

The Violence We Consume

Embodied Violence in Nicaraguan Coffee

Production

Inga Prämassing 910717-7587

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Human Ecology – Culture, Power, and Sustainability
Human Ecology Division
Department of Human Geography
Faculty of Social Science
Lund University
Supervisor: Anders Burman

Abstract

Based on ethnographic fieldwork with *corteros* in northern Nicaragua, this grounded theory study introduces two new concepts, the main concept *embodied violence* and related to it *violence displacement*. These concepts link the worker on the coffee plantation in the periphery with the final consumer in the core, arguing that the latter consumes *embodied violence* that the former had to suffer during the production process. This violence has been *displaced* from the core to the periphery, from the consumer to the producer. Through the application of concepts of violence from Galtung and Nixon on the working conditions in the coffee harvest, this study shows the inherent violence in the process. The analysis and the following conceptualization illustrate the producer-consumer relationship and the importance of the two concepts. They are framed by decolonial theory and take a bearing on Hornborg's concepts of embodied land and embodied labor, as well as on his concept of environmental load displacement. The combination of all these concepts shows that embodied violence is the logic result. Together with the concept of violence displacement, it closes a gap in the existing literature, providing a tool to investigate another dimension present in the unequal exchange in the world-system.

Keywords: Violence, Ecologically unequal exchange, World-system, Coloniality of power, Coffee, Nicaragua

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Content

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgments.....	3
1. Introduction.....	5
2. How I know what I know, or Methodology.....	7
3. Background: Nicaragua and its Coffee Exports.....	12
4. Conceptual Framework.....	15
5. Analysis of the Empirical Data.....	20
6. Conceptualization of <i>Embodied Violence</i>	35
6.1 The related Concept <i>Violence Displacement</i>	36
7. Conclusion.....	39
8. References.....	42
Appendix: Transcripts.....	47

1. Introduction

We typically consume products that we have not produced ourselves in our daily lives. Many of these products have not been produced close to where we live or consume them either. Theories to explain these deficiencies in trade relations between producers and consumers have been developed before. For example, the concepts of embodied land and embodied labor (Hornborg, 2011) illustrate how products that we consume have wider impacts than we can imagine and that we are consuming way beyond our limitations. There is another dimension to the production process that is not as easily measured which I call *embodied violence*¹: the circumstances in which a product is produced and the way in which the producer is treated or rather what he or she has to bear or even suffer. Initially, I had the idea for this term two years ago, writing an exam for Human Ecology², and always wanted to explore it in depth and elaborate it further. The concept of embodied violence, and the related concept *violence displacement* which I present less lengthily, is inspired by and closely connected to the concepts of embodied land and embodied labor, and regarding the latter to the concept of environmental load displacement. They are also based on the concepts of violence as defined by Johan Galtung (1969, 1990) and on the concept of slow violence by Rob Nixon (2011). Additionally, world-system theory is the basic understanding that underlies this study and decolonial theory serves as a frame to this concept. In a way, connecting all these concepts, they theoretically lead to embodied violence, even though it has not been defined as such yet.

Most people consume coffee though very few can claim to produce it themselves. Coffee is thus a perfect example to investigate the circumstances in which the producers live and work. Moreover, the coffee production illustrates how a product includes an undesirable ingredient, *violence*. Coffee, a hot beverage consumed in a variety of situations, and especially organic coffee are not products with overtly bad reputations such as *blood diamonds* or other precious gems from conflict zones (Timerman, 2010). Though the fact that coffee is not a luxury commodity, in contrast to blood diamonds, but a daily used, common good is what makes it more alarming. The violence inherent in the harvesting process is also

1 This concept is different from similar terms that have been used in feminist or gender studies, concerning mostly sexual violence

2 The exam I refer to was called “*Where Does Violence Fit in? Or How Consumption turns into Cannibalism*”, HT15, HEKN11, and had still a slightly different emphasis, even though I already introduced the term *embodied violence*

less obvious. Though the violence exists nonetheless and is therefore included in the product that the final consumer buys and consumes. That is, the violence is *displaced* from the consumer to the producer.

This study aims at providing two comprehensive concepts with global importance explaining what embodied violence and violence displacement is and how it can be included and used in the current scientific debates. The focus lies on the first concept, which means that the latter will be presented more briefly. The study is based on fieldwork in the northern Nicaraguan mountains to illustrate embodied violence and to develop the concept from the ethnographic data collected in the field. The study represents a grounded theory study, elaborating a new concept from primary, qualitative data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The data has been gathered over a six weeks period of fieldwork among and with *corteros*³, living together with them outside the small mountain town *San Juan de Río Coco* (San Juan) in the north of Nicaragua. The data has been collected using multiple ethnographic methods, including informal and formal interviews, narrative walks, and participant observation.

The development of the study and its concepts were guided by my research questions. Due to the nature of this study, they can be divided into two sections, the first concerning the empirical data gathered during the fieldwork and the second referring to the theoretical analysis of the ethnographic data leading to the development of the concepts:

Empirical:

- What is the work of harvesting coffee like?
- How are the *corteros* treated?

Analytical:

- How can violence be conceptualized in this context?
- How does embodied violence relate to the concept of embodied land? In which ways is it similar and in which ways is it different?
- How is the relation between the *corteros* and the final consumer mediated by this violence?

These research questions were used in the different stages of the research process and will be

3 *Cortero* (Spanish): harvest worker

addressed throughout the study. The research questions already suggest how issues of embodied violence and violence displacement might emerge.

Due to the nature of this study, it is arranged differently from other studies. I chose to place the theory chapter, that is the conceptualization of the two concepts, after the analysis chapter, as the concepts of embodied violence and violence displacement represent the result of the analysis of the empirical data. Otherwise, the structure of the study sticks to the conventional way of arranging a study. The first chapters present the methodology, background and the conceptual framework used. After elaborating the analysis and theory, I conclude by summarizing the results and referring back to the research questions. Lastly, I discuss ideas for further research and show how the study fits into the larger scientific sphere.

2. How I know what I know, or Methodology

I chose to use grounded theory as the methodological approach in order to derive two new concepts. In contrast to other methodologies, the use of grounded theory creates the space to develop a new theory or concept, allowing the researcher to come up with new ideas gained from the qualitative analysis of ethnographic data and to elaborate on them (Corbin & Strauss, 2008: 1). A grounded theory study is the best approach, because this study aims to generate a new theoretical concept and is not testing an already existing theory or hypothesis. As the focus of grounded theory is on the theory generation process (Tucker, 2016: 427).

Grounded theory study as a methodology was developed in the 1960s by the sociologists Strauss and Glaser (1965) to counteract the prevailing research norms by bridging the gap between the empirical and mostly quantitative research process and the decoupled existing theories (Howard-Payne, 2015: 2). This new methodology served two main functions to stop theoretical stagnation and to legitimize qualitative field research as source for the development of valid, reliable and rigorous new theories. Moreover, it offers guidance on how to collect, analyze and derive concepts from empirical data (Howard-Payne, 2015: 3). As the name suggests, grounded theory study allows to generate theories or theoretical concepts from data from the field, meaning that it is grounded in this same data (Glaser, 2016: 4). For this study, the theoretical concept of embodied violence is derived from the data gathered during

the fieldwork in Nicaragua and in this sense grounded. The strength of this methodology considering credibility lies in the fact that the researcher “knows *what* he knows about what he has studied and lived through [...] [and he] knows *that* he knows” (Glaser & Strauss, 1965: 8, original italics). Due to the lived experiences and the constant analysis during and after the fieldwork, the researcher can trust in his theory, which means that it is credible (ibid.). Furthermore, data analysis and data collection are done simultaneously, as the researcher constantly engages with the gathered data, thinking about it systematically to verify his or her emerging concept and analyzes the data through implicit coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1965: 6). I did the analysis according to these guidelines, which means that I began with the analysis already in the field during the collection process.

Nowadays, two competing trends exist within the grounded theory study approach, dating back to its two founding fathers who after the initial joint development of the methodology followed different paths (Cooney, 2010:19). The main differences in their perspectives can be found in the data analysis, the adopted ontology and the desired outcome of the study. Ontologically, the Glaserian approach adopts a critical realist perspective, while the Straussian approach operates within a constructivist framework (Howard-Payne, 2015: 3). Additionally, this leads to different roles ascribed to the researcher. According to Glaser, the researcher should keep the role of the objective observer, while Strauss advocates for the researcher to personally engage with the research and the participants in order to gain greater insights and understandings (Howard-Payne, 2015: 4). Regarding the data analysis, the Glaserian approach highlights initial coding, that is the development of broad patterns by comparing the occurrences, whereas the Straussian approach allows for the recognition of single occurrences as well through open coding (Howard-Payne, 2015: 7). Furthermore, Glaser argues that grounded theory studies are solely inductive, while Strauss highlights the importance of deduction and verification in the data analysis as well (Cooney, 2010: 20). Here, the Straussian approach refers to constant comparison as method to verify the data (Howard-Payne, 2015: 8). The last main difference concerns the result of a study, while the Glaserian approach only accepts a fully developed theory as end product, the Straussian approach also acknowledges conceptualized descriptions as valid outcomes of grounded theory studies (Cooney, 2010: 23). Based on these differences, I chose the Straussian approach because I consider constructivism as the adequate epistemology to this study. Constructivism is compatible with decolonial theories, which frame the conceptualization of

embodied violence and violence displacement, due to the fact that according to constructivism the understanding of the world is constructed through intersubjective interactions and ideational factors, such as norms etc. (McDonald, 2008: 59). However, ontologically I take a realist stand, because otherwise the argument of this study would be void. This means that I combine both perspectives, arguing that there is one physical world out there, that there is violence present, but that there are different interpretations and understandings of it, different epistemologies, that the violence might not be perceived as such. Furthermore, the way I acted as researcher in the field and during the analysis process also aligns with the Straussian approach. When I entered the field, I already had background knowledge about the country and the region because I had lived in Nicaragua before and I also had some preliminary research questions and ideas in mind. I was also already familiar with the concepts I use as a framework in this study and all these factors point towards the use of the Straussian approach. It is this approach that advocates a prior literature review and predetermined research questions, in contrast to the Glaserian approach, which is strictly against reviewing the literature and formulating research questions before entering the field (Howard-Payne, 2015: 5-6).

