***Documentality and Display: Archiving and curating the violent past in contemporary Argentina, Chile and Colombia.***

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**I. BACKGROUND**

Institution: **Museo de la Memoria Histórica del Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica**

Name and position:

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**II. TRANSCRIPTION**

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Well, I welcome you all here. Also, thank you very much for considering us for this research. It is really gratifying to have these types of conversations. I am Luis Carlos Sánchez, I’m the director of the Museo de Memoria Histórica del Centro Nacional de Memoria. I’ve been the museum’s director for around one and a half years. I come from the Research Directorate, which is how internally the Memory Construction Directorate is known. I even come from the Historical memory group, and I’m going to tell you in a little bit about that story. It is a bit long, what has been the work of historical memory from an institutional point of view. Of course there have been antecedents of memory social initiatives that have been working for at least 30 or 35 years. But I am going to tell you, in a schematic way, what the history of the institutional efforts oriented to the historical memory has been. Those efforts in a certain way crystallise what the centre was to become. And I have been part of the whole process, so I can tell you as a participant.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Excellent.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Great. So, to put this into context, the first institutional efforts of historical memory are linked to the 975 law of 2005, that was the law that provided a framework for the former mobilization and the paramilitaries’ submission to justice. In that law, a mechanism was provided that was a transitional justice strategy tightly focused in the judicial aspects. This had a rather precarious reparation component, and of extrajudicial clarification. So, on the one hand, what was laid out in Law 975 was a mechanism of submission to justice for the paramilitary groups that were negotiating with the Uribe government at that time, that is, this special mechanism that tried to expedite the processes, such as making the confessions of the paramilitaries, already demobilized, postulated to criminal benefits, and that at the same time tried, on the one hand, to prosecute the military leaders, and to give a differentiated treatment for those who were not responsible for the crimes, or for the most serious ones, which were, let's say, the foot soldiers of the paramilitary groups.

Law 975 was basically a special criminal project which was aimed into normalizing the situation of those who were demobilizing in the framework of regularizations with paramilitaries. And as complementary mechanisms to that judicial scene there was, on the one hand, a strategy of administrative reparations very focused at that moment on the individual. To each victim, according to the type of violation that had been suffered in the context of the armed conflict and in accordance also with his social conditions, the historical debts of the State, it was assigned to them, so to speak, a "repair fee", so they would be payed individually a certain amount of money based on what they had been victims of. The first pilots of collective reparation were made to try to recognize collective damages associated with the armed conflict, but those pilots were very incipient. There were only 7 cases in which we worked. And in addition to that, the Historical Memory group was created.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: Sorry, we are talking about what year?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: 2005.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: All year 2005.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: All year 2005. That was 13 years ago. Law 975 is the first transitional judicial instrument that existed in Colombia, which was explicitly understood as an instrument of transitional justice. Before there had been other transitions, there had been other negotiations of course, but the first normative instrument that is self-understood as transitional justice is Law 975 of 2005. As I was saying, it is an instrument of transitional justice that is still very focused on the judicial aspect of transitional justice, on the idea of what, before structures like paramilitarism, the fundamental thing was to judicially resolve their responsibilities because if one left aside, let's say If one did not give prominence to the judicial system, it seemed a sort of self-amnesty. Insofar as they were forces so close to the State, which had had explicit alliances in some regions, the fundamental thing was to judicially solve the problem rather than proposing a comprehensive solution that encompassed all the principles of transitional justice. Let's say that Law 975 was born initially in the face of an eminently judicial concern and the normalization and stabilization of a group of demobilized combatants.

There, the question about the victims and the role of victims of transitional justice was not central to the design, but it became central in its execution. And it became central in its execution first, because I believe that a combination of judicial activism and social mobilization was very important in order to make the issue more and more present in the government's agenda. So, on one hand, there were Constitutional Court sentences that tried to say: “Well, we accept your special mechanism of judicialization as long as—and that judicial mechanism with the benefits of the people that are being judged—it is guaranteed as far as possible the right of the victims to know the truth, to have reparation, and the guarantees of non-repetition”. And that was not only the job of activist judges, but there was also a vigorous social mobilization partly motivated by the decrease in levels of violence, which allowed other political conditions in the territories that also enabled people to mobilize more actively to put this issue on the public agenda.

So, in that progressive strengthening of the place of the victims in the transitional justice that has been achieved since 2005, 2006, 2007, the Historical Memory group of the National Commission of Reparation and Reconciliation was born. The latter was a historical memory group oriented to extrajudicial clarification tasks, but which was part of the institutionality of reparation. And that's something that I'm going to explain right now, the centre inherits it, only that the Historical Memory group was initially thought to be basically a group of clarification. In the first formal meetings of the Historical Memory group, when they called Lautaro Sánchez to organize the group of researchers at the beginning of 2007, initially what had been left in the law as historical memory were basically two things. It had remained the obligation to head the national commission of reparation and reconciliation, to establish in a report the reasons for the emergence and evolution of the armed groups in Colombia, of the illegal armed groups. The State was not even included. But jurisprudentially, and to the extent that the social debate was opening doors for historical memory work to have better conditions, a much more robust research agenda was opened, which had some peculiarities of which I am going to tell you right now, that were oriented more explicitly to the guarantee of victims' rights and above all the right to the truth.

At the beginning what was thought about the law was: “Let’s create a reparation and reconciliation commission oriented, on the one hand, to guarantee that the people who are demobilizing have the conditions to be reintegrated into society and that a reasonable minimum number of reparations are guaranteed to the individual victims. And also let’s make a small chapter that explains to us what happened, and why do the people finished armed at the end?” And why is it that this war lasted such a long time? At that moment the existence of a conflict was not explicitly recognized. It was considered a little bit like a paranoid discourse that didn’t help to progress the negotiations. Those negotiations led to the building of a particular criminal judicial scene, to a strategy of reparations, but without the explicit recognition of the conflict. At that time, what the government maintained was that there was a war against the democracy, let us say, the terrorist threat against the democracy. This put the institutions in such a crisis that the use of transitional justice mechanisms became necessary to deal with it. But at that time there was no explicit recognition of the armed conflict. And that is a discussion that, since the triumph of the plebiscite has been reactivated around certain political forces, that have been more in line with what could have been the existence of the conflict.

But it is a discussion that is still alive, that seemed resolved during the *Santismo*, but apparently it was not. And it was not resolved because, politically and socially, there is still a lot of resistance to the narratives that recognize the existence of armed conflict.

CECILIA SOSA: That is bad or not? I mean, it is very strong...

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Last year I was in Peru, and something similar happened. Even there, there has been a Truth Commission, and there the Truth Commission produced a report whose conclusions are part of the largest memory sites, and there has even been an attempt to integrate some of the reports into education curriculum, and still the public dispute over the recognition that there was a war is brutal. Well, even more so, because Sendero Luminoso, according to the report of the commission itself, was the principal perpetrator of the serious violations of human rights. Over there, more than half of the violations were committed by Sendero Luminoso. So they say: "What we lived here was a carnage in our democracy perpetrated by a terrorist group that was Sendero Luminoso. And [we] are responding to whether they committed excesses or not. But there was no war".

And that debate is very serious here too, although according to what all the investigations have shown, only ours, here the responsibilities are much more distributed. And in terms of lethal violence, the paramilitary's weight is much greater than that of any other force that has existed in our armed conflict.

Then, during the *Uribismo* we had the appearance of transitional justice, but a transitional justice that did not recognize the existence of the conflict, and that therefore was very circumscribed to the judicial. And they had some complementary mechanisms of repair, but an individual repair, only administrative, with very low ceilings of, of, of ...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Of compensation.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Of compensation that can be recognized. And a group of historical memory that was gaining strength over time. So, I think that context is important to bear in mind because it explains something of the particularities of that investigation. At that moment in this country, and surely the professor will remember, it was a moment in which just after the demobilizations that initiated the trials, the prominence of those who were demobilized in the public sphere was total.

Because, on the one hand, in the demobilization ceremonies, as expected, the commanders had taken the opportunity to tell their version of what the conflict itself had been, because they did not trust the idea of conflict so much, but what they had been, like the historical need for which they were born to defend democracy in the territories. The aggression of the FARC meant fundamentally—but also the ELN and the other guerrillas against the Colombian democracy—that justified them to have armed themselves in defense of democracy. And that speech was not only very strong at the time of the demobilizations, but also in the first phase of the trials. When the first versions were made, in which before the extraditions of some of the leaders of the paramilitaries took place, which, and I believe that as justice was being carried out, that initial heroic discourse became nuanced. Because justice itself sometimes works as a kind of ‘identitarian’ bulldozer for the heroes. But initially there was a very strong heroic discourse, which also, by the very nature of the design of justice, was a leading discourse, let's say.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Are we talking about the paramilitaries?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Exactly. As it was a moment in which, well, first, it was a judicial scene focused on the confessions, which were people who had accepted to submit to justice and who were there to voluntarily acknowledge the violations they had committed. So, it was a judicial scene focused on the confessions of the victimizers. And in their confessions, they acknowledged responsibility for what happened, but they wrote their acknowledgment of responsibility in a justifying speech that often exaggerated the heroic.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Sorry, was this open? Was it public? Or was it necessary to find out about these speeches? Or was the press mediating?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: It was basically the press. Let's say, in this.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Are they not public trials?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: No. It's not like what's happening right now, no, that did not happen, with justice and peace. Let's say that at that moment the media echoed a lot. Because it was also the news of the moment, when they began to say their confessions in the judicial scene. Because the judicial press reports came out daily, with conversations in which they were protagonists. They were the ones that were being installed in the public sphere. That involved for the Grupo de Memoria Histórica, to begin to make initial decisions, which over time have been changing. But one of the discussions that we gave at that time when we were designing the research—2007, 2008—was the following: knowing that we are a much smaller group than a judicial scene like the one that is working at the moment, and that controls most of the press that is at your disposal, how do we try to balance, representationally, what is happening?

