



# LUND UNIVERSITY

## **Hate Violence as Attacks on Bodies, Identities, and Futures**

**A qualitative study of LGBTQIA+ persons'  
experiences of hate violence**

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# Abstract

This thesis examines the experiences of LGBTQIA+ persons in Latin America, when they are targeted with hate violence. The study is based on 21 in-depth, qualitative interviews from persons affiliated with IRCA CASABIERTA, a non-governmental organization in San José, Costa Rica, working with LGBTQIA+ migrants, typically from other Latin American countries. The study works through a post structural and social constructivist lens, by applying a theoretical framework from Judith Butler, looking into linguistic vulnerability, injurious speech, and regulation of bodies. This approach is accompanied by concepts from Richard Jenkins, Erving Goffman, Raewyn Connell, and Pierre Bourdieu, which aid and complement the analytical scope. The study aims to unveil how hate violence permeates lived experiences in various life domains of LGBTQIA+ persons. By applying a holistic approach in understanding the workings of hate violence attacks, the study examines life domains as the objects of attack, rather than categories of violence, as is usually the framework for violence studies. Here, the study identifies three life domains that are predominantly attacked and impacted by hate violence, which are: the body, the identity, and the future. The study contributes to the existing field, by introducing a novel way of understanding hate violence as a disruption of entire life domains, which builds on and adds to pre-existing understandings of hate crime and hate violence.

Key words: hate violence, LGBTQIA+, Latin America, normativity, linguistic vulnerability, gender border control, regulation, life domains.

## Popular science summary

Hate crime, or bias motivated crime, is defined as a criminal act against a person, or several people, which is executed based on a represented minority of difference from, what others consider to be the norm. This can entail attacks on people, because of their religious beliefs, skin colour, gender, country of origin, sexual orientation, and many other such representations. Different countries have different definitions of hate crime written into their penal codes, while some have none at all. Hate violence, is used to describe acts of violence based on bias, against minorities or marginalized people, whether it be criminalized in a given country, or not. Thereby, hate violence describes the act of hate violence, in various forms, rather than judicially, regionally, ratified ones.

This thesis focuses on hate violence attacks in Central- and Latin America, and the Caribbean, targeting LGBTQIA+ persons, which stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and more. The study was carried out with qualitative interview methods, by interviewing 21 individuals. The interviews are the center of the thesis, where post structural and social constructivist social theories have been applied to analyze the testimonies from the informants. These perspectives see all social and societal life as constructed by humans, human history, and human politics, meaning that nothing can be taken for granted, and everything currently considered as normal, could potentially be very different, if people saw it differently.

Typically, hate violence and violence in general, is understood through different categories, such as physical, psychological, institutional violence, etc. Hate violence is furthermore seen as targeting the whole community, in this case the LGBTQIA+ community, through an attack on one of few individuals. This study looks into how LGBTQIA+ persons are affected by hate violence, and how that in turn reflects on what hate violence truly is attacking in people's lives. In this thesis, hate violence attacks are presented to attack people's bodies, their identities, and their futures. This may sound simple, nevertheless all three of these areas of lived experiences are fairly complex and have not previously been conceptualized as targets of hate violence, in the way they are presented in this thesis. Moreover, the body, identity, and future are interlinked, why there are overlaps between attacks on the three "life domains".

A trigger warning is in order before reading the result chapters, as some testimonies can be difficult to read, as they at times concern severe, violent, and heartbreaking lived experiences.

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# Introduction

This thesis concerns experiences of hate violence, specifically targeting people in the LGBTQIA+ community, in Central America, the Caribbean and a few South American Countries, all of which is also referred to as Latin America. The term ‘hate violence’ is applied in this study as it encompasses discriminatory violence regardless of criminalization thereof, as hate *crime* is a geosocially contingent concept, as will be explained in the literature review. The data, which the thesis centers around, was gathered in connection to a research-internship in IRCA CASABIERTA<sup>1</sup>, a non-governmental organization, located in San José, Costa Rica. 21 in-depth, qualitative interviews have been conducted, all of which had original purposes relating to the research I did for IRCA CASABIERTA. 11 interviews were conducted with professionals in the organization, whereafter 10 interviews were conducted with ‘persons of interest’. ‘Persons of interest’ refers to the people, which receive the services by IRCA CASABIERTA, who, in this dataset, are all migrants from other Latin American countries, residing in Costa Rica. ‘Persons of interest’ will be used going forward, as is preferred within the organization.

IRCA CASABIERTA is a civil rights and non-governmental organization that specifically works with and provide services for people, who have migrated to Costa Rica and who identify as LGBTQIA+<sup>2</sup> persons. IRCA CASABIERTA provides humanitarian aid, legal advice and processing, social work, accompaniment for appointments with other institutions, political advocacy, psychological treatment, and workshops for improved integration and employment strategies. Moreover, they produce political advocacy and provide education for institutions and enterprises in Costa Rica, both of which are aimed at improving life circumstances for LGBTQIA+ persons, identifying issues, and illuminating associated topics for general society in the country (Méndez, 2022).

In 2022 Costa Rica ratified hate crime, as a separate, more severe category, to their penal code (Pérez & Fonseca, 2022). Nevertheless, impunity for offenders persists to be the main response to hate crimes and illegal discrimination in Costa Rica (Hivos, 2022). Many persons of interest come to Costa Rica, in search of safer, better lives, without persecution (Refugees International, 2023),

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<sup>1</sup> Institute for Refugees and Migration and LGBTQIA+ issues in Central America

<sup>2</sup> People whom identify within a non cisgender or heterosexual norm. Stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and more representations

because Costa Rica is considered safe, inclusive, and progressive regarding LGBTQIA+ and feminist issues. However, the reality in Costa Rica is oftentimes not as hoped or anticipated, upon arrival, as hate violence is continuously produced within the country (ibid., Q Costa Rica, 2023). Thus, many persons of interest have and continue to experience hate violence in various forms and fluctuations, both in their countries of origin and in Costa Rica. Costa Rica will be the only specifically addressed country, as the study was conducted there. Nevertheless, this study does not differentiate between the experiences of hate violence from the respective countries of origin and Costa Rica, as the focus is rather to understand the various functions of hate violence in the region.

