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Faculty of Political Science and Sociology

Final Degree Project

**Re-envisioning Transitional Justice through an
Ecofeminist Ethics of Care:
Insights from Colombia**

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Abstract

This study identifies the shortcomings in the dominant liberal discourse in transitional justice (TJ) when addressing the interplay between environmental harm and violence against racialized women during armed conflict. Bridging the calls by feminist, Indigenous, and environmentalist scholars for an expansion of the field, it explores the potential of Ecofeminism - a critical philosophy of feminist ecology that has been largely absent in TJ - to fill such gaps. The paper reviews the core elements of an ecofeminist ethics of care and illustrates how the latter may be applied to TJ. For that, it turns to Case 02 before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) - a TJ initiative focusing on mass harm in the department of Nariño during the Colombian conflict (1964-2016) - arguing that the case furthers key ecofeminist principles. After analyzing narratives by Awá Indigenous women explaining their understandings of *womanhood*, *harm* and *justice*, the analysis finds that dominant anthropocentric views in TJ ignore conflict-related disruptions of symbolic socio-ecological relations between Indigenous women and their territories. On the contrary, the ecofeminist approach adopted in Case 02 addresses the realities of Awá women by de-centering anthropocentrism and recognizing environmental victimhood; understanding Indigenous women's suffering as intrinsically related to ecological harm; revalorizing Indigenous worldviews and self-determination; and restoring material, cultural, and spiritual *woman-territory* ties. The paper concludes that Ecofeminism has strong potential to re-envision TJ towards more inclusive cultures of peace.

Key words: Transitional Justice; Ecofeminism; ethics of care; environmental harm; Awá women.

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1. Introduction

It is now common knowledge that armed conflicts cause environmental damage. What is yet to be grasped in Western worldviews is that conflict-related ecological degradation is neither restricted to economic loss linked to the depletion of natural resources nor does it disrupt the lives of humans living on battlefields equally (Killean and Dempster 2022, 14). Environmental harm reproduces and amplifies specific gendered and racialized dynamics of power (Yoshida and Céspedes-Báez 2021, 17). Carriers of unique relationships with ancestral territories as sustenance of their identity, beliefs, and community ties, Indigenous women are disproportionately affected by environmental destruction in the physical, cultural, and spiritual dimensions (Garcés 2022, 69). Despite transitional justice (TJ) bearing responsibility for redressing all forms of mass violence during conflict, Indigenous women's realities of harm have remained marginalized within the field (Acosta et al. 2018, 115). Re-envisioning TJ concerns the need to make the invisible visible in the discipline.

This project aims to identify the gaps in the dominant discourse in TJ when addressing the interplay between environmental harm and violence against racialized women during conflict. Bridging the calls by feminist, Indigenous, and environmentalist scholars for an expansion of the field, it explores the potential of Ecofeminism - a critical philosophy of feminist ecology that has been largely absent in TJ - to reframe TJ and fill such gaps. Following these objectives, the paper poses the following research questions:

- What are the limitations of liberal transitional justice when addressing environmental violence and its gender and ethnic dimension during armed conflict?
- Can Ecofeminism inform transitional justice for it to better account for the intersection between conflict-related environmental, gender-based, and ethnic violence?

As for its initial hypotheses, the study expects the limitations of TJ to be found in dominant anthropocentric views ignoring conflict-related disruptions of symbolic *woman-territory* socio-ecological relations that extend beyond economic harm. However, Ecofeminism may

enrich TJ by de-centering anthropocentrism and giving visibility to the interconnected experiences of harm faced by racialized women and nature.

This work begins with a review of the literature on TJ and the theoretical principles of Ecofeminism, providing a background for its hypotheses. Before evaluating the possible contributions of Ecofeminism to TJ, the paper outlines how the theory may translate into concrete TJ mechanisms. For that, it refers to Case 02 before Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP, for its initials in Spanish), a transitional justice initiative focusing on mass harm against Indigenous peoples in the department of Nariño during the Colombian conflict,¹ arguing that the case furthers an ecofeminist ethics of care. The paper then analyzes the experiences of violence of Awá Indigenous women - disproportionately affected by conflict-related ecological degradation in Nariño - to reflect on the limitations of liberal TJ in accounting for their realities. It then assesses whether an ecofeminist TJ framework, exemplified by Case 02, may instead reflect their needs and conceptualizations of justice. The main argument of this study is that Case 02 follows an ecofeminist approach to TJ that can potentially transform the field towards more inclusive cultures of peace.

2. Literature Review

a. Background on Transitional Justice

The broad scholarly consensus around the general character of transitional justice (TJ) stems from the emergence of official international documents on the field, the most important being the former UN Secretary General's Report (2004), "The Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies" (De Greiff 2012, 31). The report defines TJ as the entire range of processes and mechanisms a society adopts to address the legacy of large-scale past conflict and violations of human rights, aiming to both provide redress to victims of massive violence and prevent similar victimhood in the future (UN 2004, 4). As such, it is a tool for accountability, justice, and reconciliation in post-conflict settings (Grover 2019, 370). TJ comprises multiple judicial and non-judicial mechanisms initiated by national

¹'Auto SRVBIT - No. 004, Caso 02,' JEP, July 10, 2018; 'Caso 02: Situación Territorial De Nariño,' JEP, accessed April 30, 2024, <https://www.jep.gov.co/macrocasos/caso02.html>.

governments and the international community, including truth-seeking, prosecution, reparations, institutional reforms, and cultural initiatives (Werle and Vormbaum 2022, 4).

The field first emerged with the fall of autocratic regimes in Latin America and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s to respond to the claims for justice advanced by survivors of systematic abuses by those regimes (Rangelov and Teitel 2014, 338). Coined by Rudi Teitel in 1991 and popularized by Kritz's (1995) work "Transitional Justice: How Emerging Democracies Reckon with Former Regimes," (Arthur 2009, 330) the term "transitional justice" has since evolved into a subject of major interest in International Law (Grover 2019, 378).

International Law scholars have produced a vast literature on normative frameworks in TJ. In her groundbreaking work, Ruti Teitel (2002) identifies a common understanding of TJ as rooted in Western liberal values (e.g. rule of law and human rights, and democracy). Her findings are reinforced in the work of scholars such as Miller (2008), Nagy (2008), and Andrieu (2010). In particular, there seems to be agreement on the role of the UN as a standard setter in the field (Andrieu 2010). Starting from the establishment of international criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (1993) and Rwanda (1994), the UN has been a key player in TJ since the early years of the field (Pitic 2020, 106). Up to this day, the UN has referred to TJ in more than 160 resolutions, while the Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) has supported TJ programs in more than 20 countries worldwide (Grover 2019, 388).

As Grover (2019) notes, UN resolutions and activities by the OHCHR have come to define the dominant approach to TJ internationally. The latter builds upon individualistic liberal frameworks addressing individualized violations of "universal" civil and political rights and punishing individual perpetrators while aiming to instaurating liberal societies based on electoral liberal democracy, free market economy, respect of the rule of law, and economic development (Miller 2008, 268). In Teitel's (2014) words, TJ has witnessed a process of normalization of Eurocentric standards, being now a form of global governance endorsed by the UN and other international actors through top-down approaches.

b. Current Debate

In recent years, the literature on TJ has expanded beyond International Law, incorporating multiple disciplinary perspectives (An-Na'im 2013, 204). Scholars of feminist,

environmental, and Indigenous studies have contributed to a growing critique of liberal TJ. At the core of the critical debate are reflections on the narrowness of normative understandings of TJ, which have come to define and limit what conceptions of *harm* and *victimhood* fall under the scope of TJ (Killean and Dempster 2022, 13).