If certain premises at this moment are very strong in the public sphere since they are the protagonists of the judicial scene, because of the "adversarial" character of the judicial processes, how do we make the voices of the victims have a platform in which they can dispute them, with which a public version of what happened in Colombia is being built? And that's why we started a strategy of emblematic cases.

The first experiment we did as an emblematic case was about the Masacre de Trujillo in the north of the valley. And the bet of the emblematic case was to have a case that allowed us to work from the local, from the confidence building with communities in the territories. A very detailed work that would not remain in the specifics of the case in which we were working, but instead it would help illuminate the dynamics and general logics of the armed conflict in Colombia.

Thus it was, to try to build from the very local, so that from the work in detail with the communities, one could raise the voices of these people, so that they became the keys of interpretation of the armed conflict. To empower them, to empower them also in the dialogue between researchers, fundamentally the team that Gonzalo set up, was a team of researchers, with their research assistants. At that time, I joined them as a research assistant in one of the lines of that work. Well, I initially entered as the rapporteur of the first discussions, the secretary of the discussions, and later, I was a research assistant when the group began to operate.

CECILIA SOSA: Now I realize to what extent you were a protagonist and witness participant of the whole process.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Key informant.

CECILIA SOSA: The key informant, yes.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: The key informant [Laughs]. So, that was a bit the purpose of the research. We tried to think about each of the cases, and looking for them to be well represented: territorially, the diversity of the country, different dynamics, right? Each dynamic is different. So, in the case of Trujillo, there was already a strong emphasis on mechanisms of impunity. There was a complex relationship, trying to show a case in which there was convergence between state actors and drug trafficking. And how when there was convergence of these two dynamics in a territory, mechanisms of impunity were put into operation very quickly. Then, Trujillo served us as a first laboratory to see the convergence between the logic of political violence, drug violence, and how it was expressed institutionally in the territory through the implementation of mechanisms of impunity.

The second case was El Salado. In the Masacre de El Salado the issue was stigma, how stigmas work as triggers of violence in the territories.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: An example?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: I'm going to tell you. El Salado is a village of El Carmen de Bolívar, in the district of Bolívar, two hours from Cartagena. That was a territory which was effectively controlled by the 37th Front of the FARC guerrillas. The guerrillas sometimes passed through there when they were carrying a kidnapped person. They even sometimes stocked up on food and supplies. In 2000, the paramilitaries arrived in a block to dispute the area in front of the FARC. Three blocks of paramilitaries arrived. The guerrillas retreated in El Salado but also in other towns of the mountains of María, as in the department of Bolívar and Sucre. The paramilitaries began to kill the people who had served, according to them, as allies of the guerrillas—those who had the stigma of being guerrilla peoples. In El Salado they killed 60 people in a single night. Chengue is burned to the ground, and 38 or 39 people die, of which 20 were minors who died incinerated. Chinurito...Well, there is a whole chain of massacres, and we try to raise that of El Salado, to tell through it what the violence triggered by stigmas built in the war was.

And that is how we were building the entire research agenda. We could do that partly because of the progressive expansion of the field of memory and the place of victims in transitional justice. As I was saying, initially what the law said was: Get someone to tell us why armed groups emerged here and why they lasted so long shooting between themselves. And the conclusion was: No. And we said it because there were people that were mobilizing to be understood in a way...and because jurisprudentially a gap for work by memory was opened. And the first thing we have to do beyond establishing an official history that says "the FARC were born on the 54th", is to build with the people a way to tell the story of the armed conflict, different ways of telling about the armed conflict, ways that discuss the emphasis that at this moment is becoming official in the public sphere, in the country.

And then, once we can have a more complete map, diverse as far as possible, of what the history of the armed conflict has been, we will make a synthesis report that gathers what happened. That was the initial concept of the "¡Basta ya!" report that perhaps some of you know. The "¡Basta ya!" report, published in 2013, collected all the strategy of emblematic cases that had been done until then, in a story that synthesizes all that, and that proposes new lines of research for the centre that is being born at that time. The centre is born in the law of victims, which is law 1448 of 2011, but it really starts up in 2012. So, while the "¡Basta ya!" is being finished, which is all 2012, all of us are focused on the reaction of the "¡Basta ya!", some people is beginning to do research in the Centro de Memoria Histórica.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: I'm sorry. In the "¡Basta ya!", what you do is an emblematic cases synthesis, so it is not the same case that is republished, but instead is reduced, it is synthesized in another narrative structure, let's say. And does it have any introduction? Something where it is explained?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: The "¡Basta ya!" is organized into five major chapters. And it seems, by its structure, a report more similar to Truth Commission reports.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Okay.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: So, it is a first chapter of figures and dynamics of violence; a second chapter that tries to “periodize” the armed conflict with explanatory hypotheses; a third chapter that tries to think about the relationship between armed conflict and justice in Colombia.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: That was the original request or not?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: No.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: No, no, no. Oh, but then, here you do not put the original request of the context?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: The original petition is like the second chapter of “¡Basta ya!”

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Okay. The periodization. Okay.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: The periodization of the conflict. In there, we try to show the factors that were triggers and others that were catalyst factors of the war. The second was like the answer to the legal mandate.

[Laughs]

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: The fourth chapter was about damages. Damage to the civilian population, but also damage to democracy, damage to the institutions; and the third [chapter] was resistance.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: The fifth one.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: The fifth one, I’m sorry.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: I'm sorry, which one was the third [chapter]?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: War and justice in the armed conflict, and the justice system. So there you find something about impunity, but also something of the complexity of the Colombian case institutionally speaking. This is a State that, in the midst of such a long and bloody armed conflict, with such harsh crises, remained democratic, and preserved a certain autonomy in its justice system. So, in the third [chapter] we try to see how that worked. Why? Because this State seems to be working in the midst of a crisis of these dimensions, and that is one of the questions that the third chapter of "¡Basta ya!" is trying to address.

CECILIA SOSA: I have a question. For the writing of the report "¡Basta ya!" How many people did the team that Santos had armed had? How many researchers?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: That changed over time, but there were about 10 researchers, each with a research assistant. We were about 20 people.

CECILIA SOSA: And how many emblematic cases were in total? Because you were talking about El Salado and also the case of Trujillo. But how many emblematic cases were there in total?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Until 2002, although we continued to work with some emblematic cases later since the line of emblematic cases was not completely closed with "¡Basta ya!". Until the "¡Basta ya!" we managed to do, if I'm not wrong, about 38 emblematic cases.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Did it not happen that there were people who wanted—or situations that wanted—to be nominated emblematic cases? That is, did it not begin to generate an expectation in the population to become emblematic cases?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Sure, all the time.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And did you have to respond to that?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: All the time. And that's why we left the idea of the emblematic, because finally for each victim his own case is emblematic. And sometimes to have the argument of: "no, because we already studied this dynamic in El Salado", is an unsustainable argument for people who want to see their case recognized.

CECILIA SOSA: I'm sorry, I have a question. Did you always see the emblematic cases as social cases? They were never individual cases, they were all emblematic cases, and the stigma, always by definition, the idea to show against the official line.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Exactly. They were collective. The individual [cases] began to appear in the Centro de Memoria Histórica. People for individual [cases] appeared with the centre, but at that time they were social cases as you called them, more collective. And there was also an additional criterion, and it was that they had to belong to very invisible territories or communities. Because in the Colombian case, it was not only that at that time there was a prominence of the different mobilized groups but also, in the whole spectrum of victims, there was a very prominent balance of visibility. For example, while the victims of kidnappings had been very visible at one time, the disappearance victims did not appear anywhere.

And there were also certain groups of victims about whom almost everything was ignored. Including not only here in Bogotá... Bogotá, I think that, well, it is very difficult to talk about Bogotá as a whole, but in Bogotá certain groups tended to build a kind of non-denialist discourse but rather an immunizing one, such as: "Yes, we know that this happens, but we don't want to bring up the things we see".

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Among the population? Or who has that speech?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: I believe so. Yes, I think there was, well.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: Yes, but there is one thing that we say, and that is that Bogotá is perceived a bit as: "that happens far away, and after we do not find out much, and it is like separate”.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Like "We are free from this", okay.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Exactly. Sometimes I do not know if that is exactly indifference, or rather it is as if Bogota tried to immunize itself, as a self-protection so the war does not inhabit at least the speech of the daily life of the *bogotanos*. Let's say, there is a series of ...

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: However, it is curious, what we have learned these days, is that in Bogotá things have also happened, and there is a relationship, not only things that have happened but indirect relationships. Those of us who live in Bogotá have family members, connections, which have also generated that we do not speak about those affectations, in those territories impacted, such as [by] migration.

All: Of course.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: It's a curious thing, is it not? It is far, but in the end it is not.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Exactly. Yes, agreed.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And did you take any emblematic cases from Bogotá?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Not in the group.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Okay.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: In the group, we did. Because the idea of the group was to show a bit of the most invisible. So that's why we went to Trujillo, to El Salado, to San Carlos. To San Carlos, which is an Antioquia municipality, emblematic in terms of displacement. Segovia and Remedios are Antioquia municipalities in the north-east where political violence was very strong. They were municipalities where in addition to massacres against militants of the Unión Patriótica, there were years, for example, in which there was no massacre, but people still died. If one counted the dead of the whole year, there were more or less 300 dead, because they killed one every day.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Okay.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: In the persecution of political dissidence.