During the research, I noticed how hate violence against the population of interest is often referred to in categorical forms, such as physical, psychological, and institutional violence, as is the widespread understanding of the versatility of violence (CONAPO, 2018). While the categories certainly are not without function and explanatory value, this study presents hate violence as various forces, which interfere with life in interplaying and fluctuating ways, that are not limited to the typical categories. This interference presents as very harmful and thus prolongs the harm which is perpetuated in hate violence incidents. How people are impacted, transcends into aspects of their lives, and lived experiences, which I have chosen to define as ‘life domains’. In this thesis, the concept of life domains thus refers to large aspects of life and overarching forms of lived experience, which are inherently present in human and social life, such as relationships and health, etc. (Gao et al., 2024). This approach allows for a more holistic way of understanding hate violence, as going beyond infliction of pain. By examining the topic with this perspective, while maintaining a tight connection to the data at hand, I arrive to the research question below.

## Research question

Which life domains are under attack in hate violence targeting LGBTQIA+ persons, and how do the attacks take form in their testimonies?

Essential to answering the research question, is uncovering the existing scholarly contributions to understanding hate violence against LGBTQIA+ persons, and furthermore the LGBTQIA+ communities residing in Latin America, as well as specifically in Costa Rica. Thus, it is deemed necessary to present a thorough literature review, providing an overview of current and previous knowledge regarding the topic at hand.



## Literature review

The following review will introduce a comparison of previous scholarly efforts towards understanding and perceiving hate crime and hate violence, followed by an examination of hate violence and hate crimes specifically against LGBTQIA+ persons, and the impacts that follow. Thereafter, the review focuses regionally on Costa Rica and wider in Latin America, as is primordial to the present study. Finally, the chapter identifies limitations to existing research and relevance of the scope in the thesis.

### Hate crime and hate violence

Through the last decades, the notion of hate crime has received increased legal, political, and scholarly attention (Perry, 2001; Chakraborti & Garland, 2015). Although many states and countries are adopting the concept of hate crime into their legislative and punitive frameworks, the concept of hate crime is not globally accepted. Where hate crime is legislatively incorporated, it is perceived as a criminal act of graver severity than others of similar conduct, meaning that the criminal act is taken more seriously and punished more harshly, if the motivation behind is hatred, bias or opposition to the victim's community or perceived representation (Institut for Menneskerettigheder, 2024; National Police Chief's Council & True Vision, 2024.; U.S. Department of Justice, 2022). Minority representations can include race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation, religious beliefs, physical or mental disability, and more – however these categories are contingent on national laws and are therefore not globally protected (Garland & Funnell, 2016). Furthermore, a purely legislative scope will not provide a comprehensive understanding of what hate violence is, and how it can be conceptualized. As will be demonstrated, there is scarce dispute between definitions in the field of hate crime and hate violence, but rather a co-construction and continuous improvement of the concepts.

Non-criminalized aspects of hate violence are addressed in the work of Leah Burch (2021), where she discusses the effects of *everyday hate*, although specifically regarding the invasions and discriminations experienced by people with disabilities. Other scholars have used different terminologies such as *hate-motivated aggression* or *bias-motivated victimization* (Sugarman et al., 2018), and in official endeavors outside of academia, terms such as *hate-incidents* are also applied

(National Police Chief's Council & True Vision, 2024) to overcome limitations of the hate crime concept, and thereby widen the scope and understanding of non-criminalized hate victimization. Hate violence spans far beyond concepts of physical violence, as it also circumfers verbal, psychological, symbolic, sexual, systemic, and institutional violence, based on or motivated by prejudice, bias or hatred against the victimized minority (CONAPO, 2018; Opotow, 2005; Sugarman et al., 2018). The following sections mainly use the term hate *crime* but do, nonetheless, address how hate violence of non-criminal nature is also to be understood as equally harmful. This is an important observation to keep in mind, as the focus of the thesis looks into experiences of hate violence in myriad forms, and not only those criminalized.

Chakraborti & Garland (2015) discuss the difficulties of operationalizing the concept of hate crime. They distinguish between academic, official, and legal definitions, which all have different functionalities and in turn different operationalizations. One aspect of the slippery nature of the hate crime concept is the presumption of hatred being a key element in hate crime or hate incidents. As they argue “‘hate’ is an emotive and conceptually ambiguous label that can mean different things to different people” (ibid.:2), thus making hate crime harder to identify, also in judicial procedures. Moreover, they argue that the presumed hatred is often misleading, as hatred is not necessarily an element in hate crimes and, if present, it is rarely the hatred between perpetrator and victim, that is most salient, but rather ideological implications. As they elaborate on prior definitions of hate crime, it becomes evident that what is considered ‘hatred’, rather encompasses the reaction or opposition to a given minority.

Then, hate violence is exercised, when the minority's presence is perceived as a threat, to the ‘quality of life’ of the majority and/or the perpetrators, as is seen in one definition (Petrosino, 2003:10). Other academic definitions employed by Chakraborti and Garland are those of Sheffield (1995) and Perry (2001). Sheffield's definition suggests belief systems as key components of motivations for a legitimization of violence against minorities (1995), which thereby also pulls away from a hatred-centered concept. The definition Chakraborti & Garland themselves have applied is one that considers “hate crimes as acts of violence, hostility and intimidation directed towards people because of their identity or perceived ‘difference’” (2015:5). Chakraborti & Garland also show partiality to Barbara Perry's definition, which similarly is presented in her work as emerging from an elaborate comparison of previous definitions. In her book *In the Name of*

*Hate* (2001), Perry introduces other scholarly work, which tends to focus on ethnic or racial hatred, or particular legal frameworks, and lacks certain nuances or factors. Perry then arrives to her own definition:

Hate crime, then, involves acts of violence and intimidation, usually directed toward already stigmatized and marginalized groups. As such, it is a mechanism of power and oppression, intended to reaffirm the precarious hierarchies that characterize a given social order. It attempts to recreate simultaneously the threatened (real or imagined) hegemony of the perpetrator's group and the "appropriate" subordinate identity of the victim's group. It is a means of marking both the Self and the Other in such a way as to reestablish their "proper" relative positions, as given and reproduced by broader ideologies and patterns of social and political inequality. (Perry, 2001:10)