In addition to stressing the general absence of gender issues in the arena of TJ, feminist scholars Bell and O'Rourke (2007), and Fineman and Zinsstag (2013) highlight that universalist tendencies in liberal discourse fail to account for the position of women as unique victims of specific forms of violence. While Rooney and Ní Aoláin (2018) note that the UN's Women, Peace, and Security Agenda has placed increasing attention on gendered dynamics in TJ, they claim that such attention has been mainly directed toward conflict-related sexual violence. In light of these considerations, Warren et al. (2017) stress the need for intersectional approaches in the field to account for the complex array of structural and cultural violence targeting women whose experiences of abuse are informed by interlocking markers of social identity (e.g. gender, race, class, nation).

On the other hand, scholars of environmental and Indigenous studies have problematized dominant anthropocentric frameworks in liberal TJ (Izquierdo and Viane 2018; Ruiz-Serna 2023). Revolving around the belief of the "biological, mental and moral superiority of humans over other living and non-living entities," anthropocentrism places greater intrinsic values on humans than nature (Halsey and White 1998, 349). As Killean (2022) argues, anthropocentric legal frameworks have shaped how victimhood is understood in TJ. While other-than-human victimization is seldom considered worthy of recognition, human victims of environmental violence are themselves not recognized as victims of crime (Garcés 2022, 69). As a result, harm to individuals is considered in isolation from the individual's wider environment (Yoshida and Céspedes-Báez 2021, 19).

Despite the growing consciousness of the international community around environmental harm during conflicts, such harm has been predominantly framed in liberal terms, namely as economic loss (Killean and Dempster 2022, 14). This is apparent in the context of the Liberian civil war, with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission referring to environmental degradation caused by unsustainable diamond mining uniquely as material loss to be addressed to ensure prosperity in post-conflict Liberia, as opposed to granting the environment redress for its intrinsic value (Killean and Dempster 2022, 14). An-Na'im (2013) notes that, in their attempt to "colonize" TJ, liberal anthropocentric standards ignore

conflict-related disruptions of Indigenous peoples' cultural and spiritual connection to their lands, thus denying justice to Indigenous communities.

The current debate on TJ advocates for the expansion of the field to include more diverse perspectives on harm and victimhood, and to account for injustices that currently fall outside of it, such as violence against marginalized women and other-than-human entities. Despite evolving in parallel, the feminist and environmentalist critique of transitional justice have largely remained separate (Yoshida and Céspedes-Báez 2021, 17). As a result, there has been little attention to the interplay between gendered, racialized, and environmental violence in armed conflict (Acosta 2018, 764). The struggles of racialized women such as Indigenous women, the most affected by gender-based, ethnic, and environmental violence, have remained invisible within the field (Garcés 2022, 69). A new holistic framework that allows for feminist, Indigenous, and environmentalist perspectives to come into dialogue is needed in the field (Yoshida and Céspedes-Báez 2021, 17). In the next paragraphs, I will turn to Ecofeminism to assess whether the theory may fill the gaps in the existing literature on TJ.

3. Theoretical Framework: Ecofeminism

a. Theoretical Principles of Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is a critical feminist philosophy of ecology that draws parallels between the patriarchal subjugation of women and human domination of nature as a basis for analysis and practice (Natalis, Purwanti and Asmara 2023, 53). Emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s from various feminist, peace, and ecology movements, as well as foundational texts such as Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature* (1978) and Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature* (1989), Ecofeminism offers a holistic critique of patriarchy as a project of cultural subjugation of any human and non-human entity that threatens the hegemony of a very specific subject: the white, heterosexual, able-bodied, and masculine man (Braidotti 2020, 29). Such domination relies on a stratifying "Otherism" of peoples and nature through sexism, colonialism, racism, and anthropocentrism, among other forms of stratification (Gallo-Cruz 2022, 95). The superiority of the masculine subject is upheld through the devaluation of female qualities, attributed to women and nature alike (Vance 1993, 125).

Under patriarchy, both women and nature are deemed as irrational, passive, and weak - as the “non-self” to be oppressed and exploited (Shiva 1989, 5).

According to some scholars known as “cultural ecofeminists,” women and nature not only experience equivalent forms of subjugation but they are also linked conceptually and symbolically (Gaard 2011, 32). Informed by matriarchal spiritualities and cultures, Cultural Ecofeminism highlights the common ontological nature of women and earth rooted in their life-giving power, for which women experience a profound connection with nature (Carlassare 2000, 94). Women’s bodies and bodily experiences are interpreted as extensions of the broader life cycle on Mother Earth, with the womb, breast, menstruation, and birth holding important meanings in Ecofeminism (Field 2000, 53). It is in the woman-territory “kinship” where cultural ecofeminists build a critique of anthropocentrism: the parallel biological and cultural nature of the female and earth serves as proof for the interconnectedness between the human and non-human sphere (Diamond and Orenstein 1990, 224). In other words, women and the broader society cannot be considered as detached from nature.

Ecofeminism understands patriarchal domination under an intersectional lens, acknowledging the critical differences in women’s experiences of oppression across race, class, sexuality, nation, and ability (Warren 1997, 46). Being intersectional and critical in nature, ecofeminist theory and practice are guided by a clear emancipatory goal: ending all forms of oppression against humans and non-humans alike (Gaard 2011, 46).

b. Ecofeminism and War

Ecofeminist scholars have long theorized about the interplay between masculinity, war, and violence against nature and marginalized women (Mies and Shiva 2014, 14). While situations of insecurity may threaten the masculine subject, conflict provides men with an opportunity to showcase and reinforce their masculine attributes (strength, courage, aggressiveness, etc.) by taking up arms and intensifying violence against vulnerable women and nature (Gallo-Cruz 2022, 96). In the words of Mies and Shiva (2014, 15), war reproduces the same dynamics of heterosexual and man-nature relationships: “aggression, conquest, possession and control.” The two feminist references capture the interplay between ecological destruction and sexist and racial violence during conflict with an analogy linking men’s “rape” of the land to men’s rape of marginalized women’s bodies (Mies and Shiva 2014, 14).

The concept of “rape” in the latter metaphor ought not to be interpreted narrowly. Ecofeminists refuse reductionist understandings of gendered harm during conflict as confined to sexual violence, shedding light on multiple other forms of violence experienced by women of diverse social and racial identities (Gaard 2011, 36).

One of the main contributions of Ecofeminism is its comprehensive analysis of environmental harm as a weapon of war against racialized women (Gallo-Cruz 2022). Bringing attention to Indigenous women’s struggles, Yoshida and Céspedes-Báez (2021) reflect on how conflict-related militarization and extractivism are tactics to target Indigenous womanhood, shaped by its intimate physical, cultural, and spiritual relationship with the Land. Shiva (2014) highlights how Indigenous women act as heads of their traditional economies and are responsible for harvesting and conserving biodiversity, leading to environmental harm undermining their autonomy and erasing their identity as custodians of ancestral lands. According to Ecofeminism, environmental degradation during conflict is correlated with specific ethnic and gender-based harms (Yoshida and Céspedes-Báez 2021, 26).

c. Ethics of Care

Ecofeminism does more than just unmasking patriarchal violence in its complexity: it provides clear answers as to how to break such a cycle of violence (Gallo-Cruz 2022, 103). It does so by envisioning a transformative paradigm to be applied to any discipline and aspect of our lives, the so-called “ethics of care.” First coined by feminist psychologist Carol Gilligan (1982), the term entered the Ecofeminist discourse through the work of Donovan (1990), Warren (1990), and Plumwood (1991), among others.

