LIVING WITH VIOLENCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA: AN EXPLORATION OF COLOMBIAN YOUNG ADULTS’ ENCOUNTERS WITH ONLINE HARMS

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Abstract

As social media platforms—such as Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp—have become an inescapable element of our lives, they have also become spaces where we regularly encounter, experience, and make sense of violence. These ecologies of online harm have profound implications in settings with long-lasting histories of armed conflict—such as Colombia, the context of this study—as cultures of violence become gradually more intertwined with digital platforms. Accordingly, this dissertation examines Colombian young adults’ views on and experiences concerning violence on social media. To address this research objective, I draw from a case study where Colombian young adults discussed the violence they interacted with in their everyday uses of digital platforms, examining how violence on social media is experienced and understood by users. The findings of this dissertation are organized in three sections: 1) the violence that young people encounter in their everyday engagements with digital platforms, 2) the processes of meaning-making around violence, and 3) the potential of education as a device of estrangement toward violence. Overall, this dissertation emphasizes how social media is now a crucial element through which we live with violence. Indeed, the findings of this dissertation highlight the critical role that social media platforms play in contemporary cultures of violence in Colombia—due to its pervasiveness, complexity, and processes of mediation in citizens’ meaning-making around harm and peace. In this context, education—and more specifically, critical dialogue and reflection—emerges as a productive space to unground existing cultures of violence and support peacebuilding processes.
Lay Summary

Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp have not only become an integral part of our lives—they have also become spaces where we regularly encounter, experience, and interpret violence. Indeed, online violence is especially significant in regions with a prolonged history of armed conflict, such as Colombia. This dissertation examines how Colombian young adults perceive and engage with violence on social media. The findings are divided into three sections: first, the types of violence encountered in everyday digital interactions; second, the processes through which individuals interpret violence; and third, the potential of education, including critical dialogue and reflection, to transform entrenched cultures of violence and contribute to peacebuilding. This research underscores the pivotal role of social media in shaping our relationship with violence, emphasizing education as a valuable strategy for promoting and sustaining cultures of peace.
Preface

This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Esteban Morales, with the support of the supervisory committee. The original research reported in this dissertation was covered by UBC Ethics Certificate number H21-03145.

This dissertation is organized as a manuscript-based dissertation, an acceptable model at the University of British Columbia. To avoid repetitions of methodologies through each of the three chapters that comprise the studies, I have dedicated Chapter 2 to explore the methodological design of this dissertation in detail. In each of the following chapters (3, 4 and 5), I only discuss the data sources and analytical decisions that pertain to the particular research objective addressed in that section.


A version of chapter 4 has been accepted for publication in the journal New Media & Society: Morales, E. (forthcoming). Social media and the mediation of everyday violence: A study of Colombian young adults’ experiences. *New Media & Society*.

A version of Chapter 5 is currently under review as a single-authored research article.
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Dedication

Esta disertación está dedicada a todos y todas los que me recordaron—como aquel famoso poema—que el camino se hace al andar. Y a todos y todas los que lo caminan conmigo.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Colombia, as described by Rincón (2020), is a nation built from violence that now does not know what to do with peace. From the bipartisan fights between conservatives and liberals in the middle of the twentieth century to the recent armed conflict between the government, guerillas, and paramilitaries, Colombia has had little time to envision itself as anything but a place of violence (Karl, 2017; Vanegas, 2019). One of the most impactful conflicts in the lives of contemporary Colombians is the war between the guerrilla Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC, translated as Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and the government. The Comisión de la Verdad de Colombia (Colombian Truth Commission, in English) estimated that, since 1985, the armed conflict in Colombia resulted in 450,664 people dead, 121,768 people missing, 32,446 acts of sexual violence, and 16,238 children and adolescents recruited by armed groups (Comisión de la Verdad de Colombia, 2022). The magnitude of the violence present in this conflict is both a cause and a result of a cultural transformation in Colombian society, whereby violence is normalized and expected (J. O. Melo, 2021), permeating how citizens experience and make sense of their surroundings.

Moreover, as social media becomes increasingly important in Colombian lives (Kemp, 2023b), cultures of violence have become gradually more intertwined with digital platforms. Indeed, as Colombians live with and through technology, violence has become an inescapable element of our mediatized routines, manifested when we chat with family over WhatsApp, follow the news over TikTok, or check on our friends over Facebook. In these digital environments, the violence that Colombians experience goes beyond the armed conflict to include other quotidian (yet not trivial) forms of violence, such as gender violence (Benavides-
Vanegas, 2020; Cepeda, 2018), racism (Arango, 2013; Roshani, 2021) or cyberbullying (Contreras Álvarez, 2013). Inhabiting these ecologies of violence on social media is recognized to have significant implications for users, as these digital spaces are increasingly intertwined with existing and emerging structures of power. Certainly, structures of power are reinforced, expanded, or resisted on digital platforms (Cover, 2023; Marwick, 2021). In this context, recognizing the centrality of social media in contemporary ecologies of violence is a critical step toward building and sustaining cultures of peace in Colombia (Charry Joya, 2020; García Perdomo, 2020; Maya‐Jariego et al., 2019).

A particular demographic group impacted by social media violence is young adults—Colombians between 18 and 25 years old. On the one hand, young adults are among the most avid users of social media in the country, regularly spending time on platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok to connect with one another and make sense of their surroundings (Kemp, 2023b; Telefónica, 2022). Young adults in Colombia frequently use platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook to engage in political participation and access relevant information (Restrepo, 2023)—showcasing the critical role these platforms play in their quotidian meaning-making practices. On the other hand, young adults are a vital age bracket to consider when promoting a culture of peace, as they play crucial roles in armed conflicts. Colombian young adults are both the most common victims and perpetrators of the Colombian armed conflict (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica., 2016; Riaño-Alcalá, 2006) and a critical demographic in social movements that support the process of building and sustaining peace. Young adults’ critical role in cultures of peace in Colombia is best illustrated by their leadership of the social mobilizations to support the ratification of the peace accords in 2016, marching in
the streets of various Colombian cities to demand the government and the guerrilla FARC reach an agreement that would put an end to the conflict (Carvajal Restrepo, 2016).

Accordingly, this dissertation examines Colombian young adults’ views on and experiences concerning violence on social media. Central to the objective of this study is a question about how young adults live with violence in and through digital technologies such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube. By asking about how young adults live with violence through social media, I centre discussions about “how technologies articulate, constitute, and are part, through their daily use, of particular ways of being and existing in the world” (Gómez Cruz, 2022, p. 32, my own translation).

This study aims to provide novel insights into violence on digital platforms by grounding a situated reading in the Colombian context. There is a wide range of studies that have explored online harms from varied perspectives, including but not limited to discussions about definitions (Dunn, 2021; Fairbairn, 2022), justifications (Blackwell et al., 2018; Schmid et al., 2022), impacts (Coombs, 2021; De Choudhury et al., 2014), intersections with existing structures of power (Jane, 2018; Williams et al., 2019), as well as the experiences and perspectives of victims (Veletsianos et al., 2018), perpetrators (Soares et al., 2023), and bystanders (Bayerl et al., 2023), among other relevant areas. In light of this growing literature concerning online harms, authors such as Barth et al. (2023) and Cover (2023) have noted the importance of studies that emphasize digital violence as a cultural and communicative process, where we can better situate how it

1 Original text: “Cómo las tecnologías articulan, constituyen y son parte, a través de su uso cotidiano, de formas particulares de ser y existir en el mundo.”
transforms the varied ways in which we inhabit and interact with our surroundings with an ethical and moral horizon of the impacts of violence.

By focusing on the cultural and communicative aspects of digital violence, this dissertation aims to provide a nuanced reading of online harms that enable researchers, policymakers, activists, platforms, and citizens to imagine new ways to build and sustain practices of peace. More specifically, this dissertation aims to provide insights to educators in Colombia to better address the complexity of violence—which is increasingly connected to our use of digital platforms. Indeed, past peace education initiatives in Colombia have struggled to properly contextualize their content to the lived experiences of communities. For example, Cátedra de la Paz (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2015), a mandatory course to strengthen the culture of peace in all Colombian schools, failed to achieve its intended goal in the country because (among other reasons) it was not adequately tailored to the needs of the communities it aimed to improve (Bellino et al., 2022; Morales, 2021; Morales & Gebre, 2021). As a response, creating scenarios where students can dialogue about social media violence could be a powerful strategy to engage students in meaningful, collaborative, and critical reflection around their cultures of violence and peace—a starting point to help them make sense of and address the violence students see in their communities.

In this introductory chapter I first outline the objectives and structure of this dissertation, presenting a summary of each chapter. Finally, I explore my positionality in relation to the topics, theoretical lenses, and context.
1.1 Objectives and structure of this dissertation

To respond to the research goal of examining Colombian young adults’ views and experiences around violence on social media, this dissertation follows a manuscript-based model, which integrates three stand-alone (yet, interconnected) scholarly articles. To avoid repetitions of the methodological process through each of the studies, I have dedicated Chapter 2 to exploring the methodological design of this dissertation in detail. Each of the following chapters (3, 4 and 5) responds to one specific research objective, which are as follows:

1. Describe the violence that Colombian young adults encounter in their everyday engagements with social media platforms.

2. Explore how violence is mediated through and within social media platforms among Colombian young adults.

3. Examine how reflection and dialogue concerning social media harms can be a device of estrangement toward violence.

While these three articles are written to be stand-alone pieces, they are connected by a common theme—Colombian young adults’ experiences around social media violence. In this sense, each of these chapters offers a different gaze into the issue of violence on social media. As noted by Tait (2008), attending to the gazes through which violence is understood is a necessary step towards grappling with “the modes of looking that the internet enables, their potential harms and utilities” (p. 109). In the following subsections, I summarize each of the three articles, presenting the objectives and sources of data.
1.1.1 Ecologies of violence on social media: An exploration of practices, contexts, and grammars of online harm

Violence is an almost ubiquitous phenomenon in contemporary digital environments (Microsoft, 2023; Schoenebeck, Lampe, et al., 2023). In this context, there is a growing need to understand the violence that is encountered by users on social media. In this chapter, I focus on the violence participants identified throughout their quotidian engagements with social media. Overall, this chapter aims to grasp the complex nature of violence on social media—a complexity that has been evidenced by previous literature that has explored how violence is enacted (e.g., Jane, 2014), represented (e.g., Duncombe, 2020), or practiced by digital platform companies (e.g., Couldry & Mejias, 2019). To attend to participants’ complex encounters with social media violence, in this chapter I draw from media ecology, an intellectual tradition that sees media as environments comprising a complex set of relationships between media, symbols, and culture (Postman, 2000; Strate, 2017). Overall, this chapter emphasizes the need to recognize and address the complexity of violence in social media—a necessary step towards building cultures of peace in and outside of our digital environments.

1.1.2 Social media and the mediation of everyday violence: A study of Colombian young adults’ experiences

After noting the prevalence, complexity, and impact of social media in contemporary ecologies of violence, this chapter explores the mediation of processes of meaning-making in the context of this study, Colombia. As such, this chapter explores how violence is mediated through and within digital platforms among Colombian young adults, focusing on the lived experiences
of participants. To respond to this objective, I draw on the work of Jesús Martín-Barbero (1993, 2004), who offers theoretical and analytical tools to analyze how cultural processes (such as violence) are mediated across and through the contemporary sensorium (Martin-Barbero & Rincón, 2019). In sum, this chapter discusses how the engagement with social media destabilizes meaning-making practices in the territories of violence that young adults inhabit in their everyday lives—affecting their abilities to respond to and make sense of the emergent ecologies of violence.

1.1.3 Estranging ourselves from violence on social media: Discussing online harms to learn about peace

The mediation of violence on digital platforms results in profound transformations in the lived experiences of Colombian citizens. These transformations are better illustrated by the normalization of harmful behavior in and out of social media. In this context, scholars such as Rossana Reguillo (2021, 2023) have noted the critical need to produce strategies to reorient our meaning-making processes in relation to violence in ways that enable the creation and sustainment of cultures of peace. Accordingly, by drawing from transformative learning (Hoggan, 2016b; Mezirow, 2006), in this chapter I explore how education can be such a strategy, supporting transformative learning that changes how Colombian young adults experience the contemporary cartographies of violence. Overall, this chapter aims to foreground the possibilities that underlie integrating social media violence into peace education efforts.
1.2 Positionality

As I have noted before, chapters 3, 4, and 5 focus on different aspects of social media violence in Colombia. Chapter 3 focuses on the violence identified by participants, Chapter 4 on the meaning-making experiences concerning violence, and Chapter 5 on the process and consequences of discussing violence. In this sense, exploring the gazes through which we understand violence makes it necessary to explore who is doing the gazing—that is, to outline my positionality as researcher and pedagogical process leader.

When talking about positionality, I refer to the act of recognizing how planning, conducting, and writing research is a practice of representation, which implicates “the positions from which we speak or write—the positions of enunciation” (S. Hall, 1990, p. 222). I recognize positionality as always complex and changing, an unstable negotiation between stories of subjectivity and shared narrations of culture (S. Hall, 1990). This complexity then requires a constant reflection on my identity, which is “not given, fixed notions nor sources of authenticity but rather constructed, procedural, multiple, overlapping, contradictory and performative” (Wright, 2003, p. 203). The process of critically engaging in my positionality requires an ongoing and reflexive engagement, where I involve myself in continuing self-awareness concerning the others and the context (Pillow, 2003). Consequently, analyzing my positionality while conducting this doctoral dissertation was (and still is) a critical and challenging endeavor.

A first consideration in this ongoing process of exploring my positionality entails an awareness of the multiple—and often conflicting—stories that position me around this research topic and context, both as an outsider and as an insider. As a Colombian, for example, the participants’ cultural and political backgrounds were familiar to me. Indeed, as I have
experienced violence in the country first-hand, I was able to speak to participants about their experiences by drawing from my personal history. As a migrant currently living in Canada, however, I was also seen as partially outside Colombian current issues, placing me in a privileged spot that allows me to distance myself from everyday life in the country. This privilege is further enforced by my identity as a white Colombian male, as well as by my academic formation and identity, which positions me in an advantaged position of power. These instances highlight the complex power dynamics that framed my relationship with participants.

My positionality is further complicated by the multiple and ongoing movement of my positions of enunciation with participants throughout the study. Indeed, qualitative researchers have long noted that, in cases such as this study, participants and the researcher's respective positions as insiders and outsiders are intertwined and at tension:

We might share aspects of the worlds of our research subjects, but we can never really claim to know their worlds completely. But equally, as people who started from the margins, we can never really occupy the center completely, nor is this necessarily our aspiration. (Beals et al., 2020, p. 599)

These movements in my positionality in relation to participants were evidenced in two important ways. First, my relation to participants changed over time—becoming more harmonious as we got to know each other better. For example, participants often felt like they were able to freely comment on political issues of Colombia in ways that felt more natural to them because, as one participant noted, they felt “safe in this space” [Irene]. Second, it became

__________________________

2 Original text: “Un lugar seguro”.
evident that participants’ positionality concerning me and the research topic was fluid and constantly changing. Here, participants’ agency was evidenced when they created internal jokes that did not include me (for instance, when they shared a WhatsApp sticker of somebody they knew) or when they decided to include me in their conversations (by, for example, explaining to me who a character of a famous telenovela is or what a word meant). These movements highlight that “positionalities are products of a complex interaction of agencies of the researcher and participants” (Rahman, 2023, p. 10).

Finally, it is important to consider my positionality concerning theoretical and conceptual approaches in this dissertation. As I noted before, each of the manuscripts in this study draws from different theoretical lenses and conceptual traditions that better address each of the objectives, including media ecology (Strate, 2017), mediations (Martín-Barbero, 1993), transformative learning (Mezirow, 2006), and devices of estrangement (Reguillo, 2023)—combining perspectives from Latin America with traditions from the Global North. Furthermore, as it has been widely discussed (Backe et al., 2018; Schoenebeck, Batool, et al., 2023), most of the earlier literature and work on digital violence draws from research conducted in countries in the Global North. In this context, I must constantly negotiate and re-evaluate my positionality as I read the Colombian context through lenses and concepts that combine Latin American traditions and approaches from the Global North. As many scholars from Latin America who work in the Global North have done before me (e.g., Gómez Cruz, 2022), I approach this tension as a productive space to foster novel readings of the phenomena of violence on digital platforms in Colombia.
In sum, in the ever-shifting terrain in which I position myself in relation to the subject, the participants, and the theoretical traditions, I see my positionality as an entanglement of my identity, the process of research, the cultural and political context, and the agency of others. This reading of positionality sets the place of enunciation from which my gaze moves to the following chapters.
Chapter 2: Methodological design

This dissertation explores how Colombian young adults engage in and understand social media violence. To respond to this objective, this study relies on a methodological design that adjusts to both the stated research questions and the interdisciplinarity underlying the theoretical orientations: a case study research methodology that seeks to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its context (Yin, 2012). In this setting, the case study is focused on the process by which young adults in Medellin, Colombia, understand, discuss, and reflect on social media violence.

It is important to note that I do not approach methods as a mere technical endeavour with the goal of collecting and analyzing data. Instead, I see methods as doing things in the world—they craft the realities we bring into the study (Law, 2006). Accordingly, I recognize that the processes and questions I describe in this section shaped what was brought forward in this dissertation. In this scenario, I position case studies as a valuable methodological stance to start thinking about the problem space of violence on social media from specific socio-cultural contexts and lived experiences. Yet, I recognize the need to be open to fostering venues where we can challenge the problem space itself and escape to other realities that emerge as this study unfolds—by, for example, discussing gender or humour. The results described in the following chapters are the result of this ongoing methodological tension.

Finally, the development of this dissertation was supported by an annotated bibliography concerning violence on social media. This annotated bibliography is available online at my
personal website\textsuperscript{3}: The objective of this website is to publicly annotate literature relevant to this dissertation work, exploring studies that have examined relevant issues around violence on digital platforms. I started this annotated bibliography in January of 2023 as a way of revisiting literature that has shaped my fieldwork and as a way of expanding the literature concerning violence on social media. Each entry in this annotated bibliography is tagged with relevant keywords and a summary of the article. This annotated bibliography is a live document, and I will continue to add entries for the foreseeable future.

2.1 Participants

Participants in this study were undergraduate students from universities in Medellín, Colombia. Medellín is the second biggest city in Colombia and one of the epicentres of violence in the country during the past century (Riaño-Alcalá, 2006) due to the prevalence of drug trafficking and the expansion of guerilla and paramilitary warfare into the city (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica., 2017). Indeed, Medellín is understood to be a microcosm of the larger national conflict (Giraldo-Ramírez, 2008), resulting in—among other negative impacts—the destruction of the social fabric, weakening of social organizations, increased violence against women, and negative impacts of violence on young people (Dávila, 2016). As Martín-Barbero (2006) noted, “the young people of Medellín make death one of the most expressive features of

\textsuperscript{3} Available at https://esteban-morales.com/annotated-bibliography
their lives” (p. xix). That is, for young adults in Medellin, violence is a fundamental element through which they negotiate how they remember and make sense of their territories.

In such a context, universities become critical places for building and sustaining cultures of peace (Purwanto et al., 2023). Medellin has some of the leading universities in the country, including Universidad de Antioquia, Universidad EAFIT, Universidad Nacional, and Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana (El Tiempo, 2022). In Colombia, universities operate within a framework established by the Ministry of National Education, the entity responsible for supervising all accredited institutions (Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia, 2019).

One of the Ministry’s goals for universities was establishing them as spaces where the educational community could build and support cultures of peace—especially amid the negotiations that would eventually lead to the peace accord in 2016 (Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia, 2015). In this regard, the Ministry of Education recognizes universities as active actors in the Colombian armed conflict and, hence, essential to reframing narratives around historical memory and reconciliation in Colombia (Morales, 2021).

Nevertheless, the higher education system in Colombia is currently facing multiple and overlapping challenges that make it difficult for universities to become spaces for communities to build and support cultures of peace. These challenges include inequity of access, uneven economic solvency between private and public institutions, and lack of monitoring of quality standards (Patiño, 2017). Certainly, while the Colombian higher education system has achieved an expansion in enrollment and programs offered in the last 20 years (Carranza & Ferreyra,

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4 Original text: “los jóvenes de Medellín hacen de la muerte una de las claves más expresivas de su vida”.

14
universities have largely failed to bring Colombian citizens of various socio-economic backgrounds into their institutions. Such unequal access to higher education is shown by Jaramillo-Echeverri and Álvarez (2023), who investigated whether the historical standing of different social groups is linked to their access to higher education. Here, they found evidence of social segregation in accessing higher education, noting that there are “very sticky floors for the ethnic groups, while the elite of the past has been slowly moving down the social ladder” (p. 42). In this scenario, it is doubtful that universities can become the centres of peace that the Ministry originally envisioned.

The specific demographic group included in this study were students who have participated in peace or social media programs or activities at their universities. By focusing my invitation efforts on this group, I aimed to bring together young adults interested in thinking about and reflecting on their experiences around social media violence, as well as the possible impact it might have on communities in Colombia. To invite them to participate in this study, I first identified professors and instructors who were leading either peace or social media projects. I then contacted them and asked them to extend the invitations to students who might be interested in participating in this study (Appendix A). Invitations sent to the students (Appendix B) included a description of the project, the details of their participation, and information about the remuneration that they were going to receive for their participation in the project (100,000 COP, approximately 32 CAD at the time of the research).

As a result of this process, 18 Colombian young adults agreed to participate in this study. Participants were 21 years old on average. In an open-ended question (Appendix C), twelve participants self-identified as women and six identified as self-identified men. They came from
seven different universities—Universidad EAFIT (private), Universidad Católica Luis Amigo (private), Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana (private), Universidad de Antioquia (public), Escuela de Ingenieros de Antioquia (private), Universidad Nacional de Colombia (public), and Universidad de Medellín (private)—and six different academic programs (Communication, Psychology, Engineering, Architecture, Law, and Political Science). Details of the participants can be found in Table 1 (below), along with the pseudonyms I provided to each participant to ensure their anonymity across the study. Across the study, pseudonyms will be provided in parenthesis—e.g., (Esteban)—when not directly included in the text.
Table 1: Detail of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Preferred platform</th>
<th>Av. Daily time on social media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>Between 3 and 4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook</td>
<td>Between 3 and 4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luisa</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook</td>
<td>Between 4 and 6 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuela</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Instagram and WhatsApp</td>
<td>Between 3 and 4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcela</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>Between 3 and 4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liliana</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Facebook, Instagram</td>
<td>Between 3 and 4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernesto</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>Between 3 and 4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valeria</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>Less than 3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok</td>
<td>Between 3 and 4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veronica</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok</td>
<td>Between 3 and 4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Political science</td>
<td>Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook</td>
<td>Between 3 and 4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arturo</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>Between 3 and 4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudonym</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Preferred platform</td>
<td>Av. Daily time on social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>Between 4 and 6 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandro</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube</td>
<td>Less than 3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Law / psychology</td>
<td>Instagram and WhatsApp</td>
<td>Between 3 and 4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobias</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Less than 3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Social work</td>
<td>WhatsApp and Instagram</td>
<td>More than 6 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>Between 3 and 4 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This study did not focus on a single social media platform—but rather on the platforms participants used routinely. As I have noted previously (Morales, 2023), studies concerning violence and social media in Colombia tend to focus on specific platforms such as Facebook and Twitter due to the ease of accessing and analyzing data. This focus results in the omission of platforms central to the lives of many young adults in the country. In this sense, the idea is to avoid understanding specific social media sites as unified objects of inquiry by foregrounding how participants experience violence across the multiple platforms that mediate their lives (Gómez Cruz, 2022). This pluralization of understanding of platforms, Matassi and Boczkowski (2023) note, acts “as an epistemic antidote to the deterministic tendencies that have dominated academic and popular discourses on social media in recent years” (p. 84).

