Politics of Victimhood
An analysis of LGBT activism and peace building in Colombia, 2011-2016
Cover picture: a campaign by *Caribe Afirmativo* posted on Facebook on March, 23 2016
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‘There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve. The fear to fail’ – The Alchemist by Paulo Coehlo
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Abstract
The objective of this research is to understand how and why the LGBT movement in Colombia developed a politics of victimhood during the peace process between 2011-2016. With a case study of state-orientated NGOs, it is described how a politics of victimhood has developed next to peace building activism. The politics of victimhood is a strategy for the recognition of social grievances within the armed conflict. At the same time, the politics of victimhood is damaging for the movement. The focus on victims denies the agency of LGBT people, creates new boundaries and does not deal with root causes of homophobia and violence. To offset these consequences, the LGBT movement concentrates on peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights. This strategy balances the victim identity and deals with root causes of violence. The development of these tactics is investigated with the use of social movement theory. It is argued that a politics of victimhood and peace building activism come into existence during the peace process because of possibilities for identity framing and resource mobilisation alongside opportunities within the political context. The empirical data is acquired through semi-structured interviews, participant observations and governmental and scientific documents.

Keywords: LGBT activism, social movement, politics of victimhood, identity framing, resource mobilisation, political opportunities.

Resumen
El objetivo de esta investigación es entender cómo y por qué el movimiento LGBT en Colombia desarrolla una política de victimización junto al activismo de construcción de paz durante el proceso de paz, 2011-2016. La política de victimización es una estrategia para el reconocimiento de reclamos sociales en el marco del conflicto armado. Pero a su vez, la victimización como política trae desventajas al movimiento. El enfoque en las víctimas niega la acción de las personas LGBT, crea nuevos límites y no se ocupa de las causas de fondo de la homofobia y la violencia. Para compensar estas consecuencias, el movimiento LGBT se concentra en el activismo de construcción de paz con la inclusión de los derechos humanos. Esta estrategia, en cambio, equilibra la identidad de víctima y a su vez se ocupa de las causas de fondo. El desarrollo de esas tácticas se investiga por medio del uso de la teoría del movimiento social. Se argumenta que las políticas de victimización y el activismo de construcción de paz aparecieron durante el proceso de paz debido a las oportunidades, que esto generó, para enmarcación de identidad y para la movilización de recursos junto a las oportunidades en el contexto político. Los datos empíricos son recogidos a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas, observación participante y documentos tanto gubernamentales como científicos.

Palabras claves activism LGBT, movimiento social, política de victimización, enmarcación de identidad, movilización de recursos, oportunidades políticas.
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Abbreviations and concepts

**Acronyms**

- **AUC**: United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia)
- **AECID**: Spanish Development Cooperation Agency (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo)
- **CNMH**: National Centre for Historical Memorial (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica)
- **ELN**: The National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional)
- **FARC-EP**: The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo)
- **GIZ**: German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)
- **LGBT(I)**: Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender (and Intersex). A common acronym that is often used to describe the plurality of sexual orientations and gender identities
- **SOGI**: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- **UARIV**: The Victim’s Unit (Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas)
- **UN**: United Nations
- **UNDP**: United Nations Development Programme
- **USAID**: Development Organisation of the United States

**Important concepts**

- **Arepas**: Name for the typical Colombian dish made from corn flour and often filled with cheese. The name is also used to describe women, and used in the gay scene to describe women that are attracted to the same sex.
- **Gender**: Gender is the socio-cultural connotation given to the different roles of the sexes. The construction of what it means to be male and female.
- **Heteronormativity**: The sociocultural valuation of the heterosexual orientation of the norm within society.
- **Intersex**: Sex characteristics with a chromosomal, hormonal or anatomical variation.
- **Maricas**: A masculine noun that is often used as an offense, describing a sissy boy, or a homosexual man.
- **Sex**: The social distinction for biological differences between male, female and intersex.
- **Sexual orientation**: The erotic, affective relationships between sexes. A female can have a sexual orientation of heterosexual or homosexual. Being attracted to the opposite or the same sex.
Transgender People who have a gender identity or gender expression that differs from their assigned sex.

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1. Introduction
In this thesis, I explore how the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) movement in Colombia negotiates their position as victims of the armed conflict. I examine why activists frame LGBT people as victims of the armed conflict and explain how this is related to peace building activism and human rights activism. The situation for LGBT people in Colombia is contradictory. The country has gone through an LGBT rights revolution that has been made possible by an established LGBT movement, but the situation for many LGBT people in Colombia remains difficult. In this introduction, I will discuss the position of LGBT people within the Colombian society, the influence of homophobia and the impact of the armed conflict on LGBT people. The context of the armed conflict is slowly changing and this provides the LGBT movement with opportunities for the recognition of violence against LGBT people. Moreover, it gives opportunities to focus on peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights.

The position of LGBT people in the Colombian society
The position of LGBT people in Colombia is paradoxical. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Colombia face a contradicting reality of progressive rights that coexists with recurrent homophobia and violence. There are spaces in which LGBT people have seen great advances. However, the reality in many parts of society is the complete opposite. The statement below of Andres Hernandez Godoy explains in a few words the situation in Colombia (Godoy 2016):

‘I think in Colombia, there are niches — or niches are beginning to be made — in particular parts of society. What I mean is that in certain parts of the society, for example, on television, you find that there are many LGBTs, or even in the art world. You know where there are niches, but those niches have not been carved out everywhere’.

A harsh reality exists next to progressive legislation. While Colombia is known for its continuous political violence, it is an international leader for LGBT rights. Colombia has experienced an LGBT rights revolution that is very profound and claimed to be more progressive than the US and Canada (Wilson 2009). Discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation is prohibited (Itaborahy and Zhu 2014). Additional laws forbid discrimination within the military, schools, and the Boy Scouts (Lemaitre Ripoll 2009). Civil unions are recognized. Moreover, same-sex couples have full inheritance rights, rights to pension and health benefits, and a right to a Colombian nationality in a same-sex union with a Colombian (Itaborahy and Zhu 2014). Adoption is possible when the child is from one of the two parents since 2015, and Colombia is the 24th country in the world to have approved marriage equality 2016.

There is an increased governmental interest in the LGBT population within different institutions. The Ministry of Internal Affairs started to implement the inclusion of LGBT people within laws. Local governments are increasingly implementing policies for the LGBT community. The Bogotá district government has a Directorate of Sexual Diversity of the Secretariat of Planning that deals with issues of sexual orientation and gender identity within the district of Bogotá. Moreover, the Colombian state is involved in the international arena as a protagonist for international LGBT rights during the 27th human rights council of the UN in Geneva in 2014. Colombia spoke on behalf of a trans-regional group of over 72 countries, articulating their concern about continued violence and human rights violations by calling upon states to take steps to end acts of violence, discrimination, criminal sanctions and related human rights violations.
committed against individuals showing they actively support the LGBT rights internationally (ARC-International 2015).

Nonetheless, the reality for many LGBT persons in Colombia is challenging. Homophobia and heteronormative ideas are strong in the Colombian society. A study conducted during gay pride marches in 2008 revealed that 77% of those interviewed had suffered forms of discrimination and 67.7% had undergone forms of aggression (Lemaitre Ripoll 2009). In a high school survey, six out of the ten children admitted insulting gay children. Almost 40% explained being afraid of homosexuals while 17.6% stated to be disgusted by them. Opposition towards gay marriage is still large, with 64% to 28% in favour of same-sex marriage in 2014 (Pew Research Center 2014). The idea of the ‘natural order’ of the division between the sexes is dominant, making all other sexualities unnatural. Only a man and a woman can make a family (Sheffield 2008). Religion, the hegemony of masculinity and heteronormativity encourage social attitudes of hatred towards homosexuality and the policing of gender identities (Wilets 2010).

Homophobia is translated into a grim reality that remains unchanged by the laws. In 2006 and 2007, 102 LGBT were assassinated in Colombia. Transvestites and people that openly express their sexual and gender identity have reported 31 cases of police abuses. In 2013 and 2014, 164 incidents were reported varying from arbitrary detention, to discrimination and physical assaults, of which 83 were murders (Colombia Diversa 2006-2007). The actual number of violations is higher as many people do not report these violations out of fear of further violence. Perpetrators are civilians, armed forces, public servants, or other groups part of the conflict dynamic. Progress is limited for many LGBT Colombians because of the inefficiency of the law (Lemaitre Ripoll 2009). Laws are denied and disrespected. The right to life is violated, and the State does not take effective measures. For example, the increased punishment for an act of intolerance or discrimination within article 58 of the Penal Code is never used (Colombia Diversa 2010). There is a strong impunity as laws are not being implemented.

**Violence against LGBT and the armed conflict**

The occurrence of violence and the lack of law enforcement is also related to the ongoing conflict between guerrilla rebels and the government, as well as paramilitary forces and the BACRIM (organised illegal groups). Colombia has been plagued by internal armed conflict since its independence from Spanish rule. The internal conflict has never been continuous nor uniform. It has varied in intensity, location and actors involved. The conflict started with a clash between the political elites, the Liberal party and the Conservative party, during la violencia (1948-57). Since 1964, the internal conflict was fuelled by the growth of opposition to the State from leftist guerrilla groups such as the FARC (The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and ELN (The National Liberation Army). The conflict became more complex when the government allowed right wing paramilitary groups called United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) to protect landowners against the leftist insurgents. Thousands of people have been killed or have suffered extreme human rights violations (Abozaglo 2009). Many people have fallen victim to displacement, to landmines or sexual abuse. Victims are predominantly people in the rural areas, women, youth, Afro-Colombians and indigenous (Bouvier 2009).

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1 Of this data, the distinction between the conflict setting and ‘normal’ day violence is not made. The high levels of assassinations in the regions of Antioquia, Bogota can be accounted for the presence of NGOs documenting these crimes. As such, the rise between 2006 and 2013 can be related to the increased ability of NGOs to document crimes.
Moreover, violence against LGBT people is part of the dynamics of the armed conflict. Homophobia is used as a weapon of war that is often revealed in social cleansing practices (Serrano Amaya 2015). Actors take control of communities by taking control of their locations and their economic revenues. Moreover, unwanted individuals such as homeless people, LGBT people, and drug addicts are eradicated from the territory (Serrano Amaya 2015). This often occurs in the form of threats by the use of pamphlets (figure 1.1). The most extreme cases of violence are ascribed to paramilitaries (Payne 2015), but violence is performed by different actors including guerrillas, BACRIM (criminal gangs) and governmental forces.

The title ‘for a good future’ sounds a like positive advertisement for a campaign. Nonetheless, it is a social cleansing announcement made by armed forces on the 24th of February 2016 in Sucre, the Caribbean part of Colombia (figure 1.1). It was spread to threaten gays and lesbians amongst other people ‘to make the decision to live or die’. Thereby, these groups threaten individuals with assassination if they do not leave the territory of this paramilitary group. The pamphlet on the left threatened ‘maricas’ and ‘areperas’ (gays and lesbians) in Magdalena in 2015 to leave the department within 72 hours. Pamphlets circle regularly in different departments in Colombia. These pamphlets spread fear to LGBT people and activists, and enforce the presence of the armed forces.

Homophobia is not a straightforward tactic. According to Serrano Amaya (2015:6) ‘the practices of violence bundled under the concept of ‘homophobia’ can be deployed differently in the course of conflicts to serve different functions and produce different effects for the actors involved’. Anti-homosexual violence is not a single nor a stable phenomenon (Tomsen 2009). It occurs before conflicts, it can be aggravated during conflicts, and it is transformed and strengthened after peace building processes (Serrano Amaya 2015: 6). Violence against LGBT people has different reasons and motivations and it is justified as LGBT people are already stigmatised in wider society (Serrano Amaya 2015).
The changing prospect for peace and LGBT rights

The armed conflict is transforming gradually. A peace process has come into existence. The Victim’s Law deals with reparations and compensations of victims of the armed conflict since 2011 and peace negotiations between the Santos government and the FARC have taken place between 2012 and 2016. First, the Victim’s Law (Law 1448 or Ley de Victimas) is an important step towards building peace in Colombia. It has been implemented during the armed conflict. The Victim’s Law is the successor of the Justice and Peace Law of 2005 for the demobilisation of paramilitaries that allowed victims to come forward. The Victim’s Law is the most important legislation dealing with the consequences of the conflict. Summers (2012: 231) argues that although it is complex, it ‘creates a robust institutional structure’. The Victim’s Law is the initial step towards peace and reconciliation (Partido Liberal 2016) and recognises the responsibility of the state within the armed conflict (UARIV n.d.). The Victim’ Law recognises victims and LGBT people as object of state interventions and offers reparation and compensation to victims. Second, the government and the FARC-EP signed a peace agreement in 2016. The government and the FARC-EP started peace negotiations in 2012. The peace was signed in different steps. The government came to an agreement with the FARC-EP. An initial accord was signed on September 26, 2016. Though it was rejected in a referendum by the people of Colombia, a renewed agreement was approved by the Congress on November 30, 2016. This started the demobilisation of the FARC-EP and its transformation into a political party.

In this thesis, I will investigate how this peace process has influenced the focus and strategies of the Colombian LGBT movement. This conflict transformation opened political spaces for LGBT rights. Both the peace negotiations and the implementation of the Victim’s Law have included LGBT people. A gender commission was appointed during the peace negotiations and the Victim’s Law has a differential focus for the inclusion of LGBT victims. I will explain how the LGBT movement in Colombia uses this political attention to victims of the armed conflict along with the political interest in peace. I will explain how a politics of victimhood is developed, and how the consequences of a politics of victimhood are balanced by peace building activism and human rights activism.

Structure

The politics of victimhood and peace building activism are explained with the social movement theory. In chapter two, I outline the importance of my research by explaining my research objectives, my problem statement and the aim of the research. I give an overview of academic literature on LGBT activism, and the role of the politics of victimhood. In chapter three, I elaborate on the methodology I have used. Thereafter, I show the results of my fieldwork and literature study. In chapter four, I give an overview of the current LGBT movement and its establishment. In chapter five, I show the interest of the movement in LGBT people as victims of the armed conflict and I explain how this is an outcome of identity framing, resource mobilisation and political opportunities. Furthermore, I explain the impact of the politics of victimhood for the LGBT movement. In chapter six, I show how the implications of a politics of victimhood are balanced with opportunities for peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights.
**Terminology**

Before I continue, I will explain my use of important concepts in this thesis. I investigate the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) movement in Colombia. The LGBT movement is a broad concept for a group of individuals and organisations that focuses on the empowerment of people with a diverse sexual orientation or gender identity, by advancing their rights and their position within society. I have chosen to use the abbreviation of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) instead of the more inclusive abbreviation of LGBTI. I chose for the exclusion of intersex people as this group is very invisible in Colombia even though the LGBT movement in Colombia is inclusive for intersex people. I have not altered the abbreviation of LGBTI in quotes. Moreover, I will use the terms LGBT movement and LGBT activists. The movement consists of different organisations and activists that work inside and outside these organisations. It needs to be noted that activists are not necessarily LGBT people themselves. A person can be an LGBT activist without being a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex. To investigate the LBGT movement, I focus on professional state-orientated NGOs which are organisations ‘not belonging to or associated with any government’ (Oxford dictionary) besides independent activists.
2. Researching the Politics of Victimhood

In this chapter I outline the importance of my research by explaining the research objectives, the problem statement and the aim of the research. This will be followed by an overview of academic literature on social movements and the politics of victimhood.

Research aim

The goal of this research is to understand the dynamics of LGBT activism in Colombia and to comprehend how the LGBT movement develops a politics of victimhood through which LGBT people are framed as victims of the armed conflict. I will identify the mechanisms that have opened a window of opportunity for the LGBT movement. Moreover, I will investigate how the LGBT movement engages with peace building activism in relation to the politics of victimhood. I use social movement theory to argue that goals and strategies of activists depend on the availability of resources and social networks, as well as opportunities for collective identity framing that allow for a recognition of the social movement within the political context. Hereby, I uncover the choices made by the LGBT movement that have determined the focus on victims of the armed conflict and peace building activism.

This thesis will elaborate on:

- How the LGBT movement actively engages with their collective identity. LGBT organisations in Colombia frame the LGBT identity varying from a ‘victim of violence’ frame that shows the minority position of LGBT people within society, to a ‘peace builder with rights’ frame that shows LGBT people as active constructors of peace and as human beings with rights.
- How the availability of resources – financial resources and social capital – influences decisions made by the LGBT organisations.
- How the peace process in Colombia – that includes the peace negotiations and the Victim’s Law – provides political opportunities for a politics of victimhood and peace building activism.
- How the politics of victimhood and peace building activism affect the LGBT movement.

Research question

In order to achieve the objective of this research, the following research question is investigated:

_How do professional LGBT organisations negotiate the position of LGBT people as victims of the armed conflict, using identity framing, resource mobilisation and political opportunities, in a time of the peace process in Colombia between 2011 and 2016?_

I will show how collective identities, resources and the political context are strategized by the professional LGBT movement in Colombia. I will do so in two parts. In the first part, I will explain the emergence of a politics of victimhood and its consequences. I will show how LGBT activists have given attention to LGBT people as victims of the
armed conflict. The politics of victimhood is a strategy for collective identity framing, resource mobilisation and political opportunities. Moreover, I will elaborate on the consequences of the development of this politics of victimhood for the LGBT movement. In the second part, I will investigate how the LGBT movement is balancing the consequences of a politics of victimhood. Peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights activism enables LGBT activists to focus on the impact of the armed conflict on LGBT people. In turn, I will show how peace building activism is a strategy for identity formation, resource mobilisation and political opportunities. Altogether, I will show how a politics of victimhood and peace building activism have developed within the peace process in Colombia.

Social and academic relevance
This thesis contributes to the understanding of the dynamics of the LGBT movement in a context of a peace process. This study is limited to the way the LGBT movement deals with the consequences of the armed conflict in an attempt to change the dynamics of the armed conflict. I do not study the direct consequences of the armed conflict for LGBT people. This thesis creates an understanding of the timing of peace processes that bring about opportunities for social movements. It creates insights in the necessity of the involvement of the government to be able to create change.