In order to gather the empirical data needed to develop the concepts, I chose to conduct ethnographic fieldwork with *corteros* in the north of Nicaragua. This fieldwork took place outside a small mountain town and my research participants were all living close to each other. I was living with one family, whose members all still worked or had worked as *corteros*. They became my key informants and introduced me to all my other research participants. Thus my sampling methods were a combination of availability and purposive sampling. Availability, or convenience, sampling is a method to sample participants based on convenience (Chambliss & Schutt, 2010: 122). Purposive sampling is a sampling method where participants are selected based on specific characteristics, such as position or occupation (Chambliss & Schutt, 2010: 123). In short, the conditions I had for recruiting my research participants were that they had to be *corteros* and they had to be willing to take part. The fieldwork conducted in cooperation with these *corteros* combined various ethnographic methods, such as different interview techniques. These methods included informal and formal interviewing, with groups and individuals, narrative walks, participant observation and taking extensive field notes. The combination of all of these methods allowed me to maximize the possible insights and to grasp the bigger picture from various angles in order to create an

understanding of the situation (i.e., triangulate my findings). Informal interviewing can be said to be done all the time during fieldwork, going on as usual conversations and in an informal setting, while formal, or in-depth interviewing, in my case semi-structured interviewing, is a scheduled activity covering certain pre-defined topics (Bernard, 2006: 210). Informal interviewing serves as a good way to get into a setting and to explore the topics available, opening up new ways of thinking or exploring (Bernard, 2006: 211). I used this in order to get to know the situation, to explore the different areas of relevance to my topic and to clarify things that I had heard before. In order to complement this and to gain more concrete information, I conducted formal in-depth interviews, which were semi-structured and conducted both as individual and group interviews. Semi-structured interviews are based on the use of an interview guide, but nonetheless also allow for a lot of space for open questions (Bernard, 2006: 212). The interview guide used in my semi-structured interviews, for both the individual and group interviews, was short and consisted of two parts, a set of three closed questions in the first part and one open-ended question introducing the second part:

- How old are you?
- Until which year did you attend school?
- At which age did you start working in the coffee harvest?
- Could you tell me something about your work?

The closed questions were intended to give some general background knowledge about the person I worked with and the open-ended question introduced the second part of the interview, which provided me with a lot of insights. Structuring the interview in this way serves to provide the background information, but also allows the space for topics that pop-up unexpectedly, something the interviewee would like to mention, or the follow-up of a theme that has emerged beforehand (ibid.). Additionally, I conducted participant observation, a method to produce experiential knowledge through being close to people and see what they do in their everyday life (Bernard, 2006: 342). Because I had the chance to live with a family whose members were *corteros*, I had the chance to immerse myself in their lives as a participant observer almost all day which is a fundamental element of participant observation (Bernard, 2006: 344). They showed and explained a lot of their everyday tasks to me and I had the chance to be part of a lot of conversations, as well as to observe the *corteros* who

passed by the house on their way to work and back. The last method applied during the fieldwork, was narrative walks. I conducted these in order to complement the data I got from interviews and participant observation. Narrative walks, or sometimes also called walking interviews, are a qualitative method that allows the researcher to walk the research participant's landscapes and life-worlds in order to discuss the observations and impressions and to connect directly the heard with visual stimuli (Jerneck & Olsson, 2013: 118). Furthermore, it is argued that narrative walks open up a new way to access the interviewee's knowledge of their surroundings and that it triggers more spontaneous answers and a less intimidating interview situation (Evans & Jones, 2011: 850). In order to be helpful, of course the place to be walked has to have some relevance to the research, which is why it is important to make a careful choice of the route and also who decides it, the researcher or the interviewee (Evans & Jones, 2011: 849-850). For the narrative walks I conducted, I chose a hybrid form of deciding on the route, while I had decided where I wanted to go to eventually, the interviewee was free to choose the way which would lead us there. These narrative walks added valuable data to the interview data gathered "being at home", as they allowed me to get an even deeper insight of their daily lives and the landscape that defines not only my research participants' lives, but also this study.

All these different methods did not exist on their own or isolated from each other, but rather were combined and are closely connected. Moreover, where and when I could, I audio-recorded the interviews. However, most data exists only in the form of field notes due to the terrain during the narrative walks and the attitude of the people towards being audio-recorded. Nevertheless, I always noted down the information gained as soon as possible, which at the latest was in the evenings, in order to create data the most valid and transparent possible, especially in the cases when it was not possible to audio-record. Due to the scope and time frame of this study, I was not able to conduct fieldwork with a comparison group in order to further verify my findings, as would have been desirable (Glaser & Strauss, 1965: 7). Furthermore, I am fluent in Spanish, so that there was no need for a translator and all of the translations made in this study are my own.

Considering the ethical dimension of this study, I take a bearing on critical ethnography as described by Madison, which refers to critical ethnography as ethically responsible to address injustices in the area of study and to contribute to changing them (2005: 5). I think this fits this study and want to act accordingly to this ethical responsibility

towards my research participants. I was at all times open and transparent about my study, asking for informed consent before interviews, explaining my intentions and ensuring anonymity, confidentiality and the participants' privacy and security (Madison, 2005: 111). I ensure this through the use of pseudonyms in my study and the confidential use of personal data. Furthermore, concerning the scholarly responsibility, I will neither misrepresent nor falsify data gained during the research (Madison, 2005: 112). This also included active consultation with my participants during the fieldwork period in order to verify my interpretations and to avoid misinterpretation. All in all, I also adopt a self-reflexive attitude, being aware of my positionality and constantly reflecting upon it, in order to identify power relations, privileges, and their impacts on the study (Madison, 2005: 14).

In effort to be transparent about my positionality and the research process I recount that during the fieldwork I was accompanied by my husband, who is Nicaraguan and served as a gatekeeper. He created the initial contact and introduced me to the situation and the family I came to live with. I chose to conduct the fieldwork accompanied by him based on my cultural knowledge of the country. I am aware of my appearance as a young, white woman and having my husband with me creates a different understanding. People assume that I am familiar with their culture and habits. Additionally, oftentimes men would rather talk to other men, and so my husband in some situations had to get the information for me while I was only standing next to them and listening. Due to the fact that he was always informed of what I had in mind for my research and was instructed closely on what information I was lacking or which new thread I wanted to explore, there is no issue of validity or credibility. Furthermore, when introducing us and informing the research participants, we would always say that we were doing investigations together so people knew about him being included in the research. However, apart from the fieldwork, all the work has been done by myself and on my own.

3. Background: Nicaragua and its Coffee Exports

I now turn to a brief introduction to Nicaragua in order to give context about where this research was situated. Nicaragua is the second poorest country in Latin America and is facing a high level of poverty (IHS, 2017: 2). The agricultural sector is the most important sector in Nicaraguan economy and the products are mainly produced for exporting,

constituting the main part of all of Nicaragua's exports (IHS, 2017: 24). The vast majority of the twenty most important export products are agricultural products, given the official trade statistics from the first months of this year and the last years. The only recurrent non-agricultural product is gold (CETREX 2017a, 2017b). Among these agricultural products, coffee is one of the most important goods, going back and forth between the first and second place (ibid.). In the last two years over 100 000 tons of coffee have been exported per year, which equals a value of almost 400 million dollars (CETREX, 2017a). This makes coffee an excellent candidate for this study because it is one of the most important goods for exportation and contributes largely to the economy. It is seen not only as valuable in economical terms due to the exportation of this product, but also in terms of the work it provides (Amaya L. & Lanuza Orozco, 2014: 38). This is important, because of this size and the fact that it is not a peripheral product which might not have a lot of impact. As mentioned before, due to the nature of this study and the concept of embodied violence, it is important that the product is exported. Moreover, in order to strengthen my argument and to highlight the relation between producer and consumer, it is also important to note where the product is exported. Coffee is mainly exported to North America and Europe, but also to other countries of the so-called developed world, such as Australia, New Zealand or Japan (CETREX, 2015, 2016, 2017c). The major importers include the United States of America (USA), but also Germany and Sweden rank high, all within the top ten (ibid.).

The export of coffee to these countries has historical roots, as the growing demand for coffee in Europe and North America in the nineteenth century led to the establishment of coffee cultivation in Nicaragua and all of Central America (Revels, 2000: 17). This means that coffee has traditionally been a commodity produced for exporting, which is important for this study due to the decolonial perspective that is applied later on in the conceptualization of embodied violence.

Today increasingly more of the coffee produced in Nicaragua is traded as fair trade or organically grown coffee, and these certifications are also associated with improved working conditions (Valkila & Nygren, 2010: 322). The fact that the production of coffee is turning towards these trends, has triggered a lot of research. Indeed, numerous studies have been done on the topic of Nicaraguan coffee, but, as already mentioned, almost exclusively on the issue of fair trade or organic coffee and its implications for small-scale farmers (see e.g. Bacon, 2005; Utting, 2009; Utting-Chamorro 2005; Valkila, 2009, 2014; Wilson, 2010). However,

considering these studies, the focus lay on the farmers and little attention has been paid to the harvest workers, who do the actual work. In the cases where working conditions were part of the studies (see Valkila & Nygren, 2010; Valkila et al., 2010), attention was solely paid to the question if fair trade improves working conditions compared to non-fair trade projects. There is a lack of research on general working conditions in the coffee harvest, let alone an approach to violence, and I argue that for my study there was no need to distinguish between workers on fair trade or non-fair trade farms, because former studies have shown that there are no considerable improvements in the working conditions for workers working on fair trade farms (Valkila & Nygren, 2010: 331; Valkila et al., 2010: 267).