An ethics of care is grounded in the development of relationships that understand the importance of every human and non-human entity having a voice to be heard with care and respect (Donovan 1990, 375). Plumwood (1991) describes it as a radical reshaping of the underlying values of our societies towards the deconstruction of traditional hierarchical Western dichotomies (man vs woman, human vs nature, civilized vs uncivilized, etc.) and the creation of a future of relationality. In such a future, anthropocentrism is dismantled. The individual is no longer seen as separate from the environment but rather as an integral part of nature, while nature is valued as alive and sensate per se (López-Serrano 2023, 86).

According to an ethics of care, responsibility, reciprocity, and love must become the guiding principles of horizontal and harmonious relationships between all humans and nature, leaving no room for domination and violence (Warren 1990, 143). The ecofeminist paradigm calls for re-matriation, or the return to societies that honor the centrality of women and the environment as life-giving entities (López-Serrano 2023, 86). This implies a revalorization of women's knowledge and cultural heritage, leading to, among other things, the resurgence of Indigenous women's self-determination (Santamaría et al. 2023, 177). As Mies and Shiva (2014) put it, an ecofeminist ethics of care values, preserves, and nurtures the diversity of all life forms, allowing for their cultural expressions and realities to come into dialogue.

It is essential to point out that ecofeminists were not the first to develop an “all-life embracing cosmology.” (Mies and Shiva 2014, 322) The ethics of care specifically borrows from Indigenous epistemologies, the ones that have always cared for the environment and perceived all life forms as sacred and spiritually interconnected (López-Serrano 2023, 87).

5. Case 02 Before the JEP

With Ecofeminism being mostly absent in the debate on TJ, there have been no significant reflections on how an ecofeminist ethics of care may translate into concrete TJ mechanisms. To adequately assess what contributions Ecofeminism can bring to the field, it is important to provide an example of an existing TJ regime that aligns with ecofeminist principles. For that, I will refer to Case 02 before the JEP.

a. Background

The JEP is one of the pillars of the Integral System of Truth, Reparations, Justice and Non-repetition, a series of transitional justice mechanisms created in the wake of Colombia's 2016 Final Peace Agreement.² The latter agreement formally ended the 5-decade long civil war (1964-2016) between the Colombian Government, multiple guerrillas - the main ones being the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP), and the National Liberation Army (ELN) - and several paramilitary groups (Fabra-Zamora, Molina-Ochoa, and Doubleday 2021, 1). Tasked with selecting, investigating, and prosecuting the most serious

² Jurisdicción especial para la paz (JEP), accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.jep.gov.co/JEP/Paginas/Jurisdiccion-Especial-para-la-Paz.aspx>.

crimes committed during the armed conflict,³ the JEP seeks to identify patterns of victimization under an intersectional lens.⁴ Dialogue between its Territorial-Environmental, Gender, and Ethnic Commissions has led to the prioritization of cases of conflict-related environmental, gender, and ethnic harm (Huneuus and Rueda Saíz 2021, 210). Among those, Case 02 has addressed mass violence against ancestral lands and Indigenous women in the department of Nariño.⁵

Located in South-Eastern Colombia, Nariño was a major hotspot during the Colombian armed conflict (Ilich Bacca and Delgado Hernández 2023, 176). There, the conflict had a strong environmental character (Ilich Bacca and Delgado Hernández 2023, 176). Nariño is a resource-rich and geographically marginalized department that has grappled with a weak presence of the state historically (Lasso Urbano and A Cabello-Tijerina 2022, 4). This prompted the rise of illegal economies around illicit resources during the conflict (Lasso Urbano and A Cabello-Tijerina 2022, 3). Mining, logging, hydrocarbons, monoculture crops (coca, palm, coconut), and drug trafficking became the primary financing source for both guerrilla and paramilitary groups in Nariño (Ilich Bacca and Delgado Hernández 2023, 176).

According to the Peace and Reconciliation Foundation, the presence of armed groups in Nariño was highest on ancestral soil.⁶ In particular, the *Katsa Su*, the ancestral territory of the Awá Indigenous people, experienced extreme militarization, bringing disastrous consequences to ecosystems and Awá traditional ways of life.⁷ As ruled by the Constitutional Court (*Autos* 004 and 174), the Awá community is now at risk of physical and cultural erasure as a result of the conflict.⁸

b. Case Selection

JEP's Case 02 was selected as it serves as an illustration for the application of an Ecofeminist framework in TJ. In particular, I argue that Case 02 is the first ever to introduce an ethics of

³ Hernández et al., 'La Jurisdicción Especial Para La Paz En El Modelo de Justicia Transicional Colombiano,' Corporación Excelencia en la Justicia, 2021.

⁴ 'Lineamientos Para La Implementación de La Interseccionalidad En La Jurisdicción Especial Para La Paz,' Secretaría Ejecutiva de la JEP, n.d.

⁵ 'Caso 02: Situación Territorial De Nariño,' JEP, accessed April 30, 2023, <https://www.jep.gov.co/macrocasos/caso02.html>.

⁶ 'Katsa Su. Ecologías de La Guerra En La Pervivencia Del Gran Territorio Awá: Derecho Propio, Coordinación Interjurisdiccional y Violencia Estructural,' DeJusticia, 2022.

⁷ 'Auto SRVBIT - No. 079, Caso 02,' JEP, November 12, 2019.

⁸ 'Katsa Su. Ecologías de La Guerra En La Pervivencia Del Gran Territorio Awá: Derecho Propio, Coordinación Interjurisdiccional y Violencia Estructural,' DeJusticia, 2022.

care and reframe TJ according to ecofeminist principles by moving away from anthropocentrism and Western cultural dominance in the field.

Case 02 marks the first case in the history of TJ to formally accredit the territory as a victim of conflict (Huneus and Rueda Sáiz 2021, 211). In November 2019, the JEP issued a resolution granting the Katsa Su the status of victim during the Colombian conflict.⁹ The JEP resolution also acknowledges the disproportionate impact of environmental violence on Awá women, mentioning the “relationship woman-territory” and “intersectionality” to capture how Indigenous women are carriers of a special relationship with nature (Yoshida and Céspedes-Báez 2021, 33). While Case 02 transforms the environment from an object to a legal subject of rights that suffers harm and is in need of repair (Huneus and Rueda Sáiz 2021, 210), it sees racialized women’s suffering as intrinsically related to ecological harm (Santamaria et al. 2023, 173). I argue that JEP’s decision follows an ethics of care by recognizing the validity of the experiences of violence of all humans, including Indigenous women, and non-human entities equally.

Not only is the outcome of the 2019 resolution historically significant but so are the process that led to it and the following reparative measures.¹⁰ Judicial steps prior to the accreditation were informed by the local community’s own conception of justice as opposed to being top-down processes led by the JEP (Huneus and Rueda Sáiz 2021, 215). The JEP persistently maintained horizontal dialogue with Awá communities by receiving and examining reports by Awá traditional authorities and victims on their interpretation of the Colombian conflict, increasing its presence in Awá territories through “knowledge sharing sessions” and community workshops, and ensuring the participation of *Awapit* (the native language of the Awá people) translators in all its sessions.¹¹

The steps following the 2019 resolution have furthered a restorative model of TJ aimed at restoring broken ties within the Awá community.¹² While the resolution lists as a harm, and therefore commits to the non-repetition of economic activities that cause imbalance within the *Katsa Su*, such as industrial-scale mining, and mono-crop farming (Huneus and Rueda Sáiz 2021, 223), the JEP has engaged with Awá worldviews to ensure symbolic reparations

⁹ ‘Auto SRVBIT - No. 079, Caso 02,’ JEP, November 12, 2019.