Perry furthermore elaborates on how the particular aspect of positioning in hate crime situations, is not considered to be solely relational incidents between perpetrator and victim. Rather, the parties directly involved become almost immaterial to the meaning and symbolism that is created in hate crimes. The real effect, which is linked to the intent of a hate motivated attack, establishes fear of breaking social rank between groups, through producing "fear, hostility and suspicion" (Ibid.:10). A salient point in Perry's approach, is that hate crime is an attempt to subdue entire communities, which results in manifold consequences, beyond the harms caused in the isolated incident. It is therefore a symptom of structural oppression and a hostile response to potential challenges of the normative status quo. These challenges are often present when minority groups gain visibility or political voice, which has also been suggested in a study by Cikara et. al (2022), that found an increase in hate violence against certain minority groups in local communities, when they increased in size-based rank. Other examples of hate violence responding to minorities' increase in size or influence have been examined, when heterosexist and heteronormative aggressions are displayed as reactions to same-sex marriage rights and same-sex marriages. Then heteronormative political power is presumably challenged, relinquishing a perceived entitlement for retaliation (Piatkowska & Messner, 2022).

## Homophobic and transphobic hate violence

This thesis solely focuses on LGBTQIA+ persons and how hate violence and hate crimes affect their lives and communities. Therefore, this section addresses previous work concerning this specific type of hate violence. The LGBTQIA+ community consists of a large variety of representations, which cannot all be placed in one category. Attacks on LGBTQIA+ persons entail

attacks on more groups than those of homosexual and transgender people. However, the offenders or rationales behind attacks are usually described as either homo- or transphobic. Therefore, I will oftentimes refer to attacks as such, although these hold clear limitations. It is important to understand that anti-LGBTQIA+ hate violence is harmful regardless of its potential criminalization (National Police Chief's Council & True Vision, 2024).

Transphobic violence refers to an aversion or denigration of people who identify with another gender than the one they were assigned at birth, as opposed to cisgender people. Transphobia is a discrimination category of its own, although it receives significantly less political and scholarly attention (Chakraborti & Garland, 2015:66). Furthermore, transgender women are the most marginalized and victimized group, in the LGBTQIA+ community. Transgender women are tragically, still, often mis-perceived as men, pretending to be women (ibid.:68), as there is a prevalent disregard and lack of respect towards transgender peoples' gender identity. Secondly, many transgender people receive daily discrimination and harassment, which sadly results in processes of normalization thereof, leading to a higher threshold for violence and thusly a larger barrier for reporting or seeking help, after experiences of hate aggression (Ibid.:66). A third problem also occurs, when transphobic violence is confused with homophobic violence, in spite of their clear difference, where one has to do with sexual orientation and the other gender identity (Ibid.:71), hence the terms; transphobia and homophobia.

Homophobic hate violence is explained by Barbara Perry (2001) as an extreme version of heterosexism that denigrates, condemns, and violates the presumed "unnatural" (ibid.:106) practices of sexual and amorous behaviors, which do not conform to heterosexual and heteroamorous norms. Thus, by attacking representations of non-hetero-conforming practices, the offender displays *doing difference* (Ibid:2;46), and thereby demonstrates their own alignment with heteronormativity.

As mentioned previously, one perspective on anti-LGBTQIA+ attitudes suggests that hate motivated aggressions stem from a perceived group-threat or political encroachment (Piatkowska & Messner, 2022). This is described as protectiveness of norms associated with privileges and normative superiority, followed by attacks on those believed to threaten them (ibid.). Other explanations have been connected to hegemonic gender expectations (Chakraborti & Garland,

2015:62), especially regarding violence against homosexual men and/or transwomen. This perspective does not differ all that much from the priorly described suggestion of a challenged positioning in normative, political power if considering masculinity as a main power structure in a heavily, binarily, gendered society (Ibid.). Javaid suggests that perpetrators feel a need to react to male bodies not conforming to stereotypical or hegemonic ideals of masculinity, with physical and sexual violence (2018, 2020). This can be interpreted as a reaction to a threatened norm of masculinity, insecure masculinity within the offender, and extreme othering of the victim, all of which result in a re-affirming act of establishing a gendered structure through aggression against homosexual and/or effeminate men (Lucies & Yick, 2009; McConnell et al., 2021; Perry, 2001). With homosexual women, masculinity structures can also be considered as threatened, when the object of “male” desire shows no need nor interest in male partnership or simply does not conform to the femininity expected of women (Perry, 2001:83).

Another gendered approach, which also seeks to explain hate aggressions against homosexual and/or effeminate males, transgender women, and misogyny by extension, is the suggestion of hate aggressions emerging from *femmephobia* (Hoskin, 2020). Femmephobia entails a hierarchy between masculine and feminine, but moreover an aversion to, oppression or vilification of femininity – especially in bodies, where it supposedly does not belong. The concept of femmephobia aids in explaining, why homosexual men are targeted more frequently than homosexual women, and transgender women more frequently than transgender men (Hoskin, 2020). Furthermore, other studies have shown that sexual minority women and trans-women are at higher risk for intimate relationship violence (Roffee & Waling, 2016) and gender-based violence (Williams et al., 2023), which would further the argument for femininity and femaleness being a more targeted gender expression.

## Repercussions of anti-LGBTQIA+ violence

Until this point, the focus has mainly been on the productions of hate violence, why I will now examine the possible consequences thereof, which has also been described as *hate harm* (Walters, 2014:62). Previous research on hate violence against LGBTQIA+ persons has shown several types of repercussions to the psychological and social lives of victims (Lucies & Yick, 2009).

Psychological effects such as depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicidal ideation have been shown to be highly prevalent within LGBTQIA+ communities (Chakraborti & Garland, 2015; Cramer et al., 2012, 2018; Lucies & Yick, 2009). These effects connect to low self-esteem, internalized

homophobia or transphobia, where self-blame has been identified as a form of making sense of the victimization (Ibid.; Dank et al., 2014; Vergani & Navarro, 2023). Other repercussions, such as self-alteration or self-regulation to avoid discrimination, have also shown to inhibit LGBTQIA+ persons' psychological wellbeing, since many feel they cannot express themselves fully in fear of victimization (Chakraborti & Garland, 2015; Lucies & Yick, 2009; McConnell et al., 2021; Walters, 2014), while some develop strategies to prevent emotional vulnerability in hate violence (Sugarman et al., 2018). In either case, a form of self-preservation is carried out, due to an expectation of violence and aggression from social surroundings.