This change is of extreme importance for the LGBT population. Consequences of the armed conflict need to be dealt with. Its dynamics need to be altered. Violence has a large impact on victims as it leaves lasting consequences for the victims. Hate crimes hurt more depending to the extent people feel comfortable with themselves. The affects of violence on a person’s life differs from depressive symptoms and risky sexual behaviour to anxiety and suicide attempts (Stotzer 2014). People try to avoid being ‘gay’ and stop showing affection in public. Moreover, victims can perceive violations as a normal part of their being (Molinares Hassan et al 2014). Next to severe individual consequences, hate crimes spread fear and strike at the core of societal values (Iganski 2001).

Moreover, this thesis adds to the understanding of social movements. First, I challenge the dichotomies in social movement theory between identity based movements and strategy movements. I argue that identity movements deploy strategies similar to strategy based movements. The variety within the LGBT movement cannot be explained by their shared identity. Identity is a strategy. Collective identities can vary depending on opportunities to obtain resources and enter political spaces. At the same time, I challenge the automatic relationship between political goals and social objectives in this social movement theory. I argue this in line with the opinion of Bernstein (2003). While political and social goals are related, political changes do not automatically alter cultural values of homophobia.

Furthermore, LGBT movements have been criticized for failing to articulate a universal vision for social change, because of their reliance on fixed identity categories (Bernstein 2002). This research shows that the LGBT movement can frame their identity in a way that relates to the dynamics society such as the armed conflict and the peace process. The LGBT activists focus on a shared Colombian history and future by emphasising citizenship and shared possibilities within the peace process. Thereby, the movement transcends its LGBT identity.

Additionally, this thesis provides knowledge on the influence of networks between academia and social movements. This thesis shows the importance of the involvement of different academics in the LGBT movement. José Fernando Serrano Amaya, who is both a scholar and activist, has played an important role in how the
move  understanding has proven colombia, for NGOs and government institutions alike. More knowledge on the subject has proven to be necessary and valuable.

Understanding the LGBT movement and the politics of victimhood

In this part, I elaborate on the academic foundation and theories that I use to explore my research question. This thesis investigates the national and regional state-oriented LGBT movement in Colombia and the way this movement negotiates the politics of victimhood. In order to understand why the LGBT movement focuses on victims, I use social movement theory to investigate how social movements change their goals and strategies over time depending on the external political environment, social networks, resource mobilisation and identity formation.

Social movements have long been classified on the basis of their ‘logic of action’ within a classification between strategy-orientated movements and identity-orientated movements (Bernstein 1997). In this distinction, LGBT movements are seen as internally orientated movements that follow their identity orientation in comparison to instrumental movements that are externally orientated (Duyvendak and Giugni 1995 in Bernstein 1997). However, identity movements such as the LGBT movement cannot be understood by their shared identity characteristics alone. The focus of LGBT organisations is not static. LGBT organisations have diversified goals and objectives, and the role of their identity changes over time (Bernstein 2002). Hence, there is a great division between different voices in the movement that can be found on a spectrum of the queer identity. Ward (2008) describes this scale of ‘queerness’ with on one side the emphasises on diversity within sexual transgression (e.g. non-monogamy) and on the other side the focus on a shared identity ‘just like everyone else’ (Ward 2008: 3). According to Bernstein (1997), the identity formation of LGBT movements is not only the outcome of internal characteristics but also of social networks, resources and political conditions. LGBT organisations negotiate their internal and external environment. In understanding the course of social movements, resource mobilisation and political opportunities are central next to identity formation (Benford and Snow 2000). Thayer (1997:386) argues: ‘three factors account for the differences in the way movements in distinctive national contexts construct collective identities’: the economic model of development, the state-civil society relations, and the broader field of the social movements. Hence, goals and strategies are determined by collective identity and socio-political factors, such as resource mobilisation and political opportunities (Taylor 1989, Taylor and Whittier 1995).

Identity movements need to be defined by the goals and strategies employed in order to transform dominant cultural and political patterns. Cultural change is the transformation of practices, norms, and values of the dominant culture, while political change includes the transformation of laws and policies towards the protection from harm (Bernstein 2003). Scott (1990) emphasises the necessity to include social and political aspects of strategies, in comparison to the new social movement theory that focuses on social and cultural characteristics over political features. According to Bernstein (2003), the focus on the social aspects alone is not sufficient to describe social change. Political accomplishments also embody cultural impact. Bernstein (2003) quotes McAdam (1994:52): ‘I hypothesize that the cultural impact of a movement will be commensurate with the substantive political and economic success it achieves’. At the same time, Bernstein (2003) warns for the dangers of an automatic linkage between political and social change, as they do not change in a similar manner.
Political laws that include LGBT people do not automatically alter a culture of homophobia. Below I elaborate on the connection between the politics of victimhood and social movement theory.

Identity deployment and the politics of victimhood

The role of identity within social movements is manifold. Identity is a strategy as well as a goal for social movements (Bernstein 2003). Initially, the internal formation of was used as a goal and a form of empowerment for LGBT people. With the growth of the LGBT movement, external identity deployment became a strategy for cultural and political change (Bernstein 1997). In this thesis, I will focus on ‘identity strategies’ (Bernstein 2002). Identity deployment can be used as a strategy to criticize dominant categories, values and practices by challenging the dominant perception of LGBT people within society (Bernstein 2002).

The politics of victimhood is the deployment of grievance-based identity as ‘victims in need of tolerance and inclusion’ through which social movements politicize victimhood in a struggle for recognition (Jacoby 2015; Jeffrey and Candra 2006). Jacoby (2015: 511) distinguishes between victimisation ‘as an act of harm perpetrated against a person or a group’ and victimhood ‘as a collective identity based on that harm’. The victim identity is formed in ‘othering’ (Brown 1995). The marginalised position of the LGBT community is emphasised in opposition to the ideal of the middle class and against the dominant worldview of heteronormativity. The LGBT movement draws attention to their marginalised position within society by emphasising on their otherness (Sandoval 2012). In the politics of victimhood, the collective identity is created in order to promote different ethical and political goals (Jacoby 2015). Through framing processes NGOs try to obtain governmental attention for their concerns (Keck and Sikkink 1998). A movement creates a ‘political identity’ (Bernstein 2002) to enter the political domain to achieve goals of freedom and equal opportunity (Sullivan 1997).

In this way, the political context shapes the identity orientation of social movements as states recognise certain identities and exclude others (Matthews 2012). As such, LGBT people are framed as victims of violence as a strategy for political recognition.

Consequently, a victim frame articulates itself, claims and establishes itself, by reaffirming, dramatizing and engraving its pain into politics (Brown 1995). By doing so, frames shape the interpretation of the audience, as they select aspects of a perceived reality and make those more prominent in communication (Entman 1993). Benford and Snow (2000: 614) show that frames provide schemes of interpretation that enable people to ‘locate, perceive, identify and label’. Frames give meaning to events or incidences and function to create experiences and direct actions. Thereby, particular definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations or treatment recommendations are promoted (Matthews 2012: 52). The process of framing puts emphasises on a particular discourse that can promote a certain image of reality (Hilhorst 2000), and opens ‘windows through which people see things’ (Danaher et al. 2000: 31). Accordingly, a discourse structures the way in which can be meaningfully talked and reasoned about a topic (Pijnenburg 2004). Many discourses exist side by side, only at times one of these discourse can become hegemonic, standing above them all. Activists adopt a hegemonic discourse and base their choices on a deliberation of the ability to achieve political, mobilisation and cultural goals (Steinberg 2002).

The politics of victimhood has been criticized by contemporary feminists and postcolonial scholars as it enforces a minority position that is exclusively based in terms of oppression (Jacoby 2015). It is perceived as inadequate for the LGBT movement as it depends on a minority status (Vaid 1995). The victim identity is ‘deeply
invested in its own impotence’ (Brown 1995: 65). Jeffrey and Candea (2006) state that the professional language of victimhood can silence people’s voice as the agency of these people is denied. The ‘victim trope’ shows how agency is diminished when queer youth are framed as a subject in need of help by external agents (Marshall 2010 based on Rasmussen et al. 2004). Moreover, the politics of victimhood legitimises the victimhood of certain groups over that of others. Benefits are provided for those people that fit the label as victim. Those who fail to be recognised are deprived (Jacoby 2015). While attention to victims has made a greater responsiveness for the specific needs of victims, it simultaneously marginalises the interests of these victims (Tomsen 1996).

Counterbalancing the politics of victimhood
Activists are aware of the enabling and constraining consequences of discourse and its hegemonic deployment (Bernstein 2003: 259). Hence, the LGBT movement has used different strategies to counterbalance these effects as victimhood is not the only collective identity frame LGBT movements can adopt. Identity movements have emphasised both the celebration and the suppression of differences from the majority over different periods of time (Bernstein 1997). LGBT movements have deployed identity frames varying from ‘queer’ to ‘just like everybody else’ (Ward 2008), and in a spectrum from ‘victims in need of tolerance and inclusion’ to ‘citizens with rights’ (Rasmussen, Rofes, and Talburt 2004: 4). Besides positioning LGBT people as victims, other frames have been used by LGBT movements to counter the marginalised position of LGBT people as victims. On top of this, the consequences of the politics of victimhood can be balanced by a broad range educational campaign to raise awareness and change attitudes to diminish the levels of violence (Tomsen 1996).

Human rights offer a counterbalancing identity frame for the politics of victimhood. The human rights practices include documentation and public reporting of abuses, material aid to victims and their families, education efforts, and street protests (Tate 2007). Human rights activism has often been classified under political activism in which LGBT injustice is framed in the necessity for legal equality within the institutionalised deprivation of LGBT rights (Vaggione 2013: 249). Human rights legislation offers the ability to claim recognition and protection from the government (Holzhacker 2014). Human rights cannot be seen separate from identity. LGBT rights are framed as human rights that are based on the sexual orientation and gender identity of people (Holzhacker 2014). Human rights activism is a fights for cultural transformation by achieving political rights on the basis of interest-group politics that are ‘ethnic like’ (Bernstein 2003 quoting Seidman 1993). Human rights activism is a political form of activism that tries to alter the cultural meaning of violence, of which violence is allowed and which is not (Tate 2007). Human rights redefine the victim identity by denying the symbolism of violence (Lemaitre Ripoll 2009). Human rights activism breaks down the existing believes of homophobia by condemning the crimes (Tate 2007). Human rights provide LGBT people with an identity frame of dignity (Joachim 2003). The provision of rights provides LGBT people with a discourse on dignity, which is used as a legal argument for demanding rights (Vaggione 2013: 250). Human rights create a ‘civic identity’ around equal citizenship in the term of rights (Engel 2016, De la Dehesa 2010). LGBT people can freely express their identity and have the right to self-determination, self-possession and self-government. A symbolic value that influences the self-persecution of LGBT people as well as their social identity (Lemaitre Ripoll 2009).
Since the 1990s, LGBT movement all over the world have been strongly engaged with the struggle for human rights. Human rights activism came into existence in a global struggle over culture and identity. Two high-profile documents have been established i.e. the Declaration of Montreal and the Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. With these document the international struggle has intensified and human rights framing has become progressively dominant in national settings (Kollman and Waites 2009). LGBT movement in Colombia has greatly depended its success on human rights activism. Human rights activism in Colombia received a wavering faith in which the individual becomes protected by the right to equality (Lemaitre Ripoll 2009). Human rights resonated in Latin America, as it shows LGBT people as humans instead as a ‘gay agenda’ that portrays LGBT people as a distinct group within society (Encarnación 2011: 106). Human rights activism offer a great potential for the counterbalance of the politics of victimhood in Colombia.

It is to expect that human rights offer a counterbalance for the politics of victimhood. Nonetheless, human rights activism was not the strongest counterbalance for the politics of victimhood in Colombia between 2011 and 2016. The LGBT movement in Colombia has been working on peace building activism that is in direct opposition to the victim identity. This type of activism started in the early 2000s with Planeta Paz and has become important during the peace process of Santos government and the FARC, as will be investigated in this thesis. To understand this development of the politics of victimhood and the ability to counterbalance this strategy, opportunities for resource mobilisation and the existence of political spaces will to be examined.

Resource mobilisation and political opportunities
The existence of the politics of victimhood and the counterbalancing forms of activism will be investigated with regard to political opportunities and resource mobilisation. Resource mobilisation and political opportunities explain why different LGBT movements focus on different forms of identity framing in different periods (Thayer 1997). Resource mobilisation and political process provide an analysis of the forces that shape movements and for understanding differences between movements (McCarthy and Zald 1977, Obershall 1973 in Thayer 1997). To start, resource mobilisation is ‘a major subject of concern’ for understanding strategies of social movements (Holloway 2001). For example, external resource mobilisation has fuelled the transformation of banned political parties into social movements (Grodsky 2007). Resources are according to the Oxford dictionary: ‘a stock or supply of money, materials, staff, and other assets that can be drawn on by a person or organization in order to function effectively’. Resource mobilisation is seen as the mobilisation of financial resources as well as the ability to organise people to accomplish objectives (Kendall 2006) that are found in services and knowledge.

First, financial resources are very important for the strategies deployed by social movements. Resource mobilisations has been important by work from McCarty and Zald 1977 and Tilly 1978) in understanding the economic roots of political change (Buechler 1995). In the LGBT movement literature, Ward (2008) has shown the influence of resource mobilisation on the focus of LGBT organisations. The dependency on prospective funders explains the identity of the organisations (Ward 2008: 141). Ward argues that professionalised activism greatly depends on resources from various organisations. Goals and plans are designed in a way that will attract funding. Ward (2008) shows the example of the HIV organisation Bienestar. The
organisation transformed from being an LGBT organisation into an organisation for AIDS patients. After the HIV crises the organisation struggled to provide programs for Latina lesbians as the risk for HIV for lesbian women was seen as irrelevant. The organisation shifted to an AIDS agenda in order to survive and grow, influenced by the governmental funding. Hereby, Ward has argued for the influence of the availability of financial resources on the identity of NGOs.

Second, the ability to organise people facilitates or constrains the mobilisation of resources within movements (Edwards and McCarthy 2004) and influences the kind of strategies the LGBT activists deploy. The ability of the LGBT movement to accomplish objectives can be examined with the use of social capital. Social capital is embedded in social networks (Lin 1999: 28). Social movements depend on the structural position, of linkages within the movement, as well as relationships with other actors, and the cultural and political elite (Diani 1997). Social capital is the investment of social relations with expected return (Lin 1999: 30). Social capital can enable the flow of information, influence agents and reinforce identity and recognition (Lin 1990: 31). Social capital is the access within a network to resources (Foley and Edwards 1999). Social capital includes the influence of prior activism and current networks within the movement. Moreover, the study of social capital takes into account the knowledge that is available within the network of the LGBT movement. Although social capital could be incorporated in different positions within the study of social movements, I chose to connect social capital with resource mobilisation to connect the the importance of networks, knowledge and prior activism in a clear manner. In brief, I examine resource mobilisation in the form of financial funding next to social capital in the form of networks and knowledge available.

By the same token, political opportunities need to be taken into account. According to Bernstein (2002), strategies alter when the political context changes. Correspondingly, Suh (2001) argues that political opportunity is a significant external element that organises social movements into collective action. Suh (2001: 439) refers to Tarrow (1994: 18) who argues that political opportunity is defining the existence of movements. Political opportunities exist at different levels. Coralles (2015) discusses political opportunities of the LGBT movements on three levels: the reservation of ideas with local majoritarian sentiments, strong connections with national-level parties, and operating progressive courts. Political opportunities, as described by Kirschelt (1986), Tarrow (1996), Kriesi et al. (1995) and (Diani 1997) includes access to participation and ruling positions next to the availability of networks with the political elite. The plurality of the state allows for different opportunities on different levels. Connections with the government can be built on different levels outside the party system and the courts. Fundamentally, political opportunities are a social space that is constructed by means of control, domination and power in which the activists negotiate their goals and objectives (Gaventa 2005). Correspondingly, political spaces do not exist without the influence and interaction with social movements. Political opportunities are shaped in the interaction between governmental institutions and activists that offer spaces as “opportunities, moments, and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships which affect their life and interests’ (Gaventa 2005: 11). Political opportunities can be claimed by the social movement, and invited by the government (Gaventa 2005). To understand the politics of victimhood, I examine the political spaces during the peace process. These spaces made it possible for the LGBT movement to develop a politics of victimhood alongside counterbalancing strategies.
Investigating the LGBT movement in Colombia

To summarise, I investigate how and why the professional LGBT movement in Colombia develops a politics of victimhood. I argue that the focus of LGBT organisations is determined by opportunities for identity formation, by resource mobilisation and by political opportunities. The politics of victimhood is a form of identity framing in order to resonate with political opportunities, that has developed alongside opportunities for resource mobilisation. The LGBT movement is able to allocate financial resources for the victimhood identity. Likewise, the politics of victimhood builds on prior activism, established networks and knowledge that is available about LGBT victims. As the development of a politics of victimhood is not without consequences, the movement counterbalances these impacts as it deploys peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights activism that rests on political opportunities and the availability of resources.
3. Doing Research

In this chapter, the research methods of the thesis will be explained. I will reflect on my data-collection and data-analysis. The data-collection is based on qualitative research design. In order to explore the LGBT movement I have spent five months in Colombia. The research was executed between November 2015 and January 2016. First, I spent six weeks to learn the local language (Spanish). Second, I conducted three months of fieldwork in the cities of Bogotá and Barranquilla. Prior to this fieldwork, I executed a desk research to familiarise myself with the local context and scientific theories.

The setting

To explore the LGBT movement and the dynamics behind a politics of victimhood, I have engaged with the professional LGBT movement in Colombia that consists of the NGOs Colombia Diversa, Caribe Afirmativo and Santamaría Fundación. The cities of Bogotá and Barranquilla formed the research location. The map of Colombia with the different departments is shown in figure 3.1. Bogotá is the political centre of the state, while Barranquilla lies in the department of Atlántico at the Caribbean Sea. Bogotá and Barranquilla are home to two of the three professional LGBT NGOs in Colombia Colombia Diversa and Caribe Afirmativo. I spent more or less an equal amount of time in both Bogotá and Barranquilla. Moreover, I spent I one week in the city of Cali (Valle de Cauca) to talk to Santamaría Fundación and accompany NGO Caribe Afirmativo on their fieldwork.