Certainly, not all social media platforms are equally present in Colombian lives, nor do they play similar roles in how they experience and make sense of violence. The best example here is the platform WhatsApp, which is the most commonly used social media site in the country (Kemp, 2023b). Unlike other countries in the Global North, WhatsApp can be seen as a technology of life in Colombia, as it mediates almost all aspects of the social life of people in the country (Gómez Cruz & Harindranath, 2020). For instance, Colombians commonly use WhatsApp to inform themselves of what is happening in their communities (Sierra Gutiérrez, 2021) and to connect with groups of people who think like them (Scherman et al., 2022). The critical role of WhatsApp can be best exemplified by what happened in the 2021 social mobilizations, where the platform quickly became a space to find resources and communicate with others about their safety (M. E. I. Melo et al., 2021). Similar to WhatsApp, other platforms
such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have localized and nuanced uses among Colombian young people.

In this context, participants mentioned using various platforms in their everyday lives. As shown in Figure 1 (below), participants reported using platforms such as WhatsApp (18), Instagram (17), Facebook (14), YouTube (14), Twitter (11), TikTok (10), Snapchat (5) and LinkedIn (1). However, while they noted that they engage with those multiple platforms at different times in their daily routines, they did not use them all frequently. In this regard, when asked about the platforms they most frequently use, 16 of them responded that they regularly use Instagram, followed by WhatsApp (7), Facebook (4), and Twitter (4). Overall, most participants (12) reported that they spent between three and four hours using social media every day, with three participants saying that they used social media less than three hours and three for more than four hours.

![Figure 1. Platforms used by participants.](image-url)
Concerning participants’ opinions on violence on digital platforms, they perceived social media as places with high levels of toxicity. When asked to rate from 0 to 10 how much violence they think there is on social media (0 being *there is no violence on social media* and 10 being *violence is everywhere on social media*), their average response was 7.7—emphasizing their views that social media are frequently places filled with violent behaviours. Justifying her response, Manuela (who responded 10 out of 10) argued that “people constantly insult each other through social media, almost endless chains of falsehoods are set up and we all end up living there and getting involved in this harmful lifestyle.”5 Even Arturo, who provided the lowest response to this question among all participants (answering 4 of 10), argued that “There are often comments on vulnerable groups, violence against women and justification for certain terrorist attacks.”6 These responses emphasize a generalized view among participants that violence is a prevalent element of violence on digital platforms.

Nevertheless, whether the violence prevalent on social media has critical consequences for their context is less clear among participants. As shown in Figure 2 (below), three participants disagreed or somewhat disagreed with the statement “Social media plays an important role in creating a culture of peace in Colombia.” Here, a participant who disagreed with the statement argued that “social media reflects a little of who we are”7 (Valeria). Most

5 Original text: “Personas constantemente se insultan por redes, se arman cadenas casi interminables de falsedades y todos acabamos por habitar ahí e involucrarnos en este estilo de vida nocivo”
6 Original text: “Suele haber comentarios sobre grupos vulnerables, violencia en contra de la mujer y apología a ciertos ataques terroristas”
7 Original text: “Las redes sociales de alguna manera reflejan un poco de lo que somos y a veces se vuelven un caparazón”
participants (10) somewhat agreed with the statement, noting that “peace in Colombia does not lie 100% in social media” (Irene). Another participant—who argued that they somewhat agreed with the statement—said they did so “because the media can help to promote this healthy coexistence in social networks as well as in the physical world.” (Maria).

![Bar Chart]

Figure 2. Summary of responses to the question “To what extent do you agree with the following statement: ‘Social media play an important role in the creation of a culture of peace in Colombia.’”

2.2 Procedure and group discussion design

Due to COVID-19 international travel restrictions that were in place at the time of the implementation of this research project, this dissertation was conducted relying on online tools and platforms. As noted by Hall and colleagues (2021), while the use of remote technologies in research had considerable advantages (such as safety for participants and ease of data collection), it also presents serious ethical complications, including a lack of equal opportunity for

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8 Original text: “La paz en Colombia no radica al 100% en las redes sociales”
9 Original text: “Porque los medios de comunicación pueden ayudar a promover espacios de sana convivencia tanto en redes sociales como en el mundo físico.”
participation due to uneven access to technology, potential data security breaches, and the difficulty of establishing and sustaining social relationships at a distance. These issues—both the benefits and complications—were taken into consideration in the design and implementation of this study.

The design of this project draws from transformative learning, an adult learning theory that focuses on the processes by which learners’ frames of reference are transformed. In transformative learning, frames of reference are understood to be “the structures of culture and language through which we construe meaning by attributing coherence and significance to our experience” (Mezirow, 2006, p. 92). To achieve transformative learning, Taylor (2009) outlines six necessary components: 1) individual experience, where learners bring their lived experiences into the learning process; 2) critical reflection, where learners question their assumptions and beliefs; 3) dialogue, where learners engage in reflections with others; 4) holistic orientation, where other ways of knowing (especially relational and affective) are encouraged; 5) awareness of context, where socio-cultural factors are included in the learning process; and 6) authentic relation, where positive connections are fostered between all involved in the learning process. The methodological and pedagogical process of this study draws on these six core elements in a recursive process through which we (both participants and I) continually reflected on our past engagements and discussions around social media violence (Moström Åberg, 2022).

To follow this process, participants were organized into groups of three or four, forming five discussion groups to reflect on social media violence. Each group met four times over Zoom, with each session lasting between 40 minutes and one hour. In each session, participants were first asked to share and discuss the violence they experienced in the past week. After each
person shared their experiences, they were invited to reflect on the other participants’ experiences, how they felt, or how they thought their experiences affected them or their communities (to name a few examples). These meetings were recorded with Zoom and transcribed by the author using Online Microsoft Office Word transcription services. Additionally, between the four sessions, each discussion group participated in a WhatsApp chat where they were invited to share and discuss violence as they encountered it in their everyday experiences. Finally, participants completed two surveys at the beginning and end of their involvement in this research project, which spanned four weeks. Figure 3 (below) summarizes the procedure followed in this study.

![Figure 3. Summary of the methodological and pedagogical process with participants](image)

The discussions with participants were planned to be open and directed by the flow and content of the conversations. However, when this did not happen naturally, I motivated the discussion with prompting questions (Appendix E), such as “How does the violence you are describing made you feel?” or “How do you all think this affects the country?” In this sense, I position myself as both a researcher who seeks to explore a question with participants and a pedagogical process leader who aims to encourage critical reflection among participants.
These two roles were deeply intertwined in my interactions with the participants, and they are impossible to differentiate across the analysis of this study.

My overall intention during the discussions was to avoid the imposition of a universalistic definition of what violence is and how to address it with participants, because I feel that this in itself can be a form of epistemic violence. Indeed, Gur-Ze’ev (2001) noted how peace education efforts have been used to impose narrow definitions of peace that constrain reflection, resistance, and transcendence. Scholars such as Kennel (2023) have noted the impossibility—or at least, the undesirability—of strictly defining violence, arguing instead that it is “something that inheres within and follows from how we think the world is (ontology), how we speak about the world (language), and how we hold our knowledge of this world (epistemology)” (p. 191). In this context, my goal was to generate collaborative scenarios to critically reflect on peace and violence (Kester & Cremin, 2017), eliciting participants’ own definitions and examples.

2.3 Data sources

To respond to the objectives of this study, I collected and analyzed data from three sources. The first data source was the WhatsApp chats of each group, which included either a link to or a description of the identified social media violence, their reflections on the posts, and the subsequent discussions that arose from them. The chats from each WhatsApp group were exported and formatted to be analyzed. Messages in this group included reports of violence they experienced on social media platforms (e.g., “In the comments there are homophobic opinions
and other opinions that attack the performance itself, but without justification”10 [Maria]), reactions to violence on social media (e.g., “I think it's the worst thing that they disseminate [the video]. This is a very clear example of violence and misuse of social media”11 [Mia]), and messages focused on the logistic organization of the synchronous meetings (e.g., “I'm just on my way home 😊 lots of work today. I don't know if I'll make it to the 9 o'clock meeting”12 [Sofia]). Table 2 (below) summarizes the number of WhatsApp messages in each group (totalling 850 messages) and the members of each group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Members (pseudonyms)</th>
<th># of WhatsApp messages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>Mia, Melissa, Ernesto, and Luisa</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>Arturo, Tobias, and Carlos</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>Manuela, Sofia, and Valeria</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>Marcela, Mercedes, Alejandro, and Samuel</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 5</td>
<td>Maria, Irene, Liliana, and Ernesto</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>850</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Original text: “En los comentarios hay opiniones homofóbicas y otras opiniones que atacan a la obra en sí, pero sin justificación”
11 Original text: “Me parece el colmo que lo difundan. Esa es una muestra muy clara de violencia y del mal uso de las redes.”
12 Original text: “Apenas voy en camino a la casa 😊 mucho trabajo hoy no se si logré llegar a las 9 en punto”
The second data source was the discussions from the four meetings, which were recorded and transcribed to be analyzed. These meetings—which lasted from 40 to 60 minutes—were recorded on the videoconferencing platform Zoom. As noted in Table 3 (below), the transcription of the synchronous discussions resulted in 237 pages of double-spaced text, totalling 82,868 words.

Table 3. Summary of transcripts from synchronous meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>12,244</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>17,963</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>18,256</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>14,375</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 5</td>
<td>20,030</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82,868</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final data source was participant responses to two surveys that individuals completed before and after the four meetings. By relying on survey methods, the goal was to “find out specific characteristics of a well-defined group” (Berends, 2006, p. 624), providing both quantitative and qualitative insights to this study. These surveys are my original design, modelled on surveys developed in other studies of transformative learning (Hoggan, 2016a). The initial survey (Appendix C) collected demographic data on the participants, as well as information about their social media use and their views on social media violence. The exit
survey (Appendix D) collected information on participants’ learning experiences, their views on social media violence, and their participation in the project.

The description of how each data source was used to answer the three research objectives of this study—summarized in Figure 4 (below)—will be discussed in more detail in each chapter.

**Figure 4. Data sources used to respond to each research objective.**
2.4 Data analysis

I relied on thematic analysis to analyze data in this study: a methodological approach that has been productively used to investigate experiences of social media violence in multiple studies (Dickel & Evolvi, 2023; Stubbs et al., 2022). In brief, thematic analysis aims to examine qualitative data by gradually developing and refining segments of data into coherent groups (Riger & Sigurvinisdottir, 2015). Although similar to other qualitative data approaches (such as content analysis, grounded theory, discourse analysis, or narrative analysis), thematic analysis differentiates itself by its methodological flexibility that is bound to the theoretical assumptions of each study (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Herzog et al., 2019).

In their extensive reviews of thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2012, 2019, 2022) have identified three different traditional approaches shaping usage of this method. One approach, the coding reliability approach, employs thematic analysis as a bridge between qualitative and quantitative research traditions as it focuses on turning qualitative readings of data into quantifiable information. This tradition, grounded in (post)positivist philosophies, aims to build “a singular, shared, and ‘correct’ analysis of the data” (Braun et al., 2018, p. 5). A second approach, the codebook thematic analysis approach, replicates the strict procedures of the coding reliability approach without any quantification of data. Finally, the reflexive thematic analysis approach centres researchers’ subjectivity, the research questions, and the theoretical assumptions in the process of generating themes. In the words of Braun and Clarke, a reflexive view of thematic analysis sees “qualitative research as creative, reflexive and subjective, with researcher subjectivity understood as a resource” (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 591). The latter approach—reflexive thematic analysis—has guided the data analysis process of this dissertation.
In this context, I see thematic analysis as a way to create and identify “creative and interpretive stories about the data, produced at the intersection of the researcher’s theoretical assumptions, their analytic resources and skill, and the data themselves” (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 594). To conduct thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2019; 2012) outline six necessary steps, although they are not necessarily to be followed sequentially. These six steps—which guide the analysis of this dissertation—are:

1. Familiarizing oneself with the data, where the goal is for the researcher to see the available sources of information as data.
2. Generating initial codes, where the objective is to organize available data into meaningful groups.
3. Searching for themes, where the researcher reviews all the data and codes, creating relevant themes and sub-themes that showcase patterns of shared meaning.
4. Reviewing themes, where the researcher organizes and distributes the initial themes and sub-themes into final themes which more accurately represent the data.
5. Defining and naming themes, where each final theme and sub-theme is defined and named.
6. Producing the report, where the researcher builds a narrative that ties together the arguments put forward across the themes and sub-themes.

I approach these six steps towards thematic analysis in different ways across chapters 4, 5, and 6, depending on its theoretical assumptions, research questions, and available data. Accordingly, in each chapter I will describe how this iterative and creative process was
undertaken—in some cases, a data-driven approach, and in other cases, a theory-driven approach. Across all chapters I relied on NVivo 12 to code and organize the thematic analysis.

I have also given attention to the trustworthiness of the analysis presented in the following chapters. As noted previously, a central tenet of reflexive thematic analysis is the recognition of the researcher's subjectivity in creating, shaping, and connecting the themes. Indeed, the themes present across the various chapters of this dissertation did not emerge out of nothing, but they are rather the result of my engagement in a creative and iterative process of creating themes with the data and the research questions that underlie this study. Unlike the coding reliability or the codebook approaches that measure trustworthiness by consensus or inter-coder reliability, thematic analysis requires trustworthiness to be measured differently.

As a response to this scenario, Nowell and colleagues (2017)—drawing from the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985)—outline four essential components to establish trustworthiness in thematic analysis: 1) Credibility, referring to the process whereby themes are recognizable by readers; 2) Transferability, referring to the process where insights from the study might be applicable (or not) to other cases; 3) Dependability, referring to the reliability of the process of the research; and, finally, 4) Confirmability, which refers to the process where readers can see that “researcher’s interpretations and findings are clearly derived from the data” (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 3).

Following the work of qualitative scholars (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Nowell et al., 2017), I made use of several strategies with the goal of achieving trustworthiness in my thematic analysis. First, themes were created when an experience was mentioned by more than one participant, affording a triangulation of data to corroborate the experience. Second, I provided thick
descriptions of each theme alongside examples derived from participants’ experiences, aiming to ensure that future researchers can evaluate its transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Third, I outline the analytical decisions made in each chapter, allowing readers to judge the dependability of the research. Moreover, these processes to achieve trustworthiness were supported by a constant effort to write memos, creating a record of my decisions across the whole data collection and analysis process— as recommended by various qualitative scholars (Herzog et al., 2019; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Finally, critical attention to the ethical considerations that are at play when collecting and analyzing data is central to reflexive thematic analysis (Herzog et al., 2019). To conduct this research, I obtained approval from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board in The University of British Columbia’s Office of Research Ethics. Research ethics guidelines often suggest that public social media posts (i.e., material accessible without passwords) can be included in a study without consent. However, organizations such as the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) have previously noted that this is not enough to ensure an ethical approach to collecting and analyzing social media content, as expectations of privacy and safety in these platforms go beyond password-protected content (franze et al., 2020; Markham & Buchanan, 2012). Indeed, ethical decision-making as an internet researcher involves constantly adapting “to their subjects’ ever-changing nature, while recognizing a common set [of] starting principles and guidelines” (Locatelli et al., 2023, p. 135).

To attend to concerns regarding privacy and safety, this study takes a contextual and dialectical approach to ethics in internet research. Participants were asked to constantly and iteratively consider whether what they were sharing should be disclosed to the group. For
instance, they were asked not to share posts that contained information not available in the public domain—such as screenshots of messages from their friends or pictures of their family. To complement this screening process, at the end of the data collection process, I analyzed case by case whether the social media posts that participants shared were to be included in the study. In this process, I deleted posts that provided personal and identifiable information from the data collected in this study.

2.5 Translation

Latin American scholars such as de Casanova and Mose (2017) have noted the importance of engaging in linguistic reflexivity as researchers conduct research that involves translation processes. They argue that “in translating into a language of privilege, in representing the speech of the other” (p. 16), researchers materialize power dynamics. Indeed, the act of translation is an act embedded in relations of power, bound by social, historical, cultural, epistemological, and ontological elements (Bochmann, 2022). Accordingly, I aim to make my contribution as a translator visible, avoiding the assumption that I am “an objective instrument of research” (Temple & Young, 2004, p. 163). In this section, I aim to be explicit in my role of transforming participants’ voices from Spanish into English.

Because Spanish is my first language and the first language of my participants, all processes of data collection and analysis in this study were conducted in Spanish. Moreover, I conducted the analysis of all data in Spanish. The objective of analyzing the data in its original language is to ensure that the meaning intended by participants was not accidentally modified
through translation. Indeed, collecting and analyzing data in participants' original language helps maintain the conceptual equivalence of their testimonies (Squires, 2009).

It is important to note, however, that there were nuances in the use of Spanish across the study. For instance, while all participants were living in Medellin at the moment of this study, they had various accents—some of them came from coastal cities or other regions in the country. Additionally, there were various linguistic markers of different socio-economic levels across participants, coherent with their various backgrounds. These challenges emphasize what cross-language qualitative scholars have long noted: transcription is translation (Roth, 2013). In these cases, my sociocultural positioning as an insider to the Colombian context was an advantage. I was familiar with all the various accents and dialects—as is typical for many who grew up in Medellin. In this case, my dual role as researcher/translator afforded by studying a familiar context strengthened this work, as it allowed me to better deal with issues of meaning equivalence through my fluency with the cross-cultural meanings and interpretations present across the research process (Temple & Young, 2004).

As a result, only the selected data examples included in chapters of this dissertation were translated into English. Translation of these participant quotations took place only after the analysis stage, and during preparation of this document. In translating these exemplars, I aimed to preserve participants’ intended meaning (Munday, 2016). In this sense, I did not aim to create formal equivalence throughout my translations, mapping word by word from Spanish to English. Rather—and recognizing that all translations are somewhat incomplete as they showcase the impossibility of completely ‘carrying’ meaning from one language to the other (Roth, 2013)—I aim to achieve functional equivalency, striving to capture the overall meaning of the text.
translating from Spanish to effective English, similar to the approach of Afreen (2023) in translating participants' Bangla utterances to English.

To achieve this translation process, I relied not only on my linguistic knowledge of both Spanish and English, but also on my sociocultural knowledge of the place where participants were speaking. For example, when Arturo argued “Los gota a gota ahora se han ido a un tipo aplicación en Facebook,” I knew that gota a gota in Medellin refers to a type of informal lender, and I knew that, in the context of everyday language use in Medellin, the expression “se han ido,” when referring to digital platforms could be better translated as they now use. In this context, I translated Arturo’s quote as “Informal lenders now use a type of application on Facebook.”

All the original quotes in Spanish are provided in the footnotes across the different chapters of this study in order to establish the trustworthiness of my translations (as described in section 2.4). By providing these quotes in Spanish, I aim to provide information to allow readers to evaluate the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the translation process throughout the research process.
Chapter 3: Ecologies of violence on social media: An exploration of practices, contexts, and grammars of online harm

Even as violence is a concept that has long accompanied humanity, it is no easy task to make sense of what it is or how it is exercised. Certainly, defining violence always involves framing it in cultural and historical contexts (Dwyer, 2017), recognizing that “what violence means is and will always be fluid, not fixed; it is mutable” (Stanko, 2005, p. 3, emphasis in original). And as digital technologies—such as social media platforms—become increasingly central to our daily existence (Gómez Cruz, 2022; Lagerkvist, 2018), they have become essential components in how violence is enacted and experienced. An illustration of the pervasiveness of violence on social media can be found easily in emergent terminology to describe quotidian manifestations of harm on digital platforms, such as cyberbullying, online hate speech, and trolling.

Indeed, as access to and use of social media continue to expand across the world (Kemp, 2023a), the violence enacted through these digital platforms becomes more common. For example, a report published by the Pew Research Centre (Vogels, 2021) found that over 41% of people in the United States of America have suffered online harassment, from physical threats (14%) and sexual harassment (11%) to name-calling (31%). On a global scale, a survey of over 16,000 online users in 14 countries conducted by Microsoft (2023) found that a high number of users have experienced different forms of online violence over the last year, such as online hate

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https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231196882
speech (35%), cyberbullying, harassment, or abuse (20%), and threats of physical violence (16%). But violence in digital environments is not only expanding, it is also becoming more complex as the evolving affordances, structures, and cultures of contemporary digital environments increase its scale, speed, reach, and visibility (Backe et al., 2018). For instance, violence on social media is found in the new ways cultural and informational wars are enacted and deployed in the United States:

In these wars, the weapons were memes, slogans, ideas; the tactics were internet-enabled threats like swarms, doxes, brigades, disinformation, and media-manipulation campaigns; and the strategy of the warriors was to move their influence from the wires (the internet) to the weeds (the real world) by trading fringe ideas up the partisan media ecosystem and into mainstream culture. (Donovan et al., 2022, pp. 14–15)

While violence on social media is most often discussed in countries of the Global North (Backe et al., 2018; Schoenebeck, Batool, et al., 2023), attention to this subject in other parts of the world continues to grow, including in Latin America (e.g., Anaya et al., 2022; FLIP, 2023). In Colombia, the setting of this study, the end of an internal armed conflict in 2018 and the possibility of entering a new age of violence (Gutiérrez-Sanín, 2020) provide great significance to efforts to understand how social media enacts, represents, and transforms violence—especially concerning political and armed violence (García Perdomo, 2020; Parra Gregory, 2015). These efforts are increasingly relevant, as noted by Parra Mendez et al. (2021), who argue that violence in Colombia has migrated to social media environments and the internet, often translating violent practices and antagonistic relationships to these digital spaces. Colombia’s case illustrates that,
while violence on social media is a global phenomenon, its impacts and manifestations are intertwined with particular socio-political and cultural contexts.

In the context of the growing complexity, severity, and ubiquity of violence on social media, scholars and civic organizations across multiple disciplines have urged researchers, educators, policymakers, and users to treat digital violence as a severe threat; an integral component in the continuum of violence (Dunn, 2021) that is deeply interconnected to other forms and manifestations of violence (Wilkins et al., 2014). To properly address the increasing complexity of violence on digital platforms, however, it is critical to first understand what we mean when we talk about social media violence. In this context, the goal of this chapter is focused on understanding what violence Colombian young adult experience on social media, as it is in the quotidian encounters with violence where we can better reflect on its features, movements, and impacts (Reguillo, 2023). If, as Postman (1998) noted, “a new medium does not add anything, it changes everything” (para. 18), this study responds to the critical and timely necessity to provide further insights into the ways digital technologies transform how violence is enacted, represented, and experienced by users of these platforms.

This chapter draws from media ecology, an intellectual tradition that sees media as environments comprising a complex set of relationships between media, symbols, and culture (Strate, 2017). While over 60 years old, this tradition offers critical insights into contemporary media environments, as it emphasizes how digital platforms create environments that transform how we connect to one another and the world (Laskowska & Marcyński, 2019). Two key aspects of media ecology are central to this study. First, the notion that social media, like any other media, is a “complex and multidimensional interaction between people, their media, and other
social forces” (Lum, 2014, p. 137). Studying social media through the lens of media ecology foregrounds digital platforms as intertwined with the cultures, agencies, and structures which are involved in the communicative process, which is a central tenet throughout this study. Second, media ecology is often approached through the lens of communicative biases, which stress that “media do not determine our actions, but they define the range of possible actions we can take, and facilitate certain actions while discouraging others” (Strate, 2008, p. 135). Using this lens emphasizes that digital platforms are not neutral, rather they are built on a set of physical, technical, symbolic, and environmental characteristics that encourage users to engage with violence in specific ways.

3.1 Literature review: Violence and social media platforms

Violence—understood as direct, cultural, or structural harm targeted toward specific individuals or communities (Galtung & Fischer, 2013)—is no longer at the margins of the web. It is a widespread phenomenon that directly or indirectly affects many aspects of our lives. Nonetheless, digital manifestations of violence are often thought to be less ‘real,’ ‘serious,’ or ‘harmful’ than those enacted face-to-face (Dunn, 2021). Indeed, they are often framed under digital dualism, where the virtual and the real are separated, diminishing the significance of online violence and causing victims to constantly need to restate that this type of violence matters (Gosse, 2021). But boundaries between offline and online violence are artificial and blurred, rendering such old dichotomies futile. Illustrations of complex interactions between online and offline realities around violence abound. For example, Coombs (2021) argues that digital manifestations of violence directly impact various human rights, such as the “rights to
privacy, freedom of movement, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly to name a few, as well as rights relating to freedom from violence” (p. 480). In this context, and as argued by Dunn (2021), to name digital violence as violence is an urgent and necessary task, because “to do otherwise risks minimizing the severity of these actions and fails to recognize their interconnectedness with other more familiar forms of violence” (p. 28).

