la vida (June 28, 2016).

This legislative change was remarkable for two women I interviewed, one of whom now celebrates the bittersweet success of sending her 18-year old daughter’s 21-year old murderer to prison as the first person whose acts were criminalized. She believes that a common mistake people make is that they confuse femicide with homicide

but these are two very different words, and more importantly, they are two very different sentences. People need to informed about these meanings in the news, media, mouth to mouth ... On the coast people talk more about femicide but here in Quito it’s like they don’t want to admit that it is happening. There were three of them just last week! This is not just a problem of Central America or the Middle East. It happens right here and we, women, need to know how to fight against it. We have to say, basta. So that women know that they are not alone and are not scared to denounce. When there are golpes, there will be femicidio. Hombres, simplemente por el hecho de ser hombres will kill women, simplemente por el hecho de ser mujeres. Women don’t deserve that. They deserve respect, not death (Interview, June 12, 2016).

Returning to COIP’s relative merits, apart from psychological, physical, sexual and femicide violence, no other offenses or punishable acts, omissions, penalties or criminal proceedings listed in other legal form will be penalized (and even within this framework, only those that fit the definitions) (Art. 17, Código Orgánico Integral Penal 2014).\(^5\) This makes it harder for a denuncia to be

\(^5\) Full COIP is available via http://www.justicia.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/c%C3%B3digo_org%C3%A1nico_integral_penal_-coip_ed._sdn-mjdhc.pdf
successful. COIP repeals the part of Ley 103 that establishes non-criminal preventive measures for psychological violence (Venegas Pallo 2016). For example, previously, a woman who was living in fear of being attacked by an individual (or was already attacked) could request protective measures and undergo therapy. Now, all the forms identified in COIP will be processed in court. This means that the violence must happen in order to be criminalized. Finaly, COIP brings challenges to the ways in which psychological violence is considered, as briefly discussed in the next section.

**Penalizing Psychological, Physical and Sexual Violence**

When an individual wishes to start legal action against a person who is exercising violence in their life, they can go to one of the Judicial Units for Violence against a Woman and a Family (La Unidades Judiciales de Violencia contra la Mujer y la Familia), which are governmental bodies that aim to “conocer, tramitar y resolver” (know, process and resolve) cases of VAW (Consejo de la Judicatura, 2013). COIP determines that the competence of the judges is based on their knowledge of VAW and intrafamiliar violence (Venegas Pallo 2016). The process of denuncia (reporting) is complex. To summarize, acts of violence can be reported in different ways and will result, after evidence is presented, in different sentences. The process starts with an individual who files

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6 Protective measures include but are not limited to: an order for the aggressor to leave the shared house; a restraining order; reintegrating the victim into the household if they had been previously forced to leave it; a temporal custody for the child and treatment (psychological) (Ministerio de Justicia 2014; Art 558)

7 These Judicial Units (JU) collaborate with other institutions such as Ministry of Justice, (which oversees the Plan de Erradicación de Violencia, Asamblea Nacional), Fiscalías General del Estado (Attorney Generals), Ministry of Public Health and others.
a verbal complaint at a Unit, where their report is written down, word by word. As described in a working paper presented by the Consejo de la Judicatura, which describes the ways in which institutions help prevent GBV against women and children, the written report is a crucial document that will be one of the main determinants of how the process evolves. A judicial assistant manages all the documentation (if an individual has been sent by a Health professional, that documentation will be processed in accordance with COIP as well). Following, is a participation in an “emphatic” conversation where the victim will be informed about their legal rights and file an official legal complaint. Next, the judge inspects the documentation, grants measures of protection, determines rehabilitation practices that usually includes external actors (such as CEPAM team) who will work with the victim and follow up with their own reports (this takes months, even years). Following this long process, evidence is presented to the court, and – if determined to be sufficient and satisfactory, a sentence would be given to the accused individual.

As discussed by the CEPAM legal specialist, forcing individuals to start criminal trials to get justice includes hiring lawyers, public defenders and following a long criminal procedure executed by ordinary judges called Garantías Penales who “tend to be more preoccupied with delito [a criminal acts] such as robbery or trafficking” (Interview, June 10, 2016). She also emphasized that

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8 If a person is underage, disabled, or shows more serious and/or recent signs of abuse, they will be given priority.
9 This includes medical examinations that follow sexual abuse which includes graphic sketches of genitalia of women of all ages.
certain protective measures are easily issued, but that the “rigidity of laws in the areas of violence” pose problems in practice:

In many cases, several exams are required before violence is criminalized [such as medical exams, psychological therapies]. Formally, it all seems well. I have had cases when the aggressors have escaped and came back so the women are scared … to report. And in those cases, there is no other support and no boletas de auxilio and women feel helpless (Personal communication, June 26, 2016).