Social processes of hate violence are expressed through bullying, rejection from social networks such as families and religious communities, neighborhoods, and the like (Walters, 2014). Connections to religion have also been identified as a great source of rejection and violence, through spiritual exclusion or being identified as sinful, sodomites, outcasts, or assumed to be "going to hell", leading to experiences of being "doomed to personal and spiritual misery" (Lucies & Yick, 2009:59). In relational spheres these inequalities are identified through significantly higher rates of violence in intimate relationships (Dank et al., 2014). Also, LGBTQIA+ persons have been found to be less likely to report violence in intimate partner relationships, and violence in general, in comparison to their heterosexual counterparts (Ibid.; Vergani & Navarro, 2023).

On a societal scale, hate violence is often observed when LGBTQIA+ persons interact with state institutions or authorities, such as healthcare, police, and justice systems (Dank et al., 2014; McConnell et al., 2021; Walters, 2014). This can affect LGBTQIA+ persons' safety and cohesion within societal structures, when "interaction with agency employees left them with a sense of secondary victimization" (Walters, 2014:186). An important element to understand within this theme is the concept of intersectionality, which aims to uncover the effects of accumulated oppression factors and/or privileges in people's lives (McConnell et al., 2021; Warrier, 2022), which greatly impacts life circumstances for targets of hate violence and discrimination. Another element to keep in mind is that hate violence against a minority, as described previously, affects the community as a whole. This connects to concepts of *minority stress* (McConnell et al., 2021) and *sexual minority specific stress* (Burks et al., 2018). This presents as distress caused by violence against minority representation, experienced historically, by others in the community, if not

personally, and produces inequalities between LGBTQIA+ communities and the cisgender and heterosexual majority.

## Anti-LGBTQIA+ Hate Violence in Latin America and Costa Rica

As this study specifically concerns LGBTQIA+ persons who have migrated to Costa Rica, from Caribbean, Central- and other Latin American countries, it is important to review the scholarly work particularly from this region of the world, as experiences of hate violence are patterned, conditioned, and expressed differently within cultural contexts.

Latin America has been said to be the most violent region in the world, when it comes to anti-LGBTQIA+ violence (Sin Violencia LGBTI, 2023). COES, a United Nations research collaboration on online hate speech in Costa Rica, has observed an exponential increase in hate speech against minority groups in Costa Rican social media. This increase manifests in a 71% increase in online hate speech from 2021 to 2022, and an additional 50% growth from 2022 to 2023, thus indicating that hate-, prejudice-, and bias-attitudes are continuously spreading in Costa Rica after 2020, in spite of increased equality and political inclusion in the previous decades (Refugees International, 2023; United Nations & COES, 2023). Some of the most affected minorities are migrants, followed by women, persons of non-heterosexual orientation and non-cisgender identity, where the majority of comments are directed towards homosexual men. The most prominent producers of online hate speech are men, which coincides with a commonly seen criticism of the prevalent misogynistic, patriarchal, and cis- and heteronormative discourses in Central America (Sagot, 2008). These online discourses do not remain in online fora, but manifest in material life.

A multi-organizational collaboration, produced a report which not only presents data on the overwhelming prevalence of hate violence against LGBTQIA+ persons, but also points to societal issues, which prevent combatting hate violence in Costa Rica, such as an absence of cultural and legal support and protection of victims (HIVOS, 2022).

When it comes to determining the magnitude of hate violence in the region there is scarce informative involvement from governmental and legislative apparatuses, which provides impunity for perpetrators, and absence of statistical representation. Thus, collaborations between interest- and non-governmental organizations have become key in illuminating the risks and dangers that LGBTQIA+ persons live with. In 2019, a study showed that 61% of hate violence in Costa Rica

was targeted trans-women (REDLACTRANS et al., 2020). Another study points to a general absence of state acknowledgment of transgender identities in Latin America, which leads to a heightened unsafety for trans lives (REDLACTRANS et al., 2022). This includes institutional violence within healthcare, education, employers, and the police. Furthermore, the violence extends into civil society, where sexual and physical assaults are also prevalent (Ibid). Violence against transgender women in Costa Rica has been documented to lead to an unjustly, high incarceration of transwomen, whose gender identities are rarely acknowledged, and are therefore placed in men's prisons, where they continue to be victimized (Rodriguez Alvarez & Fernandez Muñoz, 2022). Also, transgender women have been documented to have less access to education and work, which unsurprisingly leads to higher marginalization (Ibid.).

Recent changes in Costa Rican law have meant that same sex marriage is legalized (Malta et al., 2019), and transgender people in Costa Rica have a right to identification documents with their chosen name and gender identity (Salazar, 2017). In 2022 Costa Rica ratified an acknowledgement of hate crime (Pérez & Fonseca, 2022), which was previously not considered a category within the legislation. Therefore, many LGBTQIA+ persons flee from their countries of origin in search of safer lives in Costa Rica, but unfortunately still encounter difficulties adjusting (Q Costa Rica, 2023; Refugees International, 2023), due to evident reasons, as seen in this section.

Although the situation for LGBTQIA+ persons in Costa Rica continues to be precarious, the circumstances in the surrounding countries, unfortunately provide harsher odds for safe and healthy lives for LGBTQIA+ people (Malta et al., 2019). In spite of lacking documentation and investigative collaboration from governments, 2841 murders of LGBTQIA+ persons have been registered by civil rights organizations in Latin America since 2014 (Sin Violencia, 2024). Furthermore, the average life span for transgender women in Central America is tragically documented to be between 30 and 35 years (IACHR, 2015).

In addition to a merited need for further research on how the current disparities and disadvantages impact LGBTQIA+ lives, there is little question of whether structural changes are equally needed.