Another issue that repeatedly emerges concerning coffee production in Nicaragua is that the coffee is mostly shadow-grown. Studies have dealt with this strategy of cultivation, as well as its connection to and impacts on biodiversity (see e.g. McCann et al., 2003; Méndez et al., 2013).

I conducted my research in the highlands of northern Nicaragua, in the surroundings of the small town *San Juan de Río Coco*, part of the department Madriz. The northern highlands are one of the main coffee producing areas, and San Juan lives from its coffee production. It is mainly small-scale farms and the coffee has the reputation of high quality and is shadow-grown, in contrast to most industrially produced coffee (Valkila, 2009: 3019). Though little research has been done in this area, I was not the first white young woman investigating there. My participants told me about others having investigated the working conditions on the farms, though I could not find any published study. Nevertheless, numerous websites can be found offering high quality coffee referring explicitly to *San Juan de Río Coco, Nicaragua*⁴. This shows that the coffee produced where I did my fieldwork is actually exported and consumed in Europe and North America, which is especially important to make my arguments. To be more precise, I did my fieldwork in the surrounding mountains of San Juan, living with a family in between the coffee fields, which was roughly a 45 minutes walk up the mountains. This was due to the fact that most harvest workers lived in the surroundings and in the town this work was not one of the main jobs.

4 See, for examples of coffee from San Juan de Río Coco distributed in North America or Europe, the following exemplifying pages: <http://coffeetimerroasters.com/tienda/cafe-nicaragua-rio-coco-organico>, <http://scribblerscoffee.com/nicaragua.htm>, <http://bigbendcoffeeroasters.com/product/nicaragua-san-juan-del-rio-coco-new/>, <http://royalcoffee.com/products/38289/> [accessed 26th April 2017]

4. Conceptual Framework

This study is based on a number of theoretical concepts, and relies heavily on the ideas of embodied land and embodied labor developed by Hornborg (2010). In order to make the analysis more comprehensive and to clarify underlying arguments I will now turn to the concepts that frame this study and present them briefly. Due to the length and scope of this study however, a lengthy discussion is not possible and the presentation is limited to the main characteristics of the chosen concepts.

The concepts of embodied land and embodied labor⁵ will be explained first due to their essentiality to this study. The concept of environmental load displacement, also based on Hornborg's interpretation of it (2011), will be presented afterwards in connection to them. In continuation, four definitions of violence will be provided, these are structural, direct, and cultural violence as defined by Galtung (1969, 1990) and slow violence as developed by Nixon (2011). These serve to identify the categories of violence on which the analysis is based. Finally, some decolonial ideas will be explained, especially that of Quijano's coloniality of power (2000) and the connection between violence and modernity made by Maldonado-Torres (2008). The decolonial theory will be used in the conceptualization of my own concepts to give an historic frame and illustrate the characteristics analyzed in the producer-consumer relationship.

The concepts of embodied land and embodied labor were developed under the idea of ecologically unequal exchange (Hornborg, 1992, 1998, 2011)⁶. It is crucial to note that ecologically unequal exchange does not refer to the exchange value, that is the price, because in this term exchange is usually seen as equal (Hornborg, 1992: 5). Hornborg introduced the concepts of embodied land and embodied labor to highlight the inequality inherent in the exchange system of world economics, showing that locally saved time (labor) and space (land) can only occur at the expense of time and space spent by someone else or used in some other place (Hornborg, 2011: 4). Time-space appropriation is then the idea that in order to save time and space through technological development, this same time and space is exported and consumed elsewhere as part of the globalization process (Hornborg, 2011: 94). In other

5 I am aware that there are other embodied flows, such as embodied material or embodied energy (Dorninger & Hornborg, 2015: 416), but for simplification I will refer only to the two main concepts of embodied land and embodied labor.

6 For discussion on the concept of ecologically unequal exchange see e.g. Moran et al., 2013, 2015, being aware of ambivalent opinions on this topic, I still chose to apply this concept

words, even though the general perception is to spend less land and labor through the use of technologies, these technologies have been built somewhere else and hence had impacts during their production, such as the consumption of land and labor (Hornborg, 2014: 12). Besides the connection to technology, embodied land and labor can also be explained and used on their own, for example in regards to net imports or exports (Dorninger & Hornborg, 2015). Here, embodied land simply refers to the consumption of resources that are produced by the use of land that exceeds what is nationally available (Hornborg, 2011: 18). Meaning that resources are consumed at a level that could not have been produced or sustained by using only the available land of one's own nation. Because both concepts can be combined and are closely connected, embodied labor refers to roughly the same (Hornborg, 2011: 19). So, embodied labor refers to the consumption of resources that require labor which is nationally not available, not necessarily due to the lack of human beings, but due to the industrialization (Hornborg, 2011: 20). The use of technology and its disguised savings, and the ecologically unequal exchange in the world-system motivate another concept.

This concept is especially important to the second concept elaborated in this study and as mentioned before, the concept of environmental load displacement is closely related to the concepts just explained. Environmental load displacement forms part of the ecologically unequal exchange, because the same mechanisms in the world-system also lead to unequally distributed environmental problems (Hornborg, 2011: 83). Furthermore, there is an exchange of high-quality resources and degraded materials, consisting in the export of dirty or highly polluting industries from the core to the periphery, which illustrates the environmental load displacement from one nation to another (Hornborg, 2011: 19). Arguably, this happens, as the consumption of embodied land and embodied labor as well, from high-income countries to low income countries, displacing undesirable impacts and risks (*ibid.*). Environmental load displacement has taken place throughout history, distributing environmental burden according to prevalent power relations (Hornborg, 2011: 45). Hence, this concept refers to a practice of displacing undesirable impacts to places elsewhere, making sure that the own surroundings do not suffer negative impacts and degradation.

I now explain the definitions of violence that will be used throughout this study. In 1969, Galtung identified violence as an influence upon a human being that leads to his or her “actual somatic and mental realizations [being] below [his/her] potential realizations” (168), which is an overall definition of violence and can then be divided further into different

categories. This definition means that violence is the difference between what could have been (the potential) and what actually is (the actual realization), referring to a direct or indirect action or condition and expanding the concept of violence (ibid.). Even though this concept has been highly influential, it has recently been contested as too broad (Vorobej, 2008: 84)⁷. Still, I chose to use it, due to its high relevance and compatibility for and with this study, based on an understanding of violence as not solely a direct personal act. Violence can be divided into three main categories; direct, structural, and cultural violence, which can be illustrated through a triangle (see Figure 1). This violence triangle is formed by the three categories and shows the vicious relationships between them. Turning it around always emerges a different picture and the interrelations between the three forms become clear, showing how they confirm and trigger each other (Galtung, 1990: 294). Moreover, Galtung defines them differently in time relations, considering direct violence as an event, structural violence as a process, and cultural violence as a permanence (ibid.). Direct violence refers to what is commonly seen as violence, personal violence inflicted by a perpetrator upon a human body, which is why Galtung early on also referred to it as *personal violence* in contrast to structural violence (1969: 174). In other words, direct violence is the directly felt impact on one's potential (physical) realization (Galtung, 1969: 178). In contrast, structural violence is felt as indirect impact, for example through repression. This difference becomes clear regarding the subject-object relationship. If there is a direct personal link, then it is direct violence. But if there is a structural indirect relationship, then it is structural violence (ibid.). Structural violence can also be referred to as social injustice and describes the violence that is built into structures and not as visible as direct violence (Galtung, 1969: 171). Another characteristic that helps to distinguish the two types is the fact that structural violence usually does not have a concrete actor that commits it, but rather emerges as unequal power relations and unequal life chances, referring to inequality in terms of (not) having the same chances in life (Galtung, 1969: 170-171). Cultural violence constitutes the third corner of the violence triangle. Cultural violence refers to violence inherent in a culture, which serves to legitimize and justify direct and

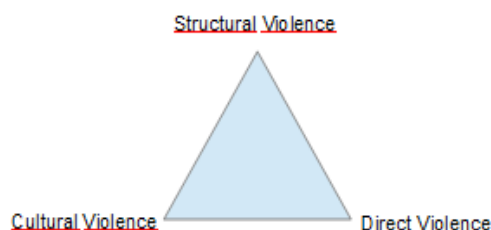


Figure 1: Violence Triangle (elaborated by me based on Galtung 1990)

⁷ For the critique contesting Galtung see Coady, 2008

structural violence (Galtung, 1990: 291). This means that cultural violence has the effect of making the other two forms of violence look normal and not perceived as violence or even wrong (ibid.). As mentioned before, these three forms are interdependent and usually do not stand on their own, which also means that the notion of peace needs to be adjusted accordingly. Positive peace refers to social justice and cultural peace in contrast to negative peace, which refers to only the absence of direct violence (Galtung, 1969: 183).

Additionally, the concept of slow violence coined by Nixon, which departs from structural violence, is included in this thesis (2011: 10-11). However, in contrast to structural violence, which is perceived as static, slow violence places the focus on gradual movement and change over time (Nixon, 2011: 11). It broadens the notion of structural violence by including the fact that it is enacted over a long period of time, or might become visible only after some time (ibid.). This means that slow violence happens invisibly and gradually over time, its impacts only coming to light after a delay. Moreover, it can be dispersed in time and space and thus is hard to grasp in contrast to direct violence (Nixon, 2011: 2).