Bogotá and Barranquilla have different landscapes with regard to LGBT policies and within the LGBT movement. The differences between Bogotá and Barranquilla are part of the enormous differences between the regions in Colombia. In terms of regional, topographical and cultural aspects, Colombia is more diverse than most other country in Latin America (Fernández L’Hoeste 2004). There are a large political and cultural differences between the regions. The state is still characterised by a centralised apparatus, even after the decentralisation process in the 1980s. The state is not present in all parts of the country and has a varying level of influence in the different regions. Coastal cities such as Barranquilla struggle over a diminishing portion of the national budget (Fernández L’Hoeste 2004). Bogotá is Colombia’s capital and forms the country’s political centre. Bogotá has been of extreme importance with regard to LGBT rights. In 2007, a Decree was signed that established guidelines for public policies in order to guarantee full rights for LGBT people in Bogotá (Serrano Amaya 2011). Moreover, the city has a directorate of sexual diversity within the secretariat for planning. A diverse range of LGBT organisations is present in Bogotá. In Bogotá, the gay and lesbian movement professionalised within the peace movement Planeta Paz during the peace negotiations of Pastrana. On the contrary, Barranquilla is located at the coast of the Caribbean were LGBT rights are not a priority.
Figure 3.1 Political Map of Colombia delineating departmental boundaries source: Nations Online Project
Respondents
To get an overview of how the LGBT movement is specialising in a politics of victimhood, peace building and LGBT rights, I had the ability to submerge in the life of the Caribbean NGO Caribe Afirmativo. I was able to observe the different focuses of the organisation and its relationship with other organisations. Moreover, I had the opportunity to talk to other NGOs, such as the NGO Colombia Diversa in Bogotá that focuses on LGBT rights on the national level for a legal, social and political agenda. I had conversations with civil society organisations working on transgender issues GAAT in Bogotá and the left-wing collective Leon Zuleta, besides Santamaria Fundación in Calí. These conversations have provided me with a clear overview of the different LGBT organisations and their focus. For this research, I focus on the NGOs Caribe Afirmativo, Colombia Diversa and Santamaria Fundación and individual activists that are part of the LGBT movement.

Additionally, I had the possibility to speak to different governmental institutions in both the governmental epicentre of Bogotá as well as in Barranquilla. This provided me with an overview of LGBT policies within the government, and allowed me to understand connections between the government and the LGBT movement. I talked to different institutions of the national government that implement the Victim’s Law, such as the Victims Unit and the Colombian National Memorial Centre. Moreover, I interviewed people from the Ombudsman that deals with the effectiveness of human rights implementation. On top of this, I was able to talk to LGBT victims that are part of the programs of the Victim’s Law. This offered me insights in the implementation of governmental victim’s programs and it allowed for an understanding of the relationship between LGBT victims and the LGBT movement.

The selection of stakeholders was made by a combination of snowball sampling and purposeful sampling. Via my personal contacts and via email, I started to build contact with NGOs and governmental institutions from the moment I arrived in Bogotá. I actively asked initial respondents for contacts of other important actors. It is a form of convenience sampling (Bryman 2008). Additionally, I purposely made a selection for the value of each interview due to time constraints. I have tried to get a broad overview of the stakeholders to minimize bias and to verify statements. A list of interviews and visited conferences and lectures is given in ANNEX 1.

Access
Access to the field would not have come about without the help of different people willing to support my research. My access was fairly uncomplicated. ‘Blending in’ in the words of Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) was a natural process. Many of the respondents work on a topic close to my heart. I have communalities with my research population as a highly educated lesbian sympathising with the LGBT movement. My position has been important during my research, as I will elaborate later.

This research project started as a study of LGBT organisations and the implementation of human rights. When I entered the field in September 2015, I was hoping to investigate the translation of international LGBT rights within the local context of the police force in Colombia. Before entering the field, I had the chance of coming into contact with William Payne who referred me to José Fernando Serrano Amaya. Serrano has been an LGBT activists for years and was defending his PhD at the University of Sydney, during my field research. Serrano explained me the difficulties with regard to this investigation and helped me to formulate achievable goals. As Serrano understood my interest in the armed conflict, he provided me with his knowledge on the LGBT movement in Colombia and their interest in peace building.
On top of this, Serrano provided me contacts and access and played an important role in facilitating access as a gatekeeper (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 41). Serrano provided initial contacts and invited me to the two-day conference during the ‘Week of Equality’ in Bogotá. Here I was able to hear different stories and meet different people. The contact with José Fernando made me aware of his vital role in the LGBT community in Colombia as the way in which access is negotiated provides important knowledge about the field (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Even though Serrano has been a gatekeeper, I kept all the freedom to talk to people, and go choose my direction. Access was not constrained by his facilitation. The interest in the topic opened doors. Many people have responded with gratitude for my interest in the LGBT people, in the LGBT victims and the LGBT movement. At the same time, not all my access was successful within my renewed focus. I wanted to investigate the international influence on LGBT rights in Colombia, especially in relation to the governmental interest in LGBT rights in relation to the armed conflict. Unfortunately, the access to embassies and donors was difficult, due to many holidays in December and January. More research is required.

Language
Language in qualitative research is fundamental. Language has impacted this thesis in different ways. Conducting interviews in a foreign language provided different opportunities and limitations. First, it made my access to the field in both Bogotá and Barranquilla more difficult. When I came to Colombia in September 2015 my level of Spanish was basic. Therefore, I started with six weeks of Spanish courses to be able to interview my respondents. When I entered the field I was not able to speak to people as my Spanish did not allow it. My access in Barranquilla was constraint as the Costeño dialect in the coast is very different from the Spanish in Bogotá. Moreover, language was a barrier during interviews as I was not able to understand nuances. I tried to deal with this disadvantage by recording all my interviews and the conference and to listen to the conversations multiple times. Additionally, when I was uncertain of things said, the recordings were checked by people with a higher level of Spanish. This allowed me to get a deeper understanding of the topic than would have been possible on the moment of the interview. Overall, it was a conscious decision not to work with an interpreter. I was determined to do the interviews myself. First, my earlier experiences with an interpreter during fieldwork in Ghana were problematic. Second, speaking in Spanish allowed me to get closer to my respondents. Third, it was an opportunity to improve my language skills.

Timing of the research
The timing of the research has been both supporting and hindering my research. Even though I spend almost five months in Colombia, I encountered different drawbacks regarding time. The time for interviews became limited because I changed my research topic upon arrival and because I spend six weeks on Spanish lessons. I was not able to ‘hit the ground while running’ as advised by José Fernando Serrano Amaya. In the months of September, October and November I learned Spanish, familiarised myself with the field and attended conferences. Moreover, I started the initial contacts with respondents and went to Cali. In December and January, I started the essential interviews and attended workshops. Unfortunately, these last months turned out to be very compressed due to many public holidays and vacations. I had to compress doing interviews in two-three weeks’ time as a ‘race against the clock’. Moreover, the holiday months hindered my entrance to the international offices. With regard to the short time
between my interviews I had very little time to reflect on my interviews while I was in Colombia. Nonetheless, it was a conscious choice: I could not have reduced the time to improve my language skills, nor compromised on attending these important conferences at the beginning of my arrival. All together, I have had the chance to collect a substantial amount of data. It has been an extremely fruitful time in which I was able to participate in many events, such as the launch of the publication of the National Memorial Centre; a two-day conference during ‘The Week of Equality’ in Bogotá, and I had the ability to accompany the NGO Caribe Afirmativo during their fieldwork in Calí. Furthermore, I was able to participate in the strategic planning seminars of Caribe Afirmativo in January. In this regard, my timing was perfect to get a good overview of the spaces that exist. I feel lucky I entered the field when I had the ability to visit conferences and meet many of the stakeholders involved.

Methods
Different research methods were used to investigate the LGBT movement. Data was collected and analysed with ethnographic techniques. Ethnographic research is a study of people in their natural surroundings, by describing, interpreting and explaining people’s behaviour and perspectives (Erikson 1995). Ethnography is ‘a narrative based on systematically gathered and analysed data’ about the interpretation and explanation of culture and behaviour of a group of people (Madden 2010: 16). Ethnography is ‘writing about people, being with people and theorising about people’ (Madden 2010). Participant observations, interviews and informal conversation together with the consultation of existing literature bring an understanding of the local circumstances (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007).

Observations and interviews were held simultaneously as these complement each other. I have used semi-structured interviews that have guided my respondents towards the topic of my research, at the same time allowing space for the opinion of the respondent. These semi-structured interviews were made specifically for each respondent depending on their organisation or job. Interviews were recorded with consent, saved on my computer and deleted from my phone. I did not walk around with information that might have been risky when found in the wrong hands. Interviews were recorded with consent of the respondent. Names were used in correspondence with the persons wishes. I did not alter names of the respondents. All respondents stated this would not interfere with their direct safety. The victims I have spoken to are part of the national arena of politics for being victims. During interviews, observations have been part of the data collection, body language and expressions were considered, and the local setting was taken into account. An interview is social event in which the interviewer is participant observer. These observations have been written down in interview notes, or in separate notebooks. Observations were compared to what people stated in the interviews. Participant observations are a check for interviews (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007), as interviews can be flawed (Green and Thorogood 2014). At times, observations can be more appropriate than asking questions as they reveal many details of the field. Observations can reveal the meaning that is given to the local context besides the effect of the researcher. Especially, the connections between my respondents have been a very important part of my observations.

Next to interviews, informal conversations were held to give opportunities to interact and get to know respondents, or lower the difficulty of entrance as people might be more inclined to talk. Moreover, I have used Skype to interview people that are not in Colombia and to stay in contact with respondents after returning to the Netherlands.
Media as Facebook have been part of the data collection, as these electronic media form a platform where these ideas, discourses and believes are expressed. Castells (1996) network society describes how media and technology are of eminent importance to create space for public discussion due to the great communication possibilities. The importance lies in the process and management of information. Facebook offered a platform through which I was able to understand the framing of the politics of victimhood as well as that of peace building and human rights activism.

**Analysing the data**

It is important to describe how the results were established for the validity of this research (Elo et al. 2014). The gathered information was analysed along the ideas of grounded theory. I derived my theory from the data that was systematically gathered and analysed. There is a close relationship between the data collection, the analysis, and the eventual theory (Bryman 2008). The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interview transcripts were written in English while the original interviews were performed in Spanish. After transcribing the interviews, the research questions were re-explored to alter the preliminary ideas of the thesis coming from the data. To successfully analyse the content of qualitative research, the data was reduced to concepts creating categories and models to describe a phenomenon. The data thereafter was coded towards a system that was made on the basis of the research question and the three sub-questions, depending on my insight and intuition, in a process of going back and forward. A qualitative content analysis was done with the use of coding. I used several indicators for coding. To understand, the focus of the LGBT movement I used ‘victim activism’, ‘peace building discourse’, ‘human rights activism’. I used a ‘background’ category that was diversified in ‘political background’ ‘activism background’, ‘history of the conflict’, ‘LGBT policies government’. In the final stages of my thesis, I have used ‘political opportunity’, ‘social capital’ identity framing’ and ‘resource mobilisation’. Within political opportunity, I used indicators such as ‘opportunities victim’s law’ and ‘opportunities peace negotiations’. I made a connection between individual statements and the overall tendencies, in which I placed the statement into the context of the interviewee, differentiating between the subjectivity of the government and the LGBT organisations.

**Reflexivity**

Reflexivity is important with regard to language as spoken words are constructed by the social world in which they are located (Bryman 2008). In order to analyse the data gathered, subjectivity needs to be made explicit and reflected on. Gupta and Ferguson (1992) describe the importance between language, space and belonging. Language is part of the discourses that are used. A conversation analysis investigates the manner in which respondents talks and how the formulation of questions determines responses. To be able to understand a person, is to be able to understand their context, their space and their belonging. Reflection is important as in cross cultural conversations. Cultural differences between the interviewer and the respondent need to be considered. The Dutch culture of directness is very different form the Colombian culture of avoiding to say no. I might have understood answers differently than implied. Therefore, counter checking statements has been of great importance.

I judged the statements of respondents with care as different interests were involved. People that work for the government are possibly more inclined to give socially favourable answers. The interviews with the government were very diplomatic and real implications of policies were hard to discuss. This shows how important it is
to interview different stakeholders to get a broader view of the context and to cross-check statements. Sometimes I asked questions several times during the interviews. I have discovered that some of the most valuable answers were given only after I had asked the question for a second time. In one of the interviews I asked a question about cooperation twice. While the first answer was brief, the second answer provided me with deeper insights on the specific cooperation and the use of different laws as a space for the NGO.

The manner in which I asked questions in the interview was sometimes very insinuating. I did this partly on purpose and partly because of my level of Spanish. Therefore, not all answers could be regarded as intrinsically theirs, but some nonetheless provided vital information. Interviewees would clearly respond to tell me this was right or wrong. An example is the interview Darla Cristina Gonzalez. I asked her the very controversial question: ‘is the conflict helping the LGBT movement?’ She stated clearly the timing is helping the LGBT people to make the subject more visible, and that the conflict destroys the lives of LGBT people. In hindsight my question was loaded, but this blunt question gave me a very clear response. This made me aware that if people find things important, they try to make sure I understood it well. This happened within this research as the topics discussed were strongly cared about by the outspoken social movement.

**Being insider and outsider**

Reflecting on my position, my relationships and assumptions is very important, because objectivity towards the research respondents is never possible as a researcher is not a third party that can remain neutral (Chaitin 2008). I am shaped by socio-historical locations, values and interest from the places I was raised, as well as my respondents are shaped by their background. Therefore, I will never be a neutral outsider. People are never a complete outsider, but are always part of a given community in different degrees. I have both felt like an insider and an outsider based on different parts of my identity and my history. In this research, my position has been somewhere between the ‘fly on the wall’ and a ‘full participant’ (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). I can never be part completely part of one of the groups; neither of the governmental domain nor the LGBT movement closer to my heart.

My identity as a lesbian and my personal interest in LGBT activism influenced how I see the development of LGBT rights. First, I feel attracted to LGBT activism, and I have friends who are LGBT activists in the Netherlands. The existence of LGBT rights is a human right in my opinion, but in Colombia many people are opposed to this. I did not want this position to direct my research. I have always been a person taken into account different positions. Although, a position contra LGBT rights might seem far from my inner values, I am able to understand the reasons why people oppose to these rights. I respect this opinion as much as I would like to change it. The latter has not been my role within this research with regard to my respondents. I have never showed judgement about someone’s position. I have been interested in the values that form those positions.

My identity as a foreigner affected my ability to understand my research population. I tried to familiarise myself in the local costumes and cultures of the research context and my respondents. I have emerged myself in the Caribbean lifestyle while I was learning Spanish in Cartagena for two weeks, while living at a local family, far away from the tourist centre. This allowed me to come closer to the local perceptions of people. In Bogotá and Barranquilla, I have been living in a probably higher class environment. In Barranquilla, participant observation made it possible
become part of the LGBT community, becoming part of the local context to understand social structures and local cultures (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Moreover, my identity as a provincial girl from Limburg that is living in Amsterdam, made me understand the struggles between people from Bogotá and Barranquilla. Limburg is one of the most distinct provinces of the Netherlands, it is perceived as different and people often perceive a minority position within the country. Similar tendencies were present in Barranquilla although on a larger scale.

The research population in their turn formulated opinions about my presence and research. My 'ascribed' characteristics as a foreign lesbian woman impacted the research on different levels. My position as a foreigner might have influenced my fieldwork in different ways. I was often referred to as gringa as people assumed I was from the United States. The relationship with the United States has two sides: on the one hand, there is a great opposition to the dependence and influence of the US, while on the other hand, people are curious for outsiders. My position as foreigner was helpful as respondents were hoping I could let their stories be heard abroad. One of the victims I have spoken to, expressed gratitude towards me for having an interest in Colombia, an interest in the things that have happened, and in the LGBT subject.

Again my identity as a lesbian is of importance. Stott and Drury (2000) explain how shared identity increases cooperation, but restrict access to other groups involved. My lesbian identity has been both open and covert. I played with my role as part of the LGBT community, as it affected my entrance with the LGBT movements and victims positively, but it did not hinder the conversations with the government. Beforehand, I decided not to cover my identity. However, in Colombia the question whether I am lesbian was not often asked. The assumption that I probably would be a lesbian by doing this research, was hardly made. Not all the people working for the LGBT organisations have the LGBT identity themselves. At my first day at Caribe Afirmativo I was asked what I thought about latinos not latinas, the assumption was made that I am heterosexual. Only when I was asked about my sexuality I told this. Although, I was involved in a relationship in Barranquilla, I did not have the impression many respondents were aware of this, nor that it has influenced my position in the field. I felt that the willingness of victims to open up might have been positively affected by my sexual orientation, as I could talk about the situation in the Netherlands, and I often showed photos of the gay pride. I did not feel that my sexuality influenced the openness of others. Still, the openness of my identity might influence my own safety and that of others.

The aforementioned language barrier influenced my position as a researcher as it created a barrier between me and my respondents. It is also possible that people might have judged me with less knowledge due to some difficulties to express myself in Spanish fluently. At the same time, it made people more explanatory during interviews and patient to make me understand the subject. I believe, it provided me with a certain level of respect, as I felt that people were grateful for me trying to understand their language. People have been extremely patient with me to understand them.

Lastly, my close relationship with Caribe Afirmativo could have inflicted bias. During my research I had the opportunity to become part of the daily work of Caribe Afirmativo spending many days in their office to work. ‘The girl who came for one interview and stayed for months’ quoting Wilson Castañeda, the director of Caribe Afirmativo. My position within the NGO could have influenced my ability to talk to other stakeholders or their willingness to be open about the situation. While in Barranquilla, this helped me get contacts to governmental agencies involved, in Bogotá the different
organisations were not aware of my connections to this NGO, as many often mention that I should talk to the director. I do not believe that my position with Caribe Afirmativo blocked my ability to talk to other people. At the same time, my closer connections to the NGO allowed me to understand my research population. All in all, my personal interests, history and identity have influenced this research. I have reflected on my assumptions and I took different opinions into account. Nevertheless, this thesis remains my version of the Colombia LGBT movement.