## Gaps in existing research

Narrowing in on the current study, a relevance for further research has been requested across the board from hate crime and hate violence scholars (Burch, 2022; Perry, 2001; Sugarman et al., 2018; Vergani & Navarro, 2023). This especially goes for Latin America, as the experiences of



LGBTQIA+ victims of hate violence are rarely given political or scholarly attention (HIVOS, 2022; Malta et al., 2019; Rodriguez Alvarez & Fernandez Muñoz, 2022). The exacerbated hate violence occurring in Costa Rica, a country in which many Latin American LGBTQIA+ migrants seek refuge, is thus attributed a much-needed focus. As this study investigates the experiences of LGBTQIA+ people from various countries of origin, all currently residing in Costa Rica, an international as well as Costa Rica-centered focus is employed. Rather than approaching the study quantitatively, this thesis is centered on how hate violence attacks are experienced and how said attacks, directly and indirectly, affect people's lives. Some literature has been aimed at unfolding the harms caused by hate violence, however, pre-existing studies have mostly demonstrated quantitative or psychological approaches, why I find a qualitative, cultural criminological and sociological focus necessary to contribute to the field of hate violence. For further understanding of the chosen approach, the following chapter will elaborate on the social constructivist and post structural theoretical frame used to interpret the collected data of this study.

## Theory

In the current study, I find great applicability in the frameworks and various theoretical concepts of Judith Butler<sup>3</sup>, in their respective books *Excitable Speech* (1997) and *Gender Trouble* (1990). As the data produces many examples of corporeal regulation and attacks on LGBTQIA+ persons' bodies and physical expression, the chapter *Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions* (1990) will be utilized, as it examines how normative constructs regulate bodies. In *Excitable Speech* Butler theorizes the injurious capacity of words and hateful speech, in various levels of human experiences, in the chapters: *Linguistic vulnerability*, *Burning Acts*, *Injurious Speech* and *Sovereign Performatives* (1997). Here, functions of lingual violence against minority groups are elaborated upon, thereby also showing relevance. Butler's theoretical pathways are accompanied by selected concepts from Jenkins (2014), Goffman (2016), Bourdieu (1997), Connell & Messerschmidt (2005), which aid the analytical approaches in the result chapters.

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<sup>3</sup>Pronouns: they/them

## Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions

In this chapter, Butler unfolds the societal inscriptions on the human body, what these signify, and what social and structural circumstances are created through them. Butler describes how social limitations transform the body from a passive medium to a field of confines, as the body becomes culturally established. The body is then described as a *drama* (1990:177) for regulations of binary gender constructs and heteronormative limitations, which manifest the performed *regulatory fiction* (ibid.:185). Bodily inscriptions thus create a conceptual prison for any non-normative gender identity and gender expression. To this Butler writes “the limit of the body is never merely material, but that the surface, the skin, is systemically signified by taboos and anticipated transgressions” (ibid.:179). Here, the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) becomes relevant, as it aims to further the understanding on how representations of masculinity, as a social structure, are regulated and consistently reproduced.

What is central in Butler’s (1990) chapter, and for the present thesis, is the ways in which the body becomes a domain for regulation, and how mere existence in a human body can be considered a precarious endeavor, as one can easily transgress, and thus be subjected to social sanctions. In this framework, the body is separated from the self, the soul, and the identity, as *surface politics of the body* and *gender border control* (Butler, 1990:185) evaluate superficial and material attributes of a person, whilst synthetically instituting inner elements. The body, or the *surface* becomes an arena for negotiation, which is utilized by external persons to determine an individual’s dignity, value, and *integrity* (ibid.). Through assessment of a body, and to which extent it aligns with the fictional gender binary and heteronormative hegemonic expectations, a person’s inner qualities are then presumed by others. Thus, Butler’s concept of the gendered or corporeal border control establishes the ways bodies are structurally and personally regulated, to match normative constructs. The non-normative body then challenges norms, as it establishes “disorganization and disaggregation of the field of bodies”, and interferences with and obstructs the *heterosexual coherence* (ibid.:185). In relation to this study, Butler’s notions on the socially inscribed body, become highly functional, when examining exclusions of LGBTQIA+ persons, as they inherently challenge hetero- and cis-normative hegemonies. The material becomes immaterial, and later materializes again, through surface regulations. Thus, the body and its social inscriptions constitute the symbolic and corporeal life and existence through which we live and perceive others.

Supplementing Butler's theorization, Bourdieu's (1997) concepts of social positioning (ibid.:20) and symbolic and social spaces, become salient, as bodies are positioned and regulated, based on different criteria, depending on the spaces in which they are encountered, and the culture within said spaces (ibid.:54). In this study, these concepts become useful, when describing the denial of access to certain spaces, such as intrafamilial inclusion, institutions, governmental protection, health and safety, and more.

## Linguistic vulnerability and Injurious Speech

### Linguistic vulnerability

Butler describes *linguistic vulnerability* (Butler, 1997:5) as an inherent implication of human and cultural existence. The conditions of language are endemic to our conceptual and social existence, meaning that we exist through language and language exists through us. Therefore, linguistic power and *injury* (Butler, 1997:47) can be found within conceptuality and lingual executions of identification, exclusion, harm, and oppression. Conceptual existence is not limited to spoken words, as it refers to the circumstances through which all humans perceive and conceive of themselves and others. Furthermore, language is constructive of agency and *doing* (ibid.:7). Thus, linguistic vulnerability is not limited to verbal attacks, but rather to all violence, as corporeality and identity also tie into the conceptual existence, although described mainly through verbal attacks. Through Butler's understanding, conceptualization of bodies and bodily representations, in and amongst people, interfere with experiences of positionality. Thereby, linguistic actions hold the power to *interpellate* (ibid.:47). The idea of interpellation signifies the process of words and conceptual attacks invading a person's self-perception and experienced social position. As will be demonstrated in the results, internalization of derogatory language is common amongst informants in this study, why the interpellation concept finds applicability. These experiences are not confined to one moment but can create prolonged oppression, which appears in many symbolic and material forms, but all begin with language and conceptualization of difference and deviation. This connects to Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* (1997:16), which relates to production of experiences as causal to future social practice.

In relation to interpellated self-perceptions, theoretical concepts of social identity are also instrumental, as interpellation concerns interference with identity matters. Jenkins (2014)

describes social identity as strongly and irreducibly connected to experienced stability in psychological and social life, as identity is equally tied to an individual's self and relationships with others (ibid.:4,136). Although dependent on experienced stability, the self is established in various ongoing processes, such as self-development, self-purpose, self-esteem etc., which constitute the identity (ibid.:51). Henceforth, when exposed to interpellation, through Butler's theory, identity processes can be interfered with.