The last concepts to be introduced are taken from decolonial theory. According to decolonial theory, the world-system is organized through hierarchical layers linking states to one another and was created at the moment of colonization. However, when direct colonization ended, coloniality kept on existing (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992: 550). This means that coloniality is the continued influence and domination through socio-cultural, economic, and political hierarchies binding former colonies to their former colonizers (ibid.). This concept can be further divided into specific categories such as the concept of coloniality of power coined by Quijano (1995, 2000). Coloniality of power refers to the circumstances which constituted the rise of power of the colonizers during colonization, establishing work and exploitation relations in combination with new social identities, based on race or ethnicity. These created new social inter-subjective relations and led eventually to the European domination (Quijano, 1995: 3). These power relations have remained over the last 500 years and still constitute the same features that were created during colonization, referring to who is dominant and who is dominated. The (social) power relations that originated from and outlived colonialism is what is termed coloniality of power (Quijano, 1995: 4). In other words, race and ethnicity were artificially constructed through the colonization and used to impose power relations. Through these mechanisms the resulting inferiority of some people and the superiority of others were naturalized (Quijano, 2000: 533). This model of power has

then been used to classify people in every part of the world accordingly and persists up until today, constituting the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000: 534).

The concept of coloniality of power, is also reflected in the analysis that Maldonado-Torres undertakes in his book. He shows that violence is a inherent feature of modernity by analyzing prevalent Western thought (or modernity) with emphasis on the periods of colonization throughout history and by countering them with views from “the underside” (2008). By analyzing Fanon, Maldonado-Torres argues that through the division between master (colonizing powers) and slave (the colonized), the slave's dehumanization, and the combination with the power relations described above, the life-world of the colonized is rendered violent. Inhuman situations turn into ordinary everyday life and constitute the violent life-world (2008: 100). He further illustrates how, due to power and identity, the colonized are constantly turned into non-beings and rendered invisible, which legitimizes every form of indifference, hate, and violence inflicted upon them (Maldonado-Torres, 2008: 239). As the power of the concept of coloniality lies in its reference to today, Maldonado-Torres highlights this aspect as well, arguing that the same violent discourse identified in the context of colonization is still present today. As was said before, race was central to found the perceived superiority of the colonizers. However, the central reason to sustain this superiority has changed over time and today economics and the market take its place as legitimization (2008: 119). The same power relations and mechanisms are still used to justify the unequal and unjust world-system we live in today. These concepts show that colonialism had impacts on and helped shape the world-system. Coloniality has to be taken into account in order to understand the bigger picture regarding relations between former colonizing powers and former colonies.

The understanding of the world as a system is a shared feature of decolonial theory and the concepts by Hornborg introduced above. Both are based on the world-system theory developed by Wallerstein in terms of how the world is constituted (Hornborg, 2006: 75; Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992). According to Wallerstein, a world-system is a social system, not a static one, but a dynamic self-containing organism that is constituted by conflicting forces (1976: 229). In this world-system the division of labor plays a vital role and shows in the three categories of core, periphery, and semi-periphery. These interact through unequal exchange and unequal power relations, the core controlling the periphery (Wallerstein, 1974: 401). A crucial feature of the world-system is its interrelatedness and the assumption that it is

one system. Hence, nothing in it can be analyzed standing on its own (Wallerstein, 2004: x). Having introduced this concept briefly, it becomes even more apparent how all concepts come together. Based on a common understanding of the world as a system and inherent power inequalities, each of the other concepts approaches this understanding differently. They all share nonetheless similar concerns about inequalities and injustices or, to put it in Galtung's words, about *violence*.

Even though the concepts share this underlying understanding, there is something lacking. The concepts elaborated by Hornborg miss a dimension, which reflects the life conditions and personal situation of the workers, who become abstract behind the hours of their labor. Decolonial theory on the other side, is concerned with these issues, but lacks a hands-on way to measure it practically. As shown above, the concepts taken together complement each other and add up to the concepts that I introduce in this study, *embodied violence* and the related concept of *violence displacement*.

5. Analysis of the Empirical Data

*“So, actually they exploit both of us,
us, well, because they exploit us
and you guys, because they lie to you
and make you pay a lot for the coffee”
(Alejandro, key informant, my own translation)*

Now I turn to the analysis of the data that I gathered during my fieldwork in San Juan. As mentioned before, I interviewed and lived with a family whose members work or have worked as *corteros*. The family consists of the mother *Paola* and the father *Chico* and their four children *Alejandro*, *Elena*, *Anielka* and *Rafa*. Additionally, there were three of their cousins staying with them at the house during the harvest and neighbors and friends of the family were introduced to me. I had the chance to interview them while living among them. As such, I had the opportunity to see where and how they worked, to try their food, to walk their routes in between the coffee plants, to ask a million questions, and to listen to whatever they thought would interest me or what they felt were important. Though I was not the first *chela*⁸ coming to this area, it also does not happen on a regular basis. My residence was even

8 *Chele/chela* (Spanish): term used in Nicaragua to refer to a light-skinned person, can refer to either a person from outside of Nicaragua or to a Nicaraguan, sometimes used interchangeably with the term

less likely up in the mountains, so I was received with great interest and curiosity. People were eager to talk about their work, because it was the center that their everyday life circles around. Throughout the analysis I show that what is described and identified as violence in this study, generally is not perceived as such by these people. However, I will argue that there is underlying violence present in the process of harvesting coffee in northern Nicaragua and its export to Europe (or North America). It is a subtle and invisible type of violence, in contrast to overt and highly visible direct violence. All the data presented in this analysis is based on field notes that I took during my ethnographic fieldwork, if not indicated differently.

To begin, I present the prices prevalent in the past coffee harvest during the season of 2016-2017⁹. The prices are the most visible and easiest accessible information, even for outsiders, and hence have quite some symbolic power. *Corteros* are usually paid by *latas*¹⁰, which means that they are paid based on what they pick, not based on the time they spent working on the field. One *lata* was paid with 40 Córdoba¹¹ in the past season and had gone up in price compared to earlier seasons, when one *lata* was only paid with 30 or rarely 35 Córdoba. According to my informants, this season was paid really good, and people explained to me that never before had they been paid that well. So, the *corteros* were generally satisfied with the price that was paid per *lata*. However, I provide some calculation examples to illustrate what these prices mean. There is a wide array of how much coffee people pick according to what I saw during my fieldwork. There were some teenagers coming from outside of San Juan and hence were not as used to the work as locals, who would, even when the harvest was still good, only pick around three *latas*. This means that per day they only gained around 120 Córdoba (~ 4 US-Dollars (USD)). To give an idea of where to place that, the \$5 poverty line was introduced by the UNCTAD to not only include the most extreme form of poverty (as does the \$1.25 line), but to show the divide between poverty and living on a standard that where one's rights to well-being and health can be reached (2013: 3). Having said this, it becomes clear that even though some of the *corteros* work the whole day, they still cannot reach the \$5 per day that is indicated to live a life outside of poverty. Of course, there are also some *corteros* that pick a lot, *Elena* and *Anielka*, the daughters of the family where I lived, occasionally came home and had picked up to eleven *latas* of coffee

“gringo/gringa”, which refers to people from the USA (in cases when it regards someone from outside of Nicaragua)

9 The harvest usually begins in October/November and ends in March

10 *Lata* (Spanish): can, refers here to a bucket that holds 20 Liters

11 The common trading rate was 1.00 US-Dollar = 29.50 Córdoba (January-March 2017)

each. This equals 440 Córdoba (~15 USD) and at first sight sounds a lot. Nevertheless, it is not that easy. Given the fact that this is the extreme upside and it is not reached every day, due to circumstances that cannot be influenced by the *cortero*. These are circumstances such as whether the harvest is good or not, whether there is a lot of ripe coffee, and whether or not your *surco*¹² is good, in terms of ripe coffee, or not. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that this is seasonal work, and hence means that with what you earn during this time you need to live all year long. Based on the fact that there is only a handful of *corteros* that is occupied at the farms during the rest of the year, most people just wait for the next season to come (this is simplified, but considering only the coffee harvest and not additional work, it is like this). So, the money made during the season can easily be divided by two. I return to the example of the eleven *latas* again, dividing it by two, that only makes 220 Córdoba (~7.5 USD) and is just above the poverty line mentioned above. Keeping in mind that this is an extreme of what people pick, all of a sudden it does not appear as that much any longer. Another example is what *Doña Juana*, an older woman and neighbor to the family with who I did an interview, gained together with her husband *Don Chepe*. She proudly reported that in one month they had managed to earn 7000 Córdoba (~240 USD). At the moment of receiving this money, it is a lot. They are a couple though. This means that they earned 120 US-Dollars each, which is not even the \$5 per day required by the \$5 poverty line. Since the prices are part of a larger system, this is one example of structural violence. In this case, it means that the prices that are guided by market forces are inherently violent, because they are at such a low level that people working full time have a hard time to surpass the poverty line and thus, are subjects to social injustice created by the same structures that create the prices.

During one of the narrative walks, we came to talk about what people in Europe or the USA would pay for a pound of fair trade or organic coffee, based on the idea that the workers throughout the production process are paid fair wages and better than others. *Alejandro*, who, as one of the sons of the family where I lived, had become one of my key informants, said the following:

“So, actually they exploit both of us, us, well, because they exploit us and you guys, because they lie to you and make you pay a lot for the coffee”

This quote indicates a variety of things. Firstly, it was an expression of *Alejandro's*

12 *Surco* (Spanish): furrow

astonishment, hearing my approximates about what people would pay for coffee. Given the fact that at that time a pound of good coffee on the local markets in Nicaragua was at around 35 Córdoba (a little more than \$1), he could not believe that someone would pay up to 12 US-Dollars per pound¹³ or 7 Euro for half a pound¹⁴. The quote also shows some consciousness about the low esteem of their work, that they are paid too little and that they are exploited. The fact that he did not even find words for why they are exploited, but simply said “well, because they exploit us” highlights the notion of this being a matter of facts, a given state that is unlikely to change. This also connects back to the prices and the fact that people were generally satisfied with the small increase in payment. Both examples show that the *corteros* I talked to have arranged themselves with the situation and do not question it further. The situation is accepted and the little improvement that is made through a small rise in prices is welcomed. Secondly, this quote also illustrates the structural violence inherent in the system. On the one hand, you have the exploited harvest workers and on the other hand, you have deceived consumers, who wish to do right, but do wrong anyway. This also refers to cultural violence, as fair trade or organic coffee are labels that are used to justify buying coffee anyway. By paying more, people pay their way out of thinking further about where the coffee is coming from and are able to consume it with a good conscience. Thus by being lied to, to put it in *Alejandro's* words, the consumers find themselves in a system where they can legitimately buy coffee. Through this behavior they constitute the cultural violence that justifies the structural violence inherent in the coffee production.