CECILIA SOSA: And that, the perception of the emblematic cases from the invisibility, did you have an idea of the geographical diversity that the armed conflict had acquired? Was that something that was at the entrance? Was it clear to you to realize?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. Of Course.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: I also had a question. How did you know what the diversity of repressive acts was, or the ways of exercising violence? How would you say: how was the "N" recognized?

CECILIA SOSA: Because this is something that we find now constantly, but during the beginning, when it is happening?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: When it is happening it is not so clear.

CECILIA SOSA: Yes.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. Well, I think we rely on the accumulated [knowledge] of those who were part of the group. Gonzalo, one of the researchers who has devoted most of his time to studying these issues, has his first publication on this [subject] in the 80s-78s, a writing about bandits, ‘gamonales’ and peasants. Later he was part of the commission, which here was called the Comisión de Violentólogos in '87. So, they have research trajectories. All these cases are cases that they knew but that had little public visibility. There were also cases that appeared during the research. For example, the first report of the gender line we did was about the Caribbean. And we found that in the Caribbean there was mostly sexual violence, or gender violence, and not all but almost all [of it] was linked to the paramilitaries. There, sources that told us about guerrilla sexual violence in the south of the country appeared. Especially in Putumayo. So we went to do Putumayo's report.

Then, initially there was a diagnosis that there are certain territories that have been made invisible, and there are certain victims that have been made invisible, so we are going to work especially with them, leaving the others aside. The emphasis is on what has been more invisible, and that sometimes triggered other research.

CECILIA SOSA: And sexual violence appeared as an emblematic case also by subject? Or did you think of it as a theme? Because, as I understand it, the cases may also have different origins, right? The issue of population “semanticization” was like, the case you also discussed about Trujillo and sexual violence, appeared as a subject already at that moment?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. We also had from the beginning a very strong line, if we wanted to identify a case that showed us well the nature of the sexual violence in this armed conflict.

CECILIA SOSA: Crossing the territorial, in addition. The territorial variable was also traversed.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. And in the Caribbean we began to find, and that is why we chose the emblematic cases there, cases that showed us well the continuities and discontinuous of violence. These are sexist gender arrangements, which are linked to sexual violence even when there is no context of conflict, but which links us to contexts of conflict. And what happens in armed conflict when sexist gender arrangements are reestablished, depending on territorial control, even in control of populations in the context of conflict. The Caribbean allowed us to see that already in motion.

And that opened not only research lines in other territories, which was: if the paramilitaries did this, let's compare [it] with what the guerrillas did. Interesting things came out. But I also think that initially we had a defect in thinking too closely about sexual violence and violence against women. And the Caribbean showed us the regulation of hegemonic identities brutally. So, the first line of violence against GLBT communities began to work in the framework of the armed conflict, which ended up producing a large national report that sought to annihilate the difference in violence against GLBT communities.

Trying to answer your question, initially we had a basic diagnosis of which ones had been the most invisible sectors, those territories excluded from the construction of narratives about conflict. And we went to them. But they later started to trigger us [to do] more research.

CECILIA SOSA: And did you feel? ... Because in this description that you are discussing, I imagine that it must have been very dizzying, to be operating and working in a professional place intervening in a conflict when it is occurring. I'm thinking, from very basic issues, such as the security of the Grupo de Memoria Histórica in terms of what they were doing, going to different territories to do the research, to the innermost feeling of creating these new lines of work, to be conceptualizing new terms, or putting into words, or theorizing something that was happening right there in front of your eyes. Did you have that feeling?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Of course, in many ways, because on the one hand, there were cases that we could never work because there were no safety conditions. Because of safety conditions or because of what happened in the conflict itself. The level of distrust with the State was such that they did not want anything [to do] with us, and that happened in all cases. The process of building trust was complicated because the war was alive. So on the one hand, some of the exclusions in the research agenda are explained—not all but some—by security conditions. There was no way to work with them, because [it meant] exposing ourselves and exposing them to violence. And there was such a level of mistrust produced by what had been the war itself, that it made it difficult for them to approach a state entity to deliver their memories, to say calmly what had happened to them, and who were responsible for what had happened to them. So that, of course, involved things.

There were other things too, because of course, trying to analyse something that was still so alive was very hard. And there were certain cases, I remember when we were working in La Rochela, which is a massacre that was committed in '89 against a group of judicial investigators who were investigating crimes committed by a paramilitary group from the Middle Magdalena. Well, yes, by a paramilitary group from the Middle Magdalena, so as not to complicate the issue much. And in that case, it was a group of researchers very similar to us. Let's say people…at that time we were 25, 26 years old, we were researchers of 25, 26 years. Many of them, who had also studied in Bogotá, who were worried about the situation that the country was experiencing, became linked at that time to justice and criminal instruction to try to understand what was happening and establish responsibilities, and all ended up slaughtered. So that was brutal. Seeing them all, and then seeing yourself as in a mirror, in the research work that they were doing. And that everything would end like this.

CECILIA SOSA: Can I interrupt you? Did you think about this, now retrospectively, almost as an academic or activist impulse? What was...?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: The motivation.

CECILIA SOSA: … [What was] the motivation that you felt and that was in you all to do this?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Humanitarian?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: I think there was a combination of that, I believe that in each case it will vary. In my case, initially it had been more of an academic concern, but it became something else as I became more involved in the subject. Here, for example, people also worked who had been victims, whose father had disappeared, or something like that, and [they] ended up working on this to understand their own history. In my case it was academic concerns, from the university this seemed to me to be a problem to be thought about.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And what appeared to you later? What other motivations?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Then I was much more emotionally linked to all the work, more like an activist of memory issues. Seeing the strength that this has as a social process beyond the power it has for me as analytical categories, as conceptual development, as being able to make a good theory, as the force that one sees that this has with people, the capacity that this has to contain the violence in some territories. That gave a different meaning to my work on memory and [to the work] of others, because I also entered [the work] with others who were like that. At the beginning it was the debate on the dynamics of conflict, on theories of causality, then one [asked himself:] and why is this happening here and not here? And the Colombian conflict for its complexity and length is intellectually very challenging.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: What is your profession? Or what discipline do you come from?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Historian and political scientist, and then I ended up in philosophy in graduate school.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: I had two questions about how you did the cases, like the backroom of the construction of the emblematic case. One is about the work methodology. Did you define: "Okay, we are going to go to this territory"? I understand that you often moved to the territories, trying to collect stories from the people affected. So if you can tell us: How did you all do it in practice? How did you collect data? How did you register? Were there interview guidelines? Were there any scripts? Did you reunite? How did you produce the information of each case? When did you consider that you had enough information to be able to narrate a case? When did you have the authority to narrate for others? That must be a theme. That first.

And second, a bit linked to Cecilia's question about dissemination. That is, as you said, you were in the conflict, you produced from this first-hand information these emblematic cases, and decided to publish them as a collection, right? And what happened there? Why do you decide that? That is a bit related to this idea of the display, how you have a case, and you can take many decisions on how to spread it. You can make a video, you can make a documentary, you can make a report as you do. So, was there a discussion on how to make it known? What was the effect of that device, let's say, in the purpose you wanted to accomplish generating these stories? It is understood?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Okay. Well, regarding your first question, about what the work methodology was like, we rehearsed in Trujillo, we tried to make a kind of collegial publication. I’ll explain a little bit about that, that did not go so well. Or at least we feel that it was not so good, because initially we had defined lines of research, and each of them was directed by one of these researchers. So, for example, the first one, my first job as a research assistant, was being a research assistant in the line of social memory initiatives. Then, there the researcher was María Victoria Uribe, and I was her research assistant. Then there was the line of justice, which was the second. When we finished the initiatives work I went to justice, and there it was [working] with Rodrigo Uprimny. There was the land line. Then, land and armed conflict was the line of Absalom Machado. They were the professors Gonzalo had summoned. And then in Trujillo what we tried to do was for each one to make his little chapter. So, we made the chapter of social memory initiatives. Rodrigo Uprimi with Iván Orozco who were already joining the group, brought out the justice chapter. The chapter on context and armed actors was written by Andrés Suárez. And then, the one who was supposed to have proposed the case, who was Álvaro Camacho, who died, looked through everything and tried to harmonize it. Then each of the groups had their own information collection tools, they had their own interview protocols, focal groups were conducted.

And then we started to implement memory construction strategies as well. The thing about collective timelines. Afterwards, we took out a toolbox with the methodologies we had used, many of them learned from other countries. That began to happen from the beginning. Gonzalo was also very close to several researchers from all over the region, so before he got sick, Carlos Iván Degregori came here from Peru, people from Guatemala also came to tell us about how they had done their memory work.

So we used many of those methodologies that they had produced: memory workshops, communal timelines, all those methodologies of activation of the memory for the work of the group. But initially, we tried to have each expert producing what [they] were expert on, and then the coordinator.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: What was an expert before joining the group?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Before.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: So, each one of them brought their previous expertise.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Exactly.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And Chile or Argentina were not methodological references in this case?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: At that time, I think we did not. At that time, I think we worked with more people from Peru, from Guatemala. I remember a lot... Oh, no! There was somebody from Chile, there was Elizabeth, Elizabeth Lira. Yes, with Elizabeth. She arrived a little later. Around 2009.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Yes, she has been around for 10 years. I work with her. [Laughs]

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: So, yes, she was here since 2009, yes. So, she then brought more psychosocial work tools, and all that was integrated and we got a first version of our toolbox. Maybe I have it here to show it to you.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: That would be very good.

VIKKI BELL: Can I interrupt to ask a few…? If I am understanding correctly. So this program of research, do you mean that it was the…[it] gave birth to the centre as it is now? It was like the first group of people or the first research that established the role for this centre?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Okay.