In the case of physical violence (defined as causing pain or physical suffering, a series of violent acts using any means without considering the time required for recovery) or sexual violence (expressed through forced sexual relations or other practices), a medical examination conducted by a health professional that inspects the seriousness of the injuries determines the extent of the sentence. If the medical exam determines that a woman is disabled for less than three days, the person will undergo a so-called “procedimiento expedito” (expedited procedure), which is employed in the cases of less aggressive damages without further offences and is considered a contravención that will be resolved in the unit (Art. 159; Art. 641; Art. 643 Código Orgánico Integral Penal, 2014). A disability of more than three days will result in act of violence being a delito, and the case will proceed the case to fiscalía (District Attorney’s Office).  

As previously mentioned, the situation is more complicated in the cases of psychological violence (manifested through threats, manipulations, blackmailing, humiliation, isolation, surveillance, harassment or control of beliefs, decisions or actions and causes) where a victim must prove to have suffered mental or

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10 Femicide is exclusively in the hands of the fiscalía.
emotional consequences. Since these units generally do not have psychological
or social services, people are sent to one of the Centers (such as CEPAM)
(Ministerio de Justicia 2014). The pride of being part of this network was voiced
by a CEPAM’s worker: “This place [CEPAM] is well-recognized. But it’s pretty
remarkable you know – they chose us you know, nos escogieron! I guess we are
still good enough to offer services” (May 18, 2016). CEPAM conducts a
psychological evaluation and later issues a report that explains the process and
progress of “victims” in their therapies (in certain cases, a shorter report is also
issued by a legal specialist at CEPAM). This report is one part of the documents
that determine the gravity of the psychological violence, which include: mild
(levé), moderate (moderato) or severe (severe) forms of psychological violence
(Art 157 Código Orgánico Integral Penal, 2014).\footnote{Mild damage would be considered an act that has “low intensity, impact or incidence,”
moderate damage occurs when a person is psychologically abused but can control the situation
and is not yet extreme. Each of them is penalized with different sentences (Art. 157).}

According to Quishpe Jacho’s master’s thesis (2016), the reform intended
to undermine claims that psychological violence is less important than the other
two forms of violence criminalized by COIP. However, according to the same
study, these three levels of psychological violence included in the law do not
have standardized counterpart categories in psychology, hence are difficult to
diagnose. If the psychological evaluation does not suggest that the mental
consequences were serious enough, the denunciation is dismissed and the
women have nowhere to turn to see justice and obtain their rights. Serious
questions have been raised about the ability to reduce the violence of a system
in which the crime needs to already happen in order to be legally addressed. One

\footnote{Mild damage would be considered an act that has “low intensity, impact or incidence,”
moderate damage occurs when a person is psychologically abused but can control the situation
and is not yet extreme. Each of them is penalized with different sentences (Art. 157).}
example was a statement by an Ecuadorian lawyer, Anunziatta Valdez Larrea, who warned that COIP is contradictory in many way, especially in how it goes against its own objective that aims to legitimize legal intervention in the cases strictly necessary for the protection of an individual. She claims that by dividing psychological violence into different levels, many cases that do not appear to be serious at first will be dismissed. She also questioned COIP’s Article 643 where it states that “los certificados de honorabilidad o laborales” must be presented to be examined by the judge (El Universo 2014). Valdez Larrea also urged that psychological therapy become obligatory for the aggressors, not only for those who endure violence. Finally, she suggests that a criminal trial should not be a mandatory procedure in the cases of psychological violence. In my interviews and case files, I have seen that some women who come for psychological therapy explained that their husbands were advised to join them, but refused to go. When I raised this issue with some of CEPAM’s workers, they agreed that men should be given more attention and that only one center in Quito requires the aggressor to undergo therapy along with their wife. As explained by a CEPAM worker: “We are called Centro Ecuatoriano para la Promoción y Acción de la MUJER, you know. And there are certain logistic issues that arise with treating both a woman and a man in the same space” (Personal Communication, May 15, 2016).12

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12 These “logistical issues” refer to different norms and rules that psychologists employ. Some methods do not allow “victim” and “aggressor” to be treated in the same spaces, which is what CEPAM worker was referring to. Other psychologists who work at CEPAM have explained that this is not always the case – sometimes men do not wish to come if their wife is there and vice versa.
Case Files: Women’s Path to CEPAM

Now we turn to the other three forms of violence (physical, psychological, sexual) and ways in which they are defined and penalized, and what kinds of implications and consequences the process has for people who report the violence. Besides opinions of specialists, I draw on more testimonies that show how people experience the process and on case files that state clearly whether a person has reported violence prior to coming to CEPAM. Table 6-1 is based on 272 case files of women over the age of 15 (same sample used in Chapter 5). For analytical reasons, I divide them into the following categories (by age): those whose case files clearly state that they have been to one of the Judicial Units (JU) prior to coming to CEPAM, who then oblige them to go to CEPAM (to receive a report) and seek psychological help; those who came to CEPAM voluntarily and have clearly stated that although they have not reported violence prior to coming to CEPAM, they feel the need to seek their assistance (usually psychological or legal) either because they just need someone to talk to, or because they wish to report their husband (either have tried before or have not); other, which refers to few cases that have listed different reasons for coming to CEPAM (wanting divorce, their parent came instead of them, referred to them by their school); and “no data.” Considering the variation in confidence and precision in information reported by users, the range between required and voluntary participation, and the fact that about 39.7% of cases has no clear information on whether violence was reported or not, the data presented in this section is only a suggestion of some trends.
As Table 6-1 shows, almost 40.8% of women who come to CEPAM that we know of have been referred to by a JU. It also shows that 15.8% of them did not report violence prior to coming to CEPAM – but due to a large percentage of missing data (39.7%), we cannot be certain of their motives. There are too few word-by-word testimonies of people who clearly articulate reasons for not reporting violence beforehand to make a least of the factors from most to least common. There are too few word-by-word testimonies of people who clearly articulate reasons for not reporting violence earlier and make a list of the factors from most to least common. It is also not possible to make an analysis by age cohort, due to a large amount of missing information.