¹⁰ JEP Colombia, ‘Declaración Y Rueda De Prensa Desde Tumaco, Nariño,’ July 14, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hus7ZHq4s8o>.

¹¹ ‘Auto SRVBIT - No. 079, Caso 02,’ JEP, November 12, 2019; Bula, Enith, ‘Boletín # 7. El Enfoque Étnico En La Jurisdicción Especial Para La Paz,’ Comisión Colombiana de Juristas, 2020.

¹² Cifuentes Muñoz, Eduardo, ‘The Restorative Model in the Special Jurisdiction for Peace,’ JEP, 2022.

towards the spiritual healing of the Awá people and territory.¹³ For instance, the JEP has held sessions which involve rituals and interactions with natural entities in accordance with Awá spiritual traditions, as well as creating a “memory house” for spiritual healing among Awá women.¹⁴

In line with an ecofeminist ethics of care, JEP’s Case 02 pushes TJ into a new terrain by allowing a multiplicity of diverse human and non-human voices to enter the field through horizontal dialogue; enabling the free artistic and spiritual expression of Indigenous peoples; and focusing on the importance of relationality, or restoring harmonious relationships within ancestral territories. As the JEP claims, Case 02 revalorizes Indigenous wisdom in TJ while building bridges to fortify Awá autonomy - two core principles of Ecofeminism.¹⁵ By analyzing whether the case successfully addresses Awá women’s experiences of harm and understanding of justice, the following paragraphs will assess the potential of Ecofeminism to enrich the current debate in TJ.

6. Methodology

The present research project follows a qualitative research method that builds upon secondary data analysis of documentary materials. It seeks to identify Awá women’s own interpretations of their relationship to the ancestral territory, their experiences of violence during conflict in Nariño, and their conceptualizations of justice in order to generate reflections on the narrowness of dominant understandings of *harm*, *victimhood*, and *justice* and assess whether an ecofeminist framework may instead reflect their realities. Following ecofeminist principles, the methods of data collection used in this case study center the *voices* of Indigenous women, allowing for understandings of patterns of environmental, ethnic, and gendered harm according to their worldviews.

¹³ JEP Colombia, ‘Declaración Y Rueda De Prensa Desde Tumaco, Nariño,’ July 14, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hus7ZHq4s8o>.

¹⁴ ‘Lo Que Debes Saber Del Sistema Restaurativo De La JEP,’ Spreaker, December 28, 2023, <https://www.spreaker.com/episode/lo-que-debes-saber-del-sistema-restaurativo-de-la-jep--58140883>.

¹⁵ JEP Colombia, ‘Nuestra JEP, Étnica-racial | Ep.06 | El Territorio Como Víctima,’ June 17, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ODkAO9Ey24>.

Data for this study were collected through analyses of: Awá women's interventions and interviews in documentaries and video files,¹⁶ recorded conferences,¹⁷ and podcasts,¹⁸ secondary interviews conducted with Awá women in ethnographic studies (Santamaría et al. 2019) and by the National Center for Historical Memory (NCHM) and National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (2019), international media outlets¹⁹ and governmental entities,²⁰ official reports published by Awá civil society organizations,²¹ experts in the legal sector,²² the Colombian Truth Commission,²³ and the NCHM,²⁴ JEP's resolutions,²⁵ press conferences,²⁶ and public hearings;²⁷ and other digital resources by the JEP.²⁸ All materials

¹⁶ Audiovisuales Awá Unipa, 'Ashampa Awá - Entretejiendo Realidades,' September 25, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6QHgOeZW14>; Contravía TV, 'El Pueblo Awá: "Aprender Y Luchar Para Resistir El Engaño,"' January 14, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwJq-DMysjc>; ONU Mujeres Colombia, 'Mujeres Indígenas De Nariño Tejen Redes Para Construir La Paz Desde El Territorio,' January 24, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zjsbUBz4aI; 'Reclutamiento Forzado a Mujeres Del Pueblo Awá,' Informe Final - Comisión de la Verdad, July 28, 2022, <https://www.comisiondelaverdad.co/reclutamiento-forzado-mujeres-del-pueblo-awa>; Xarxanet Associacionisme, 'Entrevista a L'Aura López,' February 16, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cPCG_MAXc4.

¹⁷ Banrepcultural, 'Mujer Awa: Somos Mensajeras De Vida En Casa,' June 5, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YA9z_CHncvc; Observatorio ADPI Barcelona, 'Dones Indígenes Awá Contra Les Violències De Gènere,' November 13, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOolqt90FEw>.

¹⁸ Consejo de Redacción, 'Mujer Resistencia, Mujer Resiliencia, Mujer Awá - Consejo De Redacción,' December 5, 2021, <https://consejoderedaccion.org/sello-cdr/investigacion/mujer-resistencia-mujer-resiliencia-mujer-awa/>; Contrabanda Fm, '#8 Entrevista a Claudia Jimena Pai Del Pueblo Awá: Resistencia Indígena En Nariño [Colombia],' La Memoria Del Jaguar, April 17, 2019, <https://lamemoriadeljaguar.contrabanda.org/2019/04/17/8-entrevista-a-claudia-jimena-pai-del-pueblo-awa-resistencia-indigena-en-narino-colombia/>; 'Mujeres Awá: Guardianas De Paz En Colombia,' iVoox, n.d., https://www.ivoox.com/podcast-mujeres-awa-guardianas-paz-colombia_sq_f11495614_1.html.

¹⁹ BBC News Mundo, 'La Crisis Humanitaria De Los Awá,' *BBC News Mundo*, August 31, 2009, https://www.bbc.com/mundo/america_latina/2009/08/090724_awa_salazar_ip; Diego Battistessa, 'Aura López García, Lideresa Awá: "Para Nosotros No Ha Habido Paz Después De Los Acuerdos De 2016,"' *El País*, April 4, 2023, <https://elpais.com/planeta-futuro/que-mueve-a/2023-04-04/aura-lopez-garcia-lideresa-awa-para-nosotros-no-ha-habido-paz-despues-de-los-acuerdos-de-2016.html>.

²⁰ 'Las Lideresas Indígenas Awá Y Las Escuelas De Derecho Propio,' AECID, March 8, 2023, <https://www.aecid.es/es/w/las-lideresas-indigenas-awa-y-las-escuelas-de-derecho-propio>.

²¹ 'Historias de Justicia Propia del Pueblo Awá - UNIPA. Proyecto de fortalecimiento de la Justicia Propia del Pueblo Awá asociado en la UNIPA, de acuerdo a su cosmovisión y cosmología propia,' UNIPA, 2022; 'Katsa Su. Ecologías de La Guerra En La Pervivencia Del Gran Territorio Awá: Derecho Propio, Coordinación Interjurisdiccional y Violencia Estructural,' *Dejusticia*, 2022; 'Mujeres Inkal Awá Caminando La Palabra Por Un "Buen Vivir" Libre de Violencias de Género En Colombia,' OADPI, 2021.

²² 'Mujer Awá: Tejido De Vida,' *Dejusticia*, October 10, 2023, <https://www.dejusticia.org/column/mujer-awa-tejido-de-vida/>.

²³ 'Caso "Disputa y control por el territorio awá,"' Comisión de la Verdad, 2022.

²⁴ 'Endulzar la Palabra: Memorias indígenas para pervivir,' Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2018.