VIKKI BELL: Yes?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. Well, if I understand your question well, initially the centre was born in a law so that the group could finish their work. Then when there was the discussion of the law of victims, it was said: okay.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: The 2012 law?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: It is from 2011.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: We were in the middle of emblematic cases agenda. And then by law it was said: No, it is necessary to finish the general report that they have been building. But because of the discussion that took place around the law of victims, where the language of reparation was already much stronger, where there was already recognition of the existence of the armed conflict, it was said: No. But not only the "¡Basta ya!". This research agenda has to be maintained over time, because memory itself is a remedial action, which is something that this law says. Before, it was more as I said, in the 975 law, memory is more like a complement of enlightenment to what is coming out in the justice.

In the law of victims, memory becomes one of the strong symbolic remedial actions. And then, they say: It cannot stay in the "¡Basta ya!", a longer research agenda must be opened. And also, as far as possible, the memory duty contents that for now are scattered must be gather in a single institution. So, you should not only keep the research agenda, but also constitute an archive where you can keep all the documents related to serious violations of human rights. And there is also a lot of discussion, which I think was seen lightly, but produced a result upon which we are building today, and we also edited a strong pedagogical action. And the strong pedagogical action of dissemination was the museum.

We need an institutional framework that allows memory work to be maintained over time. And to have a greater vocation for publicity and pedagogy than the one that has been. And the institution that they legally thought to do that was the museum.

CECILIA SOSA: But the pedagogical vocation was absolutely plagued from the beginning.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: But in the law of victims.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. In the victims' law, the museum was thought of as a place of recognition, but also that this recognition was put in place so that society in general would take ownership of all of this, and from its appropriation it would try to avoid repeating it.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: The change is interesting, that is, because the first law was focused on the judicial aspect, and the other is focused on the victims. How one generates different devices to deal with the past.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Exactly.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: The focus is there. And other actors appear.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. Initially the centre had the three following big tasks: Continue the research agenda, create a human rights archive and create the memory museum. And then they gave him the additional task, which is the task of the Direction of Agreements for the Truth.

As I told you a second ago, in law 975 the paramilitary commanders had to go to court, and they served sentences of between five and eight years, and those who served sentences there were not only the commanders, but all those who were considered responsible for crimes against humanity, but not all those who mobilized were criminals against humanity. Those who were not criminals against humanity were told: "Well, you will be pardoned, but to make the pardon effective you have to contribute to the truth, and how are you going to do it? Through a mechanism called ‘of truth contributions’ that will be executed by the Centro de Memoria Histórica".

And then, what we had to do was to design a mechanism to collect testimonies from all the demobilized collectively, who were not responsible for systemic crimes, to certify that these testimonies were indeed building the truth, and to integrate that information into our systems so it will have complemented what we had been collecting during these years, right?

That was an additional task that is not in the victims’ law. It is in another law called Law 1424. That is the law of contribution mechanisms to the truth for the demobilized collectively, who were not responsible for crimes against humanity. That was an additional task that was left to the centre, and let's say that this year we are finishing that task. This year [we] basically [did] all of the certification task. And that information is available at the centre for research purposes. With that information we have already produced reports. They are reports about the history of each paramilitary structure.

CECILIA SOSA: I'm sorry. With the creation of the centre it is also stipulated that the reports are the form of dissemination par excellence that the centre will have?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Yes, that was the question I had to ask. Why do you choose reports, to do and spread all this material through reports?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Well, in the group there was a tendency to [make] reports, so initially it was a clarification group. Then it was almost a natural product to publish our research. We increasingly tried to go to other media, to other languages too. So, since El Salado it became the rule that we tried to think of other complementary devices. But under the idea that they were only complementary, and that the fundamental thing was still the report. And the others are, what we called at that time: “pedagogization” strategies and dissemination of reports. But they were documentaries, or multimedia sometimes.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Strategies of what? What else was it? Strategies of?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: “Pedagogization” strategies and dissemination of reports.

CECILIA SOSA: I am still very surprised of the level of conceptualization that you were able to achieve in such a pioneer way, in relation to this urgent situation that you were rooting. It surprises me. And that it is also conceptualized, that there is a lucidity, that gives me a certain vertigo. How could you do this registration and conceptualization work when you were working with something so immediate?

And, on the other hand, I also have some personal impressions. What a difference there is when it is the State who offers itself to a group of researchers, financed by the State and by the public sector, that offers itself as a recipient of these testimonies, of those stories, and at the same time conceptualizing that conflict. In relation to what we lived in Argentina and in Chile, where all the conceptualization is made later. I just feel that now I begin to understand the big differences of the work process. Sorry for the interruption.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: So, did you go with video cameras? I want to imagine. With photo cameras? Did you go with tape recorders? I mean, did you have different registration devices?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes, in fact, Jesús Abad, from whom you saw the exhibition of photographs, was the photographer of the group.

ALL: Oh! [Surprised]

CECILIA SOSA: Seriously? Oh!

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes, yes, yes. He was the group photographer.

VIKKI BELL: There is a photograph group that belongs to the Centre?

CECILIA SOSA: [Explains to Vikki Bell what Luis says] The main photographer of their team.

VIKKI BELL: Oh, okay.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: He was the group photographer, yes. He was at that time the group photographer, he was here until the "¡Basta ya!". In fact, I do not know if you know the "¡Basta ya!"?

ALL: No.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Almost all the pictures of the "¡Basta ya!" were made by Chucho Casi, they are all made by Chucho.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Ok, thereby everything else, really the photography [and] the audio were pedagogical devices, but mainly it was the report.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: The report.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And there was something that you uploaded into a website?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Okay.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Of course yes. Yes, from the beginning the website. In fact, our current website collects all the material that the group has produced.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: So, there are people in charge of editing, of making shorts films, I imagine, in charge of cutting the material?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: What about the issue of building trust? That is not less important. How did you do it when you arrived in the communities? How long did you stay there? Did you have previous contacts? Did you use key informants, people, gatekeepers? Or did you use people who helped you mediate? Or any diplomats who helped you mediate with the communities?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. There were several methods to be honest. From approaching organizations with which we already had a relationship, some were even individuals. As they were also well-known researchers, with a broad experience, many of them had already built a relationship with some of the social organizations. Martha Nubia Bello [had a relationship] with the forced disappearance and displacement organizations. Gonzalo himself [had a relationship] with many peasant organizations. Rodrigo Uprimny, who is an emblematic figure in the field of human rights, also had a lot of recognition. So in many times we took advantage of the capital.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: [The capital] of the researchers themselves.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: [The capital] from the researchers themselves to build at least first agreements rather than with the communities, with the leaders, who recognized Gonzalo Sánchez [and] Rodrigo Uprimny. [They said]: "[If] they are going to come, then yes".

And then, at work, I think that depended. I believe that many times, or in most cases, one started from conversations in intimate spaces, to fill the most [massive] meeting spaces. You never started with a memory workshop where you would gather people together. First, you usually had to organize a breakfast at the home of one of the victims. Then you went there, and began to talk, building in the intimacy the agreements that would allow later work in more collective spaces. Because at the beginning there was fear, even among themselves, [they would have said]: "but what if I speak?" Let's say when the armed actors were here, this person had to host one that was the one who killed somebody, then...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: They trust each other.

CECILIA SOSA: And did you stay with them? Sometimes did you stay?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes, sometimes. Sometimes they invited us to stay with them, so then we stayed in their homes.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And what happened when you put together in these collective groups actors who had different roles to talk together? Or were they just groups of victims, [separate] groups? Or were victims always [present]?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: At that time, the presence of aggressors or perpetrators was very marginal.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Were there people who helped or did not?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: People who helped, yes, of course, because that was the daily life in communities that had lived through the war. There were people who had hosted the paramilitaries, or who had served as an informant for the guerrillas. The challenge in those first workshops was to talk to people who had broken their daily lives because of what they experienced during the war.

That is why we had, before gathering them all, to go there very carefully. And to the extent that we were opening spaces, talking from the most intimate, more protected spaces in which people feel very calm to go. Then we were connecting conversations, such as: "And what would you think if we did a first workshop in this neighbourhood?" Then saying this to the neighbourhood: "Well, you know that those from the other sidewalk have a different story from the one you have, and we would like to start talking about that. Do you agree that we could have a first workshop to talk about this? Or do you think it is still premature?" Some said: "No, but who is going to come?" "I do not know". So then, we had to increasingly build intimate spaces, to be able to do collective work.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: How much time could you spend there? Or did you go and come back?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: We went and came back. Yes.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: So, to build [the case of] Trujillo, to build a case, how much research time did it involve?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: That was… Ok…

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Approximately.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Around two years each case? What happens is that then...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Did you work in several cases at the same time?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Exactly. So that was another reason to quit Trujillo. Do you remember that I told you that Trujillo was a *‘vaina colegiada’*? After that, what we did was: each one is in charge of a case, and if he needs support from the rest he must say: "I need you to help me read these things". So, we tried to standardize the work of the cases some more and each one became in charge of one. Then, the line of actors that was that of Andrés Suárez, became in charge of El Salado; the justice line became in charge of La Rochela; the displacement line became in charge of Bojayá and after, of San Carlos. And then we went.

CECILIA SOSA: Each line took care [of a case].

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Each line took care of a case. And that also allowed us to begin to address many more cases. Because in Trujillo we were all in one case, lasting almost a year and a half just in only one. [Working] on a product that you can see and make your own idea, but that is very fragmented. [It's] like a collection of essays about Trujillo. So, that had its good things, but we liked it.

VIKKI BELL: I’m sorry.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes?