The reasons for coming to CEPAM do repeat across all of them. There are more case files that include a report by a psychologist who summarized their story, sometimes touching upon reasons why a woman did not report violence beforehand. Those case files are too short and too interpretative to offer an accurate picture of a person’s experience of violence. Moreover, in many cases, those reports serve as tools to advance an individual’s case at the (because they are presented as evidence at the court) and thus they are written strategically to emphasize certain elements of one’s history to make their case stronger and help them seek justice. Considering the fact that my research took place in an urban area of Ecuador, within an organization where people come for help and have – or intend to – take action against GBV, I was less surprised that people did not emphasize struggles with finding CEPAM or Judicial Unit, as they already were there. When I asked the people I interviewed how they heard of CEPAM, they either said that they were referred to it by a Judicial Unit, or recommended by a
friend who found CEPAM to be a safe and helpful place. It seems like since the report has usually already been initiated for those at CEPAM, less debate is placed on other issues than those that concern legal obstacles.

A thorough analysis of the case files shows a couple of interesting points. For example, among younger women (aged 15-19), some women came voluntarily, either because of a sudden unwanted pregnancy (and were referred to CEPAM by a friend), or came in a company of a relative (sister) who wished to report violence (and they ended up doing an interview with a social worker as well, revealing similar experiences). Some women over 50 years old, come to either learn about or start a process of divorce. Furthermore, many women around this age have not reported violence prior to coming to CEPAM but appear to express a clear wish to report their husband (labeled “quiere denunciar”). Some of the reasons for not reporting that appear across cohorts include fear (“por miedo”), conflicts with the partner or their family (manipulations and blackmailing if going through with a divorce), not considering to have sufficient evidence to think that their case would go through (for example, no bruises). A few case files also suggest that upon the woman taking action, so many conflicts arose that she decided not to do it. Finally, two of older women (over 70) appear to accuse their daughters-in-law of GBV – both of which list economic and patrimonial violence to be the main form they have been experiencing. Additionally, both cases imply that the daughters-in-law are “aggressive,” not only to them but also to their children (who are grandchildren of the women who have come to CEPAM). Although both of these women have been referred to CEPAM
by a Judicial Unit, it is unclear whether they reported their daughter’s in law for violence perpetrated against themselves, or against their granddaughters.

“Pero las leyes también maltratan a las mujeres”

CEPAM’s team occupies a strategic position between those people who seek their assistance and the authorities who determine the destiny of the reporting process. On one hand, CEPAM provides a relatively safe space for everyone who has been sent for therapy or who comes voluntarily; on the other hand, they must monitor the progress of the users and – when applicable – report it to the authorities who demand to know the process. It is more or less clear that prior to coming to CEPAM and/or reporting violence, most people in this study encounter a wide-range of structural and economic obstacles

A legal specialist at CEPAM explained that the process of denuncia can be initiated rather easily: “Well, you can – if you want to – go to a Judicial Unit and say: I am a victim of violence and I need a boleta de auxilio” (June 20, 2016). This identifying moment “interpellates” (Althusser 1978) a person as a subject who has endured GBV and is part of the rigorous legal system that will determine how the case unfolds. Although in theory, the process appears quick and helpful, as explained in the previous section, it is often a confusing/intimidating and frustrating one. As I learnt through my interviews, most do not have a complete understanding of the process. The narratives that would reveal struggles and frustrations about the reporting process are less often present in the case files. I attribute this to two reasons: First, in 40% of the cases, women who have come

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13 This statement was uttered by one of my interviewees and it means “But the laws also abuse women.”
to CEPAM have already been to one of the JUs and have thus already entered the legal process. However, one of the most common response of those who have previously visited one of the Judicial Units was along the lines of “They sent me here … They said a therapy should help,” while implying that they are not exactly sure how the process will unfold. People coming for divorce advice, often having experienced severe violence, tend to end up pausing the process, saying that they need “more time,” “more money,” “more understanding of the process” or simply “more courage” (Personal communication with CEPAM’s lawyer and social worker June 20, 2016).