Nevertheless, identifying online violence as violence is not enough. To examine its relevance and reach, it is critical to connect the concept to societal issues in the social, political, and cultural contexts in which the acts of online violence are enacted or take place. For example, various studies have explored digital violence associated with issues such as gendered violence (Jane, 2018; Phipps et al., 2018), racism (Matamoros-Fernández et al., 2022; Williams et al., 2019), street fights (Wood, 2017), criminal gangs (Densley, 2020), and even terrorism (Tait, 2008; Tambuscio & Tschiggerl, 2023). These examples foreground violence on digital platforms as strongly intertwined with the power struggles taking place in the context in which they occur. And social media do not merely present old forms of violence in new ways, they also transform them in profound and complex ways. For instance, and as with most content posted on digital platforms, violence in social media is more visible, spreadable, searchable, and persistent than in most other mediums (boyd, 2014). Such prevalence of harmful content on digital platforms can also naturalize violence by reinforcing discourses that expand and normalize existing structures of oppression (Kramscht, 2020; Recuero, 2015).

To understand the urgency and complexity of framing online violence, three areas of literature at the intersection of social media and violence scholarship are especially relevant:
studies that discuss the violence that is enacted on platforms, studies that discuss the violence that is represented through platforms, and studies that discuss how platforms enact violence.

The first relevant area of scholarship refers to violence enacted on social media. This line of scholarship has explored how, since the advent of computer-mediated communication, the affordances of digital technologies have been used to enact violence on others (Jane, 2015; Moor et al., 2010). Insights in this line of research show that violence is often facilitated by the fact that victims and perpetrators do not have to have a face-to-face encounter (Dragiewicz et al., 2018). Additionally, research emphasizes that violence on social media is often perceived as innocuous because it is disguised as humor (Matamoros-Fernández et al., 2022). In this area of research, the expansion of violence enacted on social media has been studied from both disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. Indeed, the variety of ways in which violence is approached has led to numerous terms to frame it, such as technology-facilitated violence and abuse (Dunn, 2021), e-bile (Jane, 2014), flaming (Moor et al., 2010), cyberhate (Jane, 2018), trolling (Jakubowicz, 2017), cyberbullying (Whittaker & Kowalski, 2015), and online hate speech (Schmid et al., 2022). While overlapping in many aspects, these terms have distinct epistemological, axiological, methodological, and ontological differences that enrich (and complicate) discussions and insights into online harms.

The second area of research is concerned with how violence is represented through social media platforms, often studied in fields such as journalism (Mengü & Mengü, 2015), psychology (Stubbs et al., 2022), and criminology (Wood, 2017). In this line of scholarship, the focus is often on how digital technologies enable the expansion of violent content over time and scale “circulat[ing] images of atrocity in real time, allowing a global audience to see acts of terror as
they unfold” (Duncombe, 2020, p. 627). As such, this area of research emphasizes how social media transforms the representation of violence and war under the new dynamics of media (Reguillo, 2011, 2023; Tait, 2008). Furthermore, literature in this area of research has shown that people who are more exposed to violence on social media have complex reactions to it, including being distressed, in need of self-care time, appreciative of their lives, desensitized, or just indifferent to it (Stubbs et al., 2022). Indeed, scholarship in this area highlights the importance of studying violence through different lenses of interpretation, as understanding the various modes of violence afforded by the internet enables researchers and policymakers to better respond to potential harms on digital platforms (Tait, 2008).

Finally, a third relevant line of scholarship examines how social media companies and infrastructures sustain and expand violence. Literature in this area explores how digital platforms exercise and expand violence as they accumulate and wield power in contemporary societies (van Dijck et al., 2019). Relevant research in this area can be organized into two categories. First, there is the research that examines how platforms enact violence inside their digital ecosystems. For instance, studies on how specific populations are deplatformed (Blunt et al., 2021), how violent content is magnified through recommendation systems (e.g., Wood, 2017), how automated accounts are created to amplify and redirect hateful speech (Uyheng et al., 2022), or how specific affordances reinforce racial and gendered violence (Yee et al., 2021). Second, there is research focused on how platforms perpetuate violence outside their digital environments, as shown by studies that explore algorithmic violence, referring to the processes by which “an algorithm or automated decision-making system inflicts [violence] by preventing people from meeting their basic needs” (Onuoha, 2018, para. 2). Algorithmic violence is
evidenced in Latin America by workers who are constantly surveilled by platforms or migrants who are unable to access essential financial services due to algorithmic filtering (Barreneche et al., 2021; Morales & Reilly, 2023). Additionally, studies have also shown how social media companies sustain and expand extractivist practices—whether in the form of natural resources to sustain the necessary infrastructures of social media companies (Crawford, 2021) or in the form of the commodification of social relations (Couldry & Mejias, 2019). Indeed, as social media platforms increasingly engage in processes of datafication, algorithmization, and automation, they “contribute to the deepening of global inequality, materializing multiple forms of violence that are rendered invisible” (Ricaurte, 2022, p. 2), exercising physical, economic, social, and cultural violence.

To draw connections between these three areas of literature, in this study I foreground an ecological view of violence on social media by focusing on the various ways violence shapes and is shaped by digital platforms. Following an ecological reading, specific manifestations of violence are seen as being intertwined with other manifestations of harm, sociocultural contexts, and structures of power—thus connecting literature on how violence is enacted, represented, and sustained by platforms. Indeed, an ecological approach emphasizes that violence is enacted within complex systems that are imbricated and constantly changing—it takes place within practices, structures, and cultures that exist within and outside the digital environment. Accordingly, this study aims to further expand and explore what it means to focus on the contemporary ecologies of violence on social media.
3.2 Research methods

To respond to the objective of this chapter, I investigate participants’ experiences when they engage with digital platforms. More specifically, in this chapter I focus on the instances of violence that participants identified and shared during the project. To achieve this, I have drawn on three sources of data. The first source of data is the instances of violence shared over the WhatsApp groups. The second source of data is the instances of violence shared during synchronous meetings. Finally, the third source are the participants’ responses to initial and exit surveys—especially focused on the question “provide an example of social media violence.”

I relied on thematic analysis to explore and organize the data in this chapter, as I noted in section 2.4. In this chapter, I prioritize a data-driven approach to analysis, whereby I inductively explore participants’ experiences with violence on social media. Accordingly, I first familiarized myself with the data that resulted from participants’ experiences concerning social media violence. Second, I generated an initial set of codes by using a semantic method—seeking to categorize participants’ intended meanings (Braun et al., 2019). Codes at this stage comprised groupings of recurrent ideas across the data, such as insults, videos of war, trolls, influencers, local violence, international violence, Facebook, or Twitter. Next, I developed and reviewed a series of themes that harnessed the varied codes present across the data.

To further develop the themes into their final iteration, I incorporated insights from the theoretical lens of this dissertation —namely, media ecology (Strate, 2017)—as well as authors whose work is directly tied to the topic at hand—namely, contexts of social media use (Berger, 2022) and grammars of violence (Reguillo, 2013). Through this iterative process of revisiting the data alongside the theory that informs this study, I developed a systematic set of guidelines for
analyzing qualitative data—as shown in Table 4 (below). All these themes and sub-themes were organized and named into coherent stories that addressed the objectives of this research in the following sections.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (original)</th>
<th>Theme (translation)</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Sub-theme (original)</th>
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<td><strong>Prácticas de violencia</strong></td>
<td>Practices of violence</td>
<td>Ways in which violence is exercised in and through digital platforms</td>
<td>Realización</td>
<td>Enactment</td>
<td>Acts of violence within social media platforms</td>
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<td>Contexts of violence</td>
<td>Settings of creation, publication, and</td>
<td>Actores y redes</td>
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<td>Gramáticas de la violencia</td>
<td>Interpretation of violence.</td>
<td>Culturas y estructuras</td>
<td>Cultures and structures</td>
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3.3 Results: Understanding the ecologies of violence on social media

According to the study participants, violence is a common occurrence on social media. For example, Sofia argued that “we are exposed to social media violence just by being there.”\(^{14}\)

This apparent ubiquity of violence is perceived across a wide range of manifestations, sources, and contexts. Indeed, data shows that violence can take many forms—an insult on Facebook from a neighbour, a video of a traffic accident shared on Instagram, a comment on TikTok ridiculing your clothes, a reply on Twitter harassing your friend due to their gender, a sticker on WhatsApp ridiculing a classmate, or a sex tape leaked on Telegram. In this sense, participants recognized that violence on social media manifests in response to a variety of factors such as age, gender, body morphology, sexual preference, race, nationality, or social class. Moreover, beyond noting that violence on social media “can be viewed and caused at any time”\(^{15}\) (Marcela) participants highlighted how it is “the extension of ‘common’ violence, moving everyday violence into a new space”\(^{16}\) (Samuel). In brief, results show that violence not only encompasses all social media platforms, it is also pervasive and polymorphic, deeply connected to the contexts in and beyond the digital environment.

When discussing how violence on social media differs from that enacted through other media, participants noted different aspects and affordances of digital environments. For example, participants noted the increased reach of harmful online behaviours, with Alejandro commenting that “social media is more violent because it has a much larger reach . . . I can easily reach

\(^{14}\) Original text: “Nosotros estamos expuestos a la violencia en redes solo con el hecho de estar ahí.”

\(^{15}\) Original text: “La violencia puede ser vista y causada en cualquier momento”

\(^{16}\) Original text: “La violencia en redes sociales es primero, la extensión de las violencias ´comunes´, o sea las violencias cotidianas en un nuevo espacio”
millions of people.” Additionally, participants discussed how the ease of creating content enables everybody to engage in harmful behaviours quickly, such as “the ease of expressing disagreement on any content we do not like” (Liliana). Participants also often discussed how anonymity can promote the creation of social media violence by stating, for example, that “social media allows us to hide behind a profile that let us to say anything… people who see this will not really know who is the one who has those thoughts” (Ernesto). Anonymity is also connected to the possibility of being violent at a distance without having to deal with the responsibilities that face-to-face interactions carry. As one participant pointed out, “not being physically close makes the aggressor feel the advantage of attacking without the need for the attacker to respond directly” (Samuel). Indeed, while violence on social media is connected to other manifestations of harm, these results stress that it is not the same as harm enacted through other means.

Accordingly, it is necessary to understand the particularities of violence as it is enacted on social media platforms—that is, the understand violence on social media by following an ecological approach.

Accordingly, to explore the components of violence under an ecological approach, I will now focus on three emergent themes from the analyzed data: practices, contexts, and grammars.

17 Original text: “Las redes sociales son más violentas porque tienen un alcance mucho mayor. ... Puedo llegar fácilmente a millones”
18 Original text: “La facilidad para expresar nuestro desacuerdo sobre cualquier contenido que no nos guste.”
19 Original text: “Las redes sociales nos permite a las personas escondernos detrás de un perfil que nos permite decir cualquier cosa y pues las personas que ven esto no van a saber realmente quién es que el que tiene esos pensamientos”
20 Original text: “El no estar físicamente cerca hace que el agresor sienta la ventaja o la posibilidad de agredir sin necesidad de que la persona que ataque responda de manera directa”
3.3.1 Practices of violence

Practices refer to how violence is exercised in and through digital platforms. This theme connects to practice theory, a theoretical approach focused on the importance of understanding what people are “doing in relation to media across a whole range of situations and contexts” (Couldry, 2004, p. 119 emphasis in original). Accordingly, practices of violence underscore the micro-level interactions through which people exercise and encounter violence on digital platforms. Here, participants observed that most of the violent acts they identified are enabled by the platforms’ affordances. These acts of violence often include personal attacks or threats of physical harm. For example, Ernesto told the story of how the comment feature had been used to insult a Colombian influencer on Instagram, observing that people were harassing her by talking about “her dress, that she was overweight, that she had had a terrible surgery, that she had a lot of money and wasted a lot of it, that she didn’t help other people.”

Participants also emphasized how the platforms are used to amplify the reach of violence taking place in offline settings. Their accounts demonstrate how violence that occurs in different contexts is then seen, commented on, and shared by multiple people. For example, Veronica shared how people were publishing and sharing videos of a massive brawl in a Mexican stadium, where several people died, pointing out that “very explicit videos are being shared on TikTok of what happened in the stadium in Mexico. It really shocks me.”

21 Original text: “Criticaban el vestido de ella, que ella estaba muy subida de peso, que le habían operado super mal, que ella tenía muchísima plata y que la desperdiciaba mucho, que por qué no ayudaba a casi a las otras personas. Eran así comentarios como que la atacaban mucho y pues me imagino que ella se debió sentir súper mal”

22 Original text: “Los videos tan explícitos que se están compartiendo en TikTok de lo que ocurrió en el estadio de México me impresiona mucho”
Furthermore, participants noted that violence can extend to reach beyond the digital sphere, illustrating the profound implications it can have outside platforms, even among those who infrequently engage with them. For example, Arturo told the following story:

Informal lenders now use a type of application on Facebook in which you register, and they make loans in 10 minutes . . . in 10 minutes, they send you the money. But they download your WhatsApp data and your contacts because you give the permissions when you download the application. Well, now they have your private information without you knowing so. And they start to threaten you and tell you that they know where you live and who your contacts are.23

Additionally, participants recounted cases of symbolic violence on digital platforms—violence that “naturalizes the discourse about things and legitimates the domination system” (Recuero, 2015, p. 1). An example of this kind of violence was provided by Valeria, who recounted how her family used a WhatsApp group to continually comment on how she was dressed or who she was going out with, arguing that “good women from this country do not do that.”24 Cases like this illustrate how social media platforms are used to naturalize discourses of domination and control—sustaining and expanding cultures of violence.

23 Original text: “Los gota a gota ahora se han ido a un tipo aplicación en Facebook en la cual tú te registras, la descargas desde la App Store o la Play Store, y te hacen como los préstamos en 10 minutos… En 10 minutos te envían el dinero. Pero se descargan tus datos de WhatsApp y tu número y tus contactos porque tú das los permisos al descargar la aplicación… Pues ellos comienzan a tener tu información privada sin que tú las hayas dado como tal, sin tener ese conocimiento y empiezan a pues sí amenazarte a decirte que saben dónde vives, que saben quiénes son tus contactos”
24 Original text: “Las mujeres buenas de este país no hacen eso.”
Finally, participants noted harmful acts being perpetrated by the platforms. In these instances, they pointed to different practices that they identified as violence, such as the collection and analysis of their personal data without their consent (e.g., “[platforms] pass on your data as they see fit. They own our data”\textsuperscript{25} [Alejandro]), the lack of transparency around algorithmic reordering of their timelines that filter what they see on their platforms (e.g., “other things will come up [in your timeline], little by little. Things that have nothing to do with what you want to see and that can be very violent”\textsuperscript{26} [Liliana]), or censoring without explanation (e.g., “there is a monopoly where [platforms] can say ‘you have the right to express your opinion and you do not.’ That can be a factor in generating violence”\textsuperscript{27} [Tobias]). These instances illustrate how platforms’ designs and policies enact, reproduce, and expand violence.

In this theme, I listed five ways in which violence is practiced on social media: it is enacted through it, amplified by its affordances, expanded beyond digital environments, enacted by platforms, and naturalized. These five types of practice do not occur in isolation. Indeed, as noted by Manuela, “many times, violence is formed from other violence.”\textsuperscript{28} This quote illustrates the importance of foregrounding an ecological understanding of violence on social media, showing how digital platforms have further complicated the nature of violence in contemporary societies.

\textsuperscript{25} Original text: “Ellos pueden pasar los datos de uno como se le venga en gana. Ellos son dueños de nuestros datos.”
\textsuperscript{26} Original text: “Otras cosas aparecen, poco a poco. Cosas que no tienen nada que ver con lo que quiero ver y que pueden ser muy violentas.”
\textsuperscript{27} Original text: “Hay un monopolio donde los pueden decir ‘tú tienes derecho a opinar y tú no por discurso incendiario’ Eso puede ser un factor de generación de violencia.”
\textsuperscript{28} Original text: “Muchas veces se forma la violencia a partir de otra violencia”
3.3.2 Contexts of violence

The second theme is contexts, which refers to the settings of creation, publication, and interpretation of violence. In this study, context is understood as a set of conditions (such as time, space, and culture) that locate us in relation to one another, helping us to make sense of the world (Berger, 2022). As such, contexts—a concept of significant interest to social media scholars (e.g., Davis & Jurgenson, 2014)—implies a surfacing of actors involved in the processes of creation, reception, and reproduction of violence, placing them in relation to their surroundings and rendering (in)visible the cultures and structures embedded in their environments.

A first component that participants identified regarding contexts is the various spatiotemporal settings from which violence emerges, ranging from international (e.g., the war between Russia and Ukraine), national (e.g., armed conflicts with the ELN in Colombia), local (e.g., fights between soccer fans), hyperlocal (e.g., transit accidents in their neighborhoods), or in their immediate surroundings (e.g., harassment from an ex-boyfriend through direct messages in Instagram) contexts. Here, participants noted that contexts of violence—whether near or far, present or past—are easily accessible through social media. For example, Valeria—who lives away from her family—said that platforms like WhatsApp allow family members to exercise violence against her: “My uncles are super macho. They have that culture super ingrained in
them, and they are always messaging me things like ‘you shouldn’t be like that’, ‘girls don’t do that,’ ‘girls don’t behave like that.’”

Additionally, participants identified a wide range of actors responsible for creating, sustaining, and reproducing violence in digital environments—such as politicians, friends, family members, sports fans, internet trolls, and influencers. Nevertheless, while these actors are seen as most commonly responsible for harassment on digital platforms, participants noted that it is hard to assign them full responsibility for online violence. As such, participants recognized the presence of networked power across the digital platforms they frequently use (Castells, 2011), where interconnected actors sustain and expand enactments of violence. For instance, participants noted how some users repost hateful comments on Twitter or how family members share videos of traffic accidents over WhatsApp. Certainly, due to the presence of these networks of power, participants said that almost all social media users are responsible for the enactment and replication of violence. Indeed, they argued that “we are all responsible for social media violence”30 [Melissa] and “we are all accomplices”31 (Irene).

Moreover, participants also noted various contextual cultural and structural manifestations of violence—evidenced in manifestation of violence related to gender or race. Here, each cultural and structural manifestation of violence changes their visibility on social media. In some cases, forms of cultural and structural violence such as racism, xenophobia, and gender violence are rendered more visible on digital platforms. For example, Arturo described

29 Original text: “Mis tíos son super machistas. Tiene esa cultura super arraigada en ellos, y siempre esta eso de ‘no debería ser así,’ ‘las niñas no hacen eso,’ ‘las niñas no se comportan así.’”
30 Original text: “Todos somos responsables de la violencia en las redes sociales”
31 Original text: “Todos somos cómplices.”
how he felt when he saw a trend where women posted on Instagram a screenshot of their name plus the word “found” in the Google search engine. This trend is meant to show how many women disappear every day in Latin America:

I’ve seen this trend about ten times today, and I always think that there will be just two results. But then it turns out that they fill the whole page, and they are all different news about Daniela: “Daniela found in Bello,” “Daniela found in Cauca,” “Daniela found in Ecuador.” It is hard to assimilate how many times this kind of violence happens… in the end I understand that it is about something very systematic.32

In other cases, however, contexts are rendered opaque and less visible. For instance, Irene noted how the prevalence of violence in digital environments often leads to its normalization: “You don’t even realize how there are so many violent things on the internet, so many things.”33 This observation emphasizes how the ubiquity of harmful comments and content can sometimes hinder one’s ability to identify and make sense of it. Yet, normalization is not the only way violence is rendered opaque. Indeed, participants noted that violence enacted by the platforms—such as data recollection or systems of recommendation—is hard to discern, commenting that “they are systems of algorithms that one does not understand”34 (Liliana).

These contexts of violence, moreover, are in constant connection with one another. For instance, participants noted that contexts of violence often “collapse and collide” on social media

32 Original text: “He visto esta tendencia como 10 veces hoy en mis historias y siempre uno como que dice cómo ‘Ah bueno, ahora dos noticias.’ Pero resulta que llenan la página y todas son diferentes noticias de se llama Daniela, entonces es ‘Daniela hallada en Bello, Antioquia’, ‘Daniela hallada Cauca’, ‘Daniela hallada en Ecuador’. Y es… pues, uno no asimila cuántas veces se repiten, y al final termina siendo algo muy sistemático.”
33 Original text: “Ni siquiera te das cuenta de cómo hay tantas cosas violentas en Internet, tantas cosas.”
34 Original text: “Son sistemas de algoritmos que uno no comprende”
(Davis & Jurgenson, 2014, p. 483). For example, they discussed how Will Smith’s slap to Chris Rock during the 2022 Oscars collapsed with ongoing discussions of gender violence in Colombia: “From that point on [the slap], there was a lot of memes of violence against women in Colombia”\(^{35}\) (Valeria). These discussions illustrate how two seamlessly different contexts (the Oscars and Colombian gender violence) are intertwined on participants’ engagement with social media. These processes of collapse and collision stress the porosity of context on social media, where networks and actors easily seep into one another. Furthermore, these processes do not only bring the contexts closer together, but they also generate new manifestations of violence. For instance, on the topic of how the war between Russia and Ukraine was being discussed among the people she followed on Twitter, Luisa observed:

I heard people saying, “Russia supports Venezuela and then Venezuela has super good weapons . . . so, there is going to be a war between Colombia and Venezuela,” and I kept saying to myself: Wait, what are you saying? They are already escalating a war across the other side of the world, and they are promoting hatred against Venezuelans.\(^{36}\)

### 3.3.3 Grammars of violence

Finally, the third theme refers to the grammars of violence on social media, which emphasizes how violent speech, images, and narratives are organized in and across environments (Reguillo, 2013, 2021). This theme rests on the media ecology’s longstanding notion that each

\(^{35}\) Original text: “Desde ese momento, hubo un montón de memes de violencia contra las mujeres en Colombia.”

\(^{36}\) Original text: “Llegué a escuchar que decían, “es que Rusia apoya a Venezuela y entonces Venezuela tiene super buena armamento, entonces (...) entonces va a haber una guerra de Colombia y Venezuela” y yo, pero, esperen ¿ustedes qué están diciendo? Ya están promoviendo odio contra los venezolanos”

56
medium ought to be thought of as a new language, and thus require a nuanced understanding of its emergent grammars (Kuskis, 2015). As such, grammars of violence are closely linked to a platform’s affordances (e.g., direct messages that allow users to message people directly), cultures (e.g., tolerance towards harassment of specific populations), and structures (e.g., algorithms that highlight specific types of content in users’ timelines).

Here, it is important to note the common characteristics across the analyzed platforms. For example, participants’ experiences and testimonies highlighted humor as a frequent way to exercise and camouflage harmful behavior across platforms, as evidenced by the following observation: “There are often comments in a ‘shit-posting’ style that often camouflage hatred with humor”37 (Arturo). Indeed, these commonalities foreground a shared grammar of violence across social media platforms.