**Risks and safety**

Before I started my fieldwork, I followed the course ‘Fieldwork in Conflict Settings’. I would never forget the phrase ‘you are ignorant’ of Peter Tamas. A phrase that got stuck in my head during my fieldwork. The context of Colombia and the armed conflict often made me feel super ignorant, and even more so in hindsight. Starting this research, I did not have the time and the ability to learn everything about the context, risks and safety. I had read many different articles about LGBT rights in general and in Colombia. Nevertheless, I had only a limited idea about the laws around the conflict or the institutions that exist. I often felt very far away from the context of the conflict. As an outsider it is impossible to see the difference between people related to paramilitaries or drug trafficking and civilians. Only small statements made me aware how close this paramilitary presence still is in cities. Entering ‘Usaquen’ – an upper-class neighbourhood in Bogotá – is impossible for transgender people due to paramilitary presence, as Frida, a transgender activist from GAAT explained. Or ‘a friend in university is the daughter of a big narco that is in jail’ showing how the drug trafficking is part of the upper-class society.

People constantly made me aware about the risks, even though I never felt extremely unsafe. Questions and statements made me aware of the fear people still experience: ‘why do you take your laptop here every day, it is not that safe’, ‘do not talk to the police officer you cannot trust him, you do not know what he will do if he finds out we are gay’. Learning stories about a journalist’s uncle being killed years ago or a 16-year-old boy being shot because he did not want to give his phone, showed me that even in the higher levels of society in Barranquilla, people did not feel and are not safe. I do believe the safety has changed in the recent years, but it remains very thin line. People do not trust one another nor the government: ‘they are corrupt’. I will always be ignorant, but by learning these stories I have been able to understand the Colombian context better.

The context of safety and access to the field was a learning process. Beforehand I was oblivious to what extent I could be open about the LGBT topic. My prior experience in Ghana made me hesitant towards talking about this topic, even though the context of Ghana is completely different. In Ghana homosexuality is explicitly condemned and it is the greatest evil. In Ghana, I was not able to express myself as a lesbian. Although my experience in Ghana is not related to my research in Colombia, it affected how I initially perceived risks of openly discussing my sexuality and my research subject. Along the way, I learned to belief that this subject was not a direct risk for me in most cases. The peace negotiations have brought optimism, and there is a certain level of openness to talk about LGBT issues. Nonetheless, it was challenging to talk about this subject in certain occasion because I was afraid it could by risky for me personally or that it might affect my position or the safety of others. For example, I felt a certain hesitate to talk about my thesis when I was driving in a taxi. Nonetheless, I am not able to tell whether this was my personal perception or based on the safety of the situation. These feelings made me aware that although LGBT rights
have found a greater openness in Colombia as mentioned in chapter one, the reality is still different for many LGBT persons.

In general, my field research did not pose great risks because of the armed conflict. I choose my research locations based on personal safety, and I only conducted interviews in cities. These safety issues were similar for the NGOs. During their investigation in the city of Calí it was chosen to only conduct interviews where it would be reasonably safe to do so. The smaller towns were regarded as less safe and more of a hassle to conduct fieldwork. When I accompanied Caribe Afirmativo to Calí, safety issues were made very clear. Although, I decided to walk through the city towards the hotel where the interviews would be conducted, the NGO advised me to take a taxi next time, as working with victims asked for another level of security. In hindsight, I did not feel unsafe, but did not want to compromise on their safety standards, also with regard to the security of the victims involved.

Nonetheless, doing fieldwork always implies risks for the people involved. Especially as risks are higher in a conflict region. To minimize the security risk of my respondents, I constantly reflected on the ‘how, whom and what’, to ‘do no harm’. To start, the interviews were conducted with used informed consent and confidentiality and I have taken into account the expectations of the community. All interviews were voluntary for the respondents. I tried to give the respondents a full understanding of the implications of the research by discussing the research subject before going into interviews (Green and Thorogood 2014). I tried to ‘do some good’, taking into account to ‘do no harm’. Nonetheless, the latter could occur beyond my own influence. I hope that by researching the LGBT community and by telling their story, I have given these people a sense of empowerment by feeling heard. Moreover, I hope that my presence and interest in this subject might have given people hope for a better future.
4. Professional LGBT activism in Colombia

In this chapter, I give a short overview of the development of the NGOs that I have researched in this thesis. I focus on professional state-orientated activism. There are three professional NGOs within the LGBT movement in Colombia. Colombia Diversa originated in 2004 in Bogotá and Santamaria Fundación started in Cali in 2005. Caribe Afirmativo started in Cartagena in 2007 and later moved to Barranquilla. These NGOs have established – what I call – ‘a pink triangle’ (figure 4.1). These NGOs have developed a focus on victims of the armed conflict that started around 2011 and came to a height around 2015-2016. Especially, Caribe Afirmativo strategizes a politics of victimhood in relation to peace building activism.

The professional state-orientated NGOs are part of a LGBT movement that developed in the early 2000s. During the peace negotiations between the FARC and the Pastrana government LGBT activists became part of the peace movement Planeta Paz. Planeta Paz was a social movement for the inclusion and participation of different social sectors, such as the women’s groups and indigenous groups. Planeta Paz offered a space for LGBT people to come together. Amidst Planeta Paz the LGBT activists became a leading figure and professional activism developed. ‘It was basically a school, and enabling space’, according to José Fernando Serrano Amaya (Interview, December 2015) who mentions in his paper (2011: 27):

‘the experience in Planeta Paz improved the political discourses of LGBT organisations and activists, nurtured alliances with persons in decision-making positions and created conditions to claim the responsibility of the State in the transformation of discrimination and exclusion based on gender identities or sexual orientation.’
Planeta Paz offered three opportunities for the LGBT organisations. First, Planeta Paz offered institutional support for the articulation of the already organised groups, and the development of new ones. Second, Planeta Paz started the develop national alliances and networks. Third, Planeta Paz gave LGBT activists a chance to be a part of the national discussion about peace and conflict (Planeta Paz 2002). Consequently, Planeta Paz has been the breeding ground for activists and scholars that are part of the LGBT movement in the period between 2011 and 2016. For example, José Fernando Serrano Amaya, became an independent activist and an academic strongly connected to the LGBT movement, after his years as part of Planeta Paz. Likewise, Mauricio Albarracín, currently working for the General Public Persecutor’s Office in Bogotá, formerly was the director of Colombia Diversa after being an activist in the Planeta Paz movement.

With the foundation of the three professional NGOs, human rights activism has become a strong interest within the LGBT movement. At the same time, the LGBT movement distanced itself from peace building activism and Planeta Paz. For instance, Colombia Diversa has the objective (Tate 2007: 169): ‘to promote rights of gay people, to transform negative images of gays in Colombia and to strengthen the gay movement politically’. Additionally, Caribe Afirmativo and Santamaria Fundación work on human rights activism. The three organisations have different interests on top of this shared human rights foundation. Colombia Diversa focuses on International Human Rights legislation and lobby of the Constitutional Court. Santamaria Fundación is specialised in transgender rights and Caribe Afirmativo has concentrated on the Caribbean region and has increasingly focused on the impact of the armed conflict and peace building. This division of interests is related to local opportunities. Colombia Diversa is located in the political centre Bogotá, while Caribe Afirmativo and Santamaria Fundación are operating on a regional level. As a result, activists in Bogotá have been able to lobby the Constitutional Court. In contrast, the presence of violence and the armed conflict affected the LGBT movement in the regions.²

The LGBT movement is gradually changing in composition, interests, and political influence. After a successful period of legal human rights activism with the leading figure of the movement being Colombia Diversa, the organisations in the regions are strengthening (Mauricio Noguera from the Prosecutions Office). Colombia Diversa remains a strong position in Bogotá, but Caribe Afirmativo and Santamaria Fundación have become more established. Caribe Afirmativo has a recognized position on both regional as national level. At the same time, there has been a change in interests within the movement away from legal change.

There has been a transformation of activism that is not only juridical'. Mauricio Noguera, National Prosecutors Office.

While legal activism remains important, other subjects have developed in the recent years. Furthermore, many smaller organisations have gotten into existence within the LGBT movement that caused a growth in the overall number of organisations, according to Mauricio Noguera. Moreover, different individual activists that work in relationship to these organisations have become part of the established movement.

Since Planeta Paz, the LGBT movement has slowly built connections with the Colombian government. Gradually, different governmental institutions have started working on the subject of LGBT people. One of these institutions is the Victim’s Unit

² Notes by the author, and interview José Fernando Serrano, Wilson Castañeda (Caribe Afirmativo) and Marcela Sanchez (Colombia Diversa).
that implements the Victim’s Law and has opened possibilities for the LGBT movement to develop a politics of victimhood. In the following chapters, I continue with the results of my research of the professional NGOs in Colombia and the development of the politics of victimhood since 2011. It is in a period in which the position of the regional NGO Caribe Afirmativo has gotten stronger and the connections between the NGOs and the government have become more established.
5. A politics of victimhood

In this chapter, I explain the development and the impact of the politics of victimhood. After 2011, LGBT activists in Colombia emphasise their victimhood by giving attention to victims of the armed conflict. This identity deployment is a strategy for collective action in which the movement seeks political recognition. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part shows how the identity deployment manifests itself. Victimhood has developed as an internal drive to alter victimisation. The second part shows how the politics of victimhood is established. The politics of victimhood is a strategy to enter political spaces within the peace process. Additionally, it develops with the ability to allocate resources. In this process, the regional organisations acquire a strong position within the LGBT movement. In the third part, I will explain the impact of the politics of victimhood within the political spaces. Moreover, I will elaborate on the political influence of the social movement and the consequences of a politics of victimhood for the LGBT movement.

Identity deployment as victims of the armed conflict

The LGBT movement has developed a politics of victimhood. Victimhood is the deployment of the identity of people as victims. The LGBT movement increasingly gives attention to the impact of the armed conflict on LGBT people, and frames them as victims. Especially, the NGO Caribe Afirmativo focuses on LGBT people as victims of the armed conflict. Moreover, other organisations, such as Colombia Diversa and Santamaría Fundación alongside smaller LGBT organisations and independent LGBT activists, work on the topic of victimisation.

The deployment of the victim identity is built on internal grievances. Victimisation has been a motive for activism in order to find justice and to prevent future violence. The LGBT organisations Caribe Afirmativo and Santamaría Fundación came into existence after a murder within the community. Caribe Afirmativo originated after the murder of Rolando Pérez in 2007, and Santamaría Fundación emerged after the assassination of Maria Paula Santamaria in 2004. Moreover, personal victimisation has been a strong incentive for LGBT victims of the armed conflict to become activists. Darla Christina Gonzalez, a transgender activist, is a victim of the armed conflict in the region around Pasto. Gonzalez was recruited by the FARC-EP at the age of 13. Gonzalez was victim of torture and sexual abuse by paramilitaries and received different death threats during her life (Noticias Carasol 2016). Victimisation became a drive for activism.

‘This (referring to her victimisations) has given me the power to work for the rest. Not only to defend or reclaim my rights. With the consciousness that I have I can help others. So that others do not have to live the same. Or if they have lived it, that they receive reparation’, Darla Cristina Gonzalez independent transgender activist.

Additionally, the specific interest in the impact of the armed conflict is related to the proximity of the armed conflict. There is a great urgency to alter the violent dynamics in society, especially for the regional state-orientated NGOs and activists. For example. Caribe Afirmativo is located in a region with a strong paramilitary presence.

‘It is a LGBT project in a territory that has been extremely affected by the conflict. Therefore, the conflict it is a reality that we cannot omit’, Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.
Our concern for the conflict became stronger in the year 2010, when we found two cases in the region. LGBT victims of violence started to appear and their victimizers are actors from the conflict, and the reasons are related to the conflict. When we found this in 2010, immediately we realized that we cannot ignore this. We have to work firmly on agendas that manage to understand LGBT people in the conflict frame’, Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

In Bogotá, the impact of the armed conflict differs from the impact in the regions were grievances are more direct. ‘In Bogotá you can keep a little bit of blind eye. You can look to the other side’, as José Fernando Serrano Amaya stated. Nonetheless, the impact cannot be ignored in Bogotá e.g. there is a large population of the internally displaced persons from around the country, among which a large transgender community.

To start, Caribe Afirmativo has deployed a victim identity by creating awareness for victims of the armed conflict and by helping victims of the armed conflict in relation to the government. To display the violence within the armed conflict the NGO has hosted workshops and debates. To do so, they have used different sources of information. The paramilitary pamphlets, shown in figure 1.1, are used as material to show threats and victimisation of paramilitary groups. Moreover, research was conducted on the impact of the armed conflict on LGBT people. Caribe Afirmativo published ‘Disarm Sexualities’ (Caribe Afirmativo 2015a). The report describes violence against LGBT people within the armed conflict in the Caribbean part of Colombia. More research was carried out at the moment of field research (2015-2016). Caribe Afirmativo investigated the impact of the armed conflict on LGBT people on a national level. This research is based on interviews with victims from the regions of Cali, Medellin, Barranquilla and Cucuta and has been financed by the European Union and USAID (Saul Castellar and Alfredo Bula, personal communication, 2015).

Additionally, Caribe Afirmativo has been working closely with victims that are enrolled in governmental programs of the Victim’s Law. Caribe Afirmativo prepares victims to enter these programs and accompanies them within the systems.

‘Caribe Afirmativo is enlarging the capacity of LGBT victims of the armed conflict’, Caribe Afirmativo (2015d)

Caribe Afirmativo has become a representative for LGBT victims as a Victim Organisation at the Participation Table, for example, in the department of Atlántico and Caquetá (Caribe Afirmativo 2015c) (figure 5.1). Stressing the severity of victimisation and strengthening policies for LGBT victims to deal with this victimisation. The interest
in the impact of the armed conflict and victimhood is growing. Since 2016, Caribe Afirmativo has started working directly with victims. In conversations, it became clear that the Caribe Afirmativo wanted to engage with victims of the armed conflict more directly. Later in April 2016, a job position for a psychologist appeared on their website. There is an increased attention in LGBT victims of armed conflict. The organisation has created ‘Houses of Peace’ in 2016. Here LGBT victims can overcome the scars of the armed conflict (Caribe Afirmativo 2016b).

Caribe Afirmativo is not the only LGBT organisation deploying victimhood. Santamaría Fundación in Calí published the report ‘Voices in Context’ in July 2015. The report investigates victims of violence within the armed conflict in the region of Cali, Santander de Quilichao, Popayán, Pasto and Tumaco (see figure 2.1 of the map of Colombia). Moreover, Santamaría Fundación initiated research on the impact of the conflict. Colombia Diversa has created for the impact of the armed conflict with the campaign ‘Peace and Diversity’. Statements on their website are made: ‘recognition of the LGBT people as victims of the armed conflict’ and a video is shown: ‘I am a victim, I have rights’. Colombia Diversa announced a job position related to the armed conflict on the 12th of January 2016 for ‘investigation and litigation about the LGBT population and the armed conflict’.3 Furthermore, Colombia Diversa started working on the Justice and Peace Law from 2005 with lawsuits against paramilitaries. The Law has allowed victims to come forward after the demobilisation of paramilitaries (Interview Marcela Sanchez, Colombia Diversa).

Figure 5.2 Launch of the ‘Citizens’ Magazine of the Street’ memories of the war by LGBT people. Source: Colectivo Transgeneristas

Moreover, smaller organisations work closely to victims of the armed conflict. An example is Colectivo Transpopulares that published a collective memorial of victims in 2015 (figure 5.2). Additionally, individual activists have created awareness for LGBT victims of the armed conflict. Victims of the armed conflict have become activists that work as representatives of victims. They create awareness for the impact of the armed conflict by narrating their histories. An example is Darla Cristina Gonzalez, as aforementioned was a victim of the armed conflict. The activist has been present at many discussions throughout Colombia to speak on behalf of victims.

As a result of the increased attention to the impact of the armed conflict, LGBT people are framed as victims of violence, threats and abuse by actors within the armed

3 Notes by author.
conflict. The politics of victimhood is a strategy for the recognition of these grievances. However, the necessity for ending violence and the strong grievances alone cannot explain the existence of a politics of victimhood. The focus on victims of the armed conflict is a development that is both internally and externally driven. Victimhood is a strategy for political recognition that becomes possible within political spaces for LGBT victims of the armed conflict, and with the support of financial resources and a strong network within the LGBT movement. The development of the politics of victimhood is a connection between internal developments of the movement, political opportunities and the availability of resources.

A strategy for political recognition
The internal grievances are made visible as a strategy for the political recognition of LGBT victims. The language of victimhood is a space for political recognition for LGBT victims.

‘To make visible those voices, that have been excluded in the country and marginalised historically, it recognizes that there are people that have suffered’, Nancy Prada, social scientist at the CNMH.

‘Blood is a space for recognition. That is why it is in the agenda.’, Darla Cristina Gonzalez transgender activist and victim of the armed conflict.

‘You need to acquire the language of that. You need to talk to the right people, in the right language, using the right words’ J.F. Serra no Amaya talking about professional activism (December).

Political opportunities for the recognition of victimhood have developed with the increased political interest in victims of the armed conflict. The investment in victims started with the Justice and Peace Law of 2005 and developed within the Victim’s Law of 2011. It amplified during the peace negotiations between the Santos government and the FARC-EP. The grievances of the LGBT community are recognized within the political spaces of the peace process, as the LGBT population is incorporated as a distinct group among the victims. Consequently, activists have been able to frame LGBT people as victims of the armed conflict in order to enter political spaces.