VIKKI BELL: Keep going.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: So, when we began to build the cases, there were approximately, [although] it varied with time, between eight and ten lines of research. So then we started producing many more reports. To the extent that as I said, [we] made reports, but also more methodological reflections came out. Because one of the things...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Did you publish those reflections?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes, we did. We were aware that the conceptual task was very demanding, and that it was important to keep an open discussion about our methodologies all the time. Then, every time we produced something, methodologically we tried to advertise it so that it would become the subject of new discussions. Therefore, there are toolboxes for the beginning of memory workshops, we got a gender toolbox, a justice toolbox, which is criminal law and war, in short.

CECILIA SOSA: So, the toolboxes respond to this need to publish methodological materials for purposes within the group?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: In this need to discuss, did you open up [the debate] to other researchers who did not work at the centre, who could serve as mirrors? Did you do that? Such as, to expand the discussion a little with other people who could help reflect.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: That was the idea. We did not do it in all [cases] so judiciously because there was a lot of work, but yes.

CECILIA SOSA: And after that, were there still young researchers interested in joining the team?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yeah, sure. Further, in my generation of researchers being in the memory field was really very good. Not only because a field was being built, and that is something that sometimes you do not have, how to guarantee it in other places where research is being conducted. But also because there was a group of researchers who were our mentors. Especially in issues of armed conflict, the fact that one could be talking to Gonzalo Sánchez or Rodrigo Uprimny, for one who’d recently graduated and who had read all those people was very, very rewarding. And I feel that it is still there. There is still a lot of interest, now with the museum in particular. I feel that the museum produces many expectations in many young people who want to work on these issues and who see in the museum a powerful institution to reflect on this. But it was something like that. In the Centro de Memoria were the people with whom one was formed, by reading them.

CECILIA SOSA: Besides that, you had such a strong visibility! They were civil servants. Did you consider yourselves civil servants?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Of course. Yes, more and more. At the beginning we were such researchers [that we thought]: "Oh no! the State, how boring".

ORIANA BERNASCONI: It gave you some freedom.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: We are going to have to stay here as "memory officials". This is what it is going to happen.

CECILIA SOSA: Sure.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: But as the time went by, we said: no. I mean, yes, we may end up being seen in history as the "memory officials", but this thing is ...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Is worthwhile.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: It is well worthwhile. To get out of this just because of the question of: "what will people think of me?" No. I'm already into this.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: There were lots of methodological questions. There is also the personal impact, right? To be there, to be collecting these stories of terror. How to handle the ethical effects of research? And here I am not talking about the informed consent, but about ethics and self-care. Was there any support? Psychological support? How did you deal with ethical issues that probably were not easy ones?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. I think that has been an important gap. I believe that is because of the dynamics of the work, despite the fact that for all it is evident that there is exhaustion, that there are identifications. Even sometimes, there are people who are already in this that break, and it is very painful sometimes to see it. But we have tried to do [workshops] in the centre more than in the group. In the group there were supposed to be self-care workshops, which were places to talk.

CECILIA SOSA: In the centre.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: No, in the group.

CECILIA SOSA: In the group?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: In the group. Yes, they were very initial self-care workshops. But that ended up turning into the monthly party.

[General laughter]

ORIANA BERNASCONI: How fun! Do you know that in Chile in the Vicaría they organized *‘vicariadas’*? They dress up, that was their way of releasing tensions.

CECILIA SOSA: And it's fine, is not it? Of course, some things do not have to be ...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: They were not so "psychological".

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. Exactly.

And then, in the centre there has been an attempt to do something much more thought [out]. So, there is a strategy within the group, within the direction of human resources, of self-care. So, there are no longer only parties, although we still do our parties, but there is also psychological attention if it is required and accompaniment to people who need it. Let's say, as a more caretaking strategy on that. There are team meetings that we expected to be semi-annual, which sometimes are run a little bit late, to work on emotions. As you are seeing, now we have been more thorough, although that does not mean that there are no affectations. Every once in a while, all of a sudden you’re fine and then you say: "No, I cannot do this anymore".

CECILIA SOSA: You told us that there are people that break, right? Can you tell us about a case that you remember?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Well, there are people who end up in nervous breakdowns after a [period of] fieldwork, who had panic attacks. They have to retire from the centre because of that. Those kind of things that end up in psychological or psychiatric treatments because of the burden that this produces on them. So...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: In Memoria Abierta, in Villa Grimaldi.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Can you excuse me for a second?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Yes, [General laughs].

\* \* Luis stands up and leaves 1.13.53.3

\* \* Luis returns 1.15.48

CECILIA SOSA: Well, me and Vikki, we are very excited about what you are telling us, but also we want to move over a little bit, considering that we are going to have a meeting with Andres as well.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: ¿With Andrés Suárez? ¡Oh! Great.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Because we understand that what comes next is the victimizing facts phase, right?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: So maybe we can skip that, and we can see it later with Andrés.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Oh, ok.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And we can move to the centre phase.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: You said there were three lines, right? So, you continued with the research, and there was, as I understand, the subject of victimizing facts. There is the archive subject, which is also very interesting for us. But there is also the subject of the museum, which is what you are in charge of.

Then, maybe if you can tell us about that line. Of how the idea of museums arises, how you have approached it, and where are you now. And maybe you can take all those questions we've asked you at the beginning. Like, perhaps from the museum, to think about the relationship with archives and research. And how does that feed, or not, the museums? It's okay?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Or do you feel that there is something that you would like to mention to close this first part?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: No, no, no. It's okay. No, and if you're going to talk to Andres, he's going to tell you this story again, but completely different.

[General laughter]

ORIANA BERNASCONI: No. That's why I was telling Vikki, that it was interesting to have your point of view because you started younger, right? As an assistant. What has happened to you since then?

CECILIA SOSA: It is a very vivid story. Very, very interesting for us.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: So the museum. Well, the museum, huh. The museum was born in the congressional debate say, in the congress of the republic. And it was initially born as a kind of reinforcement to the restorative measure of memory.

CECILIA SOSA: The restorative measure.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Restorative. In fact, I believe that there is no lack of truth if we say that the museum is perhaps the most visible or strongest measure of symbolic reparation that the law of victims brings. There are components that are fundamental in rehabilitation, there is also an important component of symbolic reparation throughout the strategy of collective reparations. That this is a novelty introduced by Law 1448 and it is the program of collective reparation.

CECILIA SOSA: This is the law of victims, right? Law 1448?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. And there are other elements of symbolic reparation, but the most visible and important singular measure that the material law of symbolic reparation brings is the museum. The museum is understood as a space of visibility, kind of like a platform to make visible the ways of memory that people have established until now, thinking about the question you asked me a while ago. I believe that in part, the conceptual richness with which this strategy has been built is heir of the conceptual richness that the territories have built. The people here have thought a lot about this. It is not that people in memory are too very innovative or something like that, but that they are people who have overheard others. And from that they have heard, they have tried to incorporate new debates to build a way of doing things from the State.

So we have tried to be very respectful of the work that many people have been doing. And to understand that the museum is worthwhile, insofar as it is a space to enhance and strengthen what people have been doing.

At the beginning there was resistance to the idea of the museum. It was not a peaceful idea well transmitted to human rights organizations or memory initiatives. And there is a discussion that is still alive and is related to what many organizations have asked for. We want a public policy of memory that really supports the territorial initiatives that are working on that, not a museum over there in Bogota that does not dialogue with the territories, which is more a way of embellishing Bogotá, than a dialogue with us.

So, that initial idea that instead of a museum we need a public policy of memory is something that is still alive. Nowadays you do not think that, or at least the discussion so far is that it is not an alternative that the museum can be an important gear in the public policy of memory. But the fight for the public policy of memory is still alive politically at this moment, that that is the way it should work. Regarding the levels of autonomy, if it is going to be as in the Argentine case by provinces, or if it is going to be done in another way, it is a discussion that is now open and very strong. And I do not know if you are aware, but we are waiting for the appointment of the new director, and that has triggered this discussion. They have said: No! Not only do we need an adequate profile for the centre's management, but we must now seriously discuss the public policy of memory.

The discussion is not only if we are going to like or not the person who is going to manage the centre, but we really need to open the political discussion about a public policy of memories, their level of autonomy, the regions’ participation in it, etcetera, etcetera. That is a discussion that is still alive, and that at the time the museum was born, the museum was seen as a way to postpone the discussion about the public policy of memory, because: "we have a museum, we can talk about the public policy later". So that was a first element of discussion.

There was a second [element] that was: Well, and why a museum in Bogotá? Bogotá has been affected but has not been the most affected by the armed conflict. The war really hit hard elsewhere, in the open border areas. Over time, some consensuses were built to legitimize an institution such as the museum in Bogotá. But then, those two groups of objections against the museum made us build the first strategy from the direction of the museum, at that time it was Juan Carlos Posada, who was the first director of the museum's management ... [That strategy] was: Let's open the discussion to build, so that together we build a sense for that institution, which was the strategy of the social dialogues of memory.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: In what year did this happen?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: 2012. Actually, it was launched in 2013. In 2012 it began to be designed, and in 2013 it was launched. And then, I'll see if I have the exact figures in my head, more than 30 local meetings were organized to discuss what the Museo de la Memoria de Colombia can be. What meaning can it have? Does it really make sense for communities that there is a Museo de la Memoria in Bogotá or not? Or if it’s convenient not to do it, if people reject it, maybe it's better to back down.