However, participants often noted that violence manifested differently in each platform. For instance, participants said that violence on Twitter is often exercised by users (re)posting harmful content or commenting on others’ posts. As the participants observed, this platform facilitates connections between strangers and that acts of violence are often instigated by people they do not know. Indeed, they consider Twitter38 to be the most violent of all the social media platforms as demonstrated by statements such as “[it] is like a public bonfire”39 (Maria) and “it is

37 Original text: “Suele haber comentarios en un estilo ‘shitposting’ que suelen camuflar el odio con humor”
38 While writing this dissertation, the social media platform Twitter was bought by Elon Musk and rebranded as X. However, as the application was named Twitter by participants throughout my discussions with participants, I will continue using that name throughout this document. This move is meant to capture a specific historical moment in the platforms’ development.
39 Original text: “Es como una hoguera pública”
too toxic”\textsuperscript{40} (Mercedes). Furthermore, the participants noted that on Facebook violence is often enacted in comments on their posts or from posts of people they follow. As Manuela observed, “in Facebook’s comments there are people who literally want to kill each other.”\textsuperscript{41} Here, harmful behavior is typically instigated by people they know or those who belong to a particular interest group. Conversely, violence on Instagram is often symbolic, as demonstrated by a participant who said that influencers “show on Instagram a perfect life, but it is a false life. They are violating people who want to follow a life that is not possible, that is not sustainable, that does not really happen”\textsuperscript{42} (Valeria). Beyond this symbolic violence, the study participants also argued that violence on this platform is commonly exercised and shared via private messaging. Finally, WhatsApp was considered by participants to be a source of private and intimate violence—that is, violence that is not visible to others and that often comes from people they know, such as family or friends. Violence here can take many forms, such as content shared as chain messages displaying violence—as in one participant’s example of “videos of the security camera of the man who killed himself and had his head exploded, that is shared massively in WhatsApp”\textsuperscript{43} (Carlos). These variations in how violence is organized—that is, platforms’ grammars of violence—highlight the need to better understand how specific digital environments transform and enact violence.

\textsuperscript{40} Original text: “Es demasiado tóxico”
\textsuperscript{41} Original text: “En los comentarios de Facebook hay gente que literalmente se quiere matar”
\textsuperscript{42} Original text: “El hecho de mostrar en Instagram tu vida perfecta, pero es una vida falsa. Pues estas violentando lo que aquí muchas personas quieren seguir una vida que no es posible, que no es sostenible, que no sucede realmente”
\textsuperscript{43} Original text: “los videos de la cámara de seguridad de el man que se mató y que se le estalló la cabeza, eso lo comparten por ahí por WhatsApp.”
These grammars of violence are further complicated when content is shared across different digital environments. Examples of cross-platform harmful content include compilations of TikTok videos ridiculing specific people that are then shared on YouTube, aggressive tweets that are screenshotted and shared on Facebook, or private Instagram messages that are shared on Twitter without consent. These examples illustrate the need to understand social media violence from an ecological perspective, highlighting the limits of understanding violence from a single platform.

3.4 Discussion: Towards an understanding of the ecologies of violence on social media

Violence is a pervasive and often inescapable aspect of contemporary digital environments. As such, the results of this study align with arguments posed by scholars such as Goose (2021) and Dunn (2021), who make a case for a comprehensive and interconnected look at violence in and beyond digital environments. Considering the pervasiveness, contextuality, and impact of online harm, the findings of this study emphasize the necessity to frame the unique ways social media transforms how violence is exercised and experienced by users of digital platforms. By drawing on the experiences of young Colombian adults, this study emphasizes the benefits of understanding violence on social media by following an ecological approach.

To better understand these ecologies of violence on social media, I propose an analytical framework based on the concepts of practices, contexts, and grammars (see Figure 5, below). This framework can be approached in various ways to understand how violence is transformed and enacted in digital environments. For example, it can be used to understand particular enactments of violence (such as a particular attack against a user) by analyzing the specific
practices, contexts, and grammars involved. It can also be used to analyze wider manifestations of violence, such as the practices, contexts, and grammars of gender violence across various platforms. Finally, it can be used to analyze specific platforms, for example, starting with the grammars of Instagram and exploring what practices and contexts are highlighted and emphasized by the platform. The uses and applications of this analytical framework will be expanded, applied, and criticized in future studies—especially contemplating how different demographic groups outside the sample included in this study experience violence on social media platforms.

Figure 5. Analytical framework for studying the ecologies of violence on social media.
It is crucial to highlight that, as Reguillo (2021) observes, violence does not arise out of nothing: it nests and grows through structural, subjective, and symbolic factors (p. 119). Accordingly, future studies could combine this analytical framework with other theoretical lenses that contextualize, prioritize, and respond to power imbalances that depend on, expand, and sustain harmful behaviour in digital environments. An example of a relevant theoretical approach is mediation (Martín-Barbero, 1993; Wood et al., 2023), a lens that centres on the processes of interpretation and appropriation of media in specific socio-political and cultural contexts. This approach foregrounds an epistemological shift in how we could address the complexity of violence on social media, focusing on the perspectives of the people engaging with it, emphasizing the need not to see the other but to see with the other (Martín-Barbero, 2019). Such an epistemological shift in how we study media is particularly important given the subjective and contextual nature of violence (Schmid et al., 2022; Stanko, 2005).

3.5 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter is not to discuss whether social media are cursed with pervasive and impactful harmful content. Instead, it is to note that violent behaviors on social media platforms are here and, as such, we ought to better understand how violence is interwoven and transformed by the affordances, cultures, and structures of contemporary digital environments. Ecologies of violence are a useful approach to explore how violence flows and is transformed within, across, and through social media platforms, intertwined with existing and emergent networks of power in and out of digital environments.
Understanding violence ecologically is essential to framing appropriate strategies, policies, and actions to respond to it. Indeed, an ecological reading on social media emphasizes the limitations of platforms’ traditional approach towards violence, which relies heavily on limited models of content moderation (Hasinoff & Schneider, 2022). In this sense, it is clear that platforms could do more to address violence by evaluating and transforming their policies regarding online harms (Blackwell et al., 2018; Katsaros et al., 2022). Additionally, users need to be aware of how their engagement on social media sustains and expands cultures of violence—an issue that can be addressed through educational programs that promote critical literacies (Nagle, 2018; Scharrer, 2006). Finally, policy makers ought to formulate better procedures that respond to contemporary forms of harm (such as gender violence) enacted on digital platforms (Dunn, 2020; Hasinoff & Schneider, 2022).

Recognizing that complex problems require complex solutions, the results of this study highlight that the best approach to address the ecologies of violence on social media is responding to the interconnected forms of systemic violence present in contemporary society. Such an approach resonates with the work of decolonial and feminist scholars, who raise questions such as: “Can we imagine addressing only part of this violence without considering the rest? Can we continue to feign not to see that all of these forms of violence mutually reinforce one another (…)”? (Vergès, 2022, p. 4). This effort would thus require a multi-stakeholder collaboration (Bailey & Liliefeldt, 2021; Schirch, 2021), where governments, platforms, and users promote cultures and structures of peace in the digital environment.
Chapter 4: Social media and the mediation of everyday violence: A study of Colombian young adults’ experiences

Encountering harmful content, such as gender or racial violence, is an increasingly common experience for social media users (Schoenebeck, Lampe, et al., 2023). The prevalence of violence on social media emphasizes the role of digital platforms as critical elements of contemporary ecologies of violence (see Chapter 3), whereby social media platforms enable new ways of practicing and representing harm that transform existing cultures of violence and reorganize how harmful behaviour is displayed and experienced. In this sense, the impact of the transformation in the ecologies of violence cannot be constrained to the technological sphere. Instead, they are both a reflection of and are reflected in the contexts in which the roots, forms, and impacts of digital violence are experienced and understood. Indeed, the need to contextualize discussions about digital violence is evidenced in Colombia, the setting of this study, where violence on social media is grounded and bound to its historical, socio-cultural, and political context.

In Colombia, there has not been a single generation that has lived in peace since its founding, in 1810 (Comisión de la Verdad de Colombia, 2022, p. 133). Between 1985 and 2018, armed conflicts over the last 40 years in the country took 450,664 lives—90% of whom are estimated to be civilians (Comisión de la Verdad de Colombia, 2022, p. 140). Such scale of death and violence is both the result and the cause of a cultural environment in which the use of

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44 A version of this chapter has been accepted for publication: Morales, E. (forthcoming). Social media and the mediation of everyday violence: A study of Colombian young adults’ experiences. New Media & Society.
violence has become “easier, natural, and frequent”45 (J. O. Melo, 2021, p. 11, my own translation). Unsurprisingly, these cultures of violence have migrated and expanded to digital environments as social media platforms are increasingly adopted in Colombia (Kemp, 2023b). This is especially evident among Colombian young adults, the population described in this study, who are particularly immersed in the country’s ecologies of violence. Certainly, as social media continues to increasingly mediate the lives of young adults (Gómez Cruz, 2022), the way they routinely engage with cultures of violence and peace is transformed by the complex dynamics of our digital landscape. In this context, it is critical to explore how cultures and enactments of violence configure and are configured by social media—that is, questioning how violence is mediated through social media platforms.

This chapter explores the mediation of everyday violence through social media platforms among Colombian young adults. As noted by Tait (2008), the gazes through which violence is observed and recognized are a necessary lens to study violence, as it is through this that we can better understand “the modes of looking that the internet enables, their potential harms and utilities” (p. 109). Accordingly, to map the mediation of violence on social media platforms, I will first set the background of this case study, discussing Colombia’s historical context in the face of the end of a long-lasting internal armed conflict and how this has been reflected in the study and engagement of social media platforms. Second, I will examine the theoretical lens of this study, exploring Jesús Martín-Barbero’s approach to mediation—a productive space to map how meaning-making processes are shaped by and through culture. Relying on this theoretical

45 Original text: “Más fácil, natural y frecuente”
framework, I will next focus on the mediation of violence in young adults’ engagement with social media, exploring four central components: spatialities, temporalities, technicities, and sensorialities (Martin-Barbero & Rincón, 2019). Finally, I will discuss the implications of these results in the Colombian context and the lives of young adults.

This article then expands on research that has previously explored violence in digital environments by following the experiences and interpretations of those who engage with it. Overall, findings of this chapter provide two additions to previous literature on violence in digital environments. First, this study is set in a country outside of the Global North with a history of armed conflict—an area that is underrepresented in studies about digital violence (Backe et al., 2018; Schoenebeck, Batool, et al., 2023). In this regard, this chapter aims to build and expand on emergent scholarly discussions that critically examine the integration of digital technologies and peacebuilding (Hirblinger et al., 2022). Second, this chapter explores the mediation of violence to understand the interpretative possibilities that result from the appropriation of discourses by social media users. By drawing on mediation as a theoretical lens, this study provides novel insights into the production and interpretation of violence in socio-cultural contexts.

4.1 Background: Colombia, violence, and social media

Even as there was hope of reimagining a country in peace in 2016 after a series of peace accords were signed between the Colombian government and FARC, violence in the country has both continued some of its old forms and expanded to new ones (e.g., Albarracín et al., 2022). In this historical context, authors such as Waldmann (2007) have argued that there is an ingrained
culture of violence in the country due to the longstanding presence of inequality and power abuses across Colombian history and territories. Similarly, Gutiérrez-Sanín (2020) notes that “in Colombia we have spent decades without finding good ways to stop killing ourselves ... It is not that windows of opportunity have not opened; it is that we have not been able to prevent them from closing”46 (p. 12). While this culture of violence is most notoriously evidenced by the resulting political violence and armed conflicts (J. O. Melo, 2021), it often takes quotidian—yet not trivial—forms, as illustrated by the prevalence of gender violence emerging during the COVID-19 pandemic (Zulver et al., 2021). As such, it is of critical importance to better understand the everyday harmful experiences of citizens to address all kinds of lived violence and achieve sustainable peace cultures (MacGinty, 2021).

Unsurprisingly, acts of violence have replicated and expanded into the increasingly ubiquitous digital platforms used by Colombians. As noted by the Digital 2023: Colombia report (Kemp, 2023b), there are over 36 millions adult social media users in the country, equivalent to 93.9% of the total population aged 18 and above. And as social media continues to gain popularity among Colombian citizens, these spaces become increasingly important venues for seeing, discussing, and enacting violence. Indeed, violent practices and antagonistic relationships are often translated to these digital spaces. For example, Barrios and colleagues (2019) explored how Twitter was used to threaten journalists covering the armed conflict, which increased polarization and violence. Said-Hung and Luqueta-Cediel (2018) studied the use of social media

46 Original text: “En Colombia llevamos décadas sin encontrar buenas formas para dejar de matarnos . . . No es que no se hayan abierto ventanas de oportunidad; es que no hemos podido evitar que se cierren.”
to discuss and make sense of the peace talks, finding that Facebook groups were being used to reinforce prejudice and segregation against those with different political views. Cepeda (2018) discussed how social media reinforces the symbolic and material violence in Colombia, extending historical harms enacted against racialized and gendered bodies. Overall, these studies highlight that social media and violence in Colombia ought to be seen as intertwined with complex networks of interests and power.

Indeed, these tensions between platforms and existing power networks are present in everyday manifestations of violence on social media. By everyday violence on social media, I refer to the quotidian manifestations of the ecologies of violence I described in the previous chapter, thus encompassing various forms of direct, cultural, or structural harm targeted toward specific individuals or communities. These acts of violence have been noted to be impactful on the lives of Colombian citizens and communities—as exemplified by the work of various scholars. For instance, Benavides-Vanegas (2020) explored how memes are used to disseminate hurtful words and symbols to women—thus replicating and expanding existing structures of gender violence in Colombia. Another example is seen in Colombian educational settings, where social media has transformed the forms and practices of bullying among and towards students (Contreras Álvarez, 2013). Certainly, to understand social media violence in a way that fully addresses its cultural prevalence, it is necessary to take a grounded approach that privileges the voices of those who experience it in their everyday lives.

Focusing on everyday violence on social media platforms is especially important when exploring Colombian young adults’ experiences. Markedly, Colombian young adults are the most common victims or perpetrators of the Colombian armed conflict (Centro Nacional de
Memoria Histórica., 2017). Yet young adults are considered a vital age bracket when promoting a culture of peace due to their ability to demand and enact societal change—as demonstrated by their active participation in social mobilizations of 2021 (BBC Mundo News, 2021). Furthermore, young adults in Colombia increasingly rely on digital platforms to make sense of society and connect to their communities (Telefónica, 2022). Finally, social media is now a critical medium used by young adults to attempt to respond to power imbalances (Specht & Ros-Tonen, 2017). Combined, these aspects make young adults a population of particular interest when studying violence on social media, as they are well-positioned to be agents of change that promote a culture of peace.

4.2 A mediation approach towards the study of violence on social media

This chapter explores everyday violence on social media by focusing on the concept of mediation. Mediation, a lens that centres on how communication technologies enter into and shape human relations (Couldry, 2008), is a common keyword in media studies, as scholars across the world seek to explore how the “media mediates” (Livingstone, 2009, p. 7). Indeed, Wood and colleagues (2023) have argued that mediation is a valuable and necessary theoretical lens to explore manifestations of digital violence. In their work, they discussed how research on digital violence has traditionally followed two theoretical lenses: extension theory (focused on how media extends human capabilities) and actor-network theory (centred on the complex relationships between humans and non-humans). And while these two theories provide valuable insights into the topic, Wood et al. (2023) argue that both fail to address how technology shapes
peoples’ perceptions, experiences, and actions of violence—that is, how violence is mediated by digital technology.

To explore mediations of digital violence, I will draw on the work of Latin American scholar Jesús Martín-Barbero, who emphasized the role of culture on processes of technological mediation. For Martín-Barbero, mediations are productive spaces for studying media and communication, as it is here where researchers can better understand the ways in which meaning-making processes are shaped by and through culture (Martín-Barbero, 1993). In this regard, mediation as a theoretical lens highlights the new modes of perception and language that surface through the communicative processes that configure and are configured by ongoing processes of cultural mutation (Martín-Barbero, 2002, p. 225). As noted by Siles and colleagues (2023), being sensible to the mediations means acknowledging “the conditions that make the prevalence of specific forms of algorithmic power and the enactment of knowledge, affect, and practice possible in the first place” (p. 9). As such, following a Barberian approach to mediation has important implications for those studying digital phenomena, as it shifts the researcher’s focus: What is new and important about the study of technology is not the new machinery anymore. It is, instead, the new modes of symbolic processes that arise as we engage with media technologies, which have significant repercussions in the processes of cultural appropriation or transformation (Martín-Barbero, 2001, p. 359).

To explore mediations, Martín-Barbero proposed a series of conceptual devices to map the meaning-making processes that arise from the cultural, technological, and political environments in which people live in specific temporal and spatial contexts. These maps are a methodological approach to better understand and explore the mediation of culture and
communication (Vasallo de Lopes, 2018), as it is here where Martín-Barbero argued that the processes of meaning-making are concreted, expanded, and diversified. Over time, Martín-Barbero outlined four different maps of mediation, each seeking to respond to specific moments of socio-cultural and political transformation, highlighting what he conceived to be the key tensions and articulations in situated processes of mediation (Rincón, 2019; Vasallo de Lopes, 2018). His first methodological map, published in 1987, articulated the relationships between the logics of production and the competencies of consumption, and between the cultural matrices and the industrial formats (Martín-Barbero, 1993). These concepts were gradually updated and transformed, as illustrated by both the second and third iterations, published in 1988 and 2010 that provided further theoretical density to the study of mediations. The last version of this conceptual mapping will serve as a methodological guide for this study.

Martín-Barbero’s last methodological map is named the *contemporary sensorium* (Martin-Barbero & Rincón, 2019), inspired by the work of Walter Benjamin, who noted that “during long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity’s entire mode of existence” (Benjamin, 1969, p. 5). Accordingly, the contemporary sensorium mapping process seeks to apprehend the sensory, perceptional, and interpretive responses of cultural experiences to understand processes of making meaning as part of our daily interactions (Rincón, 2019, p. 263). With this methodological map, Martín-Barbero sought to respond to the complexities of digital environments (Martin-Barbero & Rincón, 2019; Reilly & Morales, 2023)

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47 The evolution of the methodological maps of Martín-Barbero is clearly outlined in the work of Vasallo de Lopes (2018)
through the lenses of time (temporalities), space (spatialities), technique and technologies (technicities), and the sensorial experiences (sensorialities). These four mediations are at the centre of this study and will be further explained in the following sections.

4.3 Methodology

To study the mediation of violence in the lives of Colombian young adults who participated in this study, this chapter focuses on participants’ experiences and interpretations of violence on digital platforms. To achieve this, I draw on instances where participants engaged in sense-making concerning their experiences of violence on social media, focusing on their messages in the chat and their interventions in the synchronous meetings.

As noted in the previous chapter—and as described in detail in Chapter 2—I relied on thematic analysis to explore the participants’ experiences and interpretations concerning violence on social media. Unlike Chapter 3, the analytical process in this chapter was driven by theory—particularly by the previously described contemporary sensorium (Martin-Barbero & Rincón, 2019). As noted by thematic analysis scholars (Braun et al., 2018; Terry & Hayfield, 2020), this analytical approach affords researchers flexibility to adapt to their study goals as long as it is grounded in its epistemological foundations: that is, it centres the researcher subjectivity in the process of creating, editing, and writing the themes.

Accordingly, after familiarizing myself with the data, I deductively coded all relevant data into four themes: Temporalities, spatialities, technicities, and sensorialities. I then reviewed all the data in each theme, inductively creating groupings of meaning that comprise the sub-themes of each element of the contemporary sensorium. This inductive process was iterative,
with several rounds of developing, reviewing, refining, and defining sub-themes from the data. The final version of the themes and subthemes used to analyze the data of this chapter can be found in Table 5 (below).
### Table 5. Themes and subthemes used for data analysis of the meaning-making processes concerning violence on social media platforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (original)</th>
<th>Theme (translation)</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Sub-theme (original)</th>
<th>Sub-theme (translation)</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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4.4 Spatialities and temporalities: Inhabiting violence on social media platforms

Martín-Barbero and Rincón (2019) noted that one of the most notorious and complex aspects of the evolution of our contemporary digital landscape is how it has transformed the ways humans experience time and space. Certainly, media scholars have long discussed these transformations in how time and space are mediated. For example, Chambers (2021) discussed how digital technologies allow people to “actively engage with, challenge and subvert the temporal routines and demands of timekeeping, work, sleep, speed and immediacy associated with late modernity” (p. 1192). Following Martín-Barbero (2002), spatiality and temporality are the two mediations that allow us to locate ourselves in the contemporary sensorium, as they describe the territories social media users inhabit in the mediation processes. Focusing on the mediation of both time and space highlights the need to actively and constantly contextualize the unstable and shifting terrains of violence (Martín-Barbero, 2002, 2000).

4.4.1 Spatialities

When engaging with social media content, users often inhabit multiple spaces of violence. Indeed, participants noted that social media enables them to easily access geographical territories of violence from across the world, including spaces that are far away from them (such as social media content showing missiles impacting buildings in Ukraine) or places that are closer to them (such as video of a robbery taking place down their street in Medellin). Each of these spaces of violence is represented by a myriad of perspectives provided by people and organizations uploading content with different points of view—thus creating an “endless series of representations” (Hochman et al., 2014, p. 9). For example, participants noted that they were
frequently seeing social media content depicting violence occurring in Ukraine from multiple perspectives, such as soldiers, civilians, journalists, politicians, and others. Through these processes of spatial mediation—that include multiple perspectives and geographical locations—social media users in Colombia (intentionally or not) access territories of violence on or beyond their immediate surroundings.

Moreover, as digital platforms enable users to simultaneously access multiple spaces from multiple perspectives, the boundaries between local and remote contexts turn opaque (Gordon & de Souza e Silva, 2011). This opacity, at times, makes it difficult for participants to completely delimit violence that occurs over there and violence that occurs over here. And, as the boundaries between these different contexts are blurred, “people, information, and norms from one context seep into the bounds of another” (Davis & Jurgenson, 2014, p. 477). For instance, when Sofia described her experiences with gender violence on social media, her accounts went from referencing videos of police repression on a women’s march in Medellin to posts discussing sexual abuse in Bogota and statements in TikTok from celebrities in the United States who were arguing about what constitutes violence against women. Due to this process of context collapse, the spaces of violence that participants inhabit on social media—that is, whatever terrains of violence are being depicted on specific platforms—are at times not the same as those which affect them directly. As noted by Valeria, “you log in on Twitter and you think
you see the world’s panorama. But no, you go out on the street, and nobody knows what they are talking about on Twitter.”

Another consequence of social media’s mediation of space is how Colombian young adults’ interaction with their surroundings is transformed. For example, Arturo said that he thought it was best not to visit certain neighbourhoods in Medellin based on information he saw on TikTok videos, as he perceived them to be too dangerous: “I can’t go into these neighbourhoods.” Similarly, Samuel said that he was afraid of walking around his university, as there had been threats on social media targeted to people in the LGBTQ+ population: “I saw an image, an alleged audio, [telling people] to hide. It was a threat to their life and their integrity for the fact that they were homosexuals.” Manifestations of violence such as these effectively transform and limit Colombian young adults’ experiences of their surroundings and influence their perception of safety in certain parts of their city.

Finally, participants also noted how the spatial mediation by digital platforms made it harder for them to draw physical limits between themselves and harmful actions, as the prevalence of digital technologies made it nearly impossible to escape their reach. For example, Ernesto, talking about cyberbullying experiences in educational settings said, “violence can haunt you anywhere in the world, literally at any time of the day, while you bathe, while you eat,

48 Original text: “Uno se mete a Twitter y cree que uno está con el panorama del mundo. Y mentiras, uno sale a la calle y nadie sabe qué están hablando en Twitter.”
49 Original text: “No puedo ir a esos barrios”
50 Original text: “Vi una imagen, un supuesto audio… que se escondieran, no, era una amenaza hacia ellos, pues hacia su vida y su integridad por el hecho de ser homosexual”
while you rest.”\textsuperscript{51} This statement resonates with the work of Dragiewicz et al. (2018), who argue that “the ubiquity and social convergence of digital media can enable perpetrators to increase their control on victims’ lives, even when they are physically separated” (p. 611). These examples illustrate how physical proximity is even less of a requirement to enact violence due to the increasing prevalence of digital technologies.

\subsection*{4.4.2 Temporalities}

The way we experience and make sense of time has also been profoundly transformed due to the proliferation of digital technologies. Indeed, Kaun (2015) argued that “the constant flow, immediacy and newness [foregrounded by digital technologies] have implications for our temporal experiences and meaning production” (p. 222). In this case study, the mediation of time around violence was impacted primarily in two aspects—the emphasis on present violence and participants’ engagement with the past and its memory.