To start, LGBT victims are recognised in political spaces for the attention to victims of the armed conflict. Since the 2005 Justice and Peace Law, the impact if the armed conflict is a topic of debate in Colombia. Still this law provided little sensitivity to gender issues (Meertens and Zambrano 2010). This changed in 2011 with the Victim’s Law that came into existence ‘for which measures are dictated for the attention, assistance and integral reparations for the victims of the internal armed conflict’ (Ley de Victimas 2012). The Victim’s Law guarantees the right of reparation for violence and restitution for the loss of land (Summers 2012). The Victim’s Law includes sexual and gender minorities (Law 1448 of 2011). Additionally, the protection of the LGBT population is ensured within Law 1719 of 2014, for the protection of survivors of sexual violence within the armed conflict. Although both laws give recognition to the LGBT population, the implementation of the Victim’s Law has been the most outspoken to offer opportunities for the LGBT activists.

The Victim’s Law dictates specific measurements for people with a different sexual orientation or gender identity (SOGI) in the article 6, 13 and 33 (ANNEX 1). The LGBT population is seen as a distinct segment of the population that needs to be addressed with specific policies. The law implements a differential approach (enfoque diferencial) with regard to children, youth, elderly, gender, sexual orientation, Afro-
Americans and indigenous peoples as part of the focus on diversity within article 13. Because of the Victim’s Law, an increased number of governmental institutions implement specific LGBT policies. Different institutions have come into existence because of this law, e.g. the Victim’s Unit as the institution for the overall implementation of the Victim’s Law, and the National Centre for Historical Memory (CNMH) implements the collective reparations of victims.

‘The attention is clear within parts of these policies, institutions have to incorporate LGBT people, with regard to reparation and attention to the victims of the armed conflict’, Sandra Barreto, Victim’s Unit.

Within the book: ‘ParticiPeace, the route of rights’ (UARIV n.p.) public servants receive information about LGBT people. Other governmental institutions also implement the Victim’s Law, such as the Ombudsman and the Prosecutors Office are working on human rights implementation and law enforcement respectively. The specific political attention to LGBT people started with the implementation of the Victim’s Law.

‘Before it (the Victim’s Law) was zero’, Yesenia Perez of the Ombudsman Barranquilla

‘The issue of LGBT people in the armed conflict starts to be meaningful in this country with the Victim’s Law. I mean when the Victim’s Law recognized it as such. Before you hardly saw it’ Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

‘One of the big advances of the law 1448 is the recognition that there is a universe of victims’, Yesenia Perez, Ombudsman Barranquilla.

‘There was a Victim’s Law recognises and made visible the victims’, Marcela Sanchez, Colombia Diversa.

On top of this, the peace negotiations have increased the recognition of LGBT victims as it enlarged the governmental interest in victims of the armed conflict in general.

‘The subject of victims is now especially important’ Maria Alexandra Montoya Salamanca, UNDP.

‘Reparation of victims is a central issue in the peace process’, Yesenia Perez, Ombudsman Barranquilla.

The attention to victims has grown during the peace negotiations between the Santos government and the FARC-EP. The peace process is inherently related to the governmental interest victims of the armed conflict. Since the peace negotiations, the attention to victims has increased. The attention to victims has been crucial in the negotiations. The negotiations focus on the re-establishment of the rights for victims and non-repetition (Alsema 2015). The attention to victims is one of the five fundamental issues of the negotiations: rural development, political participation, illicit crops, victims and conflict transformation. Victims have been placed at the centre of the talks as one of the reasons for starting these renewed processes was ‘the moral pressure to prevent further loss of lives and the suffering of thousands of victims of human rights violations by both sides to the conflict, including the state’ (Herbolzheimer 2016: 2). Additionally, LGBT victims have been given special attention within the negotiations. An LGBT victim participated in one of the five delegations of victims (60 victims in total) (Herbolzheimer 2016), and a gender sub-commission was created in September 2014 to ensure the political participation of women and LGBT groups.

4 This differential approach works with the specified attention to different parts of the population on the basis of an equity principle. For equality people have to be addressed differently.
In 2014 and 2015, governmental institutions have showed an increasing interest in LGBT victims of the armed conflict. Research was published and governmental conferences were held. The Ombudsman published the research ‘Ignored Voices’ that described the impact of the armed conflict on LGBT people. The government of the city of Bogotá has organised a conference on the impact of the armed conflict on LGBT people. A two-day conference on the impact of the armed conflict on LGBT people was held during the Week of equality in the District of Bogotá. Another example is the sentence of Botalón, a paramilitary from the Magdalena Medio region. The court has ruled that he ‘practiced selective violence towards LGBT people as a target because of their sexual orientation and gender identity’, Wilson Castañeda, who stated ‘that is an important fact’.

The National Centre for Historical Memory has published the investigation Destroy the Difference, a publication about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims in the armed conflict, on the 10th of December 2015 the International Human Rights day was published (figure 5.3). The research narrates stories of victimisation of 63 victims from four departments in Colombia: Antioquia, Bolívar, Cundinamarca and Nariño.

![Figure 5.3 Publication of the research ‘Destroying the Difference. Source: the National Centre for Historical Memory](image)

The increased political interest in LGBT victims in these years can be explained by the development of the Victim’s Law in 2011 and the peace negotiations between Santos and the FARC-EP. The Victim’s Law of 2011 offers political opportunities since the law offers a special attention to LGBT victims. With the presence of the peace negotiations between the Santos government and the FARC that started in 2012, the governmental interests in victims of the armed conflict increased. Within the
negotiations, victims and LGBT victims specifically, have received attention. The increased attention LGBT victims opened political spaces for the LGBT organisation for the deployment of the victim identity.

Consequently, the political recognition of LGBT people opened spaces for the LGBT organisations to work on a politics of victimhood. The Victim’s Law has opened opportunities for LGBT activist to claim LGBT rights.

'We have the opportunity within the Victim’s Law in which the government modernises their services towards LGBT people. It is an opportunity for citizenship and rights’ Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

'For years, the LGBT movement in Colombia has unsuccessfully been searching for progress in the LGBT agenda. And I believe that we have the opportunity with the Victim’s Law to push the state to make upgrades on its services for the LGBT people and for the LGBT people to find new ways to relate with the state, Wilson Castañeda Caribe Afirmativo.

'The Victim’s Law is the first legislative body in Colombia that talks about LGBT, we did not have a law before. This is something to use as a first instrument to start to have influence. It is an important point of departure and a turning point for Caribe Afirmativo.’ Wilson Castañeda.

'The law has been an opportunity historically for the people LGBT in Colombia, to advance their rights.’ ‘The law makes SOGI people visible’, Sandra Barreto, Victim’s Unit.

Furthermore, the start of the peace conversations created awareness for the victims of the armed conflict, that accelerated the attention to victims of the armed conflict within the LGBT movement.

'It starts to be a subject for the LGBT organisations since the peace conversations that make the subject much more public’, Marcela Sanchez, Colombia Diversa.

'The moment that we are in, is helping us a little to make us visible, it is giving us the opportunity to make our agenda visible’, Darla Cristina Gonzalez, victim and activist.

Nonetheless, it needs to be noted that the affect of the peace process, was stronger for the NGO Colombia Diversa in Bogotá than for Caribe Afirmativo in the region. For example, Colombia Diversa has started working only recently with Justice and Peace Law in relation to the subject of victims of the armed conflict, while the law exists since 2005. Caribe Afirmativo started working with this subject before the negotiations, already in 2010. Nonetheless, the growing political attention opened spaces for all the NGOs to increase a focus on victims and enter political spaces.

Political spaces and the strength of the LGBT movement

The strength of the LGBT movement needs to be taken into account in order to understand the political spaces for a politics of victimhood. The governmental interest in the LGBT people outside the attention to victims of the armed conflict is limited. This can be explained as the political spaces within the Victim’s Law have developed with pressure from prior activism. Additionally, the strength of the movement determines the ability to deploy the politics of victimhood within these political spaces during the peace process. Social capital of the LGBT movement as well as the availability of financial resources have allowed for the development of the political spaces as well as the capacity of the organisations to enter these spaces.
The influence of prior activism and networks

First, the attention to the LGBT population amidst the victims is a result of prior activism of the LGBT movement. The input of civil society has been very important for the establishment of the political spaces. Opportunities with the government are built on the pressure from civil society that pressured to government to implement the Victim’s Law. According to Serrano Amaya (2015: 193): ‘such legal changes are a result of the activism of organisations that have struggled against a long history of denial of the victimisation because of gender identity and sexual orientation’. In turn, the Victim’s Law is built public LGBT policies (UARIV n.d.) that came into existence with pressure for the local LGBT movement in Bogotá (Gaméz Rodriguez 2009). Moreover, Chapter 13 of the ‘ParticiPeace’ book demonstrates how information about the LGBT population is provided by LGBT organisations.

‘I have the idea that everything is leaving an impression, what I am saying is that the social movement that is called the LGBT movement, has had some advances in very little time. Advances that other movements, such as the women’s movement have not had. These have been some significant advances, I think these organisations have very good capacities within the political agenda, the institutional contacts that they have. Every time the subject is more visible.’, Magda Cardenas, Ombudsman Bogota.

‘The LGBT movement has grown a lot in Colombia. It pushes a lot, it does a lot of lobby and that has started to have results’ Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

‘Caribe was the first organisations that suggested to the Memorial Centre to do a research on the impact of the armed conflict on LGBT people, in the year 2011.’ Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

‘These proposals (talking about the attention to the LGBT population within the Ombudsman) could not develop without civil society, we are working at close hand with the larger social organisation, Colombia Diversa, Caribe Afirmativo’, Magda Cardenas, Ombudsman Bogotá

Pressure from the LGBT movement opened governmental spaces within the peace process. Outside the peace process there are limited political spaces for the LGBT population. Support for LGBT inclusion can be seen as small islands within the government.

‘LGBT rights have been very invisible. It is invisible for the society. It is invisible for the government. Within the public policies there is a lack of awareness. It is a subject that is very marginal. The whole format of the Ombudsman is still masculine versus feminine. The Ombudsman has a big challenge to guarantee the rights of the LGBT community. There are many faults, it is not implemented well’, Yesenia Perez, Ombudsman Barranquilla.

LGBT policies are still not strongly institutionalized. It is a bit isolated,’ Marcial Ortega, District Bogotá

Yesenia Perez (personal communication, January 2016) explained that there is still a lot of ignorance within the political institutions, as the Ombudsman, when it comes to LGBT victims that declare their victimhood. Though it remains difficult to get LGBT issues across governmental organisations, the input from the LGBT movement has build networks and opened political spaces that will be explained further later in this chapter. First, I will explain the influence of social capital and financial resources on the strength of the LGBT movement with regard to the politics of victimhood.
Increased knowledge on victims of the conflict

The strength of the politics of victimhood within the political opportunities relies on social capital in the form of knowledge about the impact of the armed conflict on LGBT people. This knowledge is established within three converging dynamics. First, there is a growing academic interest in gender studies. The increased interests within universities influenced the amount of knowledge available on LGBT people and the LGBT movement. In 1994 the National University in Colombia started a study program on women and society. Since 2001, there is a school for gender studies with a master program. Activists and civil servants have been able to make a professional career with degrees in gender studies.

Second, the academic interest in the LGBT community led to the increase of knowledge of the impact of the armed conflict specifically. Activist and scholar José Fernando Serrano Amaya has completed his PhD on the relationship between LGBT people and the armed conflict. José Fernando has investigated how violence against LGBT people is a weapon of war. Serrano Amaya has been working in close relationship with the current LGBT organisations as well as with the government. He started his career with a degree from the National University and became an activist within Planeta Paz. Serrano Amaya has supported Caribe Afirmativo with the formulation of their goals and objectives in relation to the armed conflict. He organised a workshop in January 2016. The close relationship has been developed during his PhD studies. 'I am doing the same with them, paying them back' (Interview J.F. Serrano Amaya 2016). Next to Serrano Amaya, Nancy Prada Prada who is working for the National Centre for Historic Memory on the subject of LGBT victims, has studied at the National University. Nancy Prada, who studied Gender Studies, has been working for the CNMH because of the social investigation on the themes of gender and sexuality (Interview N. Prada, January 19, 2016). The existence of this knowledge enlarged the understanding of the impact of the armed conflict on LGBT people.

Additionally, the availability of knowledge has been influenced by the changing context of the armed conflict. In the past, research on the subject of victims was impossible because of the dangerous context (Tate 2007). In the last few years, the NGOs have been able to conduct research because of the growing peace. Victims have been able to come forward and talk about their victimisation since the implementation the Law of Justice and Peace in 2005:

>‘Before the demobilisation of paramilitaries it was not possible for the victims to talk as it was very risky. We were in the middle of the conflict. With the treaties with paramilitaries some victims started to talk. And because it is more visible, it started to be a subject for the LGBT organisations’, Marcela Sanchez, Colombia Diversa

In sum, knowledge of LGBT victims increased within the networks of the LGBT movement. The academic interest in gender issues grew and the peace process allowed organisations to conduct research. As such, the affect of the armed conflict became more visible and the opportunities for a politics of victimhood improved.

Financial resources

Apart from the social capital within the movement, financial resources have influenced the ability for the movement to develop a politics of victimhood. The presence of donor organisations in Colombia has enlarged the capacity of LGBT organisations to focus on LGBT people as victims of the armed conflict. International resources for the emancipatory agenda as well as the security agenda are available for the LGBT movement. First, funding organisations working on the emancipatory agenda of LGBT
people are strongly present in Colombia. A large part of the funding of the LGBT organisation comes from LGBT funding agencies. These organisations are working on leadership development, participation and visibility of the LGBT community. For instance, NED has offered possibilities for wide variety of agendas of the LGBT movement. Moreover, FESCOL, a German political foundation, finances the promotion of democracy and political education. These organisations allow for a focus on the politics of victimhood. The organisation of FESCOL is politically orientated, though has been helping Caribe Afirmativo with campaigns related to the impact of the armed conflict.5

Second, financial resources for a politics of victimhood are available within the security agenda of donor organisations. Different donor organisations such as USAID and the European Union are present in Colombia because of the continued armed conflict. These institutions increasingly focus on gender issues within the security agenda. Therefore, the LGBT organisations have been able to receive funding for a politics of victimhood. Marcela Sanchez of Colombia Diversa stated the importance of resource opportunities within the security agenda of the donor organisation GIZ.

‘We are going to work with GIZ. The fund is working on the conflict. It is not an LGBT fund. This is very important.’ Marcela Sanchez, Colombia Diversa.

Additionally, the Spanish development cooperation agency (AECID) has offered opportunities to develop the politics of victimhood. AECID’s presence is strongly related to the Spanish history in Colombia and the ongoing conflict. In 2015-2018, AECID formulated the objective to construct peace and prevent from armed conflict (Cooperación Española 2015). Caribe Afirmativo has been able to hold discussions about LGBT victims in cooperation with AECID. Even though ‘many of these kinds of organisations do not have specific goals for the LGBT community’ (Wilson Castañeda Caribe Afirmativo, personal communication).

Third, the availability of financial resources for a politics of victimhood is related to regional funding opportunities. There is a focus on regional impact of the armed conflict. Caribe Afirmativo has the most outspoken focus on the subject of LGBT people as victims of the conflict. An example of the regional opportunities is the development organisation USAID. The relationship between USAID for Caribe Afirmativo is related to their interest in the regions.

‘The North American government did a very intelligent thing. It went to the regions because the other nations all stayed in Bogotá’, Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

All together, the politics of victimhood is supported by resource mobilisation from the emancipatory agenda and the security agenda of funding organisations. The opportunities for resource mobilisation and the political spaces have been favourable for the LGBT movement to focus on the agenda of victims of the armed conflict. Particularly, the regional NGO Caribe Afirmativo has been able to focus on the regional grievances because of these opportunities.

Outcomes of the politics of victimhood
The outcomes of the politics of victimhood are a double edged sword. On the one hand, the victim identity has brought the LGBT movement increased networks with the government and opportunities to pressure the governmental policies. On the other

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hand, the victim identity has become engraved in its marginalisation and the politics of victimhood does not allow the LGBT movement to work on root causes of violence.

**Growth of governmental influence**

First, the Victim’s Law offers the opportunity to pressure the government as violations can be investigated in opposition to the government (Caribe Afirmativo 2015a: 20). Moreover, the politics of victimhood developed and strengthened the networks between the LGBT movement and the government. A politics of victimhood has offered the LGBT activists a space to cooperate with the government, to discuss the LGBT issues, build networks and improve the governmental policies towards LGBT people. LGBT organisations have been working closely with governmental institutions that implement the Victim’s Law.

‘In effect, working on the conflict agenda has brought us closer to institutions as the Ombudsman Office, the National Centre for Historic Memory, the Victim’s Unit, the Protection Unit, the Prosecutor’s Office’ Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo

On different levels the LGBT movement works together with the governmental institutions of the Victim’s Law. First, *Caribe Afirmativo* works together with organisations as CNMH and OIM, in order to enlarge social mobilisations of victim’s organisations for LGBT people, as well as to enforce their political impact (Caribe Afirmativo, March 15, 2016). The LGBT movement has been involved in the investigation of *Destroying the Difference* of the CNMH. The NGOs have been part of the investigation, and the publication of the research. Figure 5.5 shows the panel discussion during the CNMH publication. *Caribe Afirmativo*, *Colombia Diversa* and *Santamaría Fundación* were present. In this way, the victim law has opened spaces to enter the governmental spaces of the Victim’s Law.

![Panel discussion during publication 'Enfoque Diferencial: 'Aniquilar la Diferencia'. Among the participants: Darla Cristina Gonzales (victim), Wilson Castañeda (Caribe Afirmativo), Nancy Prada Prada (CNMH), and Marcela Sanchez (Colombia Diversa). Source Caribe Afirmativo.](image-url)
Moreover, *Caribe Afirmativo* is part of the National Table of Participation within the Victim’s Unit. The NGO is working as a link between the government and the LGBT victims. Plus, the NGOs has organised public discussions with the government. On 18th of November 2015, a meeting was held discussing the effects of the armed conflict. It was a debate between the CNMH, *Caribe Afirmativo* and the Spanish Consulate (figure 5.4).

The interaction between the organisations and the government has become a space for the exchange of information. The NGOs have a great capacity to share their knowledge and influence these governmental originations. There is an exchange of information that can be found in the contact, the discussions, but also the cooperation for making leaflets and publications.