CECILIA SOSA: And it is not a bad idea, I mean of the museum, because there is something about temporality that intervenes in that language, right? Then, you discussed that the museum was supposed to be a past experience, while thinking about a conflict that continues. I do not know. What was the discussion that you had?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes, that discussion also appeared, but I feel that it was not so strong because there were already places of memory that had appropriated the name of the museum. There are places of memory that were already called museums even before, then they had already done the work of “re-signifying” the word museum, to not be considered a place of a dead and elitist past, in which one exposes some things to make visible to the public that which is in relation to them, and try to regulate their behaviours so that they learn to behave in general. Instead, they were places already inhabited by social mobilization. So that discussion existed, I do not deny it. Actually, some people said: "No! But why a museum? A museum is like a place where the elites recreate what they think of themselves". But there were already exercises to re-signify the museum itself, and there were some organizations doing the work of saying: "No, but the museum can be another thing, many things. We do not have to tie ourselves to a traditional concept". That helped, because then we were not just us trying to make a contemporary museology speech, saying: "Well, no, what else are we going to do?" People already were reinterpreting this in another way, so there were social groups to have that discussion too.

CECILIA SOSA: This seems to me very interesting to think a lot about the local, right? Because I feel that it is like a conceptual production, of thinking itself, or of self-perception, very transformative of the idea of a museum, right? The situation of thinking of the museum as a re-signified space in a dialogue with the present, as changing the sense of what one traditionally understands of it from a more institutional place. Was this process of re-signification also very self-conscious for you? Was it a job or is it a job?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. I think so. From the beginning, because even for us the idea of making a museum was not comfortable. That is, when we were told that this was going to become a museum, it was like: "A museum? A museum for real?" Well, we had to mould this, feel comfortable with the museum as an institution that collects well the diversity of memory and the versatility of memory. Understanding, in addition, that it doesn't matter how we build the museum, memory will always exceed it. And we had to understand the museum as an operator in a process that is much broader than itself.

So yes, even for us there was some initial discomfort when we were discussing the law and it’s not that we wanted a museum. I believe that the museum's idea remained because in the menu of options that other countries had, there were museums. Then [people said:] "No, we want something like the Louvre," "we want something like the Holocaust," of course it's in everybody's references all the memory milestones of the Western memory of the second half of the 20th century. And that finally ended up being installed without having a broad discussion about whether a museum was needed or not.

CECILIA SOSA: It's almost paradoxical, is not it? Like, this inspiration, to be open to international inspirations as to how to proceed in cases like this, but attending to a case that has a very, very local particularity. There are no similar experiences of armed conflict that are happening at this precise moment, and to think of an institution that can contain that memory, that conflict that is present. And it is almost paradoxical that they are adopted by inspiration, because of this long tradition of thinking about museums that works in the line of Western history, but at the same time that idea is worked from a very local content.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes, exactly, that was internal discussions that we later constructed socially, as I say, if we are going to make a museum, then let's invent the museum that we are going to make. A little bit, as I was saying, with the Grupo de Memoria Histórica, we were sent to make a report on armed actors, and we made a research agenda of emblematic cases. Something like that happened with the museum, because they sent us to make a museum, but we did something that was up to what people were demanding of us.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And what were the people demanding?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: An institution that was really a visibility platform for them, a museum in network with the territories, that is to say, very horizontal, two-way relationships, always with them, to be one. And it is very difficult sometimes to preserve a State museum, because finally one has resources of the State and usually does not have much money. In any case, the centre, with the work that has been done, has also gained some recognition that sometimes makes it difficult to build more horizontal relationships with the rest of the places. As if, the centre arrives, the authorities on memory arrive, but what authorities, nothing. So, sometimes that gets difficult to manage.

So then the first thing we did was ask ourselves, why a museum? Why a museum in Bogotá? What would a museum have to have? And how must a museum have to be thought about to really respond to what people expect it to be? The idea that we needed a museum in Bogotá came from that discussion, so that those who have built a story from the indifference and from their self-protection open themselves to reflect on this. Also, because many of the decisions that ultimately impact all these territories are made there in Bogotá. So it is important for people in Bogotá to have an authority that permanently questions them about what happened in the armed conflict, and that this authority does it with the emphasis on the victims’ voices.

A museum that is also very de-territorialized, that is not only a building in Bogotá, but that is permanently in dialogue with the territories. Today for example, there is a discussion again about the change of the management, which I know at the time they gave us, but they lost, or we lost [laughs]. That the management of the centre was to be mostly run by the organizations, let's say, that in the board of directors of the centre the organizations were mostly represented, [but] that did not remain that way. And today they are fighting again for that, as they continue not to leave the leadership mostly in the organizations’ hands. This can be appointed by the president discretionally, and that can bring very serious problems.

So, all that discussion was initially given to build the basis of the museum itself. The meaning of the museum, in fact... Let's see if I can get you a couple of copies, because last year we made a document about what our guidelines are, and it’s the product of all this work, which is called: "The National Museum of Memory: a place for the meeting", where are condensed the results to which we arrived, the discussions, the dimensions that exist in the museum: territorial, physical and virtual, the functions that the museum should have. Then we tried to conceptualize again, after years of discussions about what this museum consists of, what is a Museo de la Memoria in Colombia?

VIKKI BELL: So that was last year? And so, where are we now with this project? Are you still discussing? Is there a site? A physical site? As I understand, there is no building. So the discussion, are they stopping or they, it proceeds?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Okay. So, the conceptual discussion about the museum that ended up at those guidelines, of course it remains open. To put final closing points on that is very complicated. Above all [as you can see] in that text that I can give to you, and that you can consult and read carefully, the issue of the mechanisms of participation in the administration of the museum are still very general. Precisely because at the moment the direction of the museum continues being part of the centre, and the centre as it was within the law, is a governmental organ that depends directly on the president. That is, the president appoints us, so that's why some things that are still discussed are still not very clear.

But based on these guidelines, we have been working since last year in... Martha Nuvia finished the concepts part, of gathering everything that had been done since Juan Carlos Posada to give it a conceptual shape, yes, a conceptual shape above all, to the idea of the museum, an idea of a museum that collected all these discussions. Based on that idea of a museum, the work that I have been leading the whole team here with in the museum is: let's build a script for the museum before having the building. A script for the Museo de Memoria Histórica.

That script proposal is already being tested in several events. The first 'showing' of the script was this year at the Bogota book fair, I do not know if the professor was there or if any of you were there too? It’s an exhibition [called:] “Voces para transformar a Colombia”. “Voces para transformar a Colombia” is the first version of our script, of what we are thinking will be inside the building once it is built. But at the same time, to the extent that it is an itinerant installation, that has travelled, that travelled to Medellin already, and that the idea is that next year can travel to other territories, it allows us to also think about other forms of existence of the museum in the territories. It is not only to support punctually such or such a group, but, and that [is something that] we can do together with the itinerant installations, so that the museum, whenever it is outside, is not only to show the community certain contents, but to build together with them every time the museum travels. And that is a bit what we are launching with the “Voces para transformar a Colombia” exhibition. So, based on what the guidelines were, a first exhibition of the museum as a museum was set up, which is “Voces para transformar a Colombia”. And at this moment we are in fact...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: I'm sorry but, there is a script?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: There is an initial script.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Is it an initial script or is it the script of these voices? Let's see, there are two things.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: It is that it’s already like that.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: It is the same.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: “Voces para transformar a Colombia” is the name of the exhibition.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Okay. So, when you get the script, that is what the exhibition is.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: So, for that exhibition, a script was made.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Oh, ok.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: A museological, curatorial and museographic script.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: But in addition the exhibition is already made.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: The exhibition is already made. In fact, you can visit our website on the internet, and there you can see virtual tours already with the exhibition so you can see some pieces, the panels. I think it still does not work as well as we wanted, but there is already a place where you can visit it, that there [on the website] the exhibition is set up as it was in Bogotá. In Medellín, it changed a little bit because we had less space. Next year, the idea is to be in the valley of Sibundo in Putumallo, in Cúcuta, and in Cali, but we'll see if we can reach three.

CECILIA SOSA: And the places where you’re thinking of doing this tour, [where] people will see these itinerant installations are the local memory museums.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: No. For now, here in Bogotá they were at the Bogotá book fair and in the Medellín book festival, which are events.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: Oh, not in the museum house?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: No, no.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: Sorry, but not in the museum house? But, is there a relationship with the museum house? Are they part of the directory that you lead or not?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: No, they are independent. Both the museum house and the centre of memory, peace and reconciliation are local places. They belong to the municipalities. This belongs by ascription to the national government. So we are completely independent. We are all part of something that was born three years ago that is the Red Colombiana de Lugares de Memoria, which is part of the Red Latinoamericana de Sitios de Conciencia, where the former ESMA and the Museo de Memoria y Derechos Humanos of Chile belong. And all of us are part of the Coalición Internacional de Sitios de Conciencia. But we are all independent there.

At the book fair, in a park called the Park of Desires, we shared a place with the Casa de Memoria, but each one carried their own samples. There it was different, we did a couple of events together, but each one had their own agenda and exhibition. And for the next year we are organizing together with a couple of universities, a large gathering of memory initiatives in Putumayo. That is a department in which there are many, well several departments abound, but in Putumayo we have accompanied several memory processes and it has several initiatives of places of memory. And they want to take advantage of the fact that we are doing the itinerant installations, to convene a large meeting of places of memory in which the museum can bring its itinerant installations, and these itinerant installations also functions as a place of content construction for the museum.