²⁵ 'Auto SRVBIT - No. 079, Caso 02,' JEP, November 12, 2019.

²⁶ JEP Colombia, 'Declaración Y Rueda De Prensa Desde Tumaco, Nariño,' July 14, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hus7ZHq4s8o>.

²⁷ 'Estado No. 1190,' JEP, July 29, 2022.

²⁸ '¿Cómo Investiga La JEP Los Crímenes Cometidos Contra Pueblos Y Territorios Étnicos?,' *Spreaker*, October 13, 2023, <https://www.spreaker.com/episode/como-investiga-la-jep-los-crimes-cometidos-contr-pueblos-y-territorios-etnicos--57225725>; 'Lo Que Debes Saber Del Sistema Restaurativo De La JEP,' *Spreaker*, December 28, 2023, <https://www.spreaker.com/episode/lo-que-debes-saber-del-sistema-restaurativo-de-la-jep--58140883>; JEP

were selected based on whether they included Awá women's direct participation and centered their perspectives. The study collects a total of 29 Awá female leaders' and/or survivors' stories, testimonies, and perspectives.²⁹ The latter were recorded or written in Spanish, for which the quotations in the next paragraphs were translated into English by me.

7. Analysis

7.1 Findings

a. The Link Woman-Territory

As highlighted by Awá leader Leydi Pai, Awá womanhood finds its foundations and meaning in Awá cosmology.³⁰ The latter represents the particular way in which Awá women “*feel, interpret, and make sense*” of their life in this world, including their experiences of violence.³¹ The Awá people define their cosmology as the “Law of Origin,” a state of millennial balance that intimately connects the human and other-than-human through material, symbolic and spiritual paths.³² The Law of Origin revolves around the *Wat Usan*, or the “*good living, good dialogue, and good sharing*” between all living things, creating and permeating the Awá ancestral territory, the Katsa Su.³³ The Katsa Su (Big House in Awapit) is “a whole,” a living entity constituted by the territory and everything that exists on it: the jungle, the mountains, the earth, the rivers, the plants, the animals, the spirits, but also social, cultural, and spiritual relations.³⁴ In the Katsa Su, life, territory, culture, and spirituality constitute one single reality.³⁵

Colombia, ‘Nuestra JEP, Étnica-racial | Ep.05 | Mujer, Familia Y Generación,’ June 10, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96lckwwz1bU>; JEP Colombia, ‘Nuestra JEP, Étnica-racial | Ep.06 | El Territorio Como Víctima,’ June 17, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QDkAO9Ey24>.

²⁹ See Appendix A for a complete list of Awá women who informed the study.

³⁰ Leydi Pai, in Observatorio ADPI Barcelona, ‘Dones Indígenes Awà Contra Les Violències De Gènere,’ November 13, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Oolqt90FEw>.

³¹ ‘Mujeres Inkal Awá Caminando La Palabra Por Un “Buen Vivir” Libre de Violencias de Género En Colombia,’ OADPI, 2021, 18-19.

³² ‘Katsa Su. Ecologías de La Guerra En La Pervivencia Del Gran Territorio Awá: Derecho Propio, Coordinación Interjurisdiccional y Violencia Estructural,’ Dejusticia, 2022.

³³ Leydi Pai, in Observatorio ADPI Barcelona, ‘Dones Indígenes Awà Contra Les Violències De Gènere,’ November 13, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Oolqt90FEw>.

³⁴ ‘Katsa Su. Ecologías de La Guerra En La Pervivencia Del Gran Territorio Awá: Derecho Propio, Coordinación Interjurisdiccional y Violencia Estructural,’ Dejusticia, 2022.

³⁵ ‘Katsa Su. Ecologías de La Guerra En La Pervivencia Del Gran Territorio Awá: Derecho Propio, Coordinación Interjurisdiccional y Violencia Estructural,’ Dejusticia, 2022.

According to Awá women, the Katsa Su is the root of their existence, with the defense of life, culture, territory, and the Wat Usan being inherent to Awá womanhood.³⁶ Women are the ones who cultivate life in the Katsa Su.³⁷ Dalia, Aura, and Viviana describe themselves as “transmitters”,³⁸ “messengers”,³⁹ and “weavers”⁴⁰ of life respectively. As Lorena further explains, in Awá matriarchal culture, women have always been “the main axis” of their lands and communities.⁴¹ Awá women play the role of custodians and teachers of Awá traditional ways of being: “they preserve the language [Awapit] every day”,⁴² they teach how to weave the *higra*, an art where “all Awá knowledge is captured”,⁴³ they give rhythm to the *marimba*, the main instrument in Awá traditional music,⁴⁴ they provide for their communities through agriculture, fishing, and hunting; and they are the bearers of ecological harmony and Awá traditional medicine, ensuring the physical and spiritual healing of the Awá people through their intimate interactions with plants.⁴⁵ Shaping Awá womanhood, all such practices acquire significance in and are anchored to the ancestral territory.⁴⁶

In Awá worldviews, women share an intimate ontological relationship with the territory. Marta reflects on the inseparability of “woman - body - territory,” a spiritual connection rooted in the capacity to conceive and give life (Santamaria et al. 2019, 235). According to Awá epistemologies, “women are life itself, they are the mother just like the earth.” (NCMH and ONIC 2019, 376) Embodying fertility and nourishment, Awá women’s bodies are

³⁶ Aura López García, in Diego Battistessa, ‘Aura López García, Lideresa Awá: “Para Nosotros No Ha Habido Paz Después De Los Acuerdos De 2016,”’ *El País*, April 4, 2023, <https://elpais.com/planeta-futuro/que-mueve-a/2023-04-04/aura-lopez-garcia-lideresa-awa-para-nosotros-no-ha-habido-paz-despues-de-los-acuerdos-de-2016.html>.

³⁷ Viviana Pai, in Banrepcultural, ‘Mujer Awa: Somos Mensajeras De Vida En Casa,’ June 5, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YA9z_CHncvc.

³⁸ Dalia Bolaños, in Observatorio ADPI Barcelona, ‘Dones Indígenes Awà Contra Les Violències De Gènere,’ November 13, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOolqt90FEw>.

³⁹ Aura López García, in Diego Battistessa, ‘Aura López García, Lideresa Awá: “Para Nosotros No Ha Habido Paz Después De Los Acuerdos De 2016,”’ *El País*, April 4, 2023, <https://elpais.com/planeta-futuro/que-mueve-a/2023-04-04/aura-lopez-garcia-lideresa-awa-para-nosotros-no-ha-habido-paz-despues-de-los-acuerdos-de-2016.html>.

⁴⁰ Viviana Pai, in Banrepcultural, ‘Mujer Awa: Somos Mensajeras De Vida En Casa,’ June 5, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YA9z_CHncvc.

⁴¹ Lorena Rodríguez, in ‘Las Lideresas Indígenas Awá Y Las Escuelas De Derecho Propio,’ AECID, March 8, 2023, <https://www.aecid.es/es/w/las-lideresas-indigenas-awa-y-las-escuelas-de-derecho-propio>.

⁴² Rosalba Pai, in Audiovisuales Awá Unipa, ‘Ashampa Awá - Entretejiendo Realidades,’ September 25, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6OHgOeZWl4>.

⁴³ Elvia Bisbocus Canticus, in Audiovisuales Awá Unipa, ‘Ashampa Awá - Entretejiendo Realidades,’ September 25, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6OHgOeZWl4>.

⁴⁴ Janeth Magaly Rodríguez, in Audiovisuales Awá Unipa, ‘Ashampa Awá - Entretejiendo Realidades,’ September 25, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6OHgOeZWl4>.