As mentioned before, the *corteros* are paid according to what they pick during their shifts and not according to the working hours. This means that there are also some parts of the job as a harvest worker that are not included in the payment, which will be discussed below. Before, I turn to the working conditions, having divided this topic into two parts. The first part considers the working conditions that are directly linked to the work the *corteros* do on the field. The second part refers to everything that is connected to the work in the sense that it is part of the surrounding conditions.

First, my informants told me that the working days on the different farms vary, but generally start between 5/6 am and end between 2/3 pm. This means that the working days vary from eight to ten hours a day. Furthermore, I was told that there is no real break. Either

13 See <http://shop.equalexchange.coop/coffee.html?cat=9> as indicating price [accessed 13th May 2017]

14 See <http://www.gepa-shop.de/essen-und- geniessen/kaffee-espresso/cafe-raritaeten.html> as indicating price [accessed 13th May 2017]

they are served breakfast and lunch during working hours and only get enough time to quickly eat it, or they are served breakfast before work and lunch after having finished the day in the afternoon. This means that they basically work the whole day straight. Additionally, the working week starts on Mondays and includes Saturdays. Sometimes, as I was told, when the harvest was at its peak and a lot of ripe coffee waiting to be picked, they even had to work Sundays. So, they have really little time to recover from the hard work, and sometimes it is only the hours they sleep. Besides the long working hours that are spent on the plantations picking coffee, there are some other tasks, which have to be completed by the *corteros*. These are not included neither in the time scheme just explained nor in the payment. During one of the narrative walks, we went to see the *medida*¹⁵, which is the measurement of *latas* by the end of the day in order to write down what every *cortero* picked that day. The day of our narrative walk, there were not that many *corteros* anymore, because it was already towards the end of the harvest season. *Alejandro* and *Carlito*¹⁶, a child (even though he would get angry when we called him a *child*) of twelve years who was the youngest of my informants and a cousin to *Alejandro* and his siblings, told me that during the peak of the season there are up to 300 people working as *corteros*. Hence, the *medida* takes a lot more time and people have to wait a long time before being allowed to leave. The workers are organized according to numbers, everyone has his or her number and what is picked is written down with this number. According to what is written down the *corteros* are then paid in the end of the cycle¹⁷. As I learned, it is common to share a number. Actually, none of my informants had a number on his own, they had all paired up. *Doña Juana*, the neighbor already mentioned, explained to me that when the season begins, the numbers are given by chance according to your arrival to subscribe to the farm and then you stick to this number. In every *medida* they call the numbers in the same order, which means that if you have a high number, you always have to wait longer than the ones who have a low number. *Doña Juana* furthermore explained to me that on the farm where she and her husband worked, at times when the coffee was really ripe, or as she said “*maduro maduro*”¹⁸, and at risk to fall down, they occasionally had to work until 5pm. Since they always started at 6 am, this means that those days they had to work an eleven

15 *Medida* (Spanish): measurement

16 *Carlito's* parents were aware of me doing research and agreed that he could participate as an informant in this research.

17 The farms have different payment routines, some pay every 15 days, others at the end of the month, there is no cohesive practice

18 *Maduro* (Spanish): mature/ripe, the duplication of the term refers to highlighting how ripe the coffee was

hours shift. Moreover, after finishing at 5 pm, they still had to measure the coffee, which means that they actually left even later and *Doña Juana* mentioned that some *corteros*, the last ones according to the numbers, only left at around 9 pm. She said that in general those days they all left really late, at night rather than in the afternoon. This shows that the payment according to *latas* does not take into account all these other hours spent, which are part of the working day, but in the end go unpaid. The same holds true for the *escogida*¹⁹, the process of sorting the coffee according to ripe and green coffee grains. After the first harvest round, when all the coffee is mostly ripe, the *repela*²⁰ takes place. Here, all remaining grains are picked, no matter whether they are ripe or green and afterwards have to be sorted. As my informants told me, the working hours spent on picking are reduced during the *repela* and usually already end at 1 pm. However, the *escogida* has still to be done afterwards, which means that the working days are not really shorter, but a great deal of the work is done unpaid. Because the *corteros* are still paid according to what they pick, the *escogida* goes largely unpaid. Even though during the *repela* the *latas* are paid with a higher price, mostly at 45 or 50 Córdobas depending on the farm, the *corteros* of course pick less, as they have less time. Given the facts that there is also less coffee left to pick, even though green grains are included, and that the *escogida* is a time-consuming task, which I know because I tried, it becomes obvious that the rise in prices during the *repela* does not benefit the *corteros*. Though at first sight this might be expected, it rather gives them a small compensation for a lot of additional work. I was further told that you did not even want to fill too many *latas* anymore either, due to the fact that the more you pick the more you have to sort afterwards. As a comparison, even *Elena* and *Anielka*, who had picked at times up to eleven *latas*, would during the *repela* pick at maximum some four *latas*. This means that they made between 180-200 Córdobas per day, at a maximum, which is no comparison to what they gained during the first harvest round. Some of the teenagers coming from other parts of Nicaragua to San Juan, would even pick only one or two *latas*, and hence work the whole day for some 45-100 Córdobas. That this payment is not appropriate for a whole day of working, even longer hours than the standards in Europe, is easy to recognize. So, the *corteros* are paid according to what they pick during the day, even though they provide a lot more work for which they are not at

19 *Escogida* (Spanish): selection, refers here to the process of sorting coffee according to ripe and green grains after having them picked mixedly in the *repela* (see note 6)

20 *Repela* (Spanish): “re-cut”, refers here to the process of the second harvest; after having harvested all the ripe grains in a first round, the coffee plantations are harvested a second time, this time all grains, ripe or green, are included and picked

all or not adequately compensated. Because these are results of the same structures as the prices per *lata* discussed above, this is another example of structural violence. The fact that the work is paid like this, creates social injustices and places the *corteros* in a less secure and more vulnerable situation than people having a job with a stable payment. Furthermore, based on the long working days there is not a lot of space for other activities to enhance well-being. Summarizing, this means that there are unequal chances and potential that cannot be realized due to these inequalities and hence, according to Galtung, there is structural violence.

Second, I now examine the conditions that surround the work as a *cortero*. These aspects refer mainly to the right of well-being which is stated as a basic human right (United Nations General Assembly, 1948: Article 25). Here, I refer to conditions such as accommodation or food. These conditions are not directly linked to the work on the plantations, but are indirectly linked as part of the work life. An issue that was repeatedly mentioned to me by my informants, and here I mean that literally all my informants mentioned it sooner or later, was the food that was served to them on the different farms. At first I did not pay much attention to it. But realizing that everyone mentioned it and that it seemed so important to them, I started to think about it more and in different terms. After all, this study is the result of a cooperation and hence, I cannot just ignore this issue and feel that it is my responsibility to present it here. Its relevance and connection to the other topics becomes apparent soon. As already mentioned before, the *corteros* are usually served food at the farms. However, according to my informants this food is very low in quality. I heard several complaints about the food being badly cooked, having no flavor, or being too simple. The following quote is just one example:

“The food has also changed a lot [...] because before they gave us the food well cooked and now better said everything is raw” (Alejandro, Interview)

This quote illustrates the discontent with the food and also indicates that it has changed over time, having been better before. Of course, one could argue that this is a question of luxury. However, I am talking about people who are not used to a highly varied or rich diet. The diet of the region, as in the rest of Nicaragua, consists mostly of rice, beans, and *tortillas*²¹. And this means it is rice and beans three times a day, every day. So, it is easy to imagine that my informants did not require an extraordinary standard, but still expected some standard, which

21 *Tortilla* (Spanish): flat, round corn bread

was not met by the food served at work. This is also illustrated by the quote, as *Alejandro* simply refers to well cooked food in contrast to raw food that is served nowadays. He is not asking for some extraordinary specialty, but for basics. All but one farm would serve only rice and beans, and this means rice and beans in one meal and the other two meals would just be beans, plain beans without salt. Where I lived, the food that was brought home from work was persistently given to the little pig, the ducks, and the chicken, because no one wanted to eat it. The one, in this case, outstanding farm (which was the largest farm) would at some days per week vary the food and even serve minced meat or soup. However, not even this food was eaten completely when it was brought home. They kept the meat or soup, but still gave the beans and rice to the animals, because they considered it worse than what they cooked at home. Moreover, I was repeatedly woken up at around 3 am, because the young adults of the house, consisting of the four children and some cousins, were preparing breakfast to take it to work and to avoid the food being served there. All these different aspects concerning the food show that it was not considered to be satisfactory. This indicates two things. First, it illustrates that the *corteros* are not held in high regards by the farm owners and hence that their work is not either. This has further implications, reaching to discrimination and clear power relations, as the *corteros* are considered to be less worthy and as a result not worth better food. Second, it indicates that there is violence present, in terms that well-being needs are not met. As stated above, well-being is a human right and a basic need and the denial of it as such can be regarded as violence. This is violence, because there is potential that is limited through this denial or, as Galtung terms it, the real satisfaction of these needs is below the potential satisfaction (1990: 292). Besides, there are two types of exploitation, both referring to the more powerful side getting more out of an interaction than the less powerful side. The first type of exploitation leads to death and the second one refers to the permanent state of misery (Galtung, 1969: 293). In this case, the second type of exploitation applies, as the *corteros* do not die from their working conditions right away, but are kept in an unwanted and unpleasant state.