So that's what makes it conceptual. Not only is it the idea of the museum, but there is already a process of trial, experimentation of the script, that is what we are doing right now, which is unusual. It is not usual for a museum to be able to test its script before opening the doors, but to give more strength to the participatory, we said: Well, the construction can take about two years, or a year and a half, and we already have a level of accumulated work that allows us to test a script, so that when we open the building, the script that will be there will be a script that already passed several tests, that does not make mistakes that can be avoided with the test.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: So if I understand correctly you are doing two things in these two years. One, is to test the script, but also you said that in the itinerant installations you are trying to use the exhibition to serve as a producer of content for the museum. So, you are also gathering some elements that could be incorporated, to expand this initial exhibition.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Kind of. For now, what we want is that the itinerant installations of the exhibition help us to imagine possible ways of the museum's presence in the territories. That it is not only made with the support of the places of memory that there are, but through the understanding of our exhibition and its itinerant installations as a research project in itself, that helps us to take the museum to the territories, so that the museum itself goes opening lines of work every time that travels.

That does not necessarily mean gathering information, sometimes it’s just that. Because to gather information we have a different strategy. You could talk to the Archive tomorrow, which is the Registro Especial de Archivos y Objetos de Memoria.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: That supplies the museum?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: That supplies the data banks of the museum.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Registry?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: "Registro Especial de Archivos y Objetos de Memoria". Initially it was only a special record of archives, and since this year we have been doing the registration of objects with memory value for the museum.

CECILIA SOSA: The itinerant installations are, so to speak, a working methodology, right? When you work the itinerant installations as a source of content development and of taking the museum to the communities. And afterwards, the registry is the documentation strategy to fill of content the...

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: The data banks. Yes, to have in our content banks. At this time, we have a fairly good identification of works of art by the most traditional artists of the canon related to violence. But through the registry we are also identifying objects, [and] initiatives that are working on the theme of memory, which may eventually be of interest to the museum, and in which people are also interested in contributing with their things so that they are taken into account by the museum. That does not mean that we are bringing those objects with us. The only thing we do is register them. So we can have information available about all of this.

CECILIA SOSA: Only register them at the beginning, it is not appropriation.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: A small technical description, where they are, how they are being used, and a basic description of the context in which they were produced. So that later they can be taken into account with the permission of their custodians for exhibitions.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: That is to say, you are doing like a record of all the possible elements, or several possible elements, of being "museographed" or transported to this space, right?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes, initially it is not so much to shape the collections, or to bring them here and declare them heritage and that we have to guard them. Rather, for virtual dissemination strategies, but also to have information about initiatives that until now we did not have tracked, that are producing memory themes, and that have an interest in working with the museum.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Locally it can be too. Yes. They are ways of enhancing local collections.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Exactly. And that eventually they can be used, maybe in exhibitions that remain inside the museum. But also the idea is to think about virtual samples, taking advantage of what other museums have done, not necessarily [museums of] memory, but also of art. [For example] the virtual “curatories” that the Rijksmuseum has done. To try to see strategies that allow us to work in a different way with what people are also doing with their own initiatives.

So, there are these two [parts]. On the one hand there are the itinerant installations, [and] there is the registration work that has been done with the archive, which tomorrow [you will see]. There, what we did was to stick to the shelf of records that was brought by the archive. They have been working on it since the public archive policy for at least three years. And since last year we have been saying, no, but we have to see that this record is not only about archives, that in a certain way it is also thought for the museum, and there is an experiment going on.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And when you took that decision, did you include a technician from the area of museography who could do that work?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes, Ernesto is in this. You are going to meet him maybe tomorrow; he is responsible for the registration at the moment.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: Ernesto.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Ernesto.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Okay. Does he come from the art area or how ...?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: He is a restorer, conservator-restorer.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: Precisely, we were going to have an appointment with him, and with María Margot, who's the one who just called me, who cannot [meet] tomorrow because she's going to take possession, I think she's going to work on archives of public denunciation.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: He had told me that it was probably going to be that day but he did not know. He just told me it's going to be that day.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Okay. She?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: [María Margot] The previous director of the Archive.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: But, we are going to meet after this, and she told me that after she signs it, I do not know what, she was going to join us.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Oh, okay, great! That’s good.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Do you have any question about the curator or?

VIKKI BELL: Yes, so, my question will be, so at this moment in time, how much of the contents of the museum do you already have? Do You? It is the centre, the thing that you already have collected is part of the research from the centre? Would they be an important part of the museum? Do you already know, do you already have a sense of what will be in the museum or is this exercise of taking the itinerant installations to different places, is it, is the hope on that to tell you what should be in there? Or do you already have a strong sense of what would be there.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: No. I believe that what has been part of the "Voices" exhibition at this moment is already an idea of what is going to be in the building. In fact, if today everything went ahead in construction and we have a building for next year, based on the exhibition "Voices" I can build the entire museography of the building.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Is this the building? That little book [pointing at something].

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. Now I will give one to each one of you.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: I have one [Laughs].

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Oh, okay. So, yes, this is the building that is going to be built, well it is really not exactly this one, because they might build some basements.

VIKKI BELL: In English too?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. It's something we have been trying to do with the museum.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Can I take a picture?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: So, this was the proposal that won. This is how we expect that it will look. But there are a couple of basements that are going to be eliminated. The museum as it is at this moment has four exhibition rooms. And the script, as we have thought, has 3 narrative axes, which are the body axis, the earth axis and the legacy axis. And there is a first room that still has not... So, in principle with what we have set up today, each room would be for an axis, and we had thought that the initial room could do two things: give an initial context of reading for the exhibition, like initial keys of understanding what the visitor will find in the rooms, and also be a space for recognition of other places of memory that exist in the country. In other words, let people know that in Tumaco memory is being made, that in Cartagena del Chairá memory is being made. And that somehow, they can there [in the museum] know something of its contents. Those are more or less the rooms as they are currently thought out.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: Why has it taken so long? Or that was the time[line] that was thought about from the beginning?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: It has been delayed more than we thought at the beginning, not much more, but it has been delayed at least six months, or a year more than what we thought at the beginning, due to property sanitation issues. The property for the construction of this [museum], I do not know if there is a photo that allows us to see the site [he searches for a photograph or a map], it is on 26th Street with Americas, in the triangle of 26th [Street] with Las Américas and 30th [Street].

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: 26th Street with…

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Behind the Supercade. There's one... Let's see if the property is well identified here, yes, look at it, here it is [Showing a photograph or a map]. This is 26th [Street], this is 30th [Street], here is the Cade, the Supercade, and this is the administrative centre of the district, here is the Council of Bogotá, and the building will be here.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: Here is like a big structure [Pointing at something in the photograph or the map].

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Exactly. Yes, there is a sculpture that we have to restore. It costs about 1,500 million to restore it, [it was built] by Alejandro Otero, who is a Venezuelan artist of the current of Latin American kineticism, which is a really beautiful sculpture and one of the conditions that we put on the project was to well-integrate the sculpture of Otero to dialogue with everything that was being designed. That [sculpture] has two sisters, two twin sisters. One is in front of the Holocaust museum in Washington, and it works very well there, and the other one is in Caracas, and I have not seen it, but they have told me that is very well preserved. The only one that looks like some fences thrown around it is ours. The idea, in the framework of the project, is to conserve it.

So, that [Pointing to something in the photograph or the map] is the triangle that we were assigned in 2014, before launching this architectural competition. They assigned it to us through decree of the district, but in order to normalize the legal situation of the property we had to proceed with sanitation, and it is a property that has had all the entanglements of this world in terms of sanitation. Initially they had told us that it was public property, which was distributed among several public entities. So, there was a bit that was from the aqueduct of Bogotá, another piece that was from IDUC, which is the urban development institute, [and] another piece that was of the energy company, so the matter was solvable. The controversy [was] between public entities. We started to do all the paperwork when everything was public, [but] not everything was public, there was a part that was private, there was a part of here that was [property of] Bavaria. Then we had to proceed with Bavaria. There were two options: a donation for free, or a trial of belonging to Bavaria, which can take 10 years.

Then we tried to get the free title, but Bavaria set it as a condition to be exempted from taxes if it was going to make the donation. But in order to be exempted from taxes, it was necessary to change the meaning of the property, not to be a property for tax purposes, but a property for public use. We have been in these discussions all the time, all these years, but there are very significant advances. Nowadays, the project's money is guaranteed. [Cough] Sorry.

And in fact, today October 31 we are filing a construction license in the curatorship. The idea is that in March of next year we will start construction. But the designs are already there. This is the ante-project to be based in curatorship, since all the detailed studies for the work are already in place. Well, perhaps the professor already knows what happened in curatorship with the curator, who gave additional recommendations, on very specific topics, like the bathrooms. [The curator] did some things in more detail, but we could already file in due form, as it is said in curatorship to begin the construction procedures. With the schedule we have, at the end of 2020 they would be delivering the building.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: At the same time as us.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: They would be handing us the building. And the idea is to inaugurate it in 2021, which is also the year in which the victims' law closes. Let's say that our initial deadline was always 2021. So in 2021 we have to deliver the closed research agenda, the compiled archive and the museum ready for service. And in 2021 it will be [ready]. We wanted to have it from before. We wanted the building ready in 2019 or 2020. But because of sanitation issues it was completely impossible. The property they gave us initially was good because we are not going to pay anything because it is a property that the district gave to the project. But it was a legally very messy property. We had to do the cadastral history of that property from the nineteenth century to know who owned it, who had registration. And it did not have anything. And a private owner appeared, rather.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Luis Carlos, you could tell us two things about this initial script. What did you want to tell? I mean, we are going to look at the website, but if you can tell us, how was the decision made of "what to tell" in this first exhibition, in "Voces"? And what is the public? What is the audience? What audience were you [thinking] about to tell what you decided to tell?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: In this case, as I was saying, we went for axes. Each of these axes tries to address a message that we wanted to test in the exhibition. In the case of "lands", we try to send the message, on one hand of the centrality of the land for the Colombian armed conflict, but also of the complexity and responsibilities behind the conflict. This was not something that happened to us because we were bad or something like that. But here there are interests of people who wanted this to happen, right? That the war is intentional, that it is not a phenomenon that fell from the sky or anything like that.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Do you want some water?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Okay.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: We need to leave in ten minutes to…

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Oh, Okay, then…

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: Do you have more water?