‘The state is aware that the one who provides the information is the LGBT movement. The state works with the LGBT movement because it is the only one that gives it the information’, Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

‘It is important that Caribe Afirmativo is helping us, from this we benefit, it is not the same working in Bogotá as in the Caribbean region’, Victor Capador, Victim’s Unit.

In cooperation with the government, *Caribe Afirmativo* has developed leaflets with information for victims on how they can best enter the governmental system ANNEX 3. Moreover, Yesenia Perez describes how *Caribe Afirmativo* is passing on knowledge to the Ombudsman in Barranquilla on how they should deal with the LGBT population as victims as well as scenarios of peace:

‘One time we did a forum with Caribe Afirmativo and it seems to me to be very important. There they spoke about the impact of the armed conflict and talked about the scenarios of the construction of peace. Caribe Afirmativo organised the forum and they invited us’, Yesenia Perez, Ombudsman Barranquilla.
There is an established network between people from the governmental institutions and the NGOs. Within that network, the LGBT organisations are providing the government with a frame for the inclusion of LGBT people. The political spaces for victims of the armed conflict offer the LGBT movement a way to cooperate with the government, to make their grievances visible and to pressure the government to include the LGBT population.

The constraints of the politics of victimhood
The politics of victimhood is not an elixir for the LGBT emancipation in Colombia. I have discussed how the LGBT movement has developed a politics of victimhood that have allowed these organisations to enter political spaces. In this last part of the chapter I investigate the limitations of the politics of victimhood for the LGBT movement in relation to the governmental spaces. A dependency on how the government deals with LGBT people is created. On the one hand, the governmental interest in LGBT people remains limited as the spaces are islands. On the other hand, a politics of victimhood affects the position of the NGOs. The politics of victimhood compromises on the agency of the LGBT identity as it emphasises their marginalised position. The Victim’s Law creates new boundaries. Moreover, it does not offer the possibilities to change root causes of violence.

To start, the Victim’s Law remains a limited space for LGBT emancipation within the government. Although the Victim’s Law has shown an increase in interaction between the NGOs and the government, the NGOs remain sceptical about the government. The LGBT movement does not believe that LGBT policies within the government are internally driven.

‘The state has an interest on generating actions for demonstrating that it is a state that responds. Basically in that.’ Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo

‘The government is only ticking boxes’, José Fernando Serrano, activist and scholar.

‘On the national level things have been framed basically as a way to thick the balls, as a way to show: ‘we have done this, therefore everything is right’. José Fernando Serrano Amaya 2015. December

‘The government includes the LGBT population because it is in the Constitution. Because there is a movement that has pressured for their rights. This is not because the government wants it. It is for the social pressure.’ Marcela Sanchez

They believe most of these policies have come into existence with pressure from the LGBT movement, as well as international pressure that falls outside the scope of this thesis. Although there are other institutions that implement LGBT rights, such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the LGBT movement remains sceptical of the governmental interest in LGBT people. Implementation of these spaces is limited and the dialogue with the government is challenging.

‘The state is not an ally, sometimes the state seems like it, but they are not a great ally’, Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo

‘It is challenging. Sometimes the dialog with the government is very complicated’, Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

‘The state is not prepared for attending the LGBT victims in the armed conflict. It is hindered with the attention at the side of the functionaries’, Wilson Castañeda Caribe Afirmativo.
On top of this, the spaces within the Victim’s Law have different consequences for the LGBT movement. To start, the politics of victimhood frames the identity of LGBT people as victims. LGBT people are portrayed as weak and within a minority position.

‘The idea persists that LGBT people are only victims. Stereotypes are here. The LGBT person is an activist or a victim.’ Maria Mercedes Acosta, Sentido.

‘We are going back to were we started. We don not want to go back to being victims, to a minority position.’ José Fernando Serrano.

The existing idea that LGBT are victims is enforced by the government. Even though victimhood is a nationally shared grievance that transcends the position of LGBT people as weak, the governmental recognition of LGBT persons is limited to their position as victims of the armed conflict. The government implies LGBT people are only important if they are victims of the armed conflict as the Victim’s Law is the only law called upon by the National Congress that is implemented. The Congress has recognised LGBT people within the Victim’s Law, the Law for Victims of Sexual Violence and the Anti-Discrimination Law. However, the Anti-Discrimination Law is not implemented for LGBT people. Consequently, the government implies that LGBT people are only important when they are victims and thereby the minority position of the LGBT population is enforced.

Secondly, the political spaces within the Victim’s Law create boundaries between victims inside and outside the armed conflict. The Victim’s Law does not only enforce the idea that LGBT people are victims and are therefore weak, it creates a division between the victim inside the armed conflict and victims outside the armed conflict. An arbitrary hierarchy on different levels. This division that is based on random differences between perpetrators and circumstances. The distinction is not based on the type victimisation suffered.

‘What I have to say about the Victim’s Law, is that the line between violence within and outside the armed conflict is very vague’, Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

This division creates a hierarchy between have and have-nots. Compensations are often financial, which creates the division between people that receive money from the government and those who do not. All together, this division creates a subjective hierarchy between people who receive compensation for their victimisation and people who do not, regardless of the level of violence they have been subjected to. The arbitrariness of division is strengthened as some victims are better able than others to frame their victimisation in order to fit the profile.

‘The result of this situation is that those who are fluent in the language of rights and their mechanisms are more able to receive the benefits granted by the State’ (Serrano Amaya 2015: 194).

The arbitrariness of the division is enforced as not all who need compensation can access the governmental program. The ability to enter the system depends on risks involved and the location of victimisation. Not all victims have been able to declare their victimhood as many victims live in remote places were risks are still high. People that live in affected regions are not able to reach the LGBT movement or the governmental programs as became clear in the possibilities for field research (chapter 3). While most victims in remote areas are precisely the victims that need reparations the most, the declaration of victimhood is hindered by risks. There is a lot of fear to

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denounce and openly declare victimhood. Declaring victimisation imposes risks for social cleansing or retributions from armed forces or the government (Verdad Abierta 2014). An example of these risks is given by a participant of the Table of Participation who reported that after her participation in the program, armed forces appeared on her doorstep in the middle of the night and they threatened her to leave their territory within 24 hours (Centro Nacional Memoria Histórica 2015). On top of this, fear for violence hinders victims from entering the governmental victim program. Victims fear institutions such as the Victim’s Unit, as they confuse the Victim’s Unit with the state in general, including the military and the police that can be similar aggressors to the LGBT population as paramilitary and guerrillas.

‘Many victims confuse the state with the Victim’s Unit. There is still a lot of fear’, Victor Capador, Victim’s Unit Bogotá.

On the one hand, the fear to denounce to the state can be an opportunity for LGBT organisations to serve as the first contact for these victims. On the other hand, it remains difficult to reach these people. Consequently, arbitrary boundaries are created within the Victim’s Law. These boundaries are a constraint for the LGBT organisations that fight to dismantle boundaries and hierarchies between people.

‘The focus on victims is pretty reductive. The memorial of victims is a closed narrative where people need to fit in. By challenging some other kind of hierarchy, a new hierarchy is created’, José Fernando Serrano Amaya, activist and scholar.

‘It seems that in this country being a victim gives you status and that must be avoided. The state must make clear that being a victim is not a matter of opportunity’, Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

Thirdly, the Victim’s Law does not work with the root causes of the violence against LGBT people. The Victim’s Law only gives attention to victims, while the structures within society of homophobia are not altered. Especially, since there is a limited governmental interest to alter homophobia outside the Victim’s Law. This is a though constraint of the politics of victimhood for the LGBT movement that works on the emancipation of the whole LGBT population in Colombia.

Victims should not be the only route. The Victim’s Law is not a ‘cure all, it does not go to root of LGBT violence, prejudice etcetera. Roots are deeper – even at the university people still have no idea about trans people for example. There is a limited knowledge in this country. We need to look at it much larger, not just what the paramilitaries and the guerrillas are doing. The neighbour thinks the same as the guerrilla. The focus of the LGBT people, should include education. It is thinking about the conflict in a new form that deals with the sexual diversity. And, it is necessary to go to high schools. How are the schools dealing with this subject, the families the armed forces are doing’, Maria Mercedes Acosta, Sentiido.

Within the politics of victimhood LGBT organisations have been able to enter political spaces and influence governmental policies. Nonetheless, the political spaces remain an isolated island within the State. Moreover, this politics of victimhood enforce the marginalised identity of LGBT people as victims. Moreover, it creates new boundaries between victims and LGBT people, and it does not deal with root causes of violence.

Conclusion
The LGBT movement has developed a politics of victimhood during the peace process in Colombia between 2011 and 2016. Victimisation has been a strong internal driver
for the LGBT organisations and victimhood has become a space for political recognition. LGBT organisation have created awareness for the impact of the armed conflict and opened spaces within the government for the inclusion of the LGBT population. On the one hand, the LGBT movement influenced the governmental attention to LGBT victims. On the other hand, political spaces allowed the LGBT movement to develop a politics of victimhood.

The politics of victimhood developed within the political attention to LGBT victims within the Victim’s Law of 2011 and within the peace negotiations. Moreover, the strength of the politics of victimhood can be explained by the support of strong social networks and the availability of financial resources. It profited from the increase of knowledge about LGBT victims, and the availability of funding for the subject of victimisation within the emancipatory and security agenda of donor organisations. Thereby, the peace process influenced the politics of victimhood in two ways. First, the peace process enlarged the political attention to victims of the armed conflict that opened spaces for the recognition of victimhood. Second, the peace process reinforced the mobilisation of financial resources and social capital that strengthened the politics of victimhood.

The politics of victimhood increased the political recognition of LGBT victims and intensified networks between the government and the LGBT movement. However, these political spaces are not without pitfalls. The political opportunities of the Victim’s Law are a double edge sword. Cooperation between the movement and the government is a constant deliberation. NGOs run the risk of complying with the standards of the government. First, the Victim’s Law underlines the idea that LGBT people are solely victims. Moreover, the spaces of the Victim’s Law have created arbitrary hierarchies and boundaries between victims and non-victims and between victims inside and outside the armed conflict. This has created a structure of have and have-nots. Additionally, the Victim’s Law does not deal with the roots of violence. Overall, the governmental interest in LGBT empowerment is small and the political spaces for the politics of victimhood are limited. In the next chapter I show how the activists compensate some of the pitfalls of the politics of victimhood by focusing on peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights. As such, the movement tries to balance the impact of the Victim’s Law by altering root causes violence and by advancing a positive image of LGBT people.
6. Balancing the politics of victimhood

The LGBT movement is aware of the constraints of the politics of victimhood. The consequences of the politics of victimhood are balanced with other forms of activism. The LGBT movement focuses on peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights. These forms of activism exist with a right of their own, and additionally balance the politics of victimhood. They develop a positive identity frame for LGBT people and deal with root causes of violence. The development of peace building and human rights activism depends on the availability of resources and political opportunities. I explore the development, use and impact of human rights and peace building activism in four steps. First, I explain how human rights activism and peace building activism manifest themselves within the LGBT movement. Second, I show how the politics of victimhood is balanced. Third, I investigate the development of peace building and human rights activism within political spaces and with the availability of resources. Lastly, I briefly examine the impact of this form of peace building activism and human rights activism.

Peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights

After 2011, peace building activism gained momentum within the LGBT movement. This renewed interest in peace building starts more or less after the implementation of the Victim’s Law in 2012. It follows a similar tendency as the attention to victim’s of the armed conflict. The interest has been at its height during the writing of this thesis at the final stages of the peace negotiations in 2015-2016 and it has continued since.

Caribe Afirmativo has been the most outspoken NGO that engages with peace building. Since 2007, Caribe Afirmativo is working on topics related to the armed conflict. In this period, their position amongst the organisation has grown, and their focus on peace building has strengthened. Caribe Afirmativo uses the slogan (figure 6.1): ‘Caribe Afirmativo constructors of peace’.

Figure 6.1 Calendar 2016 ‘LGBT people constructors of peace’.
Moreover, Colombia Diversa and Caribe Afirmativo have engaged in the peace process with the government and the FARC-EP. Both NGOs flew to Havana to present their demands for peace to the FARC-EP and the government. A demand for the inclusion of the LGBT population within the peace agreement and the political domain in general:

‘We demand that the treaty includes and guarantees mechanism and actions for the full exercise of rights of participation, representation and development of leadership for women and LGBT people with the conditions of security, with guarantees for influence and transformation. Opening a space to be part of the political domain. We want a climate of conversation, confidence and positive construction for the diversity of opinions and representation, that will be heard in this country and that will guarantee that citizenship recognizes, contributes and supports actions that want to end the armed confrontation and passes real actions for inclusive citizenship’ (Colombia Diversa, March 6, 2015).

Furthermore, many LGBT organisations show their interest in peace building. Organisations such as Colectivo Transpopulares and GAAT (since 2008) work very locally in Bogotá. The Leon Zuleta Colectivo works on this issue in all regions of the country. The organisation Leon Zuleta has been working on this topic since their initiation in 2007. The importance of peace was shown by different organisations during the pride march of the July, 2016 in Bogota. Banners were carried that show the necessity for peace and t-shirts were worn with ‘PAZ’ (peace) in the form of a pink triangle, the international gay symbol. Colombia Diversa used slogans ‘I am marching for peace’ and ‘Equality, Peace, Family, Freedom, Dignity, Justice and Life’ (Colombia Diversa, July 3, 2016). Besides, LGBT activists have engaged in peace marches. When the outcome of the referendum rejected the peace accord, LGBT peace building activism continued and intensified. Moreover, different activists went to Havana to talk to the FARC-EP to make sure LGBT people remained part of the new agreement (Caribe Afirmativo, November 3, 2016). Showing the LGBT organisation’s active involvement in the peace building process.

Moreover, human rights activism is a solid foundation for the LGBT movement, and human rights activism is part of peace building activism. The goals and objectives of Caribe Afirmativo, as formulated January 2016, show the interest in peace building and human rights activism within the LGBT movement.

Purpose: ‘To influence the recognition and respect of the rights and the access to justice for LGBT people in a scenario of post-conflict and the construction of peace.’

Objective: ‘A region with possibilities that are favourable in which LGBT people can lead a dignified life and exercise their full citizenship’

The LGBT movement is involved with human rights activism on different levels from legal activism to political participation and education. In this thesis I focus on legal LGBT rights activism in relation to the politics of victimhood, and human rights activism as part of peace building activism. These topics though important for the LGBT movement fall outside the scope of this thesis. As aforementioned in chapter four, the ‘pink triangle’ emphasises on human rights activism.

‘Now, the LGBT movement is a super relevant political actor in Colombia. There is no human rights conference or discussion without discussing LGBT rights’ Mauricio Albarracín, former director Colombia Diversa.

The human rights focus of Colombia Diversa is the most outspoken. They focus on the lobby of the Constitutional Court since 2004, on research, reporting and monitoring of
violence within human rights reports. Different laws have been granted in this period. The lobby has continued with pressure for abortion and marriage equality that became laws in 2015 and 2016.

A strategy to balance the politics of victimhood
Human rights and peace building activism are strategized in opposition to the politics of victimhood. The activist and academic José Fernando Serrano Amaya is critical of the attention to LGBT victims of the armed conflict and the way governmental institutions are dealing with it. Serrano relates this to the peace dynamics in the country.

‘That is not my kind of peace’, José Fernando Serrano Amaya.

Serrano Amaya support Caribe Afirmativo and makes the organisation aware of the pitfalls of working on the subject of LGBT victims of the conflict. The attention to victims entails a possibility of falling backwards in the development of the LGBT movement with framing of LGBT as victims (as only victims).

In terms of what is what I could see, is a reduction of social agendas. Before it was social change in the 70s as radical politics where about social change. Than it kind of reduced to politics about recognition and visibility. Now they are kind of reducing it more to the recognition of victims. And I find that pretty reductive. I might be making a reduction now, but if you think about this, now it is people claiming to be recognized as victims, and this is like going back. Obviously I am not at all denying the experience of victimization, I am not going to deny how horrible it is. Of course it is horrible and we have been fighting that to be recognized. But when that became the only space or the main space as the only way the state looks at us. No way! José Fernando Serrano Amaya, activist and scholar.

Serrano Amaya organised a workshop with Caribe Afirmativo to formulate goals of human rights and peace building in opposition to the politics of victimhood. In the workshop Serrano Amaya shows the importance of LGBT people as normal citizens, and people with agency and capabilities (Interview J.F. Serrano Amaya, October 6, 2015). Hence, Serrano Amaya strategizes a focus on LGBT people as actors, citizens, and capable human beings in relation to the politics of victimhood. Human rights and peace building activism offer the perspective to do so. The NGO started to consciously balance peace building activism and the politics of victimhood, see figure on the front page of a campaign from Caribe Afirmativo. LGBT people are framed as constructors of peace in solidarity for victims of the armed conflict.

Moreover, peace building activism is a strategy to alter the violent dynamics of the country. Peace is as objective to end violence and build the country with the inclusion of diversity. To do so, the LGBT movement demands a different political system. Marcela Sanchez of Colombia Diversa stated: ‘peace is that the government goes to other places’ and ‘the construction of peace is the inclusion of diversity’. Caribe Afirmativo formulated their expectations for peace with the inclusion of the LGBT populations during the workshop with José Fernando Serrano Amaya. Peace building is more than the peace agreement. ‘Peace is not the negotiation between the FARC
and the government’ (Workshop Caribe Afirmativo, January, 2016). Peace is formulated as:

‘Peace is full citizenship’
‘Peace is diversity’
‘Peace is regional’
‘Peace is decentralisation’
‘Peace is plurality of the government’
‘Peace as bottom up approach’

The promise of stability brings a promise of human rights implementation. Building peace is a building block for the LGBT organisations to alter the position of LGBT people in the Colombian society.

‘We need peace to guarantee the rights of LGBT people’, Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

In the current LGBT movement, peace building and human rights are closely connected. The idea that peace is a human right for everyone, including LGBT people. The organisations demand the national inclusion of LGBT persons with a provision of their full rights. Peace building activism of the LGBT movement builds on the ideas about peace building within Planeta Paz. Where peace building became a more inclusive and broader view of structural change by incorporating the LGBT perspective (Interview J.F. Serrano, December 15, 2015). Peace is viewed as political participation of all sectors of society, including the LGBT community. An idea of political participation that is larger than the participation of victims within the Victim’s Law.