The following is an excerpt from Amanda’s story of struggling with the laws and figuring out the system when deciding whether to report her husband of 15 years or get a divorce:

For me, the most violent thing that has happened to me was what this country did to me. Nobody even believed me he was the aggressor until they interviewed my daughter who was full of bruises! I was telling them about the abuse, but until an underage child was considered abused nobody took my case seriously. I believe that everything in this state victimizes women. Yes, todo hace mujeres las victimas. The laws … All of it. I tried reporting my husband at the fiscalía and until this day he has more rights than I do. And he lives in OUR house with his new woman. And I was fighting for that house! And for my children that he didn’t let me see!

The day that changed everything for Amanda who had already been undergoing physical, emotional and patrimonial abuse, was when her husband forced her to leave the house. She took her two children and “was left on the streets, sin nada” which is when a friend from work (Amanda explained that she used to have a “good job”) advised her to go to CEPAM where she felt like she was heard for the first time:

They told me what my rights were and gave me both legal and psychological support. They told me that it’s better I get a divorce than
report, por razones legales. They even told me I can claim our house back, but I didn’t want to. I guess the laws protect an abused person, in theory. They are strong laws, good laws. Now the only thing that needs to happen is that the laws are fulfilled (Interview, May 30, 2016)."

As explained by CEPAM’s legal specialist, the stories in which economic realities and property issues interrelate with the systemic limitations are common:

Sometimes, the husband she’s reporting and her are paying off the credit for the house. He’s beating her but she’s never worked afuera de la casa. But the husband is paying off the debt. “If I get divorce,” she says, “I am scared. I am going to lose my house.” And it is true! She might – she cannot pay off the debt and she will end up on the street. She does not even have the money for the food you know! And I say, okay, we can do juicio de alimentos (child support). But she says he will get angry and take the house. She is trapped in her own house and in this marriage (June 20, 2016).

Women’s perceptions that laws/legal proceedings themselves perpetuate injustice are exacerbated by the demand that they present evidence or call witnesses. Some women were unable to make a strong case for reporting because of the lack of witnesses or having only mild injuries. As discussed by a mother of two whose husband perpetuated psychological, physical and finally economic and patrimonial violence:

I said, my daughter is my witness! It wasn’t enough. They [the judge and other authorities] told me that since she lives with me, I had probably told her what to say. It has been three months since I attempted to report him. La jueza (woman judge) told me that maybe I just need to accept that it just is how it is. This relationships you know. That if I accept it I can maybe find a way to work with it. But I could not live calmly in that house. And he kept trying to convince the authorities that I am only after the money. We had that restaurant together! But he said I always flirted with the customers. He was driving me crazy! And he hit me several times. I guess not hard enough … (Interview, June 20, 2016).

The problems of evidence interrelated with different forms of violence also show in an interview with a middle-aged Tatiana who spent the first 45 minutes of our interview talking about her new daughter in law who she considers to be a
careless mother to her newborn (Tatiana’s grandchild). Our conversation took a
different turn when she began to share a story of her sister, mother of four:

It has been hard because my sister who has been taking care of our senile
mother has interests that harm us all. I have already gotten a boleta de auxilio from the fiscalia because she was screaming and throwing things,
trying to manipulate everyone, everytime she saw us [her siblings]. It took
me a while to make this decision – but everyone said that I should do it. I
lived with her when I was 16, and at the age of 18, I decided to move to the
coast. She took all of my stuff! Not only what she had given me, also the
stuff my mami bought! She said: you will not need this anymore. It is mine
now. Lately, she has been making me pay for her gas. What hurts me the
most now is how she is exploiting our mother; as her caretaker, she is
entitled to a certain amount of money as her caretaker that she is supposed
to spend on food, pills and other stuff to keep our mom alive. But she spends
it! And what is worse, she has been trying to get her hands on our mami’s
properties. Mami has put the house under my brother’s name, who has also
contributed a significant amount of money to the construction of the house.
He has been meaning to put it under my name, because he lives in the
States. When my sister heard this, she was furious. This dispute started six
years ago and it is still going on. I tried to start a new process at the fiscalia
and found a good lawyer. Eventually, they told me that I need to be patient.
That this is a complicated process. That I need to see a psychologist
because this problem cannot be solved at the fiscalia, it will go to Ministry
of Defense? I do not understand anything anymore. All I know is that I need
a report from a psychologist. And that she cannot have the house (June 28,
2016).

This story illuminates issues raised by the absence of economic and patrimonial
violence within the GBV legal framework and reveals that the real reason that
she is at CEPAM is not her daughter-in-law, but a report from a psychologist
because her problem does not have place in legal circles.14

More common case among the CEPAM users, however is to seek such
evidence in the context of IPV. Twenty-eight-year-old Juliana who does not have
children, was also going through a difficult case of IPV and when she finally

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14 The situation where a relatively minor incident leads to a revelation of wider complexities and
dynamics within the GBV framework is repeated throughout CEPAM’s archive and came up
during some of my interviews
decided to initiate a process of divorce, she was struggling to get enough
evidence to win the case:

See, he never hit me. He was chasing me around the house, throwing me
against the car – grabbing my arms but never strong enough to leave
bruises. And he NEVER hit my face either—he was careful you know. He
would say: “I never hit you, cierto? I never hit you!” He was repeating this
over and over again … Afterwards, he took my car. He is a powerful man,
you know. He is making sure that I can’t get a job that I want. Estoy
bloqueada. I have no money, I live with my sister. I need to win my case
so he pays me enough that I can start over (June 28, 2016).