⁴⁵ ‘Mujer Awá: Tejido De Vida,’ *Dejusticia*, October 10, 2023, <https://www.dejusticia.org/column/mujer-awa-tejido-de-vida/>.

⁴⁶ Aura López García, in Xarxanet Associacionisme, ‘Entrevista a L’Aura López,’ February 16, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cPCG_MAXc4.

perceived as an extension of the Katsa Su, which, in turn, is endowed with the symbolic role of motherhood.⁴⁷ This is exemplified by the importance within Awá culture of the burial of the placenta by a very big tree, a ritual symbolizing the inseparable bond between Awá womanhood and the ancestral territory.⁴⁸

b. Environmental, Ethnic, and Gender-Based Violence

While Awá womanhood and the Katsa Su are to be understood as mutually constitutive, so are their experiences of violence. During the Colombian conflict, both Awá women and the Katsa Su were victims of a culture of violence that is “*alien to their ways of being*.”⁴⁹ Awá women define such violence as *wisha*, or “*the evil coming from outside*,” with armed actors carrying a patriarchal, colonial, and racist imaginary that regards Indigenous women and nature as “*weak, defenseless and attackable*.”⁵⁰ Dalia highlights how armed groups saw Awá women as “*an easy object to rape*” and broke into their homes, stole their food, disdained their indigeneity by burning their traditional clothes, and subjected them to sexual harassment and forced displacement.⁵¹ Similarly, Awá women have reported being affected by continuous “rape” of their ancestral lands in the form of mining, logging, illicit crop cultivation and the planting of antipersonnel mines.⁵²

As acknowledged by the JEP, such forms of harm were part of a continuum of environmental, ethnic, and gender-based violence aimed at altering the reproduction of life, or *itina kuanina* in Awapit, within the Katsa Su. In the words of an Awá leader, mass ecological violence during the conflict in Nariño was embodied violence “*expressed on women’s bodies*.”⁵³ The deaths of plants, animals that are part of the diet of Awá families, and “*spirits that inhabit mountains and rivers*” hindered practices that are constitutive of Awá womanhood, such as

⁴⁷ ‘Caso “Disputa y control por el territorio awá,”’ Comisión de la Verdad, 2022, 5.

⁴⁸ Claudia Jimena Pai, in Contrabanda Fm, ‘#8 Entrevista a Claudia Jimena Pai Del Pueblo Awá: Resistencia Indígena En Nariño [Colombia],’ La Memoria Del Jaguar, April 17, 2019, <https://lamemoriadeljaguar.contrabanda.org/2019/04/17/8-entrevista-a-claudia-jimena-pai-del-pueblo-awa-resistencia-indigena-en-narino-colombia/>.

⁴⁹ Leydi Pai, in Observatorio ADPI Barcelona, ‘Dones Indígenes Awà Contra Les Violències De Gènere,’ November 13, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOolqt90FEw>.

⁵⁰ Observatorio ADPI Barcelona, ‘Dones Indígenes Awà Contra Les Violències De Gènere,’ November 13, 2020, 7, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOolqt90FEw>.

⁵¹ Dalia Bolaños, in Observatorio ADPI Barcelona, ‘Dones Indígenes Awà Contra Les Violències De Gènere,’ November 13, 2020, 7, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOolqt90FEw>.

⁵² ‘Mujeres Inkal Awá Caminando La Palabra Por Un “Buen Vivir” Libre de Violencias de Género En Colombia,’ OADPI, 2021, 10.

⁵³ ‘Mujeres Inkal Awá Caminando La Palabra Por Un “Buen Vivir” Libre de Violencias de Género En Colombia,’ OADPI, 2021, 6.

agriculture, fishing, hunting, and Indigenous traditional medicine.⁵⁴ In addition to threatening their physical integrity by undermining their self-determination and food sovereignty, environmental harm was a deliberate strategy to jeopardize Awá women's identity as bearers of Awá wisdom, and with that, their cultural and spiritual survival.⁵⁵

On the other hand, violence against Awá women scarred the territory in its totality.⁵⁶ Forced displacement and massacres of Awá female leaders were tactics pursued by armed groups to deprive the Katsa Su of its main protector and ensure unimpeded access to environmental exploitation.⁵⁷ This produced territorial suffering not only in the form of ecological degradation but also through cultural and spiritual imbalances in women-territory relationships.⁵⁸ As Awá leaders explain, women and the ancestral territories are bound together by a relationship of complementarity: whatever affects Awá women affects the Katsa Su and vice versa.⁵⁹ In their worldviews, women, the earth, animals, food, the jungle, communication, and medicine all suffered during the war in Nariño.⁶⁰

c. Awá Justice

In the face of extreme and generalized suffering, achieving complete healing in post-conflict Nariño is challenging.⁶¹ As Maritza claims, the only option is “*to return to the origin*” and “*live in harmony according to our values*,”⁶² while Awá elders stress the need to “*connect the victimized bodies to the Big House*.”⁶³ According to Awá women, healing means recovering

⁵⁴ Anonymous Informant, in ‘Katsa Su. Ecologías de La Guerra En La Pervivencia Del Gran Territorio Awá: Derecho Propio, Coordinación Interjurisdiccional y Violencia Estructural,’ Dejusticia, 2022.

⁵⁵ Aura López, in Xarxanet Asociacionisme, ‘Entrevista a L’Aura López,’ February 16, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cPCG_MAXc4.

⁵⁶ ‘Mujer Awá: Tejido De Vida,’ Dejusticia, October 10, 2023, <https://www.dejusticia.org/column/mujer-awa-tejido-de-vida/>.

⁵⁷ EP Colombia, ‘Declaración Y Rueda De Prensa Desde Tumaco, Nariño,’ July 14, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hus7ZHq4s8o>.

⁵⁸ Claudia Jimena Pai, in Contrabanda Fm, ‘#8 Entrevista a Claudia Jimena Pai Del Pueblo Awá: Resistencia Indígena En Nariño [Colombia],’ La Memoria Del Jaguar, April 17, 2019, <https://lamemoriadeljaguar.contrabanda.org/2019/04/17/8-entrevista-a-claudia-jimena-pai-del-pueblo-awa-resistencia-indigena-en-narino-colombia/>.

⁵⁹ JEP Colombia, ‘Nuestra JEP, Étnica-racial | Ep.05 | Mujer, Familia Y Generación,’ June 10, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96lckwwz1bU>.

⁶⁰ ‘Katsa Su. Ecologías de La Guerra En La Pervivencia Del Gran Territorio Awá: Derecho Propio, Coordinación Interjurisdiccional y Violencia Estructural,’ Dejusticia, 2022.

⁶¹ Maritza García, in ONU Mujeres Colombia, ‘Mujeres Indígenas De Nariño Tejen Redes Para Construir La Paz Desde El Territorio,’ January 24, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zjsbUBz4aI.

⁶² Maritza García, in ONU Mujeres Colombia, ‘Mujeres Indígenas De Nariño Tejen Redes Para Construir La Paz Desde El Territorio,’ January 24, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zjsbUBz4aI.

⁶³ ‘Katsa Su. Ecologías de La Guerra En La Pervivencia Del Gran Territorio Awá: Derecho Propio, Coordinación Interjurisdiccional y Violencia Estructural,’ Dejusticia, 2022.