[Laughs]

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: No, no. For you, right?

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: No, no, for you. Is because I see you…

[Unintelligible dialogue, joke about water, 1.59.09.7]

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: So, we're fine with the times. So the first thing we did was to choose the axes. Each of the axes has a central message. So, the one of “lands”, besides the centrality of the earth, [it is about] the intentionality of the war. [In] the [axis] of the "body" we wanted to make the message of stigmas as triggers of violence very strong in the framework of the armed conflict, and the identification tasks that people have undertaken, to throw back the prejudices that were installed by the conflict. And in the case of "water" we wanted to make a very strong message that war leaves damages, not only in people but in their communities, in the territories and in the environment in general. And we try to make a call that those damages also challenge us not only because we allowed that to happen, but because it is the task of the country to do as much as possible to get out of the situation in which we were left.

CECILIA SOSA: Sorry. Then "land" with the theme of the centrality of the territorial armed conflict.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: The territory in the conflict?

CECILIA SOSA: Of the territory in the conflict.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And that is an intentional war.

CECILIA SOSA: Intentionality. And the body? Stigma.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Yes, I was going to [tell you] that. I find it very interesting. Let me see if I understood the idea of stigma well. Does it mean that: The forms of violence do not fall from the sky either, but rather they settle, or they use some sociocultural realities that are existing from before? Like for example: indigenous, black, gender?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. That, on the one hand. Exactly, yes. And [also] that the violence itself is building its own stigmas, and that begins with the construction of democracy. Because to get out of the armed conflict [we have to] destabilize the common places that the war built to represent each other, right? The war itself was creating closed identities, and common places that make the construction of democracy very difficult.

And [the axis] "water" [was] damage fundamentally.

CECILIA SOSA: Just a second, could you give us an example? Thinking about a museum, what is the knowledge of the idea of stigma and how are these commonplaces constructed?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. Well, for each of the axes we chose cases. And in each case we are telling a particularity of the main message. So, for example, on land, we had five cases. The first case was of indigenous peoples of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and the Catatún. To show the long-term history of the conflict, and trying to show the complexity of interests that are crossed in it, that historically have been crossed over the territory of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Then we got involved with the case of La Pola and Palizua, which are villages in the Magdalena where the peasant struggles for land, the dispossession to which they subjected these communities, and the struggles for the restitution of the land that nowadays are happening, have been emblematic.

Then we got involved with [the issue of] drug trafficking. [The idea was] to see drug trafficking not so much as it has been seen from the bosses, but the weakest links in the chain of drug trafficking, the settlers who are forced to plant coca in their territories to have economic alternatives. And there we combine different pieces. For example, in the case of La Pola and La Palizua we have one graphic history of what the peasant movement has been in the Colombian Caribbean, that you can see in more detail in our website. [This graphic history shows] what the struggle of the national association of peasant users of the 70s was, organized so that the State would give them vacant land that they could work. Then the armed groups arrive, especially "paras" and move them, and then what they are doing to recover the territory.

[It's] a graphic story through banners. And in the centre we try to put a piece that is the tangle of restitution and dispossession, which is: using fabrics and wires we show the complexity of interests that cross to strip the peasants, but also the complexity of alliances that are put in progress to restore the land to the peasants. And that the State participates in both. The State has helped as a plunderer, but the State has also been accompanying. Because it [accompanies] us, [who are] initiatives of memory, but it also brings the restitution of lands to the people, attending to their demands to return to the territory. [The idea is] to show in a confronting way the alliances that are being disputed at that moment in the territories of the country.

In the case of drug trafficking, which is a case in Puerto Guzmán in Putumayo, we had a coca plant planted in the exhibition space for people to see. Many people do not even know what coca is like when they find it sown there. [We installed] wires that prevented in any case [people] to relate to it. [The idea was] to show how it is that something so beautiful and that has even been appropriated by indigenous communities ancestrally for varied uses different than the criminalized, ended up impossible to have a relationship with because of the conflict. Then [in the installation] there was a series of wires that prevented us from relating to the bush, and at the same time there was a sound landscape that was going to reproduce testimonies or music of settlers, coca growers who were telling their experience. Then, at the same time you had the central piece that was the coca bush with wires that prevented [people] interacting with it, a sound landscape that was playing pieces of testimonies or songs that people composed about the history of coca in the territory, and the exhibition panels where there was a map that located the area, basic figures of the expansion of illicit crops in the country, figures of fumigations and the impact of fumigations.

CECILIA SOSA: Is there any of that on the website?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Yes.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes, you have all that there. And likewise for the "body" we also chose. On the one hand, we worked with an individual body with twelve individual profiles, and two cases of collective body. What we called collective body is a political group that was the object of extermination in Colombia, which was the Unión Patriótica. So we try to tell what happened to the Unión Patriótica with a giant mural in which the central figure was the UP presidential candidates who were assassinated. There is also a sound landscape, where [you can hear] the speeches of the leaders of the Unión Patriótica that were killed, and panels that contextualize the piece. And the other one is another collective, which is the Organización Femenina Popular.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: I’m sorry. Which one?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: The Organización Femenina Popular, that is a feminist organization that was born in the year 1971, and that was doing community work during all the time in which the conflict happened. While the conflict was alive, well, and it continues [today].

CECILIA SOSA: And in the cases of individual body, any example?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Sure. We tried to choose victims that were from many different sectors. There, for example, are victims of the courthouse, of the occupation and re-occupation of the courthouse. There are also military victims who were victims of IHL infractions by the guerrillas, as victims of antipersonnel mines, or militaries. Which in this case was not a military, but was a policeman who was kidnapped for a long period by the guerrillas. There are LGBTI victims. Those that were in the exhibition are victims of paramilitaries, fundamentally LGBTI.

So what we did was, for example, on one side [we put] a photograph of one of these victims, there were [also] objects that were not the originals, they were not the authentic objects of the victims but they were objects that they had chosen that were replicas of originals that they had and that it seemed important to leave there. So, for example, in the case of the El Nogal bombs, we spoke with a girl who survived the FARC attack in El Nogal in 2003, whose parents died there. So, she wanted that, in addition to the tennis racket that she was carrying that day after playing, one of the objects that we put there were her parents' wedding rings. So, we did replicas of everything. There is a replica of a racket, a replica of her parent's rings, and we left them there with a testimony that we wrote together with them of what the experience of the conflict had been for them. And apart from that, there was also a sound landscape and a small documentary, some images with fragments of testimony and gestures of the victims while they were talking were going through screens, things like that.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And in the case of…

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: [interrupts] Sorry, I'm going to go ahead because I have to set up the room for the Skype call.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Do you not want a taxi? What do we do?

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: No, not in a taxi. There [you arrive] walking. You go down to seventh [street] and continue, right?

CECILIA SOSA: Yes, yes, to the avenue, and then to the right.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: Yes, you get to seventh [street], going down, and you go walking, and after the park…

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Ok. Five minutes.

[Jaime Hernández says goodbye and leaves]

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Maybe if you can..., you were telling us about the case of the Organización Femenina Popular, if you can tell us how the stigma worked there.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. Well, they were branded guerrillas while they were walking. And they were basically born as a popular women's organization, not so much to address issues of armed conflict. It was more a women's organization to reject macho violence. A typically feminist organization, which since the 1980s has been located in Magdalena Medio, which is a tremendously violent area in Colombia or which was for a long time. At this time the area is calmer but for a long time it was a very, very, very violent area in Colombia. Since the 80s, they have taken on the task of protecting their children and the community in general because of the onslaught of war. And they became very emblematic because of the type of symbols they used to protect themselves and their communities, and especially to protect their children. So, for example when the "paramilitaries" and the "guerrillas" arrived to take someone because they were going to kill him, they came out of their houses with stones to make noise and thus prevent the people from taking their children. They organized “ollas comunitarias” to prevent armed actors from passing by. They imposed the use of black coats in the mobilizations as a symbol of mourning, for what they were going through in the Magdalena medio. And for all that they were very persecuted, because the guerrillas saw them as, they did not say "paras", but they call them reactionaries. They were feminists and ended up trying to neutralize the rebellion. And the guerrillas, and the paramilitaries, said that they were guerrillas.

[Someone offers something to Luis]

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: No, I’m fine.

CECILIA SOSA: Ok Luis.

Someone interrupts: Would you like to have something to drink?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: No, we are just leaving.

CECILIA SOSA: Unfortunately.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: The question about the public? Or not?

VIKKI BELL: I need to walk.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes. About the publics. We were in two major book fairs. And there they were mostly a middle class public. In Bogotá, it was more middle and upper-middle class, which are the ones that go to the Bogota book fair, because there you have to pay entrance fees. In Medellín, it was an open space, so there it was for a middle class and low-middle class audience, but we kept the same contents. What changed was...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Yes, it is a challenge to try to reach different audiences with one [content].

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: Yes, over there we changed some things on the programme and the mediation strategy. Those were changed in both places but the exhibition [and] the contents of the exhibition were the same.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Great.

VIKKI BELL: Thank you so much.

CECILIA SOSA: Thank you so much, it was very interesting.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: ¿How can we get the “¡Basta ya!” and the tool kit?

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: They are all in PDF format on the internet.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Oh, ok.

LUIS CARLOS SÁNCHEZ: But if I have something left in physical [format] you can write me and I'll get it for you. For now, I'm going to give you the building's publications. Can you excuse me.

The interview finishes.

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