This story connects to a testimony from a case file of 25-year-old mother, who
reports:

I have everything. The bruises on my body – on my back, my arm, I have
this bruise on my face. I have pain in my heart. But I also have lots and
lots of calls and messages from him! Now I will also have a report from my
psychologist [from CEPAM] which will add to the medical report I already
have. I will get my justice.

After receiving advice from CEPAM, those who have not yet decided to report
violence begin to understand the importance of physical evidence that needs to
be presented in order for a denuncia to be eligible. There was more than one
case of a woman who was unable to seek legal justice because she had no
visible bruises on her body, which suggests that their aggressors were aware of
how to avoid sanctions.

**Other Obstacles Faced by CEPAM Users When Reporting Violence**

Legal obstacles are not the only one’s women face during the process of
reporting. My research participants and the case files suggest that complex
cultural and gendered norms exacerbate the already difficult profess of reporting,
including notions of shame and stigma, social and family networks, and children.
Shame and Stigma: Social and Family Networks

In the previous chapter, I identified family and social ties as playing a crucial role in encouraging the decision to report violence. I also mentioned the occasions when family contributed to the violence by either not interfering or ignoring the situation. However, during the process of reporting violence, my findings suggest that GBV-related problems are not necessarily resolved in the family. At least ten women whom I interviewed and have reported violence at CEPAM shared that they refuse(d) to discuss their processes with family members, while suggesting that their parents (in the cases of adult women in late 30s and over) know nothing about the legal battles their daughters are fighting. Although their words suggest that these decisions are connected not only to notions of stigma (less) and shame. They reported that the family has "Their own problems," or "We don’t share dolores de este tipo." However, many of them responded to the question of whether they’ve talked to other people with “Of course! Here at CEPAM!” When I asked about people outside of CEPAM I was met with "Oh … no, not really." Some even said I was the first person out of CEPAM with whom they discussed their experience.15 On the other hand, the decision of whether one will discuss their situation with friends or family also

15 Other women in my interviews also seemed to have unclear ideas of what support means to them (in general, not only in relation to reporting). For example, during an interview, I asked an older woman of poor health—whose adult daughter was murdered by her husband (they had two children together who now live with the woman interviewed)—whether she’s had any support in her community. She tells me first that she has her god and church, "to everyone else I feel like a burden," she added, which I interpreted in the sense that she is able to talk to church people about the death of her daughter. Later in our conversation, I mentioned that this is very valuable that she has support of those people, to which she reacted strongly: "No, I have no support. Nobody helps me. Even my other son stopped coming to visit me." What about your church, I asked? "There is nobody in the church whom I could tell this. El bendición de dios is the only thing that gives me power.” The rest of our conversation revealed the strong impact of religion in her life, but her words implied that it was mostly because she felt like a burden that she did not talk to anyone (Interview, May 29, 2016).
seems to be related to class. Previously mentioned Juliana, whose husband appears to be a powerful political figure in Ecuador, shared with me during an interview that it was her friends who noticed that she has been very silent (she admitted to me that she had been in denial about IPV), and encouraged her to seek help. “Todas feministas,” (all feminists) she tells me, adding that they knew of what lawyers to consult and who to turn to (Interview, June 28, 2016).

Considering that Juliana and her friends were educated women, it seems like they understood the process of reporting and taking action against someone.

**Fear of Losing Children**

Less women in the case files directly addressed their fear of losing children (or custody) as an obstacle. During my interviews, some women who have reported violence told me that custody of the children is “in the air” and that currently their children live with them, or with their partner (accused of violence), or separately with both. Sometimes I could not hide my surprise when women who have been experiencing physical abuse told me that their children (usually teenagers) were living with their papi. The women explained that it is what their children wanted (less common), or that it this arrangement is permanent, because the children have been living with their relatives (fleeing from abuse), or, in one case, with their new partner.\(^{16}\) This seems to imply a broader issue related to levels of women’s incomes (that are low (Table 5-6). As one woman said to me in an interview, “I am lucky that I have a sister who could give me *el cuarto*

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\(^{16}\) However, men tell a different story. One case file stands out where a father directly addressed his worry about losing his children. A father of two, he shares that his wife has been “manipulative” and “psychologically violent.” He has been refusing to take action against her, he refused to, because he is worried to lose his children, who, in his perception, will likely end up with the mother.
*chiquito* to not have to be near him [the accused]. He was never aggressive towards the children; he really loves them. When she [daughter] finishes school, we will find a new place” (Interview, June 28, 2016). Five other case files seem to imply that a woman is still living with her husband after the process of reporting has been initiated – but that he has to (either because a woman was issued a protective measure or for other, unspecified reasons) live in a separate floor of the house. This seems to be problematic, because about three case files seem to explicitly suggest that following the *denuncia*, their partner got even angrier. Such is an example of Rosario, a 45-year-old, mother of teenage daughters who married her husband, currently a chofer, when she was 17 years old. Following his aggressions (usually a consequence of alcohol) over the years, she finally reported him, but had to stay in the same house for the time being. She reports, he commonly attempts to enter “her part of the house” with force. On one occasion, this meant driving the taxi into the door of the house.