When users engage with social media content, the present (that is, what is occurring now) is prioritized. This foregrounded liveness of digital platforms (Lupinacci, 2021) often results in users’ engagement with acts of harm and terror in real-time (Duncombe, 2020). For instance, participants were able to easily access live transmissions of a massive brawl in a Mexican stadium, such as Sofia who noted that “there are very strong images, even people shouting at others that they deserve to be killed.”\textsuperscript{52} Accordingly, violence occurring at their present time was

\textsuperscript{51} Original text: “La violencia lo puede perseguir a uno en cualquier parte del mundo, literalmente en cualquier momento del día, mientras uno se baña, mientras come, mientras descansa.

\textsuperscript{52} Original text: “Hay imágenes súper fuertes, incluso gente gritando a los demás que merecen ser asesinados.”
often at the centre of participants’ attention, and events that occurred even in the recent past were often quickly forgotten. For example, Mia recounted that as legislation to sustain abortion rights in Colombia was discussed by the Supreme Court, there was a lot of resulting violence on social media platforms. However, she noted that “the abortion discussion was a week ago—and I was very active about it, like reading about it and everything—and now it feels super far away.”

And, while platforms foreground being in the moment, they also transform how users make sense of and interact with the past. In this sense, data shows that participants noted that they now can easily access past violent events, enabling new ways of engaging with the memory of their surroundings. For instance, Manuela told a story about how she found a video of a massacre that happened three years ago near her house: “I was watching a news story [on Facebook] that happened in 2019 in Itagüí and I had no idea. And I thought it was terrible when I read it ... I mean, this horrible thing happened, and I found out about it 3 years later.” This example shows not only the potentiality to connect and reconnect social media users to stories of the past, but also to enable spaces where hegemonic and anti-hegemonic narratives of historical memory are reconstructed and negotiated (Birkner & Donk, 2020).

Additionally, participants noted how issues of the past could more easily be brought to the present and turned into a source of harmful actions. For instance, a participant told the story of a famous athlete in Colombia who had a great following on Twitter. However, some posts with racist and classist undertones she had made in 2010 and 2011 resurfaced in 2020—leading

53 Original text: “La discusión sobre el aborto fue hace una semana—y yo estaba muy activa, leyendo sobre eso y todo—y ya se siente super lejano.”
54 Original text: “Estuve viendo buena noticia que pasó en 2019 en Itagüí y yo no tenía ni idea. Y pensé que fue terrible cuando la lei... O sea, esto tan horrible paso y yo no me vengo a dar cuenta 3 años después.”
to various insults and threats against her. Through this example, participants noted the prevalence of time collapse, where past content is brought forward as an indivisible character of the person’s present identity by noting, for example, that at the time “she was just a child” (Alejandro). These temporal collapses between the past and the present, as noted by Brandtzaeg and Lüders (2018), highlight the tensions that underlie, on the one hand, the construction and performance of users’ identities and, on the other hand, the archival nature of digital platforms—where past content is easily searchable and retrievable.

### 4.5 Technicities and sensorialities: Exploring changes in our thinking, doing, and feeling

Martín-Barbero’s contemporary sensorium maps more than the times and spaces users inhabit on digital platforms—it also highlights how users move and make sense of what they think, do, and feel during these mediated experiences. Here, Martín-Barbero outlined two central mediations: technicities and sensorialities. These two mediations highlight our digital landscape’s cultural and political density by foregrounding what we do with it, how we narrate our inhabitation of these spaces, and how we feel about it.

#### 4.5.1 Technicities

Technicities refer to what people do and narrate with technology, which is conditioned by both the materiality of the medium and the socio-cultural contexts in which they are used (Martín-Barbero & Rincón, 2019; Pieniz & Cenci, 2019). Overall, there are four technicities

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55 Original text: “Era solo una niña.”
present in participants’ engagement with violence on social media: 1) enactment of harm, 2) entertainment, 3) expression of points of view, and 4) obtainment of information about violent contexts.

The first technicity refers to the new possibilities to enact harm on others with and through social media. Indeed, violence can be enacted in emergent and transformed ways through social media, as illustrated by a wide range of previous studies that have documented how people create memetic videos to ridicule racialized others (Matamoros-Fernández et al., 2022) or use digital technologies to surveil, coerce, and control women (Dragiewicz et al., 2018), to name a few examples. In this sense, participants’ experiences highlight how the potential to do harm on social media is transformed and amplified by the affordances of these digital platforms. For example, Arturo recalled how “Instagram is now the place through which extortionists communicate,” telling a story of how he was threatened through this platform. Another participant narrated how Telegram was being used to leak and share photos of naked women without their consent. Overall, these examples illustrate how harms enacted on digital environments transcend online contexts and result in various mental, physical, and affective impacts for victims.

But not only do participants see social media as mediating new possibilities to enact harm, they also see it as mediating violence into entertainment. Here, participants noted that violent actions are often turned into a source of entertainment on social media, including photos of traffic accidents or videos of shootings. Indeed, participants said that violent content on social

56 Original text: “Instagram es ya el lugar por donde se comunican los extorsionadores”
media is more likely to be sensationalized. The premier example of this conflation of violence and entertainment is seen in how often harm is disguised as humour, which has already been noted by scholars such as Jane (2014) and Matamoros et al. (2023). Participants noted that there “are some very delicate topics and [some social media users] still make jokes about it. One laughs, but then you reflect and say, ‘oh no, what is this?’”57 (Irene). Indeed, they noted the presence of users in their networks who enjoy violence: “there are people who also enjoy [it]... they laugh, they also make memes about it ... as if they were condoning this violence”58 [Sofia].

Moreover, participants also identified violence on social media as a means to express themselves or respond to others’ expressions. In this sense, Mercedes noted that “we all feel like we have the right to say what we want to say”59 on social media. Such expressive possibilities are not limited to any specific topic, as participants mentioned how most people posted opinions about the armed conflict, animal violence, gender issues, soccer, singers, and many others. These expressions of opinions often lead to various issues related to this study. First, as participants discussed social media content, they noted that in many cases people expressed their opinions in ways that were violent toward others. For instance, one participant recounted how discussions about abortion rights in Colombia were often held aggressively, where she saw messages of people arguing that those who did not think like them “deserve to die”60 (Sofia). Additionally, whether an initial comment was deemed violent, participants noted that any opinion on social

57 Original text: “Hay como temas muy delicados e igual le sacan chiste. Uno dice jajaja y que charro, pero después uno queda en cuenta y dice “ay no, qué es esto”
58 Original text: “Hay gente que también se goza el tema… se reían, sacaron memes acerca de eso, o sea, como acolitando esa violencia”
59 Original text: “Nos sentimos con el derecho de ir a imponer nuestra opinión”
60 Original text: “Merecen morir”
media could easily be used to engender harm. For example, Liliana recounted a story of a friend trying to engage in conversation about abortion rights in Colombia, and then she noted that people start to “attack you, they can even look at your profile, so they can insult you because of your physique, because of everything. And in the end, you basically lose the topic we were discussing.”

Finally, participants also found social media a productive space for informing themselves and learning about specific contexts of violence. In this context, participants noted that through social media they learn about what is occurring related to the armed conflict in the country, as they find abundant sources of official and alternative information. For example, Tobias said that when a criminal organization conducts an attack in Colombia, “they now go on social media to recognize [the attack], saying ‘we claim responsibility’” enabling him to better understand and respond to such violence. Indeed, participants argued that seeing violence on social media platforms renders visible some abuses and injustices, “making [them] aware [that the violence is occurring], at least” (Valeria). By shedding light on violence occurring in different spheres, they then emphasized the possibilities to more easily “denounce, be alert, accompany and protect those who may be more vulnerable” (Tobias). These experiences illustrate the possibilities of using social media to promote scenarios of learning and mobilization that build and sustain cultures of peace in Colombia.

61 Original text: “Te atacan, incluso miran tu perfil para poder insultarte por tu físico, por todo. Y al final, básicamente pierdes el tema del que estábamos hablando”

62 Original text: “Van a las redes sociales y dicen ‘nos atribuimos la responsabilidad de este ataque’”

63 Original text: “Nos damos cuenta de que esto está pasando, al menos”

64 Original text: “Podemos denunciar, estar pendiente, acompañar y proteger a quienes puedan ser más vulnerables”
4.5.2 Sensorialities

Finally, sensorialities focus on how our senses and emotions, embedded in particular socio-cultural standings, mediate our processes and experiences of meaning-making (Valquíria et al., 2019). Sensorialities are especially relevant to this study because, as Duncombe (2019) noted, social media affords both the representation and the provocation of emotions, which can play critical roles in the escalation and de-escalation of violence. Certainly, emotional responses to social media content are built into the digital ecosystems as affective feedback loops that drive engagement, caused by how desires for recognition and reward are “entangled with emotions surrounding esteem, love, ‘like’ and belonging” (Boler & Davis, 2020, p. 19). In this context, Reilly and Morales (2023) highlight the opportunities of relying on sensorialities to consider the intertwined affective relations that compose our digital environments—both in users’ bodies and in the apparatus themselves.

Accordingly, participants recognized the wide range of emotional responses that result from their experiences around violence on social media platforms. For instance, Sofia reported sadness when exposed to violence against animals: “We see the little dog totally lacerated, wounded and… We want to cry.” They also reported feeling despair, such as when Manuela recounted a case of discrimination against people who work cleaning their university in a Facebook group, saying that “it makes me lose hope in society.”

Talking about this same

65 Original text: “Vemos el perrito totalmente lacerado, herido… y nos dan ganas de llora”
66 Original text: “Pierdo la esperanza en la sociedad”
discrimination case, participants discussed feeling enraged, noting that “I felt a lot of rage after I read those comments over Facebook”\textsuperscript{67} (Manuela). Fear was also present in emotional responses to violence, such as Samuel who recounted his experience after seeing threats against the LGBTQ+ community: “As a member of the community, I am afraid that the person they found in the hotel, murdered, could be me.”\textsuperscript{68} Finally, in some cases, they noted feeling amusement due to violence enacted or represented on social media, such as the case of Mia who mentioned that people were making funny memes about violence occurring on social mobilizations in Colombia, saying: “a lot of memes are making me laugh.”\textsuperscript{69}

Participants reacted in different ways to these various emotional responses. Some said that the emotional overload that accompanies violence on social media, especially when linked to rage or sadness, leads to a desire to escape from the platforms: “I deleted Facebook and Instagram for a while because I was physically contaminated... it made me angry, and I started to be a person I wasn’t”\textsuperscript{70} (Manuela). Others reacted with a desire to change things and improve societal issues, as illustrated by Sofía, who said that, when people in her social media circles shared violence related to kids or dogs, “everyone puts their hand on their heart and shares these kinds of things.”\textsuperscript{71}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{67} Original text: “Me dio tanta rabia leer esos comentarios en Facebook”
\item \textsuperscript{68} Original text: “Como miembro de la comunidad, me da miedo que la persona que encontraron en el hotel, asesinada, pueda ser yo”
\item \textsuperscript{69} Original text: “Muchos de esos memes me hacen reír”
\item \textsuperscript{70} Original text: “Yo un tiempo que borré Facebook y borré Instagram porque yo físicamente estaba contaminada... por qué ya yo me metía y me daba rabia y comenzaba a ser una persona que yo no era”
\item \textsuperscript{71} Original text: “Todo el mundo se pone la mano en el corazón y comparte este tipo de cosas”
\end{itemize}
Nevertheless, the most common response to these emotional states is the normalization of harmful behaviour. Liliana, discussing seeing violent content on social media, recounted the following: “You see a picture and you say ‘oh, how terrible.’ But after an hour, you don’t even remember it.”

Similarly, Irene said: “You play dumb, you don’t even realize how there are so many violent things on the internet.” These processes of normalization of violence have consequences beyond the digital platforms, as shown by De Choudhury et al. (2014), who explored how being exposed to violence on media could lead “to possible signs of desensitization” (p. 3570). Indeed, such a connection was made by Ernesto, who argued that “if, for example, somebody sees violence in the street (fighting or something), we are so used to seeing that kind of thing on social media that I think it also generates an instinct for someone to record and share it with the rest of the world. And instead of helping, it’s like we start to record it.”

As a result of these processes of violence normalization, young adults sensed that there is not much they can do to address harmful behaviour on (and beyond) digital platforms: “It becomes such an automatic process, that there may be things that impact you, so you save and you share them (. . .) But that is as far as it goes. That’s the most you can do” (Sofia).

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72 Original text: “Viste una foto, viste eso y uno dice ‘uy, qué terrible’. Pero ya después a la hora ya ni siquiera te acuerda”
73 Original text: “Uno se hace el bobo, uno ni se da cuenta que hay tantas cosas violentas en internet”
74 Original text: “Si uno, por ejemplo, ve violencia en la calle que se estén peleando algo ya uno está como tan acostumbrado a ver ese tipo de cosas en las redes sociales que ya yo creo que también se genera como un instinto, como de que alguien grabe y que lo comparta para el resto del mundo. Y como que, en vez de ayudar, pues como que se pone a grabar”
75 Original text: “Se vuelve un proceso tan automático, que puede haber cosas que te impacten, entonces las guardas y las compartes (. . .) Pero hasta ahí llega. Eso es lo máximo que puedes hacer”
Furthermore, it is important to note that these affective responses were not homogeneous among participants. For instance, women involved with this study noted that they were particularly affected by gender violence displayed or enacted on social media—as it easily connected to their own experiences. Others mentioned being particularly triggered by violence targeted at animals or minors, mentioning that “they are, as it were, the most defenseless” (Marcela). And others mentioned that they only care about the violence that is enacted towards people that are closely connected to them, saying things as “the only violence that hits me is the violence that I see close to me, and when I say close to me it is my family, my little sister, my mom, my ex, my dad” (Alejandro). These examples emphasize the need for contextualized approaches towards violence on digital violence—as it is only through the consideration of the bodies, subjectivities, and socio-cultural standings of those who experience and engage with it that it is possible to comprehend (and, thus, address) the impact, reach, and scale of online harms.

Indeed, not only do their contexts and identities reshape their emotional responses to violence—they also determine what they define as violence. In this regard, participants noted that violence for them is always connected to the contexts in which it is read. Here, participants argued that content on social media is often read according to their emotional state. For instance, Tobias said: “what is a joke and what is violence in social media can be subjective.” Marcela also illustrated this point, arguing the following: “I’m going through a bad moment, I don’t

76 Original text: “Ellos son como que los más indefensos”
77 Original text: “la única violencia que me da duro es la que veo cerca de mí, y cuando digo cerca de mí es mi familia, mi hermana pequeña, mi mamá, mi ex, mi papá”
78 Original text: “lo que es un chiste y lo que es violencia en las redes puede ser subjetivo”
know, something happened to me and now I’m super angry with the world, and somebody sends me a message, I read it with a super horrible tone in my head.” Such subjectivity in defining what violence is and what it is not complicates knowing what is deemed as violent for the other, as participants highlighted that it is hard to know the emotional state of the other: “If I insulted another person because of his or her physique, well, I simply forgot about it in an hour, and it just happened. But that person may be affected and remember it for a long time” (Liliana).

Certainly, as noted by Melissa, the subjectivity involved in defining violence on social media is the key challenge when identifying and addressing issues of the contemporary digital landscape: “I feel that sometimes in social media, it is not even so much the intention of the person who transmits the message, but how I am reading it as the person who is receiving it.”

### 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored multiple ways in which everyday violence is mediated through social media platforms among Colombian young adults. Overall, the results of this analysis highlight how social media platforms profoundly transform processes of meaning-making of violence—summarized in Figure 6 (below). One of the most significant findings of this study is the evidence of the destabilization of meaning-making practices of the violence young adults experience on social media platforms. These processes of destabilization are certainly present

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79 Original text: “Estoy pasando por un mal momento, no sé, me pasó algo y ahora estoy super brava con el mundo, y alguien me manda un mensaje. Lo voy a leer con un tono super horrible en mi cabeza.”

80 Original text: “Si insulto a otra persona por su físico, pues simplemente lo olvido en una hora y ya está. Pero esa persona puede verse afectada y recordarlo durante mucho tiempo”

81 Original text: “Siento que a veces, en las redes, ni siquiera es tanto la intención de la persona que transmite el mensaje, sino cómo lo estoy leyendo yo como persona que lo recibe.”
across the mediation of violence on time (e.g., the collapse of past and present violence), space (e.g., the expansion of terrains of violence accessible to users), technicities (e.g., the tensions between violence as entertainment, information, expression, or harm), and sensorialities (e.g., the multiple emotional responses users have when interacting with violence). In this sense, while historically media has often articulated how people interact and make sense of violence well beyond their immediate surroundings (e.g., Bonilla Vélez & Tamayo Gómez, 2007), the scale, speed, reach, and visibility afforded by contemporary digital environments set it apart from its predecessors.

Figure 6. Contemporary sensorium of violence on social media among Colombian young adults
Indeed, the results of this study emphasize challenges and opportunities for researchers, educators, activists, and policymakers to better understand and address violence on digital platforms. On the one hand, findings illustrate the productive possibilities of engaging with digital platforms to address cultures of violence, as illustrated by the way these digital environments enable users to learn about harm well beyond their temporal and geographical surroundings. On the other hand, results also showcase the destructive potentials of social media, such as the emergent and transformed ways of enacting harm to others. In the context of the historical traces of violence in the Colombian context, both the productive and destructive potentials illustrated by this study ought to be taken into consideration when designing strategies and policies to respond to the new ecologies of violence on digital platforms.

This study also showcases the critical role of social media in expanding the normalization of violence among Colombian young adults. In this regard, Reguillo (2021) notes that being overexposed to violence, especially when under the logic of spectacularization afforded by digital media, collapses our interpretative systems. As a consequence of this overexposition, violence becomes just another content that young adults encounter in their everyday engagements with social media. The normalization of violence in a country like Colombia has profound negative consequences, such as making it harder for citizens to recognize and address harm enacted towards others, whether in online or offline contexts. In this context, a necessary response is to “to make it come out of its naturalization, to displace it from the territory in which
it paralyzes and causes the systems of signification to collapse through the idea of its inevitability” (Reguillo, 2021, p. 68, translation my own).

Such efforts to estrange ourselves from violence would likely be an empowering tool for promoting cultures of peace in Colombia. Indeed, as noted by Judith Butler (2020), the power to recognize violence towards others and to deem that violence worth reacting to is to acknowledge that the lives of those affected by it are grievable lives—that is, to acknowledge that their lives matter. In this scenario, de-normalizing violence on social media is not a trivial act. It is, instead, a political act of reclaiming a relational bond that foregrounds solidarity and care within our communities, opening spaces to better address violent behaviour in and beyond digital environments.

In conclusion, this chapter emphasizes the opportunities of following a mediation approach to study violence on digital platforms. While this analysis provided valuable insights into understanding the meaning-making processes of young adults around violence on digital platforms, following a Barberian approach requires further exploration of articulations and tensions around social media users’ lived experiences. For instance, future studies could explore other aspects of the contemporary sensorium, such as narratives, identities, citizenships, and networks (Martin-Barbero & Rincón, 2019). As noted by Vasallo de Lopes (2018): “The map is open, connectable in all its dimensions, demountable, reversible, susceptible of receiving modifications constantly” (p. 47). In navigating this map of mediations lies an opportunity for

82 Original “Hacerla salir de su naturalización, desplazarla del territorio en el que paraliza y hace colapsar los sistemas de significación a través de la idea de su inevitabilidad”.
future researchers to continue to expand this lens in future studies of the emergent and transformed ecologies of violence in digital environments.
Chapter 5: Estranging ourselves from violence on social media: Discussing online harms to learn about peace

As I noted in the previous chapters, violence on digital platforms is a multifaceted, fluid, and complex phenomenon. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp present and transform a wide array of practices to enact, represent, and expand violence, including but not limited to harassment, bullying, and surveillance (e.g., Blackwell et al., 2018; Dragiewicz et al., 2018; Fairbairn, 2022). In this sense, more than simply creating new ways in which violence is experienced, platforms connect and expand existing contextual logics of power, as evidenced by ongoing gender violence (e.g., Backe et al., 2018; Jane, 2018; Veletsianos et al., 2018) and racism (e.g., Jakubowicz, 2017; Matamoros-Fernández et al., 2022; Uyheng et al., 2022). As these platforms increasingly transform and construct new value regimes and economies (Gillespie, 2010; van Dijck et al., 2018), violence on social media has profound consequences for how individuals and communities understand, enact, and respond to harm—inside and outside of digital spaces.

These transformations in the cultures and structures of violence are of particular significance in contexts embedded in histories of armed conflict, as in the case of Colombia. Colombia has a complex history with a longstanding tradition of violent conflicts that have left a long trail of inequality, poverty, and injustice (Comisión de la Verdad de Colombia, 2022). Such violence is not an issue of the past, as evidenced by what some call a new cycle of violence in Colombia, characterized by the expansion of urban and political violence (Gutiérrez-Sanín, 2020). In this context, and as I noted in Chapter 4, the increasing ubiquity of digital platforms
mediates existing and emergent cultures of violence, resulting in profound transformations in the lived experiences and meaning-making processes of Colombian citizens.

One of the most notorious results of the mediation of violence on social media in the Colombian context is the normalization of harmful behaviour. In this case, normalization of violence refers to the process whereby harm is an expected (and often invisible) element in citizens’ everyday lived experiences—including on digital platforms. As a response to these processes of normalization, scholars such as Rossanna Reguillo (2021) have noted that one of the most critical challenges in addressing contemporary cultures of harm is “to produce a device of estrangement in the face of violence, to make it come out of its naturalization, to displace it from the territory in which it paralyzes and makes the systems of signification collapse through the idea of its inevitability”83 (p. 68, my own translation). To achieve estrangement, Reguillo (2021, 2023) outlines two possible approaches that can transform the way we experience and make sense of cultures of violence: art and journalism.

In this chapter, I explore a different device of estrangement that can transform how we experience the contemporary cultures of violence: education. More specifically, I argue that—as our everyday encounters with online harm encourage the normalization of practices, cultures, and structures of violence—critical and reflective dialogue about such violence can transform cultures of harm and be a productive device of estrangement that supports the construction and sustainment of peace. To explore the possibilities of education as a device of estrangement, this

83 Original text: “Es producir un dispositivo de extrañamiento frente a la violencia, hacerla salir de su naturalización, desplazarla del territorio en el que paraliza y hace colapsar los sistemas de significación a través de la idea de su inevitabilidad.”
chapter examines a case study where Colombian young adults critically reflect and dialogue about the violence they experience and interact with in their everyday engagement with digital platforms. I argue that, after engaging in these dialogues, participants experienced a transformation in how they understood violence and their role in its enactment through social media, which in turn better equipped them to participate on online platforms.

To respond to the objective of this chapter, I first examine the importance of education in constructing and sustaining cultures of peace and the role of social media in this endeavour. I then outline the methodological design of this study. Next, I examine three disorienting experiences of participants of this study: de-normalization, de-trivialization, and de-individualization. Finally, I explore the implications of such disorienting experiences in relation to digital cultures and learning about peace. Overall, this study illustrates opportunities for integrating discussions of violence on digital platforms into peace education, where critical and collaborative reflections on online harms can lead to changes in cultures of violence.

5.1 Literature review: Peace, education, and digital platforms

Education has long been considered an essential way to transform prevailing narratives, habits, and structures of violence and peace. Its importance is demonstrated in the longstanding tradition of peace education—a field that emphasizes how transformative learning can “help individuals and societies acquire the skills, values, attitudes, and behaviours required for peaceful living” (Kurian & Kester, 2019, p. 12). Put simply, peace education aims to encourage learners to reflect on violence in order to promote acts of peace (Harris, 2004). Indeed, peace education has been demonstrated to be impactful in addressing cultures of violence in numerous
settings, including but not limited to K-12 schools, higher education, and community-based programs (Bajaj, 2015; Galtung, 2008). Peace education is considered a critical element of the efforts to establish and strengthen cultures of peace in Colombia (Morales, 2021; Morales & Gebre, 2021; Velásquez et al., 2017).