After having revealed the working conditions, I now turn to the next aspect which relates to the protection, security and rights of the *corteros*. When I arrived at San Juan, or rather at its surrounding plantations, *Alejandro* was staying at home, because he had a toothache. This was just one example I encountered during my fieldwork of people staying home due to sickness. Another time one of *Alejandro's* sisters, *Elena*, was staying at home

having problems with her teeth as well. What happens when they stay at home? Of course, they miss work and hence they do not gain anything. Due to the system in which they work, there is no protection in terms of sick leave or pensions. They earn their daily bread at the fields and that is where the contract between farm owner and harvest worker ends. In *Alejandro's* case, he wanted to work again after a couple of days, but was not accepted again until the next week, as a kind of punishment for having missed the first days of the week. In *Elena's* case, she was accepted again right away. This different treatment shows that there are no real guidelines which are being followed, but rather it is arbitrariness, because both were working at the same farm. In any of these cases, it becomes obvious that the *cortero* by being ill loses in various ways, it is not just one's health, but also one's finances that suffer. Another example of the lack of protection is the fact that *Doña Juana* is already 75 years old and still works together with her husband *Don Chepe* at the coffee plantations. This shows that there is no retirement pension and means that if they want to have some money, they need to work for it. *Doña Juana* told me that she had been working all her life at the coffee plantations, learning how to pick coffee at an early age and never having worked at another place. Even though she has worked all her life in the same region and roughly with the same people, she has no chance to retire, as she needs money to maintain herself and her family, neither is she somehow granted a pension. Thus by working as a *cortero*, one is not only disadvantaged through the structural violence at the moment of working, but also affected later on by not having been able to save money in order to sustain one's own future²². This is an uncommon phenomenon of slow violence, but can nonetheless be termed slow violence due to its effect and dispersion over time. After having presented these examples, it becomes apparent that there is no real protection in terms of paid sick leave or retirement pensions and that the workers are on their own regarding these issues. This is another example of structural violence, because they are not provided with any help or protection, while other people in the system are. The fact that some people in the world-system at a large scale, and in Nicaragua on a small scale, do not have to work at all, and some people have to work their whole life, because there is no protection or social benefits whatsoever, underline that there are tremendous inequalities. Through these inequalities, there are unequal chances and hence social injustice. Which is, as I explained before, an equivalent to structural violence.

²² Even though, this problem is not unique to this kind of work, but to develop this further is beyond the scope of this study.

Another related issue is the protection or rights of the *corteros* on the fields. Here, I do not refer to direct violence, as there was no one who mentioned incidents that indicated this during my fieldwork, but to structural violence. The *capataz*²³ and the *repartidor de surcos*²⁴ are the two men in charge of the *corteros*, and in almost all cases, their wives and/or families worked at the same farms as they do. This leads to inequalities and injustices on the plantations, as various informants reported that the families/wives would get the best or closest *surcos*, meaning the ones that have the most ripe coffee or the ones that are closest to the measuring point, which is shown by the situation *Anielka* described to me:

“There he gives the best furrows to the family, you know you can be here, there, but no way, there it is only to the family that this guy gives the furrows” (Interview)

This quote illustrates how the family of the *repartidor de surcos* is treated differently by being preferred over the other workers. *Anielka* refers to the situation in the mornings when the workers arrive and go to the furrows according to their arrival, but are sent to another furrow by the *repartidor de surcos* so he can give the good furrow to a family member. Furthermore, I was told that the families/wives would be treated differently by the *capataz*, in terms of him being less strict or demanding with them. These are injustices that are easily identified and are built into the organizational structures of the work. As those two men are the authority on the fields, they do not have to justify their behavior to anyone present and the owners generally do not know what happens on their fields other than from the reports of the *capataz*. These structures are discriminating the *cortero* who is not a relative of neither the *capataz* nor the *repartidor de surcos*. The examples reveal that there are no real workers' rights and that the *cortero* is victimized through structural violence. This is also illustrated by what happened to *Rafa*, the other son of the family where I lived, a brother to *Alejandro*, *Anielka* and *Elena*. As I was told, *Rafa* was fired by a *capataz* during a shift a couple of years ago, in the midst of the harvest season. He was fired, because according to the *capataz* he had overseen some ripe grains. *Rafa* asked the *capataz* to hand them over to him, which the *capataz* did not like and therefore told him that this was not his job, but *Rafa's*. If *Rafa* did not want to work properly he could leave right away. And, as I was explained, that was how the story ended. Up until today *Rafa* has not gone back to work at that farm and probably will not either in the future.

23 *Capataz (Spanish)*: supervisor

24 *Repartidor de surcos (Spanish)*: the man who distributes the furrows of coffee to the workers

This story highlights the authority of the *capataz* and the helplessness of the *corteros* in those situations. Because they are not protected by any rights and the word of the *capataz* is the law on the fields, they cannot do anything about it. My informants told me that this happened sometimes, that the *capataz* fires people based on banalities, but since the owners do not know and there are enough other workers, he does not have to justify himself and can do as he pleases. This is also a case of structural violence, not direct violence, even though this could be confused based on the fact that there is direct interaction and a perpetrator. However, this is still structural violence, because there is no direct physical impact felt and no personal violence inflicted. The violence that is at place is still based in the structures that constitute the relationship between *capataz* and *cortero*. The unequal power relation between them, which is embedded in even larger structures, makes it possible to limit the potential realizations, in this case to fire *Rafa* based on a minor incident, and constitutes the social injustice that is inherent in the working relations in the coffee harvest.

There are other injustices happening connected to picking coffee. As I witnessed during my fieldwork, at one farm they would not pay their *corteros* on time. Two of my informants, *Rafa* and his cousin *Gabriel*, were working at this farm and had to wait almost a week for being paid. When this happened, the people around me did not seem too surprised and stories of other times when the payment was delayed were recounted. In fact, during an interview with *Anielka*, she told me that the farm where she and *Elena* were working, was the only farm where payment was secure and on time. On all other farms delays happened now and then. At the same farm where *Rafa* and *Gabriel* had to wait for their payment, once the *corteros* were paid until in *Semana Santa*²⁵, almost a month after the harvest season ends. I was told about another incident on another farm where the *corteros*, even though only the local ones and not the ones coming from other parts of Nicaragua, were paid until in September. This means that they waited for their payment almost until the next season started. These examples show that the *corteros* are subject to more arbitrariness than appears at first sight, and this also refers back to the lack of rights and protections I mentioned in the section above. Nevertheless, my informants indicated that at times those delays were no coincidences at all, but that it was a mean to keep people working for the same farm. I was told that especially farms that have a lot of workers coming from other parts of the country, would not pay their workers on purpose so that they do not leave in the middle of the season. I actually

25 *Semana Santa* (Spanish): Holy week, the week before Eastern

witnessed one similar incident. While *Rafa* and *Gabriel* were waiting for their payment, they did not work for the farm they were waiting for. Instead, they were working short term on another farm. Since it was only for the meantime, they wanted to go back to the other farm afterwards, but were told by the other owner that if they did not finish the week at her farm, she would pay them only 30 Córdoba per *lata*. This illustrates that the payment is used to exert pressure on the *corteros* and shows that the owners of the farms are well aware of their power. Another way of tricking the *corteros* is the measurement with extremely full *latas*. This was described to me by *Don Chepe*, the husband of *Doña Juana*, who had made this experience on the farm where he worked. He told me that during the *medida*, the responsible workers coming from the farm, who drive out to the fields only for the measurement and to bring the coffee back into town to the cooperatives²⁶, filled the buckets way to much. So in the end out of three and a half *latas*, only three *latas* would result. This means that they, considering this example, take away half a *lata* of payment from the *cortero*. This illustrates how the *corteros*, who already earn little money, are further deceived and in the eyes of farm workers in higher positions do not even deserve the little they earn. Through a system in which strong hierarchies influence the perception of a certain type of work, the ones on the bottom do not have a chance. As this system is not created intentionally by a single person, it is another example of structural violence. Being caught up in these structures means that violence becomes invisible. The violence is not even perceived as violence, and the injustice might be realized by the *cortero* who is deceived at the *medida*, but is not felt as a direct physical harm, and not perceived as wrong by the higher positioned farm workers and owners. This action has an indirect impact, adding up to quite some money lost on the *cortero's* side and the same money saved on the farm owner's side. Already prevalent power relations are kept in place and are even intensified, creating a self-sustaining system.

In continuation, I present another topic. As mentioned above, *Carlito* was the youngest of my informants and only twelve years old. In general, various of my informants were minors. These facts indicate that child labor was a common practice on the farms. Even though I was told that officially the farms were not allowed to accept workers under 16 years, there were enough children working to know that farms were not too strict applying this rule. According to Nicaraguan law, the minimum age to work is 14 years, being subject to some

²⁶ All the farms where my informants worked were part of cooperatives, to which they hand over the coffee and the cooperatives resell it. The cooperatives also provide financial aid and hand out materials such as fertilizers, pesticides etc.

limitations, such as a maximum of 6 hours per day or 30 hours per week (Código del Trabajo, 1996: Título VI). However, these laws were also disregarded, since *Carlito* is only twelve years old and he was not the only child at this age picking coffee. Furthermore, the children worked the same shifts as the adults, which means that they worked more than the allowed hours. Even though most of the younger children only worked during their vacations²⁷ and went back to school in February, they still performed heavy physical work. Even though the process of picking might not be regarded as heavy physical work, the coffee is collected in big sacks that have to be carried back to the measurement point. The paths in between the coffee plants are really small and the fields steep, as the coffee is planted right on the mountain slopes. So that heavy physical work has to be performed on dangerous terrain, not only for children, but also for adults. I slipped various times on these paths, not carrying neither coffee in baskets nor in sacks and I was told that *Carlito* rolled down with a full sack once. During one of the narrative walks I also saw a couple of (adult) *corteros* slip down a slope with their full sacks. The following quote refers to this issue and further shows that the work on the plantations is perceived as a heavy task for children:

“I used to roll around on these slopes, but there I was” (Tupac, Group Interview)

Tupac, a friend and neighbor of the family, said this when asked for the age he started working on the coffee plantations. He refers to the time when he was little, to the steep slopes, and to the heavy loads they had to carry. The term “roll around” shows that he had hard times as a child walking with the coffee sacks. The quote also illustrates that, even though work was heavy, they kept on working at an early age. Besides, I was told that once school started again farms would not accept children anymore. However, as I noted during my fieldwork, this only applied to the youngest ones, the children that still go to primary school. Most of the older children, or better said teenagers, that already attend high school did not go back to school, but preferred to keep working another month in the coffee harvest to make some money. Generally, this means that they lose a year or drop out of school due to a month or two in which they can earn money. None of my younger informants had actually finished high school, a few because they were still going to school, but most, especially the ones living in San Juan, because they had dropped out already. As *Paola*, the mother of the family, said when we were talking about education:

27 The “long” vacations in Nicaragua take place between December and February and last roughly two month

“If they took all the kids that didn't reach high school out with a bus, San Juan would be empty.”