**Discussing the Role of the State**

This chapter discusses legislative policies and practices of a state related to strict policing of GBV in order to decrease high rates of violence, as well as the positionality of feminist NGOs in this matrix. While, on one hand, the government developed a strict system that aims to criminalize specific forms of violence, the reforms establish slow and onerous processes that require time-consuming trials and specific forms of evidence that are based on a long-term psychological evaluation. Just operation of the system is further complicated by unpredictable professionalism of judicial authorities. One example came to light when two enraged women stormed into CEPAM to complain about a report that has been
issued for Jennifer. Following a psychologically and physically abusive relationship with her mother, Jennifer, the (grand) daughter has been seeing a psychologist and living with her paternal grandmother. While they were accusing everyone at CEPAM of having been tricked by Jennifer’s lies and manipulations, Jennifer’s mother and maternal grandmother tried to make a point that the report is “a weapon” which will represent them in the worst light in front of the judges. As it later turned out, the report evaluating Jennifer’s situation, ended in her maternal mother’s hands after she asked “her friends” at the Judicial Unit to make her a copy. When a CEPAM’s worker made a call to this particular person, they said that they “forgot” about its strict confidentiality because they “felt bad” for Jennifer’s grandmothers who said to have been “kept in the dark” about her granddaughter’s progress. “I could get this story famous [put it to media]” said CEPAM’s worker, “but it would only do damage to Jennifer. And we need to protect her the best way we can” (July 3, 2016).

Some victims who depend on the legal process to determine the course of their denuncia, perceive that authorities responsible for their destinies manipulate power in a strategic way, hand in hand with the material evidence that monitors how their corporeal and mental state transforms with the experience of GBV. Drawing on Foucault (1977) and Westlund (1999), this configuration of power and control is a tool by which the state of Ecuador constructs and interprets the experience of individuals, with the underlying assumption that they know best what aspect of their experience suits their normative perception of GBV. Furthermore, by requiring individuals (mostly women) to report their aggressors (mostly men), these institutions allow themselves to have full surveillance of the
situation, but at the same time distancing themselves from the trial process. This means conducting everything in accordance with the rigid laws and strict psychological as well as medical criteria and handing responsibility over to the Centros de Ayuda (including CEPAM).

Here is where CEPAM plays a critical role in advancing the rights of those who have not only been abused by one or more individuals, but also by the system. Although on one level CEPAM functions as an extended arm of the Ministry of Justice, translating the realities of people going through GBV to the reports that fit the required criteria – on another level CEPAM assists people on how to work with the system (Guarderas Albuja 2016) while also finding solutions that best fit their individual stories. The standardized forms that are part of the case files play the main role in translating the experiences of CEPAM’s users. Although CEPAM’s services are extremely thorough and attentive to unique experiences with less recognized forms of GBV, and are (according to my interviewees) very helpful, these standard forms tend to homogenize the experience of the users. This plays an important role when parts of these forms are turned in as evidence to the judges who inspect an individual’s “progress” in terms of recuperating from GBV. Following Marxist scholars who have recognized ideological components of laws (Pashukanis 1942; Althusser 1971; 2014; Comaroff and Comaroff 2006) I demonstrated the system’s preoccupation with law and ideologically constructed subject. In the case of Ecuador, this would be a model of a nuclear family, a construction of a battered woman who suffers a specific form of violence and whose experiences fit within neatly constructed and defined categories, and of a machista man, who embodies the violent.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of cases</th>
<th>Reported violence prior to coming to CEPAM at a Judicial Unit</th>
<th>Did not report violence prior to coming to CEPAM</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>No data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>272 (100%)</td>
<td>111 (40.8%)</td>
<td>43 (15.8%)</td>
<td>3 (1.1%)</td>
<td>108 (39.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored the complexities of gender-based violence (GBV) in Quito, with a particular attention to the stories of women and men who report their experiences with GBV at CEPAM, and to the experiences of those who work there. It explored meanings and ideas associated with GBV by individuals and groups that occupy different social positions, and challenged the belief that people’s experiences of GBV can easily fit within the established categories of physical, psychological and sexual violence that seem to be reinforced by dominant legislative and professional discourses. Recent efforts to draw more attention to the forms of femicide, economic and patrimonial violence make a valuable addition to the multi-dimensional landscape of GBV where its different forms usually intertwine.