As technology becomes increasingly ubiquitous in the lives of those targeted by peace education, its strategic integration with digital media and peace education is ever more critical. Technology has long been seen as a tool that could be productively used for peacebuilding ends, for example through data processing about ongoing conflicts and sharing relevant information to targeted populations (Kahl & Puig Larrauri, 2013). However, scholars have noted that digital technology in peacebuilding efforts is usually approached from a techno-determinist lens—either as techno-solutionism or as techno-problematizing (Hirblinger et al., 2022). Seeing technology as simply a tool to support peacebuilding efforts, rather than as an integral element of contemporary ecologies of violence and peace, positions it as a “pawn in a chess game, subject to the agency of human actors and their organizations or projects that define and implement peacebuilding approaches, and as having a minor role in determining dynamics and outcomes of peacebuilding” (Hirblinger et al., 2022, p. 12). To avoid viewing technology through such a determinist lens, it is necessary to reframe our perspectives in ways that foreground the agency of humans to enact change in the world (Martín-Barbero, 2019; Siles et al., 2023).

In this context, it is necessary to explore the possibilities and challenges that lie at the intersection of peace education and technology. Here, various studies have illustrated how peace education practitioners and scholars have relied on social media platforms as sites to transform understandings of violence and actions on peace. For instance, Molnar (2022) discusses how
everyday experiences of violence on digital platforms allow users to explore and discover the language they need to describe gender violence. Similarly, Choi et al. (2023) consider how social media platforms increasingly function “as an alternative third space in which youth can learn about structural inequities, become motivated to take action against socio political issues, and act to create social change” (p. 14). These studies illustrate the critical role that social media platforms can play when integrated into peace education efforts. In the context of this study, which focuses on the pedagogical dimensions implicated at the intersection of violence and digital platforms, two lines of thought require further examination. First, how can digital media be used to support processes of peace education and second, how can social media impact the construction and sustainment of peace cultures.

The first key area of the literature focuses on how digital media—especially social media platforms—can be used to support peace education. Here, scholars have noted that platforms such as social media “can be used to initiate and promote democratic multilogues among participants of a national and global civil society” (Naseem & Arshad-Ayaz, 2020, p. 7). Such potentiality has been demonstrated in a wide range of cases. For instance, Katz (2020) noted that digital media can support peacebuilding by effectively fostering scenarios where learners can play, explore, learn, or participate on topics relevant to peace content and skills. Similarly, Ataci (2022) discussed how social media memes can encourage young people to express themselves and negotiate meaning-making practices around violent contexts. Moreover, Hirblinger (2022) describes how digital media can have a critical role in peacebuilding when they are understood in their subjunctive role—that is, when envisioning what can be possible or desirable—by detaching people from violent contexts, imagining other possible futures, or unlocking and
reassembling their social sphere. These studies illustrate how digital platforms can be productively used to promote peace education.

The second key area in the literature is focused on how users’ critical engagement with social media platforms can impact the sustainment and construction of peace cultures. The ways people—and especially, young adults—use and make sense of social media has been noted to have important repercussions on democracy, participation, active citizenship, competitiveness, cultural expression, and personal fulfillment (Livingstone et al., 2008; Poyntz et al., 2020). As such, to critically engage with social media is increasingly necessary for nourishing cultures of peace, as it directly impacts and transforms citizens’ identities, practices, and communities (Burnett & Merchant, 2020). For example, Moorhouse and Brooks (2020) discuss how media literacy can promote in students a more critical understanding of gender violence, enabling them to better “understand consent, how problematic perceptions of consent can be changed, and how affirmative consent can be effectively taught and discussed with youth” (p. 95). Similarly, Scharrer’s (2006) work demonstrated that media literacy interventions can promote critical reflection on “rewarded violence, violence that goes unpunished, and violence perpetrated by likeable characters” (p. 81). These studies also emphasize the importance of promoting and supporting social media literacy, which, as a technical, socio-cultural, and critical endeavour (Bélisle, 2006), is an essential element in contemporary peacebuilding. Certainly, how users engage with social media platforms and services has significant implications in our societies by transforming, hosting, and creating wider ranging networks of power (Castells, 2015).

In light of these two lines of inquiry, this chapter aims to explore how critical dialogue and reflection around social media violence can support both peace education and critical
engagement with digital platforms that impact the sustainment and construction of peace cultures.

5.2 Methodology

In this chapter I focus on two data sources to examine how participants critically reflected and discussed the violence they experience and interact with in their everyday engagement with digital platforms. First, I examined the transcripts of the conversations of each discussion group, especially on the occasions when they expressed things they have learned or estrangement from any aspect of violence. Second, I drew on participant responses to the exit survey, which aimed to capture their thoughts about violence on social media and assess their learning at the end of the study. More specifically, I focused on participants’ responses to the following questions: “What have you learned as a result of your participation in this project?” “Did your approach towards social media violence change?” “If you think it changed, how did it change? If you think it changed, why did it change?”

To explore both the ways in which participants were estranged from their experiences of social media violence and the possible implications concerning a transformative learning experience, I made use of two processes of data analysis for this chapter. To explore experiences of estrangement, I followed a data-driven approach, in which participants’ experiences and insights were analyzed inductively. Here, I first coded the data into patterns of similar meaning, creating codes such as forms of violence, personal role in violence, platforms functioning, and multiple points of view. I then generated an initial set of themes to group the codes, focused on three ideas: awareness of violence, socialization of violence, and importance
of violence. The final version of the themes (available in Table 6, below) was created after further revision of the data, alongside the relevant scholarly work (Green, 2022; Molnar, 2022; e.g., Reguillo, 2021) and the research objectives of this chapter.

A second focus of this chapter is the process of transformative learning. Here, participant statements that showed evidence of transformative learning (e.g., “I am now more consistent with myself and my environment” [Sofia]) were included in the sample of this study. To analyze this set of data, I first applied a two-step deductive approach. Drawing on the two lines of inquiry identified in the literature review, I established two main themes—one on peace and violence and the other on social media platform use. After coding the available data within these two themes, I coded data into relevant subthemes by adapting the work of Hoggan (2016b)—who outlines how transformative learning can be seen as an analytical metatheory to “provide categorizations of components that are common among all the underlying theories” (p. 63). Within this metatheory, Hoggan (2016a) outlines a typology of transformative learning that consists of various categories of learning outcomes: worldview, self, epistemology, ontology, behaviour, and capacity—categories that were used to analyze participants’ transformative processes. The resulting themes and sub-themes can be seen in Table 7 (below).

84 Original text: “Ahora soy más coherente conmigo y mi entorno.”
Table 6. Themes and subthemes used for data analysis of the estrangement experiences during the project concerning violence on social media platforms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (original)</th>
<th>Theme (translation)</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Sub-theme (original)</th>
<th>Definition (translation)</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normalización</td>
<td>Normalization</td>
<td>Process by which violence becomes a normal element of uses of digital platforms</td>
<td>Evidencias de normalización</td>
<td>Normalization of violence</td>
<td>Evidence of normalization of violence across participant experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trivialización</td>
<td>Trivialization</td>
<td>Process by which violence becomes an</td>
<td>Evidencias de trivialización</td>
<td>Trivialization of violence</td>
<td>Evidence of trivialization of violence across participant experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (original)</td>
<td>Theme (translation)</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Sub-theme (original)</td>
<td>Sub-theme (translation)</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme sub-theme</td>
<td>Theme translation</td>
<td>unimportant</td>
<td>Evidencia de de-trivialización</td>
<td>De-trivialization of violence</td>
<td>Evidence of de-normalization of violence as a result of participant’s involvement in the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>issue for</td>
<td>De-trivialization of violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>participants</td>
<td>Evidencia de de-trivialización</td>
<td>Evidencia de individualización</td>
<td>Evidence of individualization of violence across participant experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualización</td>
<td>Individualization</td>
<td>Process by</td>
<td>Evidencias de individualización</td>
<td>Evidence of individualization</td>
<td>Evidence of individualization of violence as a result of participant’s involvement in the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>which violence is perceived to be an individual problem</td>
<td>Evidencia de individualización</td>
<td>Evidence of individualization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7. Themes and subthemes used for data analysis of the transformative learning experiences during the process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (original)</th>
<th>Theme (translation)</th>
<th>Definition sub-theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme (original)</th>
<th>Sub-theme (translation)</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aprendizaje</td>
<td>Transformative learning</td>
<td>Evidence of transformative learning</td>
<td>Visión compleja del mundo</td>
<td>Complex worldview</td>
<td>Changes in the perceived complexity of violence and peace on social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paz y violencia</td>
<td>learning: peace and violence</td>
<td>rol personal en relación con la violencia y la paz</td>
<td>Acciones</td>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>Changes in perceptions concerning what they can and should do concerning peace and violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (original)</td>
<td>Theme (translation)</td>
<td>Definition sub-theme</td>
<td>Sub-theme (original)</td>
<td>Sub-theme (translation)</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aprendizaje transformador: redes sociales</td>
<td>Transformative learning: social media</td>
<td>Evidence of transformative learning</td>
<td>Concientización</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Changes in the awareness of the critical role of social media in societal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Visión compleja del mundo</td>
<td>Complex worldview</td>
<td>Changes in the perceived complexity of social media platforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rol personal en relación con redes sociales</td>
<td>Self in relation to social media</td>
<td>Changes in their perceived roles concerning social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Acciones</td>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>Changes in perceptions concerning what they can and should do concerning social media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Estrangement of participants' experiences: De-normalizing, de-trivializing, and de-individualizing violence on social media

In the theory of transformative learning, frames of reference both shape and limit how we interact with and make sense of the world. In the case of this study, frames of reference shape and limit how participants interact and make sense of violence within and outside social media platforms. As such, the objective of this project is to critically examine, unsettle, and disorient the frames of reference participants drew on to understand violence—or, as Reguillo (2021) puts it, to create devices of estrangement. The process of ungrounding frames of reference is a key way of enacting transformative learning, as the resulting groundless experience “anticipates an opportunity for transformation—a transitional space in which we might create a new social imaginary” (Green, 2022, p. 2). These ungrounding processes that create dilemmas have been shown to productively lead to transformative learning (Cino & Formenti, 2021). In this study, there were three ungrounding experiences for participants: de-normalization, de-trivialization, and de-individualization of violence.

5.3.1 De-normalization: Estrangement from mindless scrolling

Following the initial online discussion with one of the participant groups, the WhatsApp chat that we had been using was silent. This was despite the fact that I had asked them to share whatever form of violence they identified in their everyday uses of social media. At that first meeting, they told me that identifying violent content would not be challenging, as it was prevalent in their engagements with social media platforms. Indeed, a participant even said: “we
are exposed to social media violence just by being there”\textsuperscript{85} (Sofia), demonstrating a perception that identifying violence on digital platforms was easy. When we held our second meeting and I asked them about their lack of participation in the chat, they said it was tough to identify violence. The problem, they acknowledged, was not that there was no violence—they had no problem reflecting on their week and thinking of multiple examples of violence. The problem was, instead, that they had a hard time identifying violence as violence in the moment that they were using the platforms. For example, Valeria said: “All the time we are seeing content, it is all very fast. Seeing content is automatic: You consume information, you forget it, you consume information, and you forget it.”\textsuperscript{86} In this case, participants scrolled through violence as if it were just another form of content they consumed, which constrained their process of identifying it as violence.

However, as the process of discussion and reflection advanced, participants became capable of identifying violence more easily. This process of destabilizing the normality of violence—one that is deemed as necessary to critically educate about peace, especially in Colombia (Padilla & Bermúdez, 2016)—was one of the most notable experiences across all participants. For example, Sofia noted: “Before [these discussions] I didn’t care much and normalized atrocious things. Now I’m more detailed, consistent with myself and my environment.”\textsuperscript{87} Here, participants directly attributed the process of de-normalizing violence as a

\textsuperscript{85} Original text: “Nosotros estamos expuestos a la violencia en redes solo con el hecho de estar ahí.”
\textsuperscript{86} Original text: “Todo el tiempo estamos viendo contenido, todo muy rápido. Vemos contenido en automático: consumimos información, la olvidamos; consumimos información y la olvidamos.”
\textsuperscript{87} Original text: “Antes no me preocupaba mucho y normalizaba cosas atroces. Ahora soy más detallista, coherente conmigo misma y con mi entorno”
consequence of engaging in discussions and reflections. Further evidence of this was noted by Melissa, as follows:

In my daily life—before I started these conversations—I would see on Twitter a comment and say “oops, that’s bad,” but I just keep going like nothing... now I see it and I try to write it down and say "this would be cool to share on [the discussion group for this study]," so it’s more like that activity, like an effort of making it visible.88

The process of de-normalizing violence not only involved noticing it as they used social media platforms, but also recognizing the multiple forms and shapes that it can take—that is, they redefined what violence meant for them. For instance, some participants stated that, following the study discussions, they recognized how specific features of platforms were used to enact violence, noting, for example, that violence “can hide in the comment section”89 (Valeria). Participants also noted that violence is often hard to identify: “Many things are violence. In social media, [harm] is silent and even more dangerous”90 (Valeria). This new delineation of what violence is and how it is shaped is better illustrated concerning humour. For example, Alejandro recounted how critical it was for him to learn how to differentiate humour from violence: “You say, ‘Oh, that’s a joke and that’s it’. Then you realize that you have to differentiate between when it really is a joke and when you know that it is really hurting the

88 Original text: “En mi vida diaria—antes de empezar estas conversaciones—veía en Twitter un comentario y decía “uy, qué mal”, pero seguía como si nada... ahora lo veo e intento escribirlo y digo “esto estaría chévere compartirlo en el encuentro,” así que es más como esa actividad, como un esfuerzo de hacerlo visible.”
89 Original text: “Se puede ocultar en los comentarios”
90 Original text: “muchas cosas más son violencia. En redes [la violencia] es silenciosa e incluso más peligrosa”
other person.” As a further illustration of this process of redefining humorous content as violence, Maria told the following story:

If we hadn’t started with these conversations, I certainly would have had a good laugh at some of the things I said that I thought were supremely violent this week. And I would have laughed and maybe shared it. But now the first thing I thought was “this is violent.” Doing that conscious exercise [of noticing violence] helps to stop reproducing these behaviors. And to reproof them, because in the end I feel that in networks people are also very exposed and that reproach sometimes limits behavior too.

An important result of this process of de-normalizing violence is being able to identify harmful content and to distinguish content that is violent. As Molnar (2022) notes, social media experiences often help young adults “find … words for their experiences, or … fill a gap in knowledge from the circulation or discovery of resources and materials online” (p. 335). Indeed, Maria noted the following: “I began to question the kind of things I saw as ‘normal,’ to see them for what they are: violence.” To name online violence as such is a transformative moment, as it allowed participants to better frame their responses when they observed it going forward (Schmid et al., 2022). For instance, Maria observed

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91 Original text: “Uno dice ‘ah eso es un chiste y ya.’ Entonces es como uno se da cuenta, de diferenciar cuando de verdad sí es un chiste y cuando verdad uno sabe que a la otra persona le hace daño”

92 Original text: “Si no hubiéramos empezado con estas conversaciones, seguramente yo me habría reído mucho con algunas de las cosas que dije que me parecieron supremamente violentas esta semana. Y me habría reído y quizás lo habría compartido. Pero cuando yo lo primero que pensé fue ‘esto es violento,’ entonces hacer ese ejercicio consciente, yo creo que ayuda también a dejar de reproducir estas conductas. Y a reprocharlas, pues porque finalmente siento que en redes también está la gente muy expuesta y ese reproche a veces limita mucho el comportamiento también.”

93 Original text: “Empecé a cuestionarme el tipo de cosas que veía como "normales", a verlas como lo que son: violencia”
I think the word violence is a very strong word. You are told “violence” and you say “oh damn”. But yes, it is necessary to call things by their name ... Becoming aware that there is violence and to start calling things as they are, makes you see beyond what I can do not to influence this kind of thing and not to see things so lightly.\(^\text{94}\)

### 5.3.2 De-trivialization: Estrangement from digital dualism

Nevertheless, even as the participants became more adept at identifying violence, at times they thought that because its impacts were confined to the digital sphere—online harms did not matter as much as other forms of violence taking place in the real world. For example, when discussing the importance of violence on social media in relation to the armed conflict in the country, Alejandro said that “social media fights do not transcend to the personal or real life behind the screen, it seems to me that they are not affecting us very much.”\(^\text{95}\) In these cases, there seemed to be a boundary that some participants drew between the online and the offline world, diminishing the possible importance of harm enacted over digital platforms and recognizing them as ‘less impactful.’

The distinction between the online and offline world as described by the participants is a reflection of digital dualism, which is the impulse to place a boundary between the ‘real’ and the

\(^{94}\) Original text: “La palabra violencia es una palabra muy fuerte. A uno le dicen violencia y uno dice “ay jueputa”. Pero sí, es llamar a las cosas por su nombre . . . Entonces el hecho de ser conscientes de que hay una violencia y de empezar a llamar las cosas como son, lo hace a uno ver como más allá de que puedo hacer para no influir en este tipo de cosas y pues no ver cómo las cosas tan a la ligera.”

\(^{95}\) Original text: “Esas luchas en las redes no trascienden a lo personal o a la vida real detrás de la pantalla, entonces me parece que no nos están afectando mucho”
‘digital’ (Jurgenson, 2011). Digital dualism, as noted by Gosse (2021), has serious implications for violence in digital environments, as it erases or diminishes the harm of online abuse by hijacking “an important process of recognition” (p. 59). Indeed, separating offline from online harms is an impossible task. For example, Williams et al. (2019) found profound associations between offline and online hate speech promoting racial and religious violence in London. Likewise, feminist scholars have argued that online harms against women are part of a continuum of violence that sustains, expands, and reproduces patriarchal systems and, as such, they should not be treated as isolated events in the online world (Fairbairn, 2022; Jane, 2018). In this regard, through the discussion process, participants were able to recognize the impact that violence on digital platforms can have on themselves and their communities and that technologies are inseparable aspects of daily life (Gómez Cruz, 2022). For instance, Samuel observed that “multiple forms of violence ... transcend virtual spaces.”

Before participating in this project, I had normalized violence in social media and used not to give it the importance it requires. Now I can analyze more deeply any publication that I consider violent and think about how it connects with me and what social phenomena may be generating it.

By acknowledging that violence on digital platforms is not trivial and that it is connected to social phenomena, participants were able to identify how systemic issues are represented and expanded on through social media platforms—thus recognizing that issues of gender, race, or

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96 Original text: “Múltiples formas de violencia ... trascienden los espacios virtuales”
97 Original text: “Antes de participar en este proyecto, había normalizado la violencia en las redes sociales y no solía darle la importancia que requiere. Ahora puedo analizar más profundamente cualquier publicación que considere violenta y pensar en cómo conecta conmigo y qué fenómenos sociales pueden estar generándola.”
armed conflict in the country (to name a few) are part of their everyday uses of social media platforms. For instance, Maria said: “everything we see in the physical world will be immediately transferred to social media. Well, because social media are already part of our daily lives and in social media, we show a reflection of what is happening in society.” As such, the process of de-trivializing violence on social media entails a critical exploration of the role of digital platforms in sustaining, expanding, and reproducing symbolic violence (Kramsch, 2020; Recuero, 2015). In Colombia, such symbolic violence has proven to be a key way to dehumanize actors of the armed conflict, which in turn inhibits building and sustainment cultures of peace (Tutkal, 2023).

### 5.3.3 De-individualization: Estrangement from fragmented communities

When participants reflected on their involvement in the project at the end of our meetings, they noted that there were few regular opportunities for them to openly talk about violence with others. For example, Tobias noted that “it is difficult to talk about [our experiences with violence] in the streets, because I believe that we do not know how to dialogue about this.” Carlos said: “[To talk about the violence] is a taboo, something I can’t talk about.” This individualized encounter with violence resembles the findings of Hodson and colleagues (2021), who found that victims of online abuse engage in individualized coping mechanisms

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98 Original text: “Todo lo que vemos en el mundo físico se traslada inmediatamente a las redes sociales. Pues porque las redes sociales ya forman parte de nuestra vida cotidiana y en ellas mostramos un reflejo de lo que ocurre en la sociedad”

99 Original text: “Es difícil hablar de esto en la calle, porque creo que no sabemos dialogar sobre esto”

100 Original text: “Halar de esto como un tabú, algo que no lo puedo hablar”
(e.g., blocking perpetrators and deleting messages) due to broader institutional indifference. In this sense, participants argued that opportunities for discussing violence were rare for a variety of reasons, but mostly to do with a culture of avoiding such discussions for fear of retaliation. Nevertheless, literature from the field of peace education has noted the importance of dialogue as an important tool to recognize and transform cultures of violence. For example, Kester (2012) notes that the “overall goal of [peace education] is to transform conflict through dialogue and nonviolence towards the creation of sustainable and peaceful communities” (p. 8, emphasis added). Similarly, Gürsel-Bilgin (2020) posits dialogue as “an essential foundation for teaching peace” (p. 28).

The results of the study showcase the value of dialogue in ungounding individual’s perception of violence in two key ways. First, participants noted that discussing violence with others illuminated that they shared these experiences. For instance, they argued that the space afforded by this project felt “like freedom, like an outlet, like talking about something you don’t usually do, because you don’t question violence on social networks. ... In here I feel like I am liberated from what happened to me, from what I experienced. I question social media, I become aware of it in a different way”101 (Sofia). Similarly, Manuela noted that “It’s very cool to have spaces like this, that give you that moment of awareness, more in depth and of everything, both of yourself and of how the world moves and also to have other perspectives.”102 Indeed, they

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101 Original text: “Como libertad, desahogo, como de hablar de eso que habitualmente no lo haces, pues tú no te cuestionas de violencias en redes…. Entonces aquí como que siente como liberación de lo que me pasó, de lo que experimento, cuestiono acerca de las redes sociales, concientizarse de una forma diferente”

102 Original text: “Muy chévere tener como espacios así, que te dan como ese momento de concientización, más a fondo y de todo, tanto de ti mismo como de cómo se mueve el mundo y también a tener otras perspectivas”
noted that sharing with others allowed them to see dialogue as a way of “letting off steam and to express what I would not normally do”\textsuperscript{103} (Sofia). As such, dialogue is used to construct relational bonds with others and as an outlet for negative emotions.

Second, participants were able to learn about and reflect on different viewpoints and experiences of violence and peace. For example, Tobias said the following: “The different perspectives a group may have on the definition and interpretation of violence highlight how it is something so subjective, but where there can be common ground.”\textsuperscript{104} This kind of learning enables individuals to develop deeper engagement with the contextual and subjective aspects of violence. In other words, learning about others’ lived experiences enables critical engagement with and reflection on the topics of peace and violence.

5.4 Implications: Understanding and responding to violence on social media

In the previous section, I examined the use of discussions about violence on social media, noting how they serve to support estrangement in three areas: de-normalization, de-trivialization, and de-individualization. I will now discuss the possible implications of these findings. As outlined in the literature review, this section is organized into two parts: How participants transformed their engagement with violence and how they transformed their engagement with social media platforms.

\textsuperscript{103} Original text: “Desahogarme y expresar lo que normalmente no haría”
\textsuperscript{104} Original text: “Las diferentes perspectivas que puede tener un grupo sobre la definición e interpretación de lo que es violencia, Y como en algo tan subjetivo pueden llegar a existir puntos comunes.”
Nevertheless, it is important to first note a limitation of the implications of this study. In transformative learning, the ungrounding experience is the beginning of the change to an individual’s frames of reference (Green, 2022). However, significant transformation in frames of reference can only be evidenced by the duration of such change—that is, transformative learning can only be demonstrated if such transformation persists over time (Hoggan, 2016b; Kitchenham, 2008; Mezirow, 2006). As this study did not include a follow-up with participants after the study ended, it is impossible to demonstrate a long-lasting transformation concerning violence or digital platforms. As such, the following section explores the possible implications of dialogue on social media violence as a pedagogical device to promote peace education. Future research could explore how dialogue about digital violence can foster long lasting transformative learning by conducting longer studies.

5.4.1 Transforming learning concerning peace and violence

One of the main transformations participants experienced was in how they perceive, define, and relate to violence in the real world and on social media platforms. This change in perception is mainly due to their views of violence becoming more comprehensive and complex (Hoggan, 2016a). As a result of their participation in the conversations, participants perspectives became more inclusive of multiple facets of violence and noted the importance of taking into consideration different perspectives. Here, participants demonstrated more empathy toward others’ experiences of violence. For instance, Manuela said she “learned that listening to different perspectives will always be imperative for personal growth and maybe even change
your concept of different things.”