This quote shows that dropping out of school is not a rare phenomenon in San Juan. Especially among families that work in the coffee harvest it is common, which shows that there is a connection between the two issues. The children learn from an early age on how to pick coffee and because there is not a lot of work available, they stick to this job. Because you do not need any formal school education to be accepted as a *cortero* and the young girls and boys do not see another future for themselves, they do not see any need to finish school. Furthermore, due to the low income of the families, this is a way of gaining money independently, to help their family or to have some for your own needs and wishes. The quote also shows that there is awareness of the issue and also some disapproval, but that at the same time there is a kind of acceptance of the situation. A feeling that this cannot be changed anyway and that as long as the children are accepted as harvest workers, they might as well work. According to the International Labour Office (ILO), child labor is defined as work done by children that is harmful to them or interferes with their schooling (2004: 16). Harmful also refers to the physical level. As coffee has to be carried around and children learn from an early age to carry large amounts, the work as *cortero* is hard physical work and it can be argued that it is harmful to their physical development. Even though most of my informants were by now above the minimum age, they had started working and left school at a significantly lower age. This means that they might not have represented child labor at the moment of my fieldwork, but did in the past. This also refers to the interference with their schooling. Even though *Carlito* and *Gabriel*, the cousins, went back home to go back to school and hence, do not strengthen the argument in that sense, *Alejandro*, *Elena*, *Anielka* and *Rafa*, had all dropped out at an early age. Even though it might be argued that now they were not at the compulsory school age anymore, they were before. When they were younger, the work did interfere with their schooling and even led them to drop out. And now there are other children in the same situation, so that it is not a matter of the past. Depriving children of their education is an limitation to their potential realizations, because without education they will not realize their full potential in the future and do not have equal chances in life. Structural violence becomes present through the influences that lead children to chose work over education.

Finally, I present the issue of the use of pesticides at the coffee farms. The workers who spray the coffee plants against pests and illnesses usually do not use any protection at all,

as is common in Nicaragua. As my informants explained to me, the special danger is that one has to spray upwards in order to reach the whole coffee plant, in contrast to spraying other agricultural products. This means that a lot of the toxic pesticides fall right back onto the worker, reaching the worker even more directly than when it is sprayed downwards. Moreover, the family where I lived and a lot of other families live right between the coffee plantations and with right between, I mean literally in between the coffee plants. This means that when the plantations are fumigated, the houses of the families living there are unavoidably affected. *Paola* told me one day sitting in the patio of the house that when the pesticides were used at various plantations simultaneously or at the closest plantations, you could literally feel the pesticides at the patio, right where we were sitting. Since the impact of the pesticides on the human body is not felt directly as pain or harm, but may lead to health problems in the future, this is one example of slow violence. The use of pesticides without any protection is a case of slow violence, because slow violence is concerned with the process and the displaced impacts in time and takes into account the characteristics inherent to structural violence. Due to the lack of knowledge about the negative impacts, the worker does not care about protection. Or maybe he does care, but there is no protection provided and in order to keep the job, he sprays without protection. These are indications that there are larger influences to this situation than just the worker's choice or knowledge. Additionally, the families living in between the plantations do not have any choice whether they want to breathe pesticides or not. Simply by the location of their houses they are condemned to bear the negative impacts. Another aspect related to this, is the fact that nowadays the cooperatives are much stricter with controlling the bottles of the pesticides. I was told that the cooperatives now demand the bottles back before handing out new ones. In contrast, before those toxic bottles were simply thrown away, contaminating water and soil. However, while I was told about the improvement of handling the pesticide waste, I saw a row of those same bottles sunk into the ground as a fence for a flowerbed. In response to my question about them, it was explained to me that they were from a farm where they used pesticides, but sold the coffee as organic coffee. Thus they could not hand the bottles back to any cooperative, but had to get rid of them in some other way. This is how they ended up being a fence. Besides the fact that there was a deception taking place, which to explore is beyond the scope of this study, this behavior is contradictory to what the cooperatives try to establish in terms of environmental protection. The pesticides from the fence bottles still make their way to soil and possibly

water. This shows that despite the efforts of the cooperatives there are still damaging practices at work. Combining this with the use of pesticides and their impacts on the human being, it is shown that slow violence is inflicted upon the inhabitants and workers, as well as on the nature surrounding the coffee plantations.

6. Conceptualization of *Embodied Violence*

Through the analysis I have shown that violence and especially structural violence and slow violence can be identified in the *corteros'* work. In the following I turn to the development of the concept of embodied violence as a result of the analysis.

As was argued several times, the violence encountered is based largely in the structures of the system, encompassing not only the area where the coffee is picked, nor Nicaragua, but has to be understood in even bigger scales. To be precise, this system has to be understood as the world-system we live in, consisting of interrelations and connections between the different states and driven, economically, by market forces. As this system is also largely based on imbalanced power relations, which was explained in the chapter on the conceptual framework of the study and is based on Wallerstein's theory, this system is according to what has just been analyzed inherently violent. As was stated earlier, the concepts of embodied land and embodied labor were highly inspiring to the idea of embodied violence and are also central to its development. However, these concepts are quantitative, which means that it is possible to measure them using statistical data (Hornborg, 2011: 84ff.). In contrast, the concept of embodied violence I develop here, is not. It needs qualitative ethnographic fieldwork, due to two main reasons. First and foremost, quantifying violence, and hence judging one form of violence over another, raises ethical issues. Amongst other things, one ethical issue would be the question of who has the right to decide that some form of violence is worse than another or that what one suffers is less horrible than what someone else suffers. And second, quantifying violence would have been a different and broad issue, exceeding the scope of this study. Hence, I argue that embodied violence calls for qualitative inquiry to be identified, but can nevertheless be combined with the quantitative concepts of embodied land and embodied labor. The fact that they are based on the understanding of the world in terms of Wallerstein's world-system theory is what these concepts have in common,

and in fact, the concept of ecologically unequal exchange is just another way to describe the social injustices inherent in this system. Because both, the concept of embodied land and embodied labor, refer to an unequal exchange of resources and a hidden consumption of both in the core, by importing them *embodied* in products from the periphery, they show that inequalities and hence injustices are present in the system. Based on this understanding, *embodied violence* accordingly describes the violence, mainly, but not exclusively, present in forms of social injustices that is *embodied* in a product produced in the periphery and imported and consumed in the core. By consuming products that are produced under violent circumstances the consumer eventually also consumes the violence the producer had to suffer to produce it. These violent circumstances can range from such circumstances as those I encountered during the fieldwork to more overt forms of violence, such as open violent conflicts. Furthermore, the inherent violence is disguised, just as the concepts of embodied labor and embodied land describe the labor and land that are rendered invisible through dominant notions of development and technological progress (Hornborg, 2014: 12). Additionally, through the notion of equal exchange, economics are presented and perceived in a sanitized way (Graeber, 2011 :127). Thus, looking at the end product, embodied violence is not visible for the consumer at first sight and might even be covered up behind labels, such as those that refer to fair trade or organic products and appear to have been produced in better circumstances. The legitimizing power of these labels and the trade system as such can be termed cultural violence, in accordance with Galtung referring to neo-classical trade theories as the justification for exploitative trade (2010: 198). Cultural violence is hence the force that makes embodied violence possible, as it is not perceived as something wrong. The consumers in the core are able to consume the product, in my case the coffee, without having to suffer any kind of violence, nor to think about it, as it is *displaced* to the producer.

6.1 The related Concept *Violence Displacement*

Displaced violence or *violence displacement*, another concept inspired by Hornborg, refers then, in line with the concept of environmental load displacement explained earlier, to exactly this transfer of violence from the consumer to the producer. The violence, becoming apparent mainly in the form of unpleasant working conditions and cheap labor, is displaced from the core to the periphery. Here I refer not to a direct transfer of violence, as coffee has

never been produced in the core and hence this violence has not been present there, but to a transfer in a more abstract sense. This transfer regards the working conditions and poor wages that have been banned in the core, but are accepted for the periphery. Arguing that cheap labor is used for cheap products, but due to regulations in the core cheap labor cannot be made use of anymore there, this cheap labor is then found in the periphery, and hence in this sense the violence is transferred. As a result, we in the core can enjoy cheap coffee, or expensive coffee with a good conscience, and do not have to see the negative side of its production. One could argue that coffee cannot be produced in the European climate due to the needs of the plants, but this is not the point, since this concept does not solely apply to coffee, but can be applied to any product that is produced under similar or worse conditions elsewhere. As Hornborg explains, through technology, production processes are perceived to be independent from material constraints, but in fact displacement of environmental load to extractive sectors in the periphery takes place (2006: 75). Through displacing the violence, as the environmental load, it is rendered invisible and the economy, labor conditions, or worker's rights might be labeled clean, moral, or present, while in fact they are not. The disregard for standards upheld in the core, is simply transferred to the periphery and the relations of production and consumption are disguised. Hornborg argues that development in the core often implies environmental load displacement to the periphery (2011: 63). By connecting this argument to violence displacement, it can be argued that the same holds true, through development in the core, in the sense of rising standards in terms of working conditions, recognition of worker's rights and higher prices, violence is displaced to the periphery, taking advantage of power relations and impoverishment.