The peace building activism is the counterbalancing strategy for the politics of victimhood by working on root causes of violence. Peace building is a way to construct the nation without violence and with the inclusion of all parts of society within the political system. On top of this, LGBT people are framed as peace builders and citizens with rights in opposition to the marginalising victim identity.

Additionally, human rights activism balances the politics of victimhood. Human rights allow for a counterbalance of the victim identity and deal with the root causes of the discrimination and violence. LGBT people are constructed as equal citizens. Human rights show LGBT people in a frame of ‘just like everybody else’ (Rasmussen et al. 2004). Human rights resonate with a wider public as they emphasise universality and speak to people of all cultures and religions. Human rights transcend the divisions between people by highlighting the fundamentality of dignity (Joachim 2003). Human rights alter the cultural meaning of violence as they ascribe a new meaning to violence against LGBT by describing which violence is allowed and which not (Lemaitre Ripoll 2009, Tate 2007). In this way, the existing believes behind homophobia that tolerate violence and discrimination become illegal. The human rights frame provides hope. There is a continuous faith in human rights in Colombia as described by Lemaitre Ripoll (2009). There is an ‘unwavering faith of law’ (love) amidst violence (cholera). The Constitutional Court has acknowledged LGBT rights as human rights, which offers a foundation for the organisations to build on. The judgements of the Constitutional Court are of great symbolic value for self-perception and the social identity of LGBT people by showing that their lives count. Consequently, human rights function as a counterbalance for the victim identity.
‘By deeming homosexuality normal and violence abnormal, the Court recognizes homosexuals as fully human in a social world where violence would be by definition abnormal, or against the norm.’, Lemaitre Ripoll (2009: 83).

Opportunities to balance the politics of victimhood
Peace building activism and human rights activism are a counterbalance for the politics of victimhood as they come into existence within political spaces of the peace process. Although the political opportunities for legal human rights activism are limited, the peace process has offered spaces for human rights activism. Political opportunities allow LGBT activists to focus on peace building in relationship to the government with the inclusion of human rights. Additionally, peace building activism and human rights activism build on strong social capital of the LGBT movement and financial resources that are available for a peace building agenda and the emancipatory agenda. Accordingly, peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights becomes a strong counterbalancing strategy for the politics of victimhood.

Political spaces
Political spaces exist for peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights activism while the political spaces for working on legal human rights activism are limited for several reasons. Possibilities for change via the Constitutional Court are ending, while opportunities to influence the Congress continue to be limited because of high levels of religiosity and homophobia. Human rights opportunities within the Constitutional Court are coming to an end. The Constitutional Court granted most of the LGBT rights including marriage equality.

‘LGBT activism is turning away from the juridical. It has come to the point that, the matrimony is every time more consolidated, marriage equality is every time more established’, Mauricio Noguera, National Prosecutor’s Office.

The existing legislation offers the LGBT movement spaces to fight abuses in court, but the context of the armed conflict and high levels of homophobia hamper the implementation of LGBT rights. The situation for many people remains unchanged.

‘One of the biggest institutional challenges is that the state does guarantee human rights. The implement for LGBT people’, Yesenia Perez, Ombudsman Barranquilla.

Regardless of the hindered legal political opportunities for legal human rights activism, political opportunities for human rights have come into existence within the peace process. Human rights form a central part of peace agreements (Bell 2003). Peace without human rights is not peace. Human rights have gotten an important role within the negotiations in which the state and non-state actors received an equal consideration (Herbolzheimer 2016). The negotiations have united peace and justice. Peace and human rights are entwined and human rights are a key indicator to measure changes of peace. Human rights are important in the peace negotiations between the FARC and the Santos government. Still, the implementation of human rights within the peace process has been criticized as human right offenders get a limited punishment. However, this agreement does not argue for the traditional punitive model, but for restorative justice (Chr. Michelsen Institute 2016). LGBT rights are central in the political spaces of the Human rights are important for building sustainable peace.

‘For me, the fundamental ingredient in this scenario of the construction of peace is a culture of human rights that makes peace durable and sustainable’, Yesenia Perez Ombudsman Barranquilla.
The peace process opened political spaces for LGBT rights as there has been an increased interest in gender issues within the negotiations. These peace negotiations of the Santos government are the first to include the LGBT community. Both the government and the FARC agree on the inclusion of LGBT issues. Within peace building activism, the organisation can work on LGBT rights:

‘I think that especially now, LGBT is so important, because the whole country is thinking in the subject of peace. It is the core idea of the government’, Maria Mercedes Acosta, Sentido.

‘So, in the law and in the law application, in the peace process and in the post agreement, we have opportunities to strengthen the citizenship in the region and to ensure the recognition of the LGBT people’s rights’. Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

Hence, the peace process opened political spaces for peace building activism in three stages. First, the political interest in peace enlarged the interest of the LGBT movement in peace building. Second, political spaces for participation in the peace process allowed the LGBT movement to focus on peace building. Third, the participation of civil society combined with the attention to gender within the peace negotiations allowed for the participation of the LGBT community specifically.

First, the interest in peace building for social movement is related to the governmental interest in peace. The relationship between growing peace building activism and peace negotiations has been observed during the negotiations of Pastrana with the FARC peace activism (Isacson and Rojas Rodríguez 2009). The presence of negotiations triggered an increase in peace activism on top of the already existing mobilisation of peace within the context of the war (García-Durán 2006). While García-Durán attributes the peak of 1998 to bloodbaths and the visibility of guerrilla victories, Bouvier (2009) relates the peak of the peace movements to the start of the negotiations with the Pastrana government (figure 6.2).

![Figure 6.2](image_url) Civil society organisations source García-Durán (2006)

During the peace negotiations of the Santos government the political attention to peace increased which led to a growth in peace activism. In the period between the peace negotiations, it was not a possibility to talk about the armed conflict. The Uribe government silenced it the existence of the armed conflict and the responsibility of the
State (El Espectador, May 7, 2011). In this period, there was little to no prospect for peace. The dynamics of the conflict intensified with a larger existence of paramilitary forces. After the Uribe government, the Santos government changed its view towards the armed conflict and initiated the peace process. The peace discourse of the government was visible everywhere.

‘Everyone is talking about peace’ Maria Mercedes Acosta, Sentido.

‘What I think is, that when you are in politics at this moment, in whatever way, you have to take interest with the subject of peace and conflict’ Sandra Barreto, Victim’s Unit.

‘Everyone for a new country: peace, equity, education’, is the slogan of the government that has been used by every national institution (figure 6.3). It is even a slogan that is heard regularly on the National Radio (author's observation).

Figure 6.3. Logo of the Victim’s Unit ‘Everyone for a new country’. Source: Victim’s Unit

At the same time, peace activism was visible in Colombia. Organisations have come into existence as ‘Peace at the street’, as many people protest on the streets in favour of a peace agreement (Molano Jimeno 2016). Many people went to the streets to fight for peace before and after the referendum of the negotiations between Santos and the FARC-EP (Aljazeera 2016). The existence of peace building activism is part of these peace dynamics. The governmental interest in peace has created opportunities for civil society to work on the peace building. The direct relationship between peace building activism and the negotiations has been observed within Caribe Afirmativo. Because of the existence of the negotiations, it allows the organisation to formulate goals of peace.

‘The process of peace has made that many LGBT people and many LGBT organisations have started to worry about peace in Colombia. How this will be in the villages, and why it is important to mobilise the LGBT movement’ Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

Second, political spaces for peace building activism strengthened as the Santos government has shown recognition for public support of the peace process. During former peace conversations the number of groups working on peace building rose, but they were not part of the official negotiation tables (Isacson and Rojas Rodríguez 2009: 20; Bouvier 2009). Public participation was only symbolic (Herbolzheimer 2016). In comparison, the Santos government is in support of the role of civil society in peace building. The government supported marches in 2013 and civil society participation has become part of the peace negotiations. Participation of civil society has been secured within the ‘General Agreement for an End to the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Long-lasting Peace’ signed in Cuba in 2012 by the government and the FARC-EP. As part of the second forum in the end of April, more than 1,400 representatives of peasants, indigenous, women, and LGBT communities, participated in 20 working groups over three days producing 400 new proposals (Bouvier 2013).
As such, the negotiations of Santos with the FARC are the first negotiations that include civil society.

Third, the increase in civil society participation only partially explain the political opportunities for peace building activism. The peace negotiations offer opportunities for the participation of LGBT organisations specifically. The participation of LGBT NGOs is part of a gender sub commission of the negotiations. This commission calls for the inclusion of gender and LGBT people in part within the agreement (FARC-EP 2016). A lot of emphasis is placed on the inclusiveness of the process, especially in the beginning of the negotiations. The general agreement: ‘require the participation of all, without distinction’ (UN Women 2015). These negotiations have given LGBT organisations to enter political spaces of the government.

Consequently, the LGBT movement participated in the official negotiations. On the 11\textsuperscript{th} of February 2015, civil society joined the negotiation tables in Havana together with other movements from women’s organisations, farmers, indigenous, afro and ex-combatants. For the LGBT delegation, both Caribe Afirmativo and Colombia Diversa were present (Caribe Afirmativo 2015b). The negotiations opened political spaces for the LGBT movement.

‘The peace negotiations allow us to enter spaces that we have never been before’, Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

Altogether, peace building activism has opened political spaces for participation and citizenship. The peace process triggered peace building activism and participation of different civil society movements. Nonetheless, the inclusion of the LGBT organisations in the peace negotiation was not solely an invited political space. It came into existence via an invitation from the women’s organisations (Interview, Wilson Caribe). As such, the inclusion of LGBT organisations strongly depended on the inclusion of civil society in general and on the strong networks and social capital of the LGBT movement.

Resource mobilisation for human activism

In the period after 2011, social capital and financial resources are available for a combination of peace building activism and human rights activism. To start, the movement possesses a strong social capital in the form of networks and knowledge for both types of activism. Opportunities for working with human rights activism exist within networks and social capital with regard to LGBT rights. There is a lot of knowledge on LGBT rights within the movement that was established with organisations as Colombia Diversa and their successful lobby of the Constitutional Court. Therefore, the organisations are part of established (transnational) networks.

‘Colombia Diversa has been very well trained in this human rights LGBT language. And they have been really good, and very well connected, to acquire this international language’, José Fernando Serrano Amaya.

‘Colombia Diversa has taught us a lot’, Wilson Castañeda, Caribe Afirmativo.

Moreover, social capital is strong for the peace building activism. The LGBT movements can build on knowledge from the Planeta Paz movement and the networks with different movement such as the women’s organisations. For example, the relationship between the Caribe Afirmativo and Serrano Amaya who organised a workshop on conflict and peace.

Furthermore, the availability for financial resources for the emancipatory agenda has influenced peace building and human rights activism. Different international
funding organisations financing LGBT rights activism are present in Colombia. Different donor countries are present in Colombia. First, the presence of USAID is strong within the Colombian LGBT organisations, as observed during the fieldwork period in Colombia. Different respondents mention the interest of the United States in LGBT rights. Since 2006, USAID Colombia has been a flagship bilateral mission to work on supporting the LGBT community. Since the presidency of Obama (2009) all US agencies have been directed to be involved in the promotion of LGBT rights (Klapeer 2015). USAID declares to work with Colombia Diversa, Caribe Afirmativo and Santamaría Fundación, in order ‘to ensure LGBT people have equal rights as enshrined in international human rights and domestic law, and access to education, employment, health care and housing’ (Lucas 2013). Second, the European Union has been focusing on LGBT rights in Colombia. The Council of the European Union adopted the non-binding toolkit to promote LGBT rights in 2010 (Council of the European Union 2010 and 2013) also has a ‘guidelines to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBT) persons’ since 2013. The European Union is a visible supporter of the LGBT organisations. This is a result of the international rise of funding for LGBT organisations within an emancipatory agenda. In 2011, Klapeer (2015) identified a ‘discursive explosion’ for the attention that is given to dissident sexualities and development. There has been a shift towards a focus on LGBT persons within development agencies (Gosine 2015). Increasingly, LGBT rights are receiving attention in countries as Scandinavia, Great-British, the Netherlands and the United States.

Figure 6.4 FESCOL in the support of Caribe Afirmativo working on peace building. Source: Caribe Afirmativo

Moreover, financial resources for peace building activism are available from the emancipatory agenda of these funding agencies. Emancipatory organisations as NED and FESCOL not only offer financial resources for the promotion and fight for rights, these founds also open opportunities for working with victims of the armed conflict and the peace building in relation to LGBT rights, see figure 6.2.
Additionally, funding for peace building activism is available for LGBT organisations. The LGBT movement is able to receive funding from donor countries in Colombia similar to the dynamics of the politics of victimhood. Many donor organisations are present in Colombia because of the ongoing armed conflict and the peace process. These funding opportunities allow the incorporate the LGBT rights perspective. The subject of peace has increasingly opened possibilities for the LGBT activists. During the workshop of Caribe Afirmativo with José Fernando Serrano it became clear that all the large donor organisations are working on the subject of peace. Moreover, within the donor opportunities for peace building, there is an increased attention to gender issues, that allowed for LGBT organisations to use these funding channels.

Moreover, technical expertise from the Institute supports the LGBT movement in building peace. The Institute of Transitional Justice states on their website: ‘Today, within the framework of the peace process, we have the opportunity to make this type of violence visible, and to have a process of truth-seeking and memorialization that empowers these communities, legitimizes their rights and allows them to reclaim their dignity.’ (Institute for Transitional Justice, April 21, 2015). Consequently, the Institute offers an opportunity for the politics of victimhood and the counterbalance of peace building activism. The Institute has been working on LGBT issues in contact with Caribe Afirmativo, as well as Colombia Diversa and Santa María Fundación. This started with a meeting in New York where Caribe Afirmativo was invited to speak (Interview Wilson Castañeda, January 2016), and uses of financial resources from the Canadian Embassy.

Impact of the spaces for peace building and human rights
In the previous part of this chapter, I explored the opportunities for the LGBT movement to focus on peace building activism and human rights activism as a balance for the politics of victimhood. I showed how peace building and human rights activism have created spaces for the LGBT organisations to develop a politics of victimhood. I did not discuss the impact of the spaces for peace building activism and human rights activism. In this part, I shortly elaborate on the impact of the spaces for peace and human rights in relation to LGBT activism.

I examined the political spaces for the recognition of LGBT people within the peace process. Peace building activism opened a political door for the LGBT movement and offered a counterbalance for the consequences of the politics of victimhood. Nonetheless, the impact of these spaces remain limited outside the balance for the politics of victimhood. The prospects of peace and LGBT rights are limited. First, the peace accord does not construct peace completely as patterns of violence and human rights abuses continue. The peace accord started the demobilisation of the FARC-EP guerrillas, and although the peace process is disarming guerrilla fighters, other groups continue. Paramilitary presence is not diminished and could even increase. Human rights defenders still run great risks within Colombia. Struggles for human rights in Colombia are immense. After the peace accord, assassinations of human rights defenders by armed groups continued (Amnesty International 2017). Fourteen homicides of civil society activists have been reported in January 2017 alone (Justice for Colombia 2017). Thereby, the impact and implementation of human rights within the peace agreement are debatable.

More specifically, the impact of the peace accord on LGBT rights in Colombia is uncertain. Peace building activism is an objective for stability and political diversity,
but only one step to changing the lives of LGBT people. Peace in itself will not change the perspectives on LGBT people that exist within society. Certainly, when the government is not strongly interested in LGBT rights outside the peace process. Peace is not the cultural change of homophobia.

‘Homophobia is internalised in the social sector’, Victor Capador, Victim’s Unit.

‘A neighbour thinks the same as someone from the guerrilla’. Maria Mercedes Acosta, Sentido

The implementation of LGBT rights is hampered as homophobia prevails. Participation of the LGBT movement within peace building is one step towards the inclusion of LGBT people. Cultural change can run parallel to peace building and is part of the change towards peace, but the dynamics do not necessarily collide. For the LGBT movement, peace is an objective towards LGBT emancipation. It is not an end in itself. Peace will not eradicate homophobia. It is only one step closer towards a society without violence against LGBT people.

‘Post-conflict is not the same as changing the lives of LGBT people’. Workshop Caribe Afirmativo.

‘Homophobia will not be solved be ending the armed conflict’ Wilson Castañeda.

On top of this, the peace process enforced a backlash of LGBT rights. A polarisation or ‘backlash’ is part of the LGBT rights struggle. Kollman and Waites (2009) have research the link between the visibility of LGBT rights and the ‘backlash’ against LGBT people in countries were LGBT rights are opposed to cultural values of ‘privacy’ and the ‘family’. During the peace process in Colombia, homophobia is believed to have supported the ‘no’ vote, as the peace deal was believed to threaten traditional family values (Alsema 2016). High levels of religiosity and homophobia are strong in Colombia and during the peace process protests against LGBT people were held. Oppositional movements have increased with the growing visibility of LGBT people. This process let to the resignation of the Minister of Education Gina Parody, who is herself LGBT. Parody received critique of ‘gay colonisation’ within the peace negotiations. Respectively, ‘the fear for homosexuals remains greater than the fear for war’ as commented by Marcela Sanchez from Colombia Diversa in the New York Times (Casey 2016).

To conclude, the peace process is not a guarantee for a decrease in homophobia and violence. The peace process has included LGBT rights, but the implementation of LGBT rights has been difficult in Colombia. On top of this, a backlash of LGBT rights was observed amidst the peace process. Even though, political spaces for the LGBT movement have come into existence within the peace process, the impact of the peace process on violence and on the position of LGBT people in society remains uncertain.