Through these transformative experiences and greater critical reflection, participants were noticeably better equipped to identify the nuances of language and behaviour that constitute violence.

Furthermore, participants also described instances where they transformed their attitude toward violence. This transformation of the self in relation to violence is a common feature of transformative learning, where learners change how they perceive their interconnections with others or their place in the world (Hoggan, 2016a). More notably, participants described instances in which they were able to more readily identify their personal role in the promotion, enactment or expansion of violence. For instance, Liliana noted: “I have learned to stop myself from being a participant in absurd violence.” Similarly, Irene pointed out that she “learned to identify violence and not normalize it automatically down in the feed.”

Finally, some participants claimed that, as a result of the changes around their perception and attitudes toward violence, they now act differently in response to observing violence online and in person. For instance, participants said that they now critically reflect on how they interact with violence, especially aiming to continually transform how they engage with violent content within and outside of social media. For example, Mia said that she now aims “to question the position I assume when I witness an act that I might consider reprehensible, and also, to ask

105 Original text: “Aprendí que escuchar diferentes perspectivas siempre será imperativo para el crecimiento personal y tal vez hasta puedes cambiar tu concepto de distintas cosas. Ahora veo las redes sociales de una manera distinta de la que las solía ver.”

106 Original text: “He aprendido a cohibirme más de ser partícipe de violencia absurda”

107 Original text: “Aprendí a identificar la violencia y a no normalizarla automáticamente en el feed”
myself when I am a participant or when I legitimize violence.” 108 As such, some participants noted that their frames of reference were transformed “by being aware of the violence presented in social media and, consequently, to avoid reproducing and generating it” 109 (Maria). Finally, they also reflected on situations in which they were violent and how they could act otherwise, for example, Mia said that “I realized that sometimes I can be violent, even if I don’t mean to be; or I am condescending. I realized that sometimes I do things that I am supposed to reproach. But I’m more aware by analyzing events and self-reflecting on it to improve.” 110

### 5.4.2 Transforming engagement with social media platforms

Not only did participants change how they respond to and understand violence—they also transformed their views and use of social media platforms. This was illustrated most commonly by a greater awareness of the influence of social media on the power dynamics of their communities. Commenting on the benefits of talking about and reflecting on violence, Carlos observed that the experience “made me more aware of what I see in my day-to-day life, how social media is a more dramatic reflection of society.” 111 Such enhanced awareness of the importance of social media platforms in contemporary societies is supported by a more nuanced and complex understanding of the different ways in which violence can be enacted here. For

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108 Original text: “A cuestionar la posición que asumo cuando presencio algún acto que podría considerar como reprochable, y también, preguntarme a mí misma cuándo soy partícipe o cuándo legitimo la violencia”
109 Original text: “Siendo conscientes de la violencia que se presenta en las redes y, en consecuencia, evitar reproducirla y generarla”.
110 Original text: “Caí en cuenta que a veces puedo ser violenta, aun sin quererlo; o soy condescendiente. Me di cuenta de que a veces hago cosas que se supone que reprocho. Pero soy más consciente al analizar sucesos y auto reflexionar al respecto para mejorar.”
111 Original text: “Me hizo más consciente de lo que veo en mi día a día, como las redes sociales son un reflejo más dramático de la sociedad.”
instance, Sofia noted her involvement in the study enabled her “to be able to understand the term violence in social media, to become aware of the real violence that is generated in social media and is often normalized.” Indeed, the participants demonstrated an improved ability to more critically examine how platforms function and enact power through statements such as “social media have many flaws in their algorithms” (Samuel) and “when I’m on Tik Tok watching something, it’s like, well, what the hell am I watching this for, this doesn’t contribute anything to me” (Liliana). The latter example illustrates a transformation in the participants’ perception of themselves in relation to social media platforms. Most notably, they were better able to see how their participation in these spaces can reproduce cultures of violence, as demonstrated by Liliana’s observation that she “stopped being automatic when using social media. (. . .) [and] learned to be more inhibited from being a participant of absurd violence.” Likewise, Veronica noted: “Sometimes the simple fact of scrolling after seeing so much violence, so many accusations and so many insults… It’s like I accept violence.”

Accordingly, having increased awareness of the impacts of social media and having developed new concepts of themselves when engaging on digital platforms, participants’ frames of references could have been transformed concerning how they use and interact with social media.

112 Original text: “Entender el término de violencia en redes sociales, el hacerme consciente de la verdadera violencia que se genera en redes y muchas veces se normaliza”
113 Original text: “Las redes sociales tienen muchas fallas en sus algoritmos”
114 “Estoy en TikTok viendo algo, es como que bueno, para qué rayos estoy viendo esto, esto no me aporta nada”
115 Original text: “Dejé de estar en automático al usar las redes sociales. (. . .) [y] aprendí a inhibirme más antes de ser partícipe de violencia absurda.
116 Original text: “A veces el simple hecho de deslizar la pantalla después de ver tanta violencia, tantas acusaciones y tantos insultos… Es como que yo acepto la violencia”
media. For instance, they showcased changes of habits in the way they engaged with the platform. For example, Arturo noted:

> Sometimes I give likes and I have to take them down because... whether it’s Instagram or Twitter… I feel that it doesn’t go with my whole opinion as such. And I feel like it could be seen as affected just to say, “Ah, well that was fun, it was funny whatever” and it’s a comment that was really violent, that had like touches of violence and I say “no really this doesn’t represent me.”

Indeed, participants demonstrated a more critical consumption of social media content, noting that, for example: “I question myself when commenting or supporting a comment or photo through a reaction or depending on the comment, [I] report it and see what each social network can do about it” (Carlos). Similarly, Veronica noted that “I learned to be more critical of the content I consume on social media and recognized the power that words can have on a person.” Overall, participants were more conscious of the social importance of their actions on digital platforms and tried to improve how they acted on them. This was demonstrated by observations such as “I am more conscious and from my perception I do my best to create justice or also to create a collective consciousness” (Sofia).

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117 Original text: “A veces doy likes y los tengo que quitar porque... ya sea de Instagram de Twitter… porque siento que no va con toda mi opinión como tal. Y siento que pudiera como verse como afectado solamente por decir, “Ah, pues estuvo divertido, fue gracioso cualquier cosa” y es un comentario que realmente haya sido violento, que haya tenido como toques de violencia y que digo “no realmente esto no me representa”.”

118 Original text: “Me cuestiono a la hora de comentar o apoyar un comentario o foto mediante una reacción, o dependiendo el comentario denunciarlo y ver que pueden hacer al respecto cada red social”

119 Original text: “Aprendí a ser más crítico con los contenidos que consumo en las redes sociales y reconocí el poder que las palabras pueden tener sobre una persona.”

120 Original text: “Soy más consciente y desde mi percepción hago todo lo posible por crear justicia o también crear una consciencia colectiva.”
5.5 Conclusion

Discussing the challenge of communicating care in times of institutional, political, and technological transformations, Chouliaraki (2013) notes that what is needed are new ways of understanding and engaging with solidarity—a solidarity that balances feelings of empathy with judgement and action. In this context, she noted the importance of estrangement as a key strategy to respond to such increasing feelings of apathy towards the suffering of others, focusing on two central elements:

First, exposure to otherness, to a quality of humanity that invites empathy not through the various appropriations of otherness, characteristic of pity or irony, but precisely by challenging our notions of what or who the human is; and, second, engagement with argument, not in terms of the moral certainties of pity or the brand logos of irony, but as a systematic deliberation around social values and their justifications for solidary action.

(p. 471)

Accordingly, and as shown in this study, providing opportunities for individuals to discuss and reflect on violence on digital platforms can serve as meaningful device of estrangement to encourage and strengthen cultures of peace. Indeed, in this chapter I discussed how ungrounding the normalization, trivialization, and individualization of violence through dialogue can transform the ways people engage with peace and media in their everyday lives. As Reguillo (2021) explains, “in the face of this device of extermination and terror, the only possibility is to produce distance, estrangement … To name [violence] is a political act against
fear and paralysis.” As such, in this chapter I have posited collaborative and critical reflection about online harms as a device for estrangement of violence, one that allows us to name and materialize the contemporary ecologies of violence. Furthermore, the three elements outlined here—de-normalization, de-trivialization, and de-individualization of violence—serve as further development of the devices of estrangement, offering operational nuances for those seeking to expand on this concept in future work.

This study has implications for scholars and educators working in the fields of social media and peace education. Indeed, findings of this study highlight significant opportunities to embed awareness of and discussions about social media violence into peace education. As discussed previously, social media has proven to be a useful device in the classroom for teaching about peace, by providing learners with elements to name violence (Molnar, 2022), express themselves (Ataci, 2022), learn about societal inequalities (Choi et al., 2023), or reimagine different futures (Hirblinger, 2022), among other possibilities. This study then contributes to existing literature by emphasizing the potentials to reorient meaning-making processes concerning violence by paying attention to and critically reflecting on social media harms.

These pedagogical opportunities are particularly important in Colombia, as possible waves of conflict arise (Gutiérrez-Sanín, 2020) and make necessary concerted efforts to transform existing cultures of violence and peace (J. O. Melo, 2021; Waldmann, 2007). In this context, peace education has proven to be a useful approach to build and sustain cultures of

121 Original text: “Frente a este dispositivo de exterminio y terror, la única posibilidad es la de producir distancia, extrañamiento. . . nombrar es un acto político contra el miedo y la parálisis”.
peace (Kester, 2012), as long as the curriculum is reflective of the lived experience of those vulnerable to violence (Bajaj, 2015; Gur-Ze’ev, 2001). The pedagogical approaches towards peace education and technology described here could be applied in both formal (e.g., K-12 classrooms) and informal settings (e.g., community programs). In this sense, as social media platforms are increasingly intertwined with the everyday lives of Colombian citizens (Kemp, 2023b), the implications of this study ought to be taken into consideration for future peace education initiatives. Indeed, as peace education initiatives in the country struggle to properly contextualize their content to the lived experiences of communities (Bellino et al., 2022; Morales, 2021), critically and collaboratively reflecting on social media violence could be a powerful device to engage students in meaningful learning experiences regarding their perceptions, experiences, and actions to do with violence and peace they encounter.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

Nearing the end of the presentation of the final report of the Truth Commission of Colombia—a commission in charge of clarifying the patterns and explanatory causes of the internal armed conflict in the country—Francisco de Roux (the president of the commission) started listing the questions that guided the ongoing reflections of the organization. One question, in particular, caught the attention of many Colombian citizens. Here, de Roux asked: “How did we dare to let [this conflict] happen, and how can we dare to allow it to continue?” (El Espectador, 2022). Underlying this question was a call for all Colombians to reflect on how we—as citizens of the country—allowed armed violence to become part of our landscape, just another element that adorned our everyday lives. This was an invitation, overall, to critically examine the culture of Colombia concerning violence and peace.

As I have argued across the various chapters of this dissertation, social media is now a crucial element through which we live with violence—they are spaces where we encounter, make sense of, share, and experience violence. As a response, the aim of this dissertation is to provide insights into how young adults live with violence through digital technologies. To achieve this objective, in this conclusion I first summarize the findings of the previous chapters, noting how they respond to the overarching objective of this study. I then outline the main implications of these findings, focusing on how they could be taken up by digital platform users,

122 Original text: “‘Cómo nos atrevimos a dejar que pasara y cómo nos podemos atrever a permitir que continúe pasando’.”
educators, researchers, platforms, and policymakers. Finally, I explore future work and limitations of this study, framing possible paths of future research.

6.1 Summary of findings

As this dissertation set about to explore Colombian young adults’ views on and experiences concerning violence on social media, it focused on three aspects of this process: the violence that young people encounter in their everyday engagements with digital platforms, the processes of meaning-making around violence, and the potential of education as a device of estrangement toward violence. In this sense, this study aimed to uncover the cultural and communicative processes through which social media users encounter violence (Barth et al., 2023; Cover, 2023), with vital implications for the Colombian context. In the next paragraphs, I will describe the main findings of this study.

Findings of Chapter 3 showed that young adults experience and encounter violence in an ecological manner—that is, as closely interwoven with their technological and cultural surroundings. To make sense of these ecologies of violence on social media, I first noted a wide range of practices that participants described throughout the length of this study, noting how violence is enacted through digital platforms, amplified by their affordances, expanded beyond online environments, enacted by platforms, and naturalized. Second, I showed how these enactments of violence are connected to particular contexts, where various and intertwined temporalities, spaces, actors, structures, and cultures are made visible or invisible. Finally, I discussed how violence is structured and reorganized across platforms—that is, there are various grammars of violence, where each social media site emphasizes a certain discursive reordering of
the enactment and representation of harm. Overall, this chapter illustrates the nature of the violence that participants encountered in their everyday uses of social media platforms, showcasing its pervasiveness and complexity.

Chapter 4 then aimed to explore how such pervasiveness of social media mediates young adults’ meaning-making processes concerning violence. The results of this chapter show how social media platforms profoundly transform processes of meaning-making of violence, present across the mediation of violence on time (e.g., the collapse of past and present violence), space (e.g., the expansion of terrains of violence accessible to users), technicities (e.g., the tensions between violence as entertainment, information, expression, or harm), and sensorialities (e.g., the multiple emotional responses users have when interacting with violence). Indeed, this chapter noted how young adults are often overexposed to violence on social media—frequently portrayed under the logic of spectacles and entertainment. Such over-exposure can lead to a collapse of their interpretative systems and results in the normalization of violence, where violence becomes just another piece of content that young adults encounter in their everyday engagements with social media.

As a response to these ongoing processes of normalization of violence, Chapter 5 explored how promoting scenarios where people discuss and reflect on violence on digital platforms can be a meaningful device of estrangement to encourage and strengthen cultures of peace. Here, I discussed how the process of ungrounding our understandings of social media violence—especially around its normalization, trivialization, and individualization—through pedagogical dialogue can transform the ways young adults engage with peace and media. In this sense, I argue that collaborative and critical reflection on social media violence can provide the
distance and estrangement that allow us to name and materialize the practices, cultures, and structures of violence we inhabit.

In sum, the findings of this dissertation emphasize the critical role that social media platforms play in contemporary cultures of violence in Colombia—due to both its pervasiveness, complexity, and processes of mediation in citizens’ meaning-making around harm and peace. In this context, education—and more specifically, critical dialogue and reflection—appears as a productive space to unground existing cultures of violence and support processes of peacebuilding.

6.2 Implications

As mentioned across the different chapters of this dissertation, the findings of this study have several implications for those experiencing, responding to, or trying to make sense of violence on digital platforms. In this section, I discuss some of the most critical implications of these studies. To achieve this, I will focus on four particular populations: 1) social media users (with a specific focus on Colombian citizens), 2) educators, 3) platform governance and policymakers, and 4) scholars of violence on social media.

6.2.1 Social media users

This dissertation discusses how violence on social media is both ubiquitous and complex in the everyday experiences of Colombian citizens, which has profound implications for social media users. For example, it has been noted that encountering violence on social media
transforms the formation of our identities and our sense of subjectivity (Cover, 2023), disrupts our sense of belonging and community (Cover, 2022), normalizes power structures (Marwick, 2021), expands the reach and impact of symbolic violence (Kramsch, 2020; Recuero, 2015), and sustains systems of oppression, such as racial (Jakubowicz, 2017; Patton et al., 2017) and patriarchal (Benavides-Vanegas, 2020; Phipps et al., 2018) cultures. In this sense, results from this dissertation emphasize the need for social media users—especially Colombians—to be aware of the presence of social media violence.

Additionally, in the context of the ubiquity and complexity of social media violence, results of this dissertation illustrate the multiple ways in which digital platforms mediate Colombian processes of sense-making concerning harm and peace. In addition to the discussions around senses, techniques, space, and time, this impact is also evidenced in the processes of the normalization, trivialization, and individualization of violence in Colombian culture. In a setting where it is impossible to escape these emergent and transformed ecologies of violence, it is a critical task for citizens to create and sustain spaces where they can collaboratively and reflectively observe, name, and narrate the violence—which are, as noted by Reguillo (2021), political acts against fear and paralysis (p. 100). A venue to negotiate and challenge these impacts of social media violence in our meaning-making processes is to create collective encounters where it is possible to collaboratively reflect and transform how we engage with digital platforms. These spaces could take the form of higher education classes, clubs, museums, and community-led programs.
6.2.2 Educators

Given the prevalence of digital violence discussed previously, it is no surprise that a major implication of this study is the need to address online harms in and from the classrooms in Colombia. Indeed, the findings of this dissertation show that—as social media is now an inescapable element that shapes and is shaped by cultures of violence in the country—it is of critical importance to consider it a necessary part of peace education efforts. As such, findings of this study align with previous calls to move beyond a techno-deterministic view of technology in peacebuilding (Hirblinger, 2022), as well as with studies that have illustrated the need to consider digital platforms as an essential element of the contemporary peace education classroom (Ataci, 2022; Katz, 2020; Naseem & Arshad-Ayaz, 2020).

A particular opportunity to include social media in the peace education curriculum is focused on the affordances of digital platforms to unground our understandings of cultures of violence—illustrated in this study by the possibilities to de-normalize, de-trivialize, and de-individualize violence. This opportunity has been suggested before by various scholars, such as Molnar (2022), who discussed how social media can unsettle and clarify contexts of violence that are opaque and invisible, highlighting productive uses of digital media to promote care and solidarity. Similarly, Nagle (2018) discussed how engaging in critical examinations of how we use and understand social media platforms can be a tool for teachers to “enter into difficult conversations with their students to uncover dominant narratives, which exist and shape our existing communications via social media” (p. 93).

These possibilities for promoting critical engagement with peace through explorations of social media violence are particularly relevant in the Colombian context. Indeed, past education
initiatives (such as Cátedra de la Paz) have failed to sustain long-standing strategies to foment and support the construction of peace cultures within K-12 (e.g., Bellino et al., 2022) and higher education institutions (e.g., Alcaraz Herrera et al., 2023). There have been various reasons such peace education efforts have failed—for instance, lack of institutional support, lack of clarity in its goals, and lack of articulation with existing curriculum standards (Morales, 2021). However, one of the most critical challenges has been the lack of pedagogical tools to properly contextualize the educational efforts to the lived realities of the communities these strategies aim to transform (Morales & Gebre, 2021). Accordingly, engaging in pedagogical processes such as those described in this dissertation—dialoguing on everyday encounters with violence on social media to potentially transform their frames of reference to what it means to be at peace—could be a useful approach in Colombian schools and higher education institutions.

6.2.3 Platform governance

Regarding platform governance, one of the main implications of this study is to note that violence on social media is pervasive and significant—and indeed, the mediation of social media violence changes how citizens and users make sense of events in their surroundings. In this case, there are several strategies that have proven to be successful in addressing violence on social media—included but not limited to media literacy (Moorhouse & Brooks, 2020; Nagle, 2018; Scharrer, 2006), technical interventions (Katsaros et al., 2022), and content moderation (Crawford & Gillespie, 2016; Hasinoff & Schneider, 2022). Certainly, these efforts align with an ongoing effort and recognition of governments (Government of Canada, 2021; MinTIC
Colombia, 2022), non-governmental organizations (Derechos Digitales, 2020; FLIP, 2023), and platforms (Google, n.d.; Meta, n.d.; TikTok, 2021) to address violence on social media.

However, the ecological nature of violence on digital platforms that was described in this dissertation highlights the need to organize these multiple efforts into a coherent narrative to address violence not only as an individual or technical problem, but also as a cultural, ethical, and political issue (Cover, 2023; Jane, 2015). In the face of complex grammars of violence, platforms offer but a “narrow vocabulary of complaints” (Crawford & Gillespie, 2016, p. 498). In this context, it is of critical importance to connect political, legal, cultural, educational, and technical efforts to address violence on digital platforms. There are various efforts that illuminate how these comprehensive approaches to social media violence might look. For instance, Hasinoff and Schneider (2022) reimagine a model of content moderation not built on scalability and punitive justice, but rather on subsidiarity and restorative or transformational justice. Similarly, Patton and colleagues (2017) urge policy changes to address implicit biases in digital policing, thus integrating a cultural, social, and political reading of violence on social media. These cases illustrate comprehensive actions that policymakers and platforms ought to start integrating in order to better respond to the ecological nature of violence. These efforts, as noted by findings of this dissertation, are a critical step toward properly addressing the complex ecologies of violence present in our digital environments.

6.2.4 Scholars

Finally, there are various implications for scholars interested in exploring social media violence—in the context of Colombia and beyond. The first implication is the importance of
focusing on how we live with violence through digital technologies (Gómez Cruz, 2022). Indeed, Latin American scholars (in line with the Barberian school of thought) have argued the importance of studying phenomena on digital platforms by looking with the people who are engaging with the medium, instead of looking at them (Reilly & Morales, 2023; e.g., Siles et al., 2023). Concerning methods, this shift implies prioritizing approaches that foreground people’s experiences with mediated violence, instead of exclusively looking at the online harm as disembodied content. Moreover, concerning violence, this shift implies moving beyond studying violence from its exceptionality and its remoteness. Instead we ought to understand it as part of our mediated encounters with others and with ourselves. As argued by Reguillo (2021), violences are not located in a beyond, circumscribable to one space or another, to a savage and distant heterotopia linked to barbarism as opposed to civilization. They are here, now, present (p. 27).

As a result of the liveness of violence on digital platforms, a second implication emphasizes the need to study violence on social media not as individual acts, but rather as ethical, communicative, and cultural processes. This implies, among other things, focusing on the moral horizons of digital violence (Jane, 2015), on the responsibilities of institutions (Hodson et al., 2021), on its impacts over our relation with others (Barth et al., 2023), and on the multiple ways it transforms our subjectivity (Cover, 2023). In particular, this study highlights the importance of better understanding the processes of mediation of digital violence as a productive space to better understand how our sense-making of violence shapes and is shaped by digital technologies (Wood et al., 2023).
Finally, this research emphasizes the importance of studying digital violence in countries outside the Global North, as they provide a rich and mostly unexplored territory to explore how digital culture intersects with local and national narratives, affects, and values (Reeder et al., 2004). Indeed, scholars are increasingly bringing attention to the fact that violence on digital platforms has been almost exclusively studied in North America and Europe (Backe et al., 2018). The need for contextualized readings of online violence is illustrated by Schoenebeck and colleagues (2023), who studied perceptions of online harm across 14 countries, finding that local context plays the highest factor in determining perceptions of online harm. Consequently, they argue that those outside the Global North (and especially the United States) should be able to more actively participate in designing and shaping responses to online violence, and indeed they discourage “any idea that a single set of platform standards, features, and regulations can apply across the entire world” (p. 13). Accordingly, future studies on social media violence could continue to explore violence in contexts like Colombia, this setting proves to be a productive space in which to work to understanding the complex and ever-shifting nature of online harms.

6.3 Future work

Based on the research presented in this dissertation, there are three lines of work that I expect to expand on in relation to social media violence in the Colombian context.

The first future line of work draws on the comparative nature of violence. Previous literature on digital harms has provided a vast landscape of insights into the nature, actors, and processes that comprise the grammars of violence across specific social media platforms, such as Facebook’s public groups (Wood, 2017), TikTok’s memetic videos (Matamoros-Fernández et
al., 2022), YouTube’s comment section (McCosker, 2014), and Twitter’s hashtags (Bogen et al., 2022). However, there is a lack of information on how these grammars of violence differ across platforms. For example, there is limited information on how violence enacted on YouTube differs from that on TikTok, Twitter, or WhatsApp. Such explorations across platforms are increasingly necessary as they provide a better understanding of the nuances and impacts of digital technologies (Matassi & Boczkowski, 2023). But comparisons between platforms are insufficient to provide a clear picture of the nuances of the grammars of violence across social media sites, as the digital landscape is not a monolithic object (Schoenebeck, Batool, et al., 2023). Instead, digital culture intersects with local and national narratives, affects, and values (Macfadyen et al., 2004; Poyntz, 2021)—thus requiring a close reading of contextual factors in the enactment and experiences of violence on social media. In this context, a future line of work will focus on exploring how violence is structured in and across social media platforms and contexts, located in multiple countries (such as Colombia and Canada) and focusing on the platforms that participants most often engage with, such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube.