The multiplicity of forms of violence and its complexities can be analyzed through the individual narratives that reveal ways in which sociodemographic factors (for example gender, ethnicity, age, family situation, education, employment and income levels) interact with personal relationships and networks that have the potential to advance or regress individuals’ path to seek help. Although the majority of CEPAM’s users are women, most of whom report to be precarious workers with low and unsteady incomes without having obtained higher education, a few examples of educated, well-off women who have come to CEPAM discourage speculations that GBV only affects those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Many times, these experiences manifest in different forms of economic conflicts in a household, also interrelated with other members of the family and household, alcohol abuse and gendered expectations from men and women.
Many individuals seek legal help prior to coming to CEPAM and reveal struggles experienced not only during the abusive relationships, but also prior to and upon initiating the reporting process. Although the legal attention to GBV in Ecuador is important, and seems to be empowering some people who experience violence who dare to take the steps towards reporting violence, hoping that their case will be met with justice, the process is still complex. It appears to be a frustrating process in itself for the “victims,” and in some ways, also for CEPAM team who must find ways to work with the law while also meet the individual needs of their users. Although the recently enforced legal code brought a few valuable contributions, it also frames violence against women, children and adolescents within the limiting matrix of strictly defined forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence that do not always have clear counterparts in practice. This produces tensions within the politics of translating individual experiences into a discourse that will be evaluated and considered satisfactory for a denuncia to go through.

The transnational aspect of feminist scholarship also has critical implications for how GBV plays into the discussions of gender, race, nation, sexuality, globalization and capitalism (Alexander and Mohanty 2010). Amy Lind’s (2005) study of feminist nation building resonates with the contemporary situation in Ecuador where feminist voices are loud and critical – not only with NGO action, but also with protests and other public acts of resistance. However, in many aspects the feminist NGOs such as CEPAM remain integrated into dominant structures that create unequal fields of power, attempting to restore (and reform) law and order in the areas of GBV by criminalizing its specifically constructed forms. This suggests that the state of Ecuador attributes the responsibility
of preventing and ameliorating GBV to other actors, such as NGOs and different institutions who use multi-scale approaches to deal with GBV. One such example was a large-scale campaign, constructing an idea of transparency in the state. These tensions also draw postcolonial questions about the imposition of certain legal models (that are often based on human rights) that categorize citizens and their experiences – and often homogenize them (Paz Guarderas 2016) – eliminating those who do not fit the normative model. Thus, one of the attempts of this thesis was to acknowledge the many efforts in the areas of GBV, especially in relation to feminist NGOs, while challenging some of the widespread practices and policies, illustrating how they manifest in a particular place and time. Through the everyday practices of a center like CEPAM, it is possible to see different efforts to work with the system while also respecting individual stories that reveal micro-manifestations of the intertwined forms of violence and the ways in which they can be considered within the wider socio-political context. Because of these complexities, categorizing practices are not the solution, and it is the organizations such as CEPAM that carry the responsibility of emphasizing many complexities of GBV that they see through the everyday practices with their users. These sometimes get obscured when translated through the standardized forms that reduce the experiences to six words (physical, sexual, psychological, patrimonial or economic and threat of femicide) (sometimes elaborated in the testimonies), without illuminating the multidimensional implications of GBV (such as interrelated forms and contested categories of victim and perpetrator, different conceptions of “trabajo” and “etnicidad”). This is important, because such categorizations may have implications for
theoretical understandings and representations of the incidence of violence (Walby and Myhill 2001).

With regards to suggestions for future research and policy, I would like to propose that more men are included in the studies and workshops on GBV.¹ As argued by Paulson (2015, 21), consideration of the needs and struggles of men (who are reported to be the most common aggressors) does not mean that attention will be drawn away from challenges that women face. Rather, it could have the potential to illuminate the systemic relations “between violence against women and the violent and hierarchical regimes of masculinity in which many actors struggle to become men and to demonstrate their manliness.” Expanding the framework of GBV could generate new ways of considering – and approaching – GBV.

Second, drawing on the discussions of the limits of categorizations of violence and limited standardized forms that obscure the many complexities of GBV, I endorse the recent efforts to include economic and patrimonial violence in the legal code. Furthermore, besides legislating it, more institutions and educational programs should disseminate information on these widespread forms of violence. In June 2016, The Coalition of Ecuadorian Women’s made a promising step in this direction and proposed a new GBV legal code (*Ley Orgánica Integral*) that suggests the incorporation of the “new” types of violence into constitution (in addition to economic and patrimonial, they also recognize symbolic violence).² Finally, this provides a valuable opportunity to

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¹ My original intent to include more men’s voices did not go through, however, the case files and a few other stories illuminate tensions around gender, power and norms on the levels of community and relationships.

² They define symbolic violence as which they define as “perpetuated stereotyped through messages, values, symbols, icons, signs, as well as social, economic, political and religious beliefs that transmit,
inform the public about ways in which this form intersects not only with other, often more
recognized forms of violence, but also with some ways in which differently positioned
actors in the state perpetuates violence.

One example showed during my time in the field when CEPAM (and a few other
centers) faced serious financial crisis. By the time I was leaving Quito, the team has
already gone six months without receiving funding committed from the Ministry of
Justice, and some of CEPAM workers had to take up another part-time job to bring
foods to their families. Dozens of people who sought their help had to be waitlisted. “If
this isn't the definition of structural violence against those who try to fight against
violence, then I don't know what is!” was one of the many outraged statements
overheard in CEPAM headquarters. After months of considerable efforts to get justice,
the Centers finally received their pay, which marked – in the words of a CEPAM worker
– the beginning of CEPAM's “post-violence recovery.”