### Loss of context

The concept of lingual vulnerability and interpellation refer to verbal actions which aim to describe, name, and most importantly reducibly identify someone. Therefore, Goffman's (2016) concept of *stigma*, caused by *discreditation* (ibid.:46) of individuals, which furthermore becomes constructive of their *social identity* (ibid.:44), is found relevant. Through discreditation, stigma assigns identification to a person, without nuance, nor realistic representation of their actual identity. When instrumentalized, lingual injury (Butler, 1997), takes on the power to interfere with social identities, through stigmatization processes. When extreme interpellation takes place, a further consequence can be *loss of context* (ibid.:14). This takes place, when a person feels disconnected from their perceived social identity and positioning, as a result of lingual or conceptual injury. This takes place either through *recontextualization*, when establishment of a new "normal" is attempted (ibid.:83), or *decontextualization* (Ibid.:147), which entails a state of disorientation and loss of stable social identity and agency. Social identity in collectivity is intrinsic to experienced belonging in social layers and groups and is a basic human need (Jenkins, 2014:134). Moreover, social identities, positionings, and belonging construct stability for individuals in the process of "mapping the human world and our places in it" (ibid.:6).

The effects of injurious language and hostile perceptions of others, as seen in discreditation and stigmatization, hold capacity to destabilize identities. This interference can affect a person's perception of themselves, and how others perceive, acknowledge, and position them, and by extension, their perceived justification to be and express themselves in social spaces. The experience thereof can leave a person feeling out of place, out of words, and out of power, which in turn is a loss of context.

## The Corporeality of Language and the Dichotomic Nature of Threats

Verbal actions are produced by a body, they can be loud, guttural, and very vividly expressed. When explaining how language permeates the life of humans and the manifold aspects of lived experience, Butler also describes verbal actions, and threats in particular, as corporeal (1997:12). Threats contain direct messages which transmit from one body onto another (ibid.:4,5,12), thus making them highly corporeal. As many of my informants describe being threatened, in various forms, the conceptualization of threats, holds relevance to this study.

Threats can be considered as both chiasmic and dichotomic in nature. This is to be understood through the duplicity of threats, as they both constitute a verbal action, which is inherently violent, and a potential future consequence. Butler addresses these crossing elements as a combination of *illocutionary* and *perlocutionary* (ibid.:16) forms of speech, as they are both actions in themselves and hold an action to be followed. The chiasmic nature of threats is then constituted by the prefiguration of a material act to follow the verbal action (ibid.:12). Whether or not this eventually takes place, the potentially material repercussions, are what manifests the threat in material life. The unknown future events, after a threat, establish a loss of control for the target, which deepens the injury of threats. The prospect of violence thus becomes an attack in itself. Somewhere between words and the promise of future harm, there is a simultaneously dependent and independent action in a threat, which when executed as intended; threatens.

## Sovereign Performatives and Generative Language

Butler discusses terms used about minorities and the words that have been historically used to exclude or vilify them. This perspective allows for an elaborate comprehension of how language becomes *generative* and thereby gains historical weight (1997:50). When unequal power dynamics are present, which is rarely not the case, language can be weaponized in longitudinally tangible ways (Butler, 1997:47). Injurious language is then repeated through various channels in social life, and carries temporal and historical depth, why it becomes rather difficult to attribute culpability to the actively, uttering individual in the moment, as injurious words, such as slurs, are linked to a multiplicity of structures and power dynamics. Herein, Butler assigns the *state* (ibid.:77) as a catalyst for harmful language – not necessarily in the sense of governments, but societal structures. Thus, political discursive slippage, as seen in increased hateful speech, is intrinsically tied to power structures. Butler then proceeds to elaborate on slurs, as a phenomenon in itself, since slurs take

form through repetition and sanctioned instrumentalization (ibid.), as connected to sovereignty in generative language. When verbal attacks target minorities, they wield more power, as the target is already subjected to cultural, structural, or other forms of vulnerability and inequality. This is relevant to the countries of origin of the informants, but also Costa Rican politics. As seen in the literature review, there is an overwhelming increase in homophobic and transphobic hate speech in Costa Rica. The sovereign language of the state is disseminated throughout society, and then manifests through actions and continued utilization of injurious language. Therefore, the power that lies in speech, as produced by and within the state should be considered as co-constructive of the power that subjugates LGBTQIA+ persons.

During verbal attacks, as commonly seen against LGBTQIA+ persons, harmful words carry great potential injury to individuals' social contexts. Whether this be an attack on gender expression, sexuality, body, or identity, a potential for great harm is present.

Because the theoretical framework in this thesis is directly applied to the collected data, an elaboration of the methods utilized to gather and instrumentalize said data is in order, before moving on to the results. Thus, the following chapter introduces applied methods and the connected considerations and reflections.

## Methods

I came to write this thesis, thanks to my work with IRCA CASABIERTA, where I conducted an initial research project, which catalyzed the current study. I was privileged in the sense, that my participants were invited by the organization, why I did not need to actively seek out informants. The study was conducted using mainly sociological, qualitative methods. Nevertheless, ethnographic elements have been present during the process, since I was immersed in the field and organization, and experienced the environment and informants of study firsthand.

### Entry to the field and acquirement of interviews

My way into the field began with a three-month long internship for IRCA CASABIERTA beginning in July 2023, which consisted of a research project for and about the organization. During my time in Costa Rica, I was included in staff meetings and obtained a sense of how IRCA CASABIERTA functions and operates. I began the internship by studying the organization and

diving into the relevant literature, in order to better understand the regional and national issues the organization works to improve upon. As I commenced my independent research, I began by interviewing 11 employees in the organization, which were 2 psychologists, 2 social workers, 2 legal professionals, 2 social oversight and accompaniment professionals, 1 educator, 1 communications professional, and finally the founder and director of the organization. Thereafter, I conducted 4 interviews with persons of interest, of which 1 identified as a homosexual cisgender woman, 2 identified as homosexual cisgender men, and 1 identified as a heterosexual transgender woman. These interviews were initially conducted and intended for the research project I did for the organization, consisting of an analysis of the organization's approaches to, and understandings of, hate violence.