A second future line of future work responds to one of the limitations of this dissertation: the limited information about identity features of the people who experience and make sense of social media violence. In this regard, several scholars have long noted that a central feature of contemporary violence on digital platforms is its gendered nature (Backe et al., 2018; Fairbairn, 2022; Veletsianos et al., 2018). The scholar Emma Jane, in particular, has brought attention to the gendered nature of violence on digital platforms, arguing that “markedly misogynist e-bile no longer oozes only in the darkest digestive folds of the cybersphere but circulates freely through
the entire body of the Internet” (2014, p. 532). While these gendered readings of violence were present across my dissertation (for example, I noted different affective readings on the mediation of violence), they were not at the forefront of either my conversation with participants or my analysis of the data. A future line of work will focus on how the experiences of mediation of violence are different across genders, especially noting how gendered experiences of online harm intersect with ongoing cultures of violence and peace present in Colombia.

A third proposed line of work also responds to a limitation of this study—the way interaction with participants was limited to encounters over Zoom. Indeed, while Zoom facilitated meetings with participants that could have been difficult to organize otherwise, it also limited the scope of the analysis of this study. For instance, even though in our virtual meetings participants reported their everyday interactions with everyday violence on social media, in-person meetings would have enabled a closer analysis of other elements in Martin-Barbero’s contemporary sensorium (2019)—such as identities and rituals concerning their experiences with social media violence. Accordingly, future work will explore young adults encounters with violence on social media by privileging in-person meetings between participants, thus expanding the scope and reach of this study.

A fourth and final line of future work is inspired by Latin American scholar Arturo Escobar and his work on sentipensar (a word that can be loosely translated as feeling-thinking). Indeed, as I discussed with participants the violence they experienced in their everyday engagements with digital platforms, I noted that the way they made sense of these encounters was neither purely rational nor purely emotional—rather, these two forces were profoundly intertwined in their meaning-making processes. In this case, sentipensar evokes how we inhabit
the world in holistic and interconnected ways, where our emotions, thoughts, and experiences are not disconnected from one another (Escobar, 2018). As such, the process of sentipensar violence on digital platforms is closely connected to the epistemologies of the South that erase distinctions between the subject and its relation to the world (Escobar, 2020). Accordingly, in my future work, I would like to explore participants’ processes of meaning-making of violence on digital platforms through the lens of sentipensar. To achieve this, in future work, I will rely on a linguistic-affective approach developed by Febres-Cordero (2023), where discussions about participants’ experiences with violence prioritize affective and embodied reflections on the everyday, bridging the way people act, think, and feel around online harms.
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Appendices

Appendix A  Invitations to participate in the study

A.1  Invitations to participate in the study - English

Dear students,

My name is Esteban Morales, and I am a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. I am conducting research titled “The Violence in our Networks, the Violence of our Networks: Exploring Peace, Education, and Social Media in Colombia.” This project is supervised by Dr. Leah Macfadyen, who is the principal investigator. This study focuses on the experiences and perceptions of social media violence among Colombian young adults. If you are an undergraduate student between 18 and 25 years old who frequently engages with social media, I would like to invite you to participate in this project.

Specifically, in this project, you would participate in four discussion groups and a chat group where you and other students will identify, discuss, and reflect on the social media violence you experience in your everyday life. Additionally, you will respond to two surveys before and after the discussion groups.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be rewarded a 100,000 COP gift card.

To participate in this study, all you have to do is complete this initial survey [link to the Qualtrics survey]. The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete and includes a consent form where you will find more information about the project.

If you have any questions or comments, you can email me at [email] I look forward to your participation.

Best regards,

Esteban Morales
Ph.D. Candidate
Faculty of Education
The University of British Columbia | Vancouver Campus
A.2 Invitations to participate in the study - Spanish

Estimados y estimadas estudiantes,

Mi nombre es Esteban Morales, y soy candidato a doctor en la Universidad de British Columbia en Vancouver, Canadá. Estoy realizando una investigación titulada “La violencia en nuestras redes, la violencia de nuestras redes: Explorando la paz, la educación y las redes sociales en Colombia”. Este proyecto es supervisado por la Dra. Leah Macfadyen, quien es la investigadora principal. Este estudio se centra en las experiencias y percepciones de la violencia redes sociales entre los jóvenes adultos colombianos. Si eres un estudiante de pregrado entre 18 y 25 años que usa frecuentemente con los medios sociales, me gustaría invitarte a participar en este proyecto.

Específicamente, en este proyecto participarás en cuatro grupos de debate y un grupo de chat en los que tú y otros estudiantes identificarás, discutirás y reflexionarás sobre la violencia en los medios sociales que experimentas en tu vida cotidiana. Además, responderás a dos encuestas antes y después de los grupos de discusión.

Si decides participar en este estudio, serás recompensado con una tarjeta regalo de 100.000 COP.

Para participar en este estudio, todo lo que tienes que hacer es completar esta encuesta inicial [enlace a la encuesta de Qualtrics]. La encuesta tarda aproximadamente 15 minutos en completar e incluye un formulario de consentimiento donde encontrarás más información sobre el proyecto.

Si tienen alguna pregunta o comentario, me puedes escribir al correo electrónico [redacted] Espero poder contar con tu participación.

Saludos cordiales,

Esteban Morales
Ph.D. Candidate
Faculty of Education
The University of British Columbia | Vancouver Campus
Appendix B  Consent and information forms

B.1  Consent and information forms - English
you experience in your everyday life. The chat will be created using WhatsApp. Therefore, data will be stored in the U.S., and U.S. laws apply in this case.

- Finally, you will participate in four online video discussion groups with the same group of people from your chat, where you will discuss the social media violence you identified over the week and co-imagine possible venues of transformation. Audio and video of these group discussions will be recorded. Online group discussions will take place on a UBC-hosted version of Zoom; therefore, data will be stored in Canada, and Canada laws apply in this case.

If you agree to participate, the estimated time you will be engaged in activities related to the project is approximately seven hours, spread over a span of six or seven weeks.

You can ask to be reassigned to other discussion groups. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequence and without giving any reason. In that case, your responses will be destroyed and excluded from study findings.

**Study results**
Results of this project will be disseminated in a series of academic articles based on the findings of this work. I will also present at academic conferences to disseminate the findings.

If you agree to be re-contacted, you will receive a report summarizing the main findings of this study. If possible, results will be shared at your university in a public presentation.

**Potential risks**
I do not foresee any risks to you in participating in this study. However, some of the questions or discussion points we ask may seem sensitive or personal. You do not have to answer any question if you do not want to.

**Potential benefits**
If you participate in this study, you could benefit from the satisfaction of contributing to research about social media violence. You could also benefit from learning and reflecting about social media and peace.

**Confidentiality**
Your confidentiality will be respected. Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent, and you can choose to use a pseudonym instead of your name. You can also choose to keep camera off or use a virtual background at the group discussions. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study.

Participants are encouraged not to discuss the content of the discussion groups to people outside the group. However, it is not possible to control what participants do with the information discussed.
Please remember that telephone and email are not confidential, so please refrain from sharing any sensitive information in any correspondence that we might have through these mediums. Please also remember that if you choose to use a pseudonym, your identity may still be inferred from study results if your views are well known.

Finally, please know that we will be using online platforms to conduct activities of this research project. WhatsApp is a US company, and as such, is subject to USA Patriot Act and CLOUD Act. These laws allow government authorities to access the records of host services and internet service providers. For this reason, your participation in this study may become known to US federal agents.

Once processed, information gathered will be stored in a secure server and will only be accessible to Esteban Morales, Dr. Leah Macfadyen, and Dr. Teresa Dobson. They will use a password-protected computer to work in this study. The data will be stored in Canada, where it will be retained for five years after the last publication and then deleted.

**Payment**
You will be rewarded a gift card of 100,000 COP as a payment for the time you take to participate in this study. This payment is not dependent on completion of the project but will be pro-rated for those that withdraw from this study before completion.

**Contact for information about the study**
If you have any questions about this study, please contact Esteban Morales at [email address]

**Contact for complaints**
If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

**Consent**
If the questionnaire is completed, it will be assumed that consent has been given.
FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO

La violencia en nuestras redes, la violencia de nuestras redes: Explorando la paz, la educación y los medios sociales en Colombia

Este documento proporciona información que le ayudará a decidir si da su consentimiento para participar en este estudio, que se está llevando a cabo para obtener un título de doctorado.

Equipo del estudio
- **Investigadora principal:** Dra. Leah Macfadgen, Facultad de Educación, University of British Columbia (UBC), 6445 University Boulevard, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canadá.
- **Co-investigador:** Esteban Morales, Facultad de Educación, Universidad de British Columbia (UBC), 6445 University Boulevard, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canadá.
- **Co-investigadora:** Dra. Teresa Dobson, Facultad de Educación, University of British Columbia (UBC), 6445 University Boulevard, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canadá.

Patrocinador
Este estudio está parcialmente financiado por la Public Scholars Initiative (PSI) de la University of British Columbia (Canadá).

Invitación y propósito del estudio
Este proyecto tiene como objetivo explorar las opiniones de los jóvenes colombianos sobre la violencia en las redes sociales y estudiar cómo la reflexión crítica, el diálogo y la imaginación pueden ser un posible lugar de aprendizaje en torno a la paz y los medios de comunicación.

Se le invita a participar en este estudio debido a su condición de estudiante colombiano de pregrado que se relaciona regularmente con las redes sociales.

Procedimientos del estudio
En este proyecto, se le invitará a identificar, discutir y reflexionar sobre la violencia en los medios sociales. Su participación consistirá en tres actividades.

- En primer lugar, completará dos encuestas, una al principio del proyecto y otra al final. Estas encuestas buscan explorar su percepción de la violencia en las redes sociales y lo que ha aprendido a través de su participación en este proyecto. La encuesta fue creada utilizando la plataforma Qualtrics, y todos los datos que proporcione aquí se almacenarán en servidores seguros en Canadá.
- En segundo lugar, participará en un chat de grupo con otros tres o cuatro estudiantes de grado. En este chat, se le invitará a compartir y reflexionar sobre la violencia en las redes
sociales que percibe en su vida cotidiana. El chat se creará utilizando WhatsApp. Por lo tanto, los datos se almacenarán en E.E.UU., y las leyes estadounidenses se aplican en este caso.

- Por último, participará en cuatro grupos de discusión de vídeo en línea con el mismo grupo de personas del chat, donde discutirá la violencia de las redes sociales que identifica durante la semana y co-imaginará posibles lugares de transformación. Se grabará el audio y el video de estos debates de grupo. Las discusiones de grupo en línea tendrán lugar en una versión de Zoom alojada por la Universidad de British Columbia, por lo tanto, los datos se almacenarán en Canadá, y las leyes de Canadá se aplicarán en este caso.

Si acepta participar, el tiempo estimado que dedicará a las actividades relacionadas con el proyecto es de aproximadamente siete horas, repartidas en un periodo de seis o siete semanas.

Puede pedir que se le reasigne a otros grupos de discusión en cualquier momento. También es libre de retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento sin ninguna consecuencia y sin dar ninguna razón. En ese caso, sus respuestas serán destruidas y excluidas de los resultados del estudio.

**Resultados del estudio**

Los resultados de este proyecto se difundirán en una serie de artículos académicos basados en las conclusiones de este trabajo. También se harán presentaciones en conferencias académicas para difundir los hallazgos.

Si acepta que se le vuelva a contactar, recibirá un informe que resume los principales hallazgos de este estudio. Si es posible, los resultados se compartirán en su universidad en una presentación pública.

**Posibles riesgos**

No se prevé ningún riesgo para usted al participar en este estudio. Sin embargo, algunas de las preguntas o puntos de discusión que planteamos pueden parecer sensibles o personales. No tiene que responder a ninguna pregunta si no quiere hacerlo.

**Posibles beneficios**

Si participa en este estudio, usted podría beneficiarse de la satisfacción de contribuir a la investigación sobre la violencia en las redes sociales. Usted también podría beneficiarse de aprender y reflexionar sobre las redes sociales y la paz.

**Confidencialidad**

Se respetará su confidencialidad. La información que revele su identidad no se divulgará sin su consentimiento, y puede elegir utilizar un seudónimo en lugar de su nombre. También puede elegir mantener la cámara apagada o utilizar un fondo virtual en los debates del grupo. Los participantes no serán identificados por su nombre en ningún informe del estudio realizado.
Se anima a los participantes a no comentar el contenido de los grupos de discusión con personas ajenas al grupo. Sin embargo, no es posible controlar lo que los participantes hacen con la información discutida.

Recuerde que el teléfono y el correo electrónico no son confidenciales, por lo que le rogamos que se abstenga de compartir cualquier información sensible en la correspondencia que podamos mantener a través de estos medios.

Recuerde también que, si decide utilizar un seudónimo, su identidad puede deducirse de los resultados del estudio si sus opiniones son bien conocidas.

Por último, sepa que utilizaremos plataformas en línea para llevar a cabo las actividades de este proyecto de investigación. WhatsApp es una empresa estadounidense y, como tal, está sujeta a la USA Patriot Act y a la CLOUD Act. Estas leyes permiten a las autoridades gubernamentales de Estados Unidos acceder a los registros de los servicios de alojamiento y de los proveedores de servicios de Internet. Por este motivo, su participación en este estudio puede llegar a ser conocida por los agentes federales estadounidenses.

Una vez procesada, la información recogida en este estudio se almacenará en un servidor seguro y sólo será accesible para Esteban Morales, Dr. Leah Macfadyen y Dr. Teresa Dobson. Ellos utilizarán un computador protegido por contraseña para trabajar en este estudio. Los datos se almacenarán en Canadá, donde se conservarán durante cinco años después de la última publicación y luego se eliminarán.

Pagar
Se le recompensará con un bono de 100.000 COP como pago por el tiempo que dedique a participar en este estudio. Este pago no depende de la finalización del proyecto, sino que se prorrateará para aquellos que se retiren de este estudio antes de su finalización.

Contacto para información sobre el estudio
Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre este estudio, póngase en contacto con Esteban Morales en

Contacto para quejas
Si tiene alguna preocupación o queja sobre sus derechos como participante en la investigación y/o sus experiencias mientras participa en este estudio, póngase en contacto con la línea de quejas de los participantes en la investigación de la Oficina de Ética de la Investigación de la UBC en el 604-822-8598 o, si es a larga distancia, envíe un correo electrónico a RSIL@ors.ubc.ca o llame al número gratuito 1-877-822-8598.

Consentimiento
Si completa este cuestionario, se asumirá que se ha dado el consentimiento.
Appendix C  Entry survey

C.1  Entry survey - English

Section A. Demographics and social media use

1. Name: ________________________________
2. Age: ________________________________
3. Gender identity: ________________________________
4. University: ________________________________
5. Undergraduate program: ________________________________
6. With which of the following social media platforms do you currently have an active account?
   o Facebook
   o Twitter
   o Instagram
   o TikTok
   o Snapchat
   o WhatsApp
   o YouTube
   o Other ____________________________________
7. Which social media platform(s) do you use the most?
   ____________________________________
8. On average, how much time do you spend on social media on a day?
   o Less than an hour
   o 1-2 hours
   o 3-4 hours
   o 4-6 hours
   o More than 6 hours

Section B. Social media and violence

1. From 0 to 10, how much violence do you think there is on social media? 0 = there is no violence on social media, 10 = violence is everywhere on social media:

   0--------------------------------------------------3--------------------------5--------------------------8--------------------------10
   Why?
   ____________________________________

2. Provide an example of social media violence
   ____________________________________

3. What do you do when you identify or experience social media violence?
   ____________________________________
4. How do you feel when you identify or experience social media violence?

5. How do you think social media violence should be addressed?

6. How much you agree with the following statement: “Social media plays an important role in the creation of a culture of peace in Colombia.”
   - Strongly disagree
   - Somewhat disagree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Somewhat agree
   - Strongly agree

Why?
C.2  Entry survey - Spanish

Sección A. Datos demográficos y uso de las redes sociales

1. Nombre y apellidos: ___________________________
2. Edad: ________________
3. Identidad de género: ______________________________________
4. Universidad: ____________________________________________
5. Programa de pregrado: ____________________________________

6. ¿En cuál de las siguientes plataformas de redes sociales tienes actualmente una cuenta activa?
   - Facebook
   - Twitter
   - Instagram
   - TikTok
   - Snapchat
   - WhatsApp
   - YouTube
   - Otra _______________________

7. ¿Qué plataforma(s) de redes sociales utilizas más frecuentemente?
   ________________________________________________________

8. En promedio, ¿cuánto tiempo pasas en redes sociales al día?
   - Menos de una hora
   - Entre 1-2 horas
   - Entre 3-4 horas
   - Entre 4-6 horas
   - Más de 6 horas

Sección B. Redes sociales y violencia

1. De 0 a 10, ¿cuánta violencia crees que hay en las redes sociales? 0 = no hay violencia en las redes sociales, 10 = la violencia está en todas partes en las redes sociales:
   0---------------------------------3--------------------------5-------------------8--------------------------10
   ¿Por qué?
   ________________________________________________________

2. Proporciona un ejemplo de violencia en redes sociales
   ________________________________________________________

3. ¿Qué haces cuando identificas o experimentas violencia en redes sociales?
   ________________________________________________________
4. ¿Cómo te sientes cuando identificas o experimentas violencia en redes sociales?

5. ¿Cómo crees que deberíamos responder a la violencia en redes sociales?

6. En qué medida estás de acuerdo con la siguiente afirmación: "Las redes sociales juegan un papel importante en la creación de una cultura de paz en Colombia".

   - Muy en desacuerdo
   - Algo en desacuerdo
   - Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
   - Algo en acuerdo
   - Muy en acuerdo

   ¿Por qué?
Appendix D  Exit survey

D.1  Exit survey – English

Name: ____________________________________________

A. Learning about social media violence

1. What have you learned as a result of your participation in this project?

2. Did you approach towards social media violence change?
   o Yes
   o No
   a. If you think it changed, how did it change?
   
   b. If you think it changed, why did it change?
   
   c. If you think it did not change, why did it not change?

3. Based on your participation in this group, indicate how much you agree with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The way I understand social media violence changed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand differently how social media violence is connected to other social phenomena</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see my role concerning social media violence in a different way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now think I can address social media violence in a different way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now I am better at knowing what is and what is not social media violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Social media and violence

1. From 0 to 10, how much violence do you think there is on social media? 0 = there is no violence on social media, 10 = there is a lot of violence on social media:

   0---------------------3---------------------5---------------------8---------------------10

   Why?

2. Provide an example of social media violence:

   _______________________________________________________

3. What do you do when you see or experience social media violence?

   _______________________________________________________

4. How much you agree with the following statement: "Social media plays an important role in the creation of a culture of peace in Colombia."

   o Totally disagree
   o Somewhat disagree
   o Neither agree nor disagree
   o Somewhat agree
   o Totally agree

   Why?

   _______________________________________________________
C. Your participation in this group

1. From 0 to 10, how much do you think you participated in the discussion group? 0 = not participated at all, 10 = participated the most
   
   0-------------------3-------------------5-------------------8-------------------10

2. How would you describe your participation in your discussion group?

   

3. What influenced the way you participated in your discussion group?

   

Study Number: [H21-03145]  Version: Dec 5, 2021  Page 3 of 3
### Sección A. Aprendiendo sobre la violencia en las redes sociales

1. ¿Qué aprendiste como resultado de tu participación en este proyecto?

2. ¿Cambió tu enfoque hacia la violencia en las redes sociales?
   - Sí
   - No
   a. Si crees que ha cambiado, ¿cómo ha cambiado?
   b. Si crees que ha cambiado, ¿por qué ha cambiado?
   a. Si crees que no ha cambiado, ¿por qué no ha cambiado?

3. Basándose en tu participación en este grupo, indica en qué medida estás de acuerdo con las siguientes afirmaciones:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Afirmanición</th>
<th>Muy en desacuerdo</th>
<th>Un poco en desacuerdo</th>
<th>Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo</th>
<th>Un poco de acuerdo</th>
<th>Muy de acuerdo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mi forma de entender la violencia en las redes sociales ha cambiado</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Ahora entiendo de manera diferente cómo la violencia en las redes está conectada con otros fenómenos sociales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veo mi papel en relación con la violencia en las redes sociales de una manera diferente</td>
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<td>Ahora creo que puedo abordar la violencia en las redes sociales de una manera diferente</td>
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<td>Ahora sé mejor qué es y qué no es violencia en las redes sociales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ahora sé cómo explorar mejor la violencia en las redes sociales</td>
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<td>Ahora reacciono de forma diferente ante la violencia en las redes sociales</td>
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<td>Ahora me siento diferente ante la violencia en las redes sociales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ahora actúo de forma diferente ante la violencia en las redes sociales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mi capacidad para afrontar la violencia en las redes sociales ha cambiado</td>
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**Sección B. Redes sociales y violencia**

1. De 0 a 10, ¿cuánta violencia crees que hay en las redes sociales? 0 = no hay violencia en las redes sociales, 10 = la violencia está en todas partes en las redes sociales:

   0---------------------------3---------------------------5---------------------------8---------------------------10

   ¿Por qué?

2. Proporciona un ejemplo de violencia en las redes sociales

   __________________________________________

3. ¿Qué haces cuando identificas o experimentas violencia en las redes sociales?

   __________________________________________

4. ¿Cómo te sientes cuando identificas o experimentas la violencia en las redes sociales?

   __________________________________________

5. ¿Cómo crees que deberíamos responder a la violencia en las redes sociales?

   __________________________________________

6. En qué medida estás de acuerdo con la siguiente afirmación: "Las redes sociales juegan un papel importante en la creación de una cultura de paz en Colombia".

   - Muy en desacuerdo
   - Algo en desacuerdo
   - Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
   - Algo en acuerdo
Sección C. Tu participación en este grupo

1. De 0 a 10, ¿cuánto crees que has participado en el grupo de discusión? 0 = no he participado en absoluto, 10 = ha participado al máximo

0-------------------3-------------------------------5-------------------------------8-------------------10

2. ¿Cómo describirías tu participación en el grupo de discusión?

3. ¿Qué influyó en la forma en que participaste en el grupo de discusión?
Appendix E  Guiding questions

E.1  Guiding questions – English

Guiding questions for students’ discussion groups [English]

Synchronous session - Week 1:
- How do you usually use social media?
- How do we define violence?
- How do we define social media violence?

Synchronous session - Week 2:
- What do you think about the social media violence you and your peers identified over the week?
- Is social media connected to Colombia’s political and cultural landscape? If so, how?

Synchronous session - Week 3:
- What do you think about the social media violence you and your peers identified over the week?
- Is social media connected to Colombia’s political and cultural landscape? If so, how?
- Has the way we define social media violence changed?

Synchronous session - Week 4:
- What do you think about the social media violence you and your peers identified over the week?
- Based on what we have discussed in these groups, what is the future of social media violence?
E.2 Guiding questions – Spanish

Guiding questions for students’ discussion groups [Spanish]

Sesión sincrónica - Semana 1:
- ¿Cómo sueles utilizar las redes sociales?
- ¿Cómo definimos la violencia?
- ¿Cómo definimos la violencia en las redes sociales?

Sesión sincrónica - Semana 2:
- ¿Qué piensas de la violencia en las redes sociales que tú y tus compañeros identificaron durante la semana?
- ¿Están las redes sociales relacionadas con el panorama político y cultural de Colombia? Si es así, ¿cómo?

Sesión sincrónica - Semana 3:
- ¿Qué piensas de la violencia en las redes sociales que tú y tus compañeros identificaron durante la semana?
- ¿Están las redes sociales conectadas con el panorama político y cultural de Colombia? Si es así, ¿cómo?
- ¿Ha cambiado nuestra forma de definir la violencia en las redes sociales?

Sesión sincrónica - Semana 4:
- ¿Qué piensas de la violencia en las redes sociales que tú y tus compañeros identificaron durante la semana?
- En base a lo que hemos discutido previamente, ¿cuál es el futuro de la violencia en las redes sociales?