Indigenous wisdom and ways of being and “*strengthening the ancestral seeds*.”⁶⁴ Seeking justice requires recognizing the full nature of harm and victimhood in Nariño on Awá peoples’ own terms, de-centering Western anthropocentric conceptions of victimhood.⁶⁵ Awá leaders note how hierarchical dichotomies separating the human and nature through subject-object relationships of domination are alien to their worldviews.⁶⁶ Instead, Awá perceptions of justice see the territory as a whole, “a single reality” where the human, non-human, and spiritual are constructed “*hand by hand, stick by stick*” and share common experiences of harm that need to be repaired in their totality.⁶⁷

Awá women identify horizontal and cultural-sensitive dialogue as a starting point for achieving justice. They stress the need for “building bridges” through “*a constant and permanent dialogue among communities and cultures*” that generates reflections and gives voice to Awá women, allowing them to share their own experiences of violence and wisdom in their native language and cultural expressions.⁶⁸ According to Leydi and Patricia, justice is achieved through cultures of care, or “*caring for communities, for one self, the female body, and the territory*.”⁶⁹ Care is a constitutive element of Indigenous womanhood and collective healing, described by Awá women as “*air of life*.”⁷⁰

In the eyes of Awá women, justice does not find its ground in punishment, a concept that is foreign to Awá epistemologies.⁷¹ Rather, it is associated with “reharmonization”, that is, “*restoring the Wat Usan*” as the guiding principle of all relationships.⁷² Awá women explain that this can be done by recovering Awá traditional medicine and spiritual interactions with

⁶⁴ Aura López García, in Xarxanet Associacionisme, ‘Entrevista a L’Aura López,’ February 16, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cPCG_MAXc4.

⁶⁵ ‘Katsa Su. Ecologías de La Guerra En La Pervivencia Del Gran Territorio Awá: Derecho Propio, Coordinación Interjurisdiccional y Violencia Estructural,’ Dejusticia, 2022.

⁶⁶ ‘Mujeres Inkal Awá Caminando La Palabra Por Un “Buen Vivir” Libre de Violencias de Género En Colombia,’ OADPI, 2021, 19.

⁶⁷ ‘Katsa Su. Ecologías de La Guerra En La Pervivencia Del Gran Territorio Awá: Derecho Propio, Coordinación Interjurisdiccional y Violencia Estructural,’ Dejusticia, 2022.

⁶⁸ Leydi Pai, in ‘Mujeres Awá: Guardianas De Paz En Colombia,’ iVoox, n.d., https://www.ivoox.com/podcast-mujeres-awa-guardianas-paz-colombia_sq_f11495614_1.html; Patricia Ballecos in Observatorio ADPI Barcelona, ‘Dones Indígenes Awà Contra Les Violències De Gènere,’ November 13, 2020, 7, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOolqt90FEw>.

⁶⁹ Leydi Pai, in ‘Mujeres Awá: Guardianas De Paz En Colombia,’ iVoox, n.d., https://www.ivoox.com/podcast-mujeres-awa-guardianas-paz-colombia_sq_f11495614_1.html; Patricia Ballecos in Observatorio ADPI Barcelona, ‘Dones Indígenes Awà Contra Les Violències De Gènere,’ November 13, 2020, 7, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOolqt90FEw>.

⁷⁰ ‘Endulzar la Palabra: Memorias indígenas para pervivir,’ Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2018, 50.

⁷¹ Patricia Ballecos, in Observatorio ADPI Barcelona, ‘Dones Indígenes Awà Contra Les Violències De Gènere,’ November 13, 2020, 7, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOolqt90FEw>.

⁷² María Moreano, in ONU Mujeres Colombia, ‘Mujeres Indígenas De Nariño Tejen Redes Para Construir La Paz Desde El Territorio,’ January 24, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zjsbUBz4aI.

plants,⁷³ as well as all Awá cultural practices such as playing the *marimba*, the emblem of healing itself (NCHM and ONIC 2019, 429). Performing rituals in “healing houses” so as to “reconnect with the creator, Mother Earth, and spirits”⁷⁴ is another way for them to reconstruct the sacred and spiritual order of their lands, what they call their “*primary self-protection strategy*.”⁷⁵ In a just future, Awá women are strengthened through their own system of government and self-determination.⁷⁶ A culture of peace, in Awá women’s own words, is rooted in the four pillars of Awá indigeneity: “*unity, territory, culture, and autonomy*.”⁷⁷

7.2 Discussion

Awá women’s stories unveil the inadequacy of Western TJ to account for their realities of violence. Such inadequacy derives from dynamics of cultural domination within the field furthering conceptions of harm, victimhood, and justice that are foreign to Indigenous worldviews. Dominant anthropocentric legal frameworks that divorce individuals from nature fail to comprehend the role of the territory as the building block of Indigenous women’s physical, cultural, and spiritual survival. During conflict, Indigenous women suffer from ecological degradation and the resulting loss of integral parts of her diet and cultural and spiritual practices shaping her identity, autonomy, and well-being.

In response to this paper’s first research question, the limitations of liberal TJ in accounting for the interplay between ecological, ethnic, and gendered stem from dominant anthropocentric views in the field. The latter overlook environmental victimhood as a form of

⁷³ Claudia Jimena Pai, in Contrabanda Fm, ‘#8 Entrevista a Claudia Jimena Pai Del Pueblo Awá: Resistencia Indígena En Nariño [Colombia],’ La Memoria Del Jaguar, April 17, 2019, <https://lamemoriadeljaguar.contrabanda.org/2019/04/17/8-entrevista-a-claudia-jimena-pai-del-pueblo-awa-resistencia-indigena-en-narino-colombia/>; María Moreano, in in ONU Mujeres Colombia, ‘Mujeres Indígenas De Nariño Tejen Redes Para Construir La Paz Desde El Territorio,’ January 24, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjsbUBz4aI>.

⁷⁴ Patricia Ballecos, in Observatorio ADPI Barcelona, ‘Dones Indígenes Awà Contra Les Violències De Gènere,’ November 13, 2020, 7, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOolqt90FEw>.

⁷⁵ ‘Caso “Disputa y control por el territorio awá,”’ Comisión de la Verdad, 2022, 67.

⁷⁶ Claudia Jimena Pai, in Contrabanda Fm, ‘#8 Entrevista a Claudia Jimena Pai Del Pueblo Awá: Resistencia Indígena En Nariño [Colombia],’ La Memoria Del Jaguar, April 17, 2019, <https://lamemoriadeljaguar.contrabanda.org/2019/04/17/8-entrevista-a-claudia-jimena-pai-del-pueblo-awa-resistencia-indigena-en-narino-colombia/>; Patricia Ballecos, in Observatorio ADPI Barcelona, ‘Dones Indígenes Awà Contra Les Violències De Gènere,’ November 13, 2020, 7, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOolqt90FEw>.

⁷⁷ Lorena Rodríguez, in ‘Las Lideresas Indígenas Awá Y Las Escuelas De Derecho Propio,’ AECID, March 8, 2023, <https://www.aecid.es/es/w/las-lideresas-indigenas-awa-y-las-escuelas-de-derecho-propio>.

mass violence against Indigenous women, who experience unique connections with their territories, disregarding the need for intimate socio-ecological and symbolic woman-territory relationships to be repaired.

On the other hand, listening to Awá women's voices sheds light on the possible contributions of an ecofeminist approach to TJ. At the conceptual level, Ecofeminism allows for comprehensive understandings of the common ontological roots of womanhood and nature. The woman-territory kinship in Cultural Ecofeminism resonates with important analogies in Indigenous cultures linking motherhood to nature, such as the burial of the placenta in Awá epistemologies. Similarly, ecofeminist theory captures the twin experiences of violence against racialized women and nature during war. Armed groups, carriers of sexist, colonial and racist views, in Awá women's own words, exert masculine dominance by targeting nature as a means to attack Indigenous womanhood. In Awá women's testimonies, the connotation linking the conquest of lands to the rape of female bodies acquires particular significance as Awá women report feeling the consequences of ecological degradation on their bodies.