Upon my return to Sweden, my work for IRCA CASABIERTA continued, as I worked on a report concerning the research I had conducted, which they later published. Thereafter, the collaboration transformed, as I represented IRCA CASABIERTA in collaboration with Regnbågsfonden, a fundraising organization in Stockholm, Sweden, in March 2024. I was invited to Stockholm to present specified knowledge on the circumstances of LGBTQIA+ persons in the Central American region and how IRCA CASABIERTA functions within that context. As part thereof, I conducted 6 additional interviews with persons of interest, all of which were done virtually. In these interviews, the informants were distributed as follows: 1 heterosexual transgender woman, 1 homosexual cisgender woman, and 4 homosexual cisgender men. Thus, I ended with a total of 21 interviews, which have been the center and grounds for developing another research project – one that focuses on the experiences of hate violence, which is the present thesis.

## Research-design

While working on the project for IRCA CASABIERTA in Costa Rica, I observed how the complexities of hate violence did not correspond with the common portrayal of the topic. I started taking issue with the typical categories (CONAPO, 2018; Opatow, 2005; Sugarman et al., 2018) used to describe violence and did not find any satisfactory way of applying violence categories for coding my data at the time. The real-life experiences of the persons of interest, and the descriptions given by the professionals, who dedicate their time and work to them, had me forming other, messier perceptions of hate violence, than I previously had on the topic. In spite of seeing functionality in categorization, I found myself questioning the categories altogether. It was

challenging, but fascinating, nonetheless. I wanted to untangle the strings and connections, that were forming, but only made sense to me, so they could make sense to other people. In other words, I had found my *Intellectual itch* (Luker, 2008:62). Thus began the motivation for devoting more time and attention to the myriad aspects and possible repercussions of hate violence, which has led me to focus my master's thesis on that very topic.

The research-design of this project has been altered a few times, due to the different set-ups of my interviews, and the evolvement of my own conception of the topic. The cyclical life form of the research design was embraced with all its developments, as this allowed me as a researcher to improve on the perception of, and work with, the issues at hand (Brinkmann, 2022:35). By unpacking which life domains are attacked and affected during and after experienced hate violence I have instrumentalized the 21 interviews as a case study (Blatter & Haverland, 2012:5). Although each interview is valued as an individual contribution, approaching them collectively as a case study finds additional applicability, in pursuit of uncovering *explanatory factors*, (Ibid.:5) for which qualitative case studies are advantageous. Due to the sample size, there is little opportunity for a generalizable result section, however, this is not the aim of the project. The focal area is rather, to understand and “show how certain social practices and patterns shape what people do” (Luker, 2008:59). In respect to the limitations of the thesis project, 21 interviews have turned out to be a rather large collection of data, from which analytical possibilities are plenty (Blatter & Haverland, 2012:7). After conducting the interviews, the project consisted of transcribing, coding, and then analyzing the data, before writing the thesis. Furthermore, efforts have been put into translating excerpts, both using DeepL software, aided by personal editing, thus ensuring full comprehension and transparency.

Some informants have been key in the study and are therefore given more space in the presentation of results. Others are not directly represented with quotes but have nevertheless been crucial in developing the perspectives in the thesis.

## Positionality

One major topic of reflection in my project has been the concept of insider/outsider research (Miranda, 2022). There are great differences between my cultural background and that of people who live in Central- and Latin America. Thus, the comprehension of cultural differences and cultural competence (Bharadwaj & Daniel, 2023; King, 2023) was needed during my research.



I spent 3,5 months in Costa Rica the year prior to my internship, which meant I had a decent level of Costa Rican Spanish and had already been acquainted with facets of Costa Rican culture, before commencing the IRCA CASABIERTA project.

As I was interviewing persons of interest from an array of Latin American countries, I was self-conscious, firstly about being European, and especially Scandinavian, something which positions me very differently in the world, intersectionally speaking (Warrier, 2022). During interviews, we discussed cultural elements such as machismo<sup>4</sup> related homo- and transphobia, spiritual violence in the forms of religious exile and condemnation, and poverty in the regional context. I was aware of the fact that I could only comprehend the depths of these phenomena from an outside perspective. So, I took it upon myself to educate myself as best I could, from my Costa Rican friends and colleagues, being in Costa Rican society, and advancing my language skills, in addition to studying the literature provided to me by my supervisor at IRCA CASABIERTA. Regardless, certain layers of my data remain foreign, and perhaps invisible, to me, which inherently places me in an outsider position (Miranda, 2022).

I was apprehensive of bringing my own cultural background into the interviews, as it could interfere with the context in which the interviews were conducted. Nevertheless, the interviews were highly interactive, and should be considered as such, given that they are a *social practice* (Brinkmann, 2022:4). In addition, I was involved in the organization as a member of the team and took part in the organization, not just as a researcher, but as an individual. Furthermore, interviews concerning sensitive issues often included incorporating myself genuinely and personally, in order to extend my empathy and demonstrate an allyship with informants – both of which occurred dynamically during the interviews. Therefore, *I* was present in the interviews, meanwhile maintaining an awareness of the cultural gap between informants and myself (Miranda, 2022). My informants expressed that they took part in the research with the utmost pleasure. Therefore, I was also reminded, that simply because one is not part of the group of study, does not mean there is nothing interesting or valid to contribute with (Ibid.). Important to stress, is also that this study puts the interviewees in the center, meaning that what *they* said was of importance (Brinkmann, 2022:36,85).

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<sup>4</sup> Cultural phenomena, which relates to Latin American specific misogyny and “toxic” masculinity

Another aspect of my insider/outsider reflections within research positionality has been my own sexual orientation and gender identity. I am a queer person, and I identify within an LGBTQIA+ sexual orientation, as well as gender identity. I gave a lot of thought to whether or not it was something I should declare to my informants and whether or not it provided me with any special angle or position in the field. It could be considered a form of insider representation, which provides a primordial trust between interviewer and informants (Miranda, 2022). In certain ways this meant that I understood aspects of the experiences my informants described, which would imply an insider perspective (Ibid.). However, I will never be a queer person who has grown up in Latin America, which definitively distinguishes my queer life experiences from those of my informants. Moreover, I do not have the lived experiences of a homosexual man, nor a transgender woman. Thus, I will not pretend that my queer representation is in any way transferable to the men and transgender women I interviewed.