The concept of embodied violence, as well as the concept of violence displacement are framed according to decolonial theory, referring to the legacy of the colonial time. This is based on the fact that what I analyzed is not a new phenomenon, but has a long standing tradition, and is rooted in colonialism. This is underlined by the fact that Nicaragua entered in international trade with Europe right after independence, exporting foremost coffee (Strayer, 2009: 551). Hence, the trade relations replaced colonial rule right away, which does not mean that power relations shifted. As was explained before, coloniality of power refers to power relations that were established during the colonial time and endure until today. The application of this concept on my analysis indicates that the working conditions present at the farms in

northern Nicaragua are only possible due to power relations across states that were established long ago. If it was not for the traditional exploitation of resources from Latin America to Europe, and at a later stage to North America, the consumer-producer relationship presented in this study would not have the form it does. Because the power relations were formed in accordance with colonial notions of race or ethnics, they were naturalized, serving the European to categorize the whole world according to this artificially created system and allowed them the categorization of certain ethnicities with certain work (Quijano, 1995, 2000). This model of power also legitimated and still legitimates the feeling of superiority of the European, justifying the exploitation of the Latin American workers. As decolonial theory argues, these mechanisms are still in place and this is supported by the two concepts introduced in this chapter. Through the continuing dominance of high-income states, the exploitation through unequal exchange is naturalized and justified through economic terms. As coloniality persists, the same power relations as in the colonial time are at work and make it possible to firstly, displace violence from the core to the periphery and secondly, to render invisible the violence inherent in a production process in the periphery, leading to the consumption of embodied violence in the core. As this study is based on fieldwork in Nicaragua and the export of the coffee to Europe or North America, the decolonial frame is highly relevant and highlights the underlying mechanisms to the concept. Moreover, the identified power relations illustrate that the concept is framed in terms of core-periphery relations in the world-system. As stated introducing decolonial theory, it cannot be left out regarding relations between former colonies and former colonizers. This simultaneously justifies its use as a frame here, and is reestablished through the concepts of embodied violence and violence displacement. Additionally, decolonial theory reveals the violence inherent to modernity, arguing that through dehumanization the exploitation of the colonized is legitimated and that the justification of the superiority of the European has shifted towards economics means and the market force (Maldonado-Torres, 2008). This supports the argument regarding the naturalization and justification of exploitation through unequal exchange, that was made above. This applies to both, the concept of embodied violence and violence displacement, because both are based on the notion of a core feeling superior to the periphery and therefore also justify sustaining the structures that lead to the violence inflicted on the producer. Furthermore, this leads back to cultural violence as described above, because it illustrates how the cultural understanding and perception of superiority (core) and inferiority

(periphery), as originally created in colonial times, legitimates the structural violence up until today in forms of unequal exchange. This also means that in the core, the practices are not even perceived as violence acts or not even as doing wrong.

All in all, the two concepts elaborated in this chapter are both informed by an understanding of the world in terms of a world-system and take a bearing on the concepts of embodied land and embodied labor. They are both based on the earlier defined categories of violence and framed by decolonial theory. This means that when all these theories are combined, even without doing the fieldwork, the result is close to the related concepts of embodied violence and violence displacement. *Embodied violence* is thus the violence inherent in production processes that is suffered by the producer and consumed by the consumer of the product, who avoids suffering him- or herself by displacing the violence. Accordingly, *violence displacement* is the transfer of violence in form of unpleasant working conditions etc. from the consumer (core) to the producer (periphery).

7. Conclusion

This grounded theory study introduced the two new concepts *embodied violence* and *violence displacement*, which are based on qualitative ethnographic data gathered during fieldwork in northern Nicaragua. The fieldwork was conducted among *corteros*, who work in the coffee harvest, picking coffee that is then exported to Europe or North America. Through the analysis I showed that there are different types of violence inherent in the production process, especially structural and slow violence, but not exclusively. I used different concepts as a frame to this study, such as ecologically unequal exchange and environmental load displacement by Hornborg. I especially used the concepts of embodied land and embodied labor which initially inspired me to develop my own concepts. Besides, the definitions of violence by Galtung and Nixon and decolonial theory to take in the bigger picture were used as well. Through applying these concepts on my empirical data, I elaborated my own concepts. They are constructed within the frame of decolonial theory and the concepts by Hornborg are used as a backbone in terms of what they refer to. Accordingly, *embodied violence* refers to the violence inherent in the production process. This violence is suffered by the producer in the periphery and consumed by the consumer in the core, who avoids

suffering it through the import of the product. The violence is thus *displaced* from the consumer to the producer, which is exactly what *violence displacement* refers to. Violence displacement describes the transfer of violence from the core to the periphery, which becomes apparent in the producer's working and living conditions.

In order to develop these concepts, I posed different research questions, which are divided into empirical and analytical research questions. The empirical questions regarding the treatment and the work life of the *corteros*, helped me during the fieldwork to gather the data needed and to give me the base from where to start elaborating the concept. The analytical questions then provided me with guidance through the analysis, starting with the categorization of violence and leading to the result in form of the two concepts. Having applied the concepts mentioned above and examined the relationship between producer and consumer, helped me shape the resulting concepts, which are closely related. Hence, the answers to the research questions can be found in the two concepts and in the empirical data presented during the analysis. The concepts of embodied violence and violence displacement refer simultaneously to the working conditions, to the violence or injustice that is inherent in the world-system and make these possible, and to the producer-consumer relationship. They highlight the interrelatedness of the core and the periphery, of what we consume here in high-income countries and what is produced there in low-income countries.

The concepts were created to illustrate these circumstances, to show what impacts the system has on individuals. As presented in the conceptualization chapter, through the combination of all the concepts and theories that I chose as a frame, one gets close to what I call embodied violence and violence displacement. However, standing on their own, none of these concepts or theories describes those phenomena explicitly. Combining them and hence combining different perspectives on basically the same issue shows that the concepts I presented in this study have relevance. They are important in the sense that they explicitly describe a matter that is otherwise only present by reading between the lines and give a name to the phenomenon that is otherwise just hinted at.

Future research should be done on these concepts due to their relevance. Firstly, it should be tested on other sites, considering other products or the same product in other regions, sticking to the core-periphery divide I have identified and used here and that is coherent with decolonial theory. It would be important to have comparisons from other cases,

seeing if the concepts can be applied and supported by them. This would be the first step, maintaining the same scale. Secondly, it would also be interesting to test this concept on production processes that are not necessarily set in the coloniality context, that is not between former colonies and former colonizing powers, to see what impact this has. This could be, for example, regarding a core-periphery context in one single country. Lastly, another idea for future research, which I have briefly mentioned in the conceptualization, is to elaborate on the quantification of violence. Besides the ethical questions that arise, and which would need careful examination, quantifying violence in the context of these concepts could be a powerful tool to measure it more easily and make it even more accessible than is embodied violence as a qualitative concept now. It could be easier combined with concepts such as embodied land or embodied labor and through the presentation of numbers might gain a different weight in presenting unequal exchange in these terms. Any of these ideas to further develop the concepts introduced in this study are worth serious consideration, as they raise an important issue and illustrate a hidden feature in economic relations.

8. References

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Appendix: Transcripts

Transcripts from Field Notes:

26th January 2017 (Original quote from Field Notes):

“Pues, realmente les explotan a los dos, a nosotros pues porque nos explotan y a ustedes porque les mienten y les cobran caro el café”

2nd February 2017 (Original quote from Field Notes):

“Si sacaran todos los chavalos que no llegaron a la secundaria en un bus, se quedara vacio San Juan”

Transcripts from Interviews (exemplifying):

07th February 2017, Interview with Alejandro:

[...] “Qué...cuántos años tiene?” -“18” -“Y hasta qué grado ha estudiado?” -“Hasta segundo grado” -“[...] o a qué edad empezó a cortar?” -“A los...a los doce años” -“a los doce años?”
[...] “los capataces son enojados, si uno deja granos le regresan así es la diferencia”
“Entonces ahora es más fuerte que antes?” -“Sí” [...] “En la comida también ha cambiado mucho [...] porque antes los daban la comida bien hecha y ahora nos dan crudo mejor dicho todo” [...] “Ah y los capataces son enojados, lo regañan a uno si uno está sentado lo reprenden” [...]

15th February 2017, Interview with Anielka:

[...] “Cuántos años tiene?” -“Quién? Yo?” -“Sí” -“18” -“Y hasta...hasta qué grado estudió?” -“Quinto” -“Y a qué edad empezó a cortar?” -“Como de nueve años” [...] “Claro que pesan pero... [...] Ve es que a nosotros los ponían lo que nosotros nos aguantabamos, si nos aguantabamos dos latas, dos latas sí [...] así aprendimos a cargar” [...] “Sí porque allí le da los surcos más buenos a la familia, fijate que uno puede estar aquí aquí y qué...allí sólo es a la familia que le da los surcos éste hombre” [...] -“Y por qué no pagan parece?” -“Mmh..éste viejo a saber por qué será que no paga...para que estén allí siempre trabajando” [...]

16th February 2017, Group Interview with Rafa, David y Tupac (two friends of the family):

[...] “Cuántos años tienen?” -“Yo, 17” -“21” [...] “29” -“Ehm, hasta qué grado estudiaron?”
-“Yo estudié hasta quinto” -“De la primaria?” -“Sí” -“primer año yo” [...] “quinto año” “Y a
qué edad empezaron a cortar?” -“Yo de...” -“más o menos” -“como de...doce” -“como
de...como de trece, yo desde pequeño” -“yo caminaba revolcándome en estos guindos pero
allí caminaba” [...] “a veces los va bien y a veces los va mal pues por medio del corte como
esté la situación” [...]