In practice, an ecofeminist ethics of care in TJ, exemplified by the approach furthered by JEP in Case 02, promotes Awá women's conceptualizations of harm, victimhood and justice. By regarding the environment as a living entity suffering harm in need of repair, an ecofeminist ethics of care commits to restoring broken socio-ecological, cultural, and spiritual ties within ancestral territories, attending to the calls for reharmonization by Awá women. Informed by intercultural horizontal dialogue, Ecofeminism values Indigenous cosmologies, as well as Awá women's cultural, and spiritual expressions while fortifying their self-determination, what Awá women describe as vital elements for a just future in post-conflict Colombia.

As for the answer to the second research question, we can conclude that Ecofeminism has the potential to reframe TJ towards more holistic accounts of the intersection between environmental, ethnic, and gendered violence. It can do so by de-centering anthropocentric conceptions of harm and victimhood; granting the environment the status of victim while protecting its kinship with womanhood; allowing for a multiplicity of diverse worldviews to engage in horizontal dialogue in the field; following a restorative model of justice aimed at restoring a wide array of disrupted territorial, cultural, and spiritual relationships; and promoting racialized women's self-determination. In conclusion, both hypotheses (see Introduction) are met in the Colombian context.

8. Conclusions

Transitional justice needs new voices. This research backs critical scholarship in the current debate concerning the narrowness of dominant liberal approaches in TJ. Reflecting on Awá Indigenous women's stories, it finds that anthropocentric conceptions of harm, victimhood, and justice fail to recognize, redress, and prevent patterns of conflict-related environmental violence constituting mass physical, cultural, and spiritual harm against racialized women.

It identifies Ecofeminism as an unexplored theory in TJ, yet with strong potential to cover the gaps of the field in addressing the interplay between environmental, gendered and ethnic harm during war. While the theory allows for holistic understandings of the multi-dimensional woman-territory kinship and of the mutually constitutive nature of ecological degradation and violence against racialized women, Ecofeminism takes clear action towards better justice for Indigenous women and nature. Exemplified by JEP's Case 02, an ecofeminist ethics of care in TJ does so by transforming the environment from an object to a subject of rights that suffers harm and is in need of repair, bringing into horizontal dialogue a multiplicity of voices and worldviews, and restoring the deep socio-ecological, cultural, and spiritual relationships of women of specific ethnic identities with their lands, thus promoting women's cultural resurgence and self-determination.

At a time of environmental crisis, Case 02 serves as an inspiration for other TJ mechanisms dealing with violence against ethnic women and their territories around the globe. An ecofeminist ethics of care brings new orientations that are non imperialistic and life affirming (Gallo-Cruz 2022, 102), building inclusive cultures of peace where every human and non-human being can express themselves artistically and spiritually. This is the transformation transitional justice needs.

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9. Appendix

Appendix A: Awá women's narratives informing the study

Informant	Source
Alejandrina Pascal Member of United Indigenous Awá People's Organization (UNIPA)	 Ashampa Awá - Entretejiendo Realidades. (documentary).
Aura López García Economic and Production Advisor at UNIPA	 Entrevista a l'Aura López (video file); SOS Pueblo Awá Movimiento por la Paz (news item); Mujer resistencia, mujer resiliencia, mujer awá - Consejo de Redacción (podcast).
Blanca (Last name and profession unknown)	Auto SRVBIT - No. 079, Caso 02 (JEP resolution).
Claudia Jimena Pai Woman and Family Advisor at UNIPA	 Dones indígenes Awà contra les violències d... (recorded conference); #8 Entrevista a Claudia Jimena Pai del pueblo Awá: resistencia indigena en Nariño [Colombia] LA MEMORIA DEL JAGUAR (podcast); Mujeres Inkal Awá Caminando La Palabra Por Un "Buen Vivir" Libre de Violencias de Género En Colombia OADPI (report).
Dalia Bolaños Childhood and Youth Advisor at UNIPA	 Dones indígenes Awà contra les violències d... (recorded conference).
Elvias Bisbocus Canticus (Profession unknown)	 Ashampa Awá - Entretejiendo Realidades. (documentary).
Gladys Yolanda Ortiz (Profession unknown)	 Mujer awa: Somos mensajeras de vida en casa (recorded conference).
Janeth Magaly Rodríguez Woman and Family Advisor at UNIPA	 Ashampa Awá - Entretejiendo Realidades. (documentary).
Jasmin Bisbicus Pai Member of UNIPA	 Ashampa Awá - Entretejiendo Realidades. (documentary).
Leydi Pai Senior Advisor at UNIPA	 Ashampa Awá - Entretejiendo Realidades. (documentary);

	Mujeres Awá: Guardianas De Paz En Colombia IVOOX (podcast). Mujeres Inká Awá Caminando La Palabra Por Un “Buen Vivir” Libre de Violencias de Género En Colombia OADPI (report).
Lidia Pascal Pai (Profession unknown)	 Mujer awa: Somos mensajeras de vida en casa (recorded conference).
Lorena Rodríguez Awá Leader	Las Lideresas Indígenas Awá Y Las Escuelas De Derecho Propio AECID (news item).
Marcela (Last name and profession unknown)	Mujeres Awá: Guardianas De Paz En Colombia IVOOX (podcast).
Marcial Marín (Profession unknown)	Historias de Justicia Propia del Pueblo Awá UNIPA (report).
María Dolores Guandá Awá Leader	La crisis humanitaria de los awá - BBC News Mundo (news item).
María Eugenio Rosario (Profession unknown)	 El pueblo Awá: "aprender y luchar para resist..." (video).
María Moreano Awá Leader	 Mujeres indígenas de Nariño tejen redes para... (video).
María Nastacuas Awá Leader	 Mujeres indígenas de Nariño tejen redes para... (video).
Maritza Nastacuas Awá Youth Leader	 Mujeres indígenas de Nariño tejen redes para... (video).
Marta (Last name and profession unknown)	Santamaria et al. 2019 (academic article).
Omaira Taicus Woman and Family Advisor at UNIPA	Mujeres Inká Awá Caminando La Palabra Por Un “Buen Vivir” Libre de Violencias de Género En Colombia OADPI (report).
Patricia Ballecos Woman and Family Advisor at UNIPA	 Dones indígenas Awá contra les violències d... (recorded conference).
Rosalba Pai Senior Advisor at UNIPA	 Ashampa Awá - Entretejiendo Realidades. (documentary).
Viviana Pai (Profession unknown)	 Mujer awa: Somos mensajeras de vida en casa (recorded conference).

Anonymous Informant 1	<u>Auto SRVBIT - No. 079, Caso 02</u> (JEP resolution).
Anonymous Informant 2	<u>Auto SRVBIT - No. 079, Caso 02</u> (JEP resolution).
Anonymous Informant 3	<u>Caso “Disputa y control por el territorio awá” - Comisión de la Verdad</u> (report).
Anonymous Informant 4	<u>Katsa Su. Ecologías de La Guerra En La Pervivencia Del Gran Territorio Awá: Derecho Propio, Coordinación Interjurisdiccional y Violencia Estructural - DeJusticia</u> (report).
Anonymous Informant 5	<u>Reclutamiento forzado a mujeres del pueblo Awá - Comisión de la Verdad</u> (video file).