Violence manifests in different ways. Those differences make it difficult to
address but also give researchers and workers from different backgrounds an
opportunity to develop the ideas to work with it, ideally in a dialogue with those directly
affected. Thus, it is my hope that – besides making a modest contribution to the studies
on this incredibly complex topic – this thesis generates helpful ideas and
understandings for centers like CEPAM, and inspires them to pursue diverse and
inclusive strategies for the valuable fight that they keep on fighting.

reproduce and consolidate relations of domination, exclusion, inequality and discrimination that naturalize
the subordination of women in society.”proposal also vows to reduce revictimization of women during
reporting process but there is little guarantee that it will go into effect anytime soon (Coalicion Nacionales
de Mujeres del Ecuador).
APPENDIX: STANDARDIZED FORM FILLED OUT BY A CEPAM WORKER

**INSTRUMENTOS TÉCNICOS - PRIMERA ACOGIDA - ÁREA DE TRABAJO SOCIAL**

**FICHA DE DATOS INICIALES/ PRIMERA ACOGIDA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Código N°</th>
<th>Fecha de Entrevista</th>
<th>Mes</th>
<th>Día</th>
<th>Año</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**DATOS DE IDENTIFICACIÓN**

Nombres: ______________________________________

Apellidos: ______________________________________

Edad: _______ Fecha de nacimiento: _________________

Sexo: ___ Femenino ___ Masculino

Identidad de género (Conteste esto solo en casos que considere necesario):

__________________________

Número de cédula: ______________ Nacionalidad: _______________________

Condición migratoria: ___ Refugiada ___ Solicitante de refugio ___ Inmigrante
con visa

___ Inmigrante con residencia ___ Inmigrante sin visa___

Dirección domicilio:

______________________________ Ciudad o
parroquia_____________________

Provincia: _____________________

Teléfonos: _____________________ _________________________

Lugar actual de residencia (en caso de que esté fuera del domicilio):

______________________________

Dirección de lugar de trabajo:

______________________________

Teléfonos: _____________________ _________________________
Persona de referencia

Nombre: ____________________________________________

Parentesco o relación con la víctima Especificar
__________________________________________

Teléfonos ____________________________________________

¿CUÁL ES LA NECESIDAD O DEMANDA DE LA USUARIA?
__________________________________________________________

DATOS PERSONALES Y FAMILIARES

__________________________________________________________

La víctima requiere atención médica inmediata (corte, fractura, hemorragia, prevención de VIH, PAE, etc.):

____ SI ______ NO

La mujer se encuentra embarazada: ____ SI _____ NO _____ Meses

Discapacidad: La persona tiene algún tipo de discapacidad grave o que le limite en su vida cotidiana:

____ SI ______ NO

Descripción de la discapacidad:
__________________________________________________________

Carnet de discapacidad

____ SI ______ NO _____ Porcentaje

Estado civil o tipo de relación de pareja:

____ Casada o Unión de hecho (registrada)
____ Viuda
____ Soltera
____ Divorciada
____ Separada
____ Unión libre, “compromiso”
____ Otro (especifique) ___________________________
Número de hijos e hijas: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nombre hijos e hijas</th>
<th>Edad</th>
<th>¿Con quién vive?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Nivel de educación:

- Ninguno
- Educación Básica
- Post secundario
- Superior 3er Nivel
- Superior 4to

Nivel último año aprobado:

Pertenencia étnica cultural:

- Indígena
- Montubia
- Blanca
- Afrodescendiente
- Mestiza
- Otro

Trabajo remunerado:

- SI
- NO

Ingresos propios:

- SI
- NO

DATOS GENERALES DE LA VIOLENCIA RECIBIDA

Tipo de violencia

- Física
- Psicológica
- Patrimonial o económica
- Sexual
- Violación
- Abuso sexual
- Acoso sexual
- Tentativa de Femicidio
Datos sobre el agresor

Nombre: ____________________________________________

Edad: _____ Parentesco o relación con la víctima ____________________________

Nacionalidad ____________________________
Dirección domicilio ________________________________________________________

Dirección lugar de trabajo ________________________________________________

Teléfonos ________________________________________________________________

Observaciones:

______________________________________________________________

Croquis del domicilio de la víctima

______________________________________________________________
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Maja Jeranko was born in Ljubljana, Slovenia, where she attended The University of Ljubljana and graduated with a dual bachelor’s degrees in sociology and English Language. During her undergraduate studies, she was active in several student and activist groups, and became interested in gender studies and critical theory, which determined the future of her studies. During that time, Maja also participated in an interdisciplinary project in Montserrat, West Indies, and volunteered in San José, Costa Rica, which inspired her to learn Spanish and pursue Latin American Studies at The University of Florida, where she specializes in gender and development.