Conclusion

Peace building and human rights activism have created a foundation for LGBT organisations to work on a politics of victimhood. Peace building activism and human rights activism create an opposing identity frame that emphasises the agency of LGBT people. LGBT people are shown ‘peace builders’ and as ‘citizens with rights’. Moreover, human rights and peace building activism work on root causes of violence that are not dealt with in a politics of victimhood. Human rights and peace building activism are thriving during the political peace process, in a time that opportunities for
the implementation of human rights has limited possibilities for human rights activism. The peace negotiations offer the LGBT movement a direction for peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights. These spaces have opened within three dynamics. First, the whole country is thinking in peace with the inclusion of human rights. Second, the negotiations have enforced civil society participation. Third, the negotiations opened a door for the LGBT organisations specifically. Additionally, peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights builds on opportunities for the mobilisation of resources, and the availability of social networks besides the existence of political spaces. Strong social networks are part of the LGBT movement and the financial resources are available for the emancipatory as well as the peace building agenda. Consequently, the peace process allowed for a politics of victimhood besides a counterbalance of peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights.

Despite this, the impact of peace building and human rights activism remains uncertain. Obstacles for dealing fundamental issues of human rights inside and outside the peace process continue. The struggle for the implementation of human rights prevails with high levels of religiosity and homophobia. Peace building is the basis for the stability in Colombia and the participation of the LGBT organisations, yet it does not automatically solve issues around human rights violations. Building peace in terms of the government does not simultaneously deal with homophobia. A cultural change remains necessary to diminish homophobia and to improve the application of human rights within society. The overall impact of the peace process on LGBT empowerment is ambiguous.
7. Discussion and conclusion

The objective of this research is to understand how professional LGBT organisations negotiate their position as victims of the armed conflict within the political context of a peace process in Colombia. In this thesis, I have examined how LGBT activists in Colombia develop a controversial politics of victimhood with a focus on LGBT people as victims of the armed conflict. To do so, I have used a social movement lens. I have argued that goals and strategies of the LGBT movement depend on political opportunities, the availability of resources and opportunities to frame the identity of LGBT people. A politics of victimhood developed because of political spaces and resource opportunities during the peace process in Colombia that allowed the LGBT movement to frame LGBT people as ‘victims of the armed conflict’. At the same time, the peace process brought political opportunities and resources through which the LGBT movement developed a counterbalancing strategy for the consequences of a politics of victimhood.

I started this thesis with an introduction of the position of LGBT people in Colombia. Although Colombia is a forerunner with regard to LGBT rights worldwide, the reality for many LGBT persons in Colombia remains challenging. Religion and heteronormativity are strong cultural values that are translated into homophobia. LGBT people are subjected to violence that is amplified by the continuous presence of the armed conflict where homophobia is used as a weapon of war. In dealing with the consequences of the armed conflict, the LGBT movement has increasingly engaged with a politics of victimhood. In the previous chapters I have illustrated how victimhood is an identity frame that is a space of recognition for the LGBT movement in Colombia. The LGBT movement has developed a politics of victimhood based on their shared grievances. Opportunities to develop the victim identity exist within political spaces of the peace process, along with the availability of financial resources and social capital for the deployment of the victim identity. At the same time, the politics of victimhood has damaging consequences for the LGBT movement. In order to balance the consequences of the politics of victimhood, LGBT organisations have been working with other strategies and actions. The LGBT movement was able to counterbalance the marginalised position of the victim identity with opportunities during the peace process. Below I elaborate on this argument.

The Colombian LGBT movement has increasingly developed an interest in LGBT people as victims of the armed conflict. Victimhood is a strong driver for the LGBT activists in Colombia. The LGBT organisations are researching the impact of the armed conflict. Moreover, workshops and debates are given on the subject of victims of the armed conflict, and the organisations have started working with governmental institutions that work with victims of the armed conflict. By doing so, the LGBT movement emphasises the marginalised position of LGBT people within society (Sandoval 2012). Consequently, the movement creates a ‘political identity’ (Bernstein 2002) to enter the political domain to achieve goals of freedom and equal opportunity (Sullivan 1997). Victimhood becomes a space for political recognition. With the politics of victimhood, the LGBT movement demands attention for the LGBT population. The development of the politics of victimhood depends on political opportunities and the availability of resources (Bernstein 1997). First, political opportunities developed with the increased political recognition of LGBT victims within the Victim’s Law of 2011. These spaces increased during the peace negotiations between the FARC and the government. Second, the politics of victimhood depends on financial resource mobilisation and strong social capital within the networks of the movement. The strength of LGBT activism allows for the LGBT people to be included in the Victim’s
law and amplifies the influence of the LGBT movement within the political spaces of the Victim’s Law. The LGBT organisations are to allocate financial resources for the politics of victimhood. International donor organisations are interested in the context of the armed conflict, and social capital of the movement provides networks and knowledge about the impact. In turn, the availability of this knowledge is related to the growth of research possibilities within the increasing stability of the peace process. Consequently, the peace process has influenced the ability of the LGBT organisations to work on a politics of victimhood by amplifying the strength of the movement and by opening political opportunities.

The choice to focus on victims of the armed conflict is not without challenges. Political opportunities within the Victim’s Law are not exclusively a space for change. The political opportunities are a double edge sword. The politics of victimhood has been criticized in different research as portraying LGBT people as victims is harmful for the view of LGBT people within society. A victim identity is ‘deeply invested in its own impotence’ (Brown 1995: 65). According to Vaid (1995) and Marshall (2010), the victim identity is inadequate as it dependents on a minority status that diminishes agency. Framing LGBT people as victims denies their agency and it silences their voice (Jeffrey and Candea 2006). Moreover, the politics of victimhood legitimises the victimhood of certain groups over that of others. Benefits are provided for those people that fit the label as victim. Those who fail to be recognised are deprived (Jacoby 2015).

For the LGBT movement in Colombia, the cooperation with the government is a constant deliberation. For the LGBT movement in Colombia there are limitations for working with the Victim’s Law. NGOs run the risk of complying with the standards of the government by underlining the idea that LGBT people are victims. The victim discourse of the LGBT organisations is not similar to that of the government, but the Victim’s Law is the only law made by the national congress that is being implemented. Therefore, it enforces the idea that LGBT people are only important when they are victims of the armed conflict. Additionally, the Victim’s Law creates new boundaries between victims and non-victims, and hierarchies between victims of violence inside and outside the armed conflict. These divisions are arbitrary as for various reasons many LGBT victims are not able to declare their victimhood. On top of this, the Victim’s Law does not deal with the root causes of violence and the situation for many LGBT people remains unchanged.

Activists are aware of the risks of adopting a hegemonic discourse. Choices are a deliberation between the ability to achieve political mobilisation and cultural goals (Steinberg 2002). A social movement knows the enabling and constraining effects of framing (Bernstein 2003). In Colombia, activists are able to negotiate the limitations of a politics of victimhood by concentrating on other strategies that deal with root causes of violence and enforce a positive frame of LGBT people by confronting and denying the symbolism of violence. While the politics of victimhood are limited, they can be accompanied by a broad range educational campaign towards awareness raising and attitude changes that diminish the levels of violence (Tomsen 1996). The Colombian LGBT movement deals with the consequences of the politics of victimhood by working on human rights and peace building activism. These forms of activism emphasising the agency of LGBT people by portraying LGBT people as ‘builders of peace’ and ‘citizens with rights’. Human rights and peace building activism identifies victimisation and underlines violence as illegal. Additionally, peace building and human rights activism attend to root causes of violence.

Opportunities to work on peace building and human rights activism exist within political spaces of the peace process. Moreover, these forms of activism build on
established networks and knowledge, together with the options for financial resource mobilisation. To start, the political opportunities for peace building with the inclusion of human rights activism are strong within the peace process whereas the political opportunities for legal human rights activism are limited. The implementation of human rights remains difficult with high levels of religiosity and homophobia. The peace process provides political opportunities for peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights. The peace negotiations offer the NGOs a direction for their activism as the whole country is thinking in peace, and the negotiations have included LGBT participation specifically. Besides the political opportunities, human rights activism and peace building activism rely on the availability of resources. The emancipatory financial resources for the LGBT movement are growing, and the security agenda of donors have increased opportunities for funding for the subject of peace building. Social capital is strong for the human rights activism within Colombia Diversa, and peace building activism relies on the social networks from Planeta Paz along with the knowledge that is available within the networks with the universities. All in all, the peace process allowed for political opportunities and relied on possibilities for resource mobilisation besides a strong social capital. Therefore, peace building activism with the inclusion of human rights has become a counterbalancing strategy for the politics of victimhood.

Concluding, this thesis shows how the LGBT movement negotiates their identity as victims of the armed conflict with the prospects of peace. The peace process has allowed activists to focus on the consequences of the armed conflict. First, the Victim's Law and the peace negotiations have increased the attention to victims of the armed conflict. Second, the presence of the peace negotiations has allowed for peace building activism to balance the politics of victimhood. The context of the peace process influenced the politics of victimhood and peace building activism within the LGBT movement.

Simultaneously, this thesis has argued for a social movement theory in line with Bernstein and Thayer. I have discussed how strategies deployed by social movement can be understood by taking into account the impact of the political context, the availability of resources as well as the impact of the deployment of identity. This thesis demonstrates that strategies of social movements cannot be understood without investigating prior forms of activism and current connections and networks of the activists. Prior networks between activists, the government and other activists have been of great importance for the existence of the politics of victimhood and peace building activism. Thereby, the connection I make with the theory of social capital allows me to include the impact of networks and knowledge within resource mobilisation and structure my argument correspondingly.

Limitations and further research
In this thesis, not all forms of activism or strategies that the LGBT movement uses to balance a politics of victimhood have been taken into account. While both peace building and human rights activism have been of great importance, these issues are not the only issues that the LGBT movement is working on. Other topics and strategies of the LGBT movement in Colombia have fallen outside the scope of this thesis. The NGOs have been working on subjects of education, political participation that are part of a human rights perspective and can enhance cultural and political change from another angle. These issues as political participation could have influenced the existence of the politics of victimhood as these issues also imply a positive identity framing. The relative strength of these topics will influence the strength of the LGBT
movement, and in turn effect the possibilities within resource mobilisation, social capital and political opportunities via existing networks.

Moreover, the influence of international funding on the existence of LGBT policies within the government is not investigated. International support of the peace process has affected the negotiations. This might have influenced the issues that were taken into consideration. The interest in gender issues could be internationally driven. International resources have not only influenced the LGBT movement, but also the interest of the Colombian government. The influence of international networks and knowledge, might informally influence the national LGBT policies. Future research is necessary to understand the political interest in LGBT issues that have opened the political spaces for a politics of victimhood.

Furthermore, additional research is necessary for the understanding of the politics of victimhood during peace processes. In this thesis, I have showed the relationship between the politics of victimhood and peace activism within the LGBT movement in Colombia. The relation between the politics of victimhood and peace building activism is relatively new within the LGBT movement. An objective of further research can be to investigate the relationship between victimhood and peace building within smaller LGBT organisations. And, on the politics of victimhood within LGBT organisations in other countries that experience or have experienced conflict. Questions arise as what would happen with a politics of victimhood if there would have been no opportunities for peace building activism in Colombia. Moreover, the relationship between the politics of victimhood and peace building can be investigated in other social movements for a deeper understanding of the impact of peacebuilding on the politics of victimhood. The peace process has opened spaces for the LGBT movement, but how do other social movements deal with the political attention to victims of the armed conflict and peace building activism? Do indigenous or black organisation go through a similar development with regard to the politics of victimhood and the peace process between 2011 and 2016? Further research on how social movements balance the attention to victims of the armed conflict and peace building activism can provide important insights on the relationship between peace building and social movements in Colombia.

Challenges to peace
This research shows political spaces for the LGBT movement, but change is limited. First, the peace process is not solely a space for progress for the LGBT community. The peace process has revealed homophobia within society. Polarisation has increased with the growth of the LGBT subject within the peace process. High levels of religiosity and homophobia are strong in Colombia and during the peace process protests against LGBT people have been observed. Oppositional movements increased with the growing visibility of LGBT people. The opposition to the peace accord with the referendum has been associated with resistance to the gender component of the peace accord. Former Minister of Education Gina Parody resigned after opposition to the peace deal has been related to the conviction the peace deal threatens traditional family values (Alsema 2016). A backlash of LGBT rights that is described by Long (2005) and Kollman and Waites (2009). This in turn, comes back to the implementation of human rights activism and its limitations.

Second, the peace accord does not construct peace completely. The peace accord started the demobilisation of the FARC guerrillas, but other groups remain and paramilitary presence is not diminished. Human rights defenders still run great risks within Colombia. Struggles for human rights in Colombia are immense. After the accord
killings of human rights defenders have continued (Amnesty International 2017). In January of 2017 alone, 14 assassinations of civil society activist have been reported (Justice Colombia 2017). For further research it is interesting to investigate the development of peace in relation to the human rights implementation.

Lastly, the political spaces for change as described are limited. First, impact of these spaces is partial as these spaces are isolated islands as governmental interest outside these spaces is limited. The spaces for LGBT empowerment that have been part of the peace process are small islands of political interest in LGBT people within the Victim’s Law and the peace negotiations. Although, the governmental attention to LGBT people has increased participation of the LGBT population and starts with the implementation of human rights of participation beyond marriage equality. At the same time, peace does not automatically solve issues around human rights violations and the implementation of LGBT rights remains politically difficult. Patterns of homophobia and subsequently violence remain. What happens when the government takes LGBT people into account in the peace process, but refrains from protecting their human rights? What kind of peace is this? Hence, what do these spaces mean? What will happen to the inclusion of the LGBT population after the peace negotiations?

The peace process has taken into account LGBT people, but the unequal position of the LGBT population in society stays unchanged. Peace building will be the basis for the stability in Colombia to diminish violence in general, but it does not automatically change the situation of homophobia. Especially, when rights against violence and discrimination are hampered by the existing patterns of homophobia. While peace building activism portrays LGBT people as ‘citizens with rights’, a culture of homophobia still blocks change and can even become a backlash for the political changes that have already occurred. Peace building identity frames can influence how society views LGBT people positively, but this is not a causal relationship with cultural change. These dynamics already have been found within the gay-rights revolution in Latin America were innovative politics and alliances come into existence but the cultural acceptance of LGBT people is limited. Spade (2011) argues that legal reforms have not changed the unequal position of marginal groups within society. These laws do not take into account the systemic inequalities behind the existing violence. Serrano-Amaya (2015) refers to the ‘homoprotection’ that exists next to homophobia. He argues for the need of social change away from legal changes.

To understand the extent of the LGBT empowerment, a distinction between cultural and political change is necessary. In line with Bernstein (2003: 353) I argue that ‘political mobilization, and cultural goals do not always line up in a one-to-one fashion’. This thesis shows that cultural and political change are not two sides of the same coin. Political impact affects cultural changes, but time spans and impact differ. A cultural change remains very important for the implementation of human rights and the progress of LGBT emancipation within the peace process after the negotiations.

All in all, the LGBT movement has developed a politics of victimhood during the peace process between 2011 and 2016. The availability of financial resources, the existence of social capital and networks, and political opportunities within the peace process allowed the LGBT movement to work with victims of the armed conflict and to work on the subject of peace building. The LGBT movement has negotiated their identity as ‘victims of violence’ with that of ‘peace builders’ and ‘citizens with rights’. Political spaces have come into existence for the LGBT movement and the position of LGBT people is slowly improving. Nonetheless, peace building remains complicated and the prospects for LGBT empowerment are uncertain within the peace process as human rights implementation is hindered.
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**Legislation**


ANNEX 1

Interviews and workshops

Interviews

- Capador, V. (2016, January). [Victim’s Unit].
- Prada, N.N. (2015, December). [Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica].

Workshops, conferences and publications

- Panel discussion ‘How to understand what has happened with LGBT people in the armed conflict’. [AECID]. (2015, November 18).
ANNEX 2

Articles within the Victim’s Law that are inclusive for the LGBT population

ART. 3. VÍCTIMAS
Se consideran víctimas, para los efectos de esta ley, aquellas personas que individual o colectivamente hayan sufrido un daño por hechos ocurridos a partir del 1º de enero de 1985, como consecuencia de infracciones al Derecho Internacional Humanitario o de violaciones graves y manifiestas a las normas internacionales de Derechos Humanos, ocurridas con ocasión del conflicto armado interno.

ART. 6. IGUALDAD
Las medidas contempladas en la presente ley serán reconocidas sin distinción de género, respetando la libertad u orientación sexual, raza, la condición social, la profesión, el origen nacional o familiar, la lengua, el credo religioso, la opinión política o filosófica.

ART. 13. ENFOQUE DIFERENCIAL
El principio de enfoque diferencial reconoce que hay poblaciones con características particulares en razón de su edad, género, orientación sexual y situación de discapacidad. Por tal razón, las medidas de ayuda humanitaria, atención, asistencia y reparación integral que se establecen en la presente ley, contarán con dicho enfoque. El Estado ofrecerá especiales garantías y medidas de protección a los grupos expuestos a mayor riesgo de las violaciones contempladas en el artículo 3° de la presente ley tales como mujeres, jóvenes, niños y niñas, adultos mayores, personas en situación de discapacidad, campesinos, líderes sociales, miembros de organizaciones sindicales, defensores de Derechos Humanos y víctimas de desplazamiento forzado. Para el efecto, en la ejecución y adopción por parte del Gobierno Nacional de políticas de asistencia y reparación en desarrollo de la presente ley, deberán adoptarse criterios diferenciales que respondan a las particularidades y grado de vulnerabilidad de cada uno de estos grupos poblacionales. Igualmente, el Estado realizará esfuerzos encaminados a que las medidas de atención, asistencia y reparación contenidas en la presente ley, contribuyan a la eliminación de los esquemas de discriminación y marginación que pudieron ser la causa de los hechos victimizantes.

ART. 33. PARTICIPACIÓN DE LA SOCIEDAD CIVIL Y LA EMPRESA PRIVADA
La presente ley reconoce que los esfuerzos transicionales que propenden por la materialización de los derechos de las víctimas, especialmente a la reparación, involucran al Estado, la sociedad civil y el sector privado. Para el efecto, el Gobierno Nacional diseñará e implementará programas, planes, proyectos y políticas que tengan como objetivo involucrar a la sociedad civil y la empresa privada en la consecución de la reconciliación nacional y la materialización de los derechos de las víctimas.