Ultimately, my perception of the insider/outsider positionality of qualitative research does not subscribe to the dichotomic image, which is often portrayed. It is not one or the other, but rather an interplay, which when executed well, is done with awareness of both insider and outsider perspectives (Roulston, 2019:32). Thus, the knowledge produced during the interviews was born from a reciprocal interplay of information and experience, which allowed for the interviews to take on profound interactions and create specified knowledge (Ibid.:22).

## Interview-strategies

All interviews were conducted as semi-structured (Roulston, 2019:81), of which the majority have been classified as in-depth interviews (Hoskin, 2020), which produced more natural conversational flows and opened for sidetracks. When speaking with persons of interest, the interview-guides were always supplemented with verbal support and acknowledgement, in addition to an added emphasis on my unconditional acceptance of refusal to answer certain questions and verbalizing discomfort with formulations or topics, or discomfort in general. Moreover, I found it especially important to apply active listening (Talmage, 2012) and thereby use myself as an instrument to create a safe conversational space. I clarified to my informants, persons of interest in particular, that these interviews were in their control, why I initiated each interview with an explanation of the structure, topics, and remarks on their agency in the dialogue. All interviews were recorded, which provides a great value to the research both as a safety measure in terms of ensuring a loyalty

to the testimonies, but also as a crucial instrument in trans-national and multi-lingual research (King, 2023).

As the data collection was fragmented by time, different foci, and diversity of informants, the interview guides and strategies for the interviews were heterogenous throughout the process. Interviewing professionals, who work in the field and can analyze the circumstances from an academic or professional standpoint was a beneficial way to start my cyclical research approach (Brinkmann, 2022:35). Obtaining experiences from professionals, prepared me for interviewing persons of interest, who personally experience hate violence victimization. Talking to persons of interest subsequently meant that questions had to be phrased differently and interviews structured differently altogether. Interview-guides were designed with open-ended questions (Hoskin, 2020; McConnell et al., 2021), thus allowing the informants to elaborate their responses, and for me as an interviewer to ask follow-up questions, as is also a staple of the semi-structured and in-depth interview form (Johnson & Rowlands, 2014; Veronesi, 2019). Furthermore, a central element in my approach in all interviews, was an application of what is also known as a non-directive form of interviewing, by “putting emphasis on the respondents’ private experiences, narratives, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes” (Brinkmann, 2012:8). This meant that there was full acceptance of any response, and all testimonies were, and continue to be, considered as valuable contributions. As I 4 months later conducted 6 additional interviews with persons of interest, after having evolved my understanding of the field, and having a redirected focus, the second round of interviews allowed for a more elaborate exploration of hate violence experiences, including experiences from outside of Costa Rica. Although these additional 6 interviews were conducted virtually, they contained a freer and more in-depth form, than those prior, which allowed for the interviews to take on a new life. This meant that some of these interviews were significantly longer, many of which lasted several hours. The second round of interviews gave a better understanding of how a lifetime of fluctuating hate violence impacts people, why it became invaluable for the project.

## Coding strategy

When approaching the stage of classification and categorization, I encountered various topological challenges. Much like most other human experiences, hate violence does not behave as categories in real life. It shapeshifts, bleeds into other aspects of life, and moves away from the point of entry or origin. Nevertheless, I was still confined to the usage of categories and construction of some

artificial boundaries between themes, as is inherent to the coding process (Kuckartz, 2014). The coding was done using NVivo software and conducted with a thematic coding strategy, albeit containing elements of open coding, which provided the process with some elasticity, when the data presented itself with novel, but salient, elements (Ibid.).

When I was planning out my thesis, after familiarizing myself with the data, I arrived at three main themes of analysis, which would later become my result chapters. These are as follows: attacks on the body, attacks on the identity, and attacks on the future. I decided to let these early findings be reflected in my coding strategy. Thus, the codes became combination of *thematic* and *analytical* categories (Ibid.), meaning that some had descriptive functions, while others held a second or third level of interpretation already during the coding process. Thus, the chosen method was rather inductive, and thematically structured (Ibid.; Rubin, 2021). The codebook<sup>5</sup> ultimately had three main top codes, which were “Corporeality”, “Identity” and “Temporality”. Besides those, “Reflections on Violence” and “Complexities of Resistance” also took top code status, although they were left without underlying coding hierarchy. The other three, more expansive top codes, were given multiple sub-codes and attached hierarchies, which resulted in a total of 104 codes in the codebook.

## Ethical considerations

Apart from positionality concerns, other aspects of my data collection awakened ethical dilemmas for me as a researcher. A great concern for me, especially during interviews with persons of interest, occurred when discussing very intimate and sensitive topics. I always clarified to my informants, how they had full power over how much they wanted to share with me, as well as their right to skip questions or certain topics altogether. None of my informants chose to avoid questions, and many of them shared more than I expected them to. I saw this as a great honor and always made sure to express my gratitude for their contributions. In turn, most of my informants were unexpectedly grateful to me, for the simple act of listening to their testimonies. I saw myself as the one who should be grateful to them, which made me question whether or not the power dynamics in the interviews contained unintended skewedness (Kim, 2023). I listened actively and

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<sup>5</sup> See codebook in attachment

worked to ensure their comfort when speaking to me, which undoubtedly also played a part in the exchanges (Emanuel & Farson, 1975).

The informants were all anonymized and given pseudonyms. When informants are addressed with first name only, they are persons of interest, while names and professional descriptions signify employment at IRCA CASABIERTA. Everyone's country of origin has been excluded, and all persons of interest have signed informed consent forms with IRCA CASABIERTA. Thus, there are no qualms in terms of practical confidentiality or ethical issues in reference to European Union GDPR laws (EU, 2018), even though the interviews were conducted in Costa Rican regi.

Another ethical consideration was the consistent element of my utilization of testimonies from private and personal lives, for research purposes and academic knowledge production. Although, I take my research to heart, it is inherently an academic and professional endeavor, which potentially adds to the previously mentioned power imbalance (Kim, 2023). Nevertheless, I believe in the concept of knowledge production as a source of advocacy and awareness creation (Deshman & Hannah-Moffat, 2015). Thus, I find this form of research valuable, and the personal testimonies primordial and priceless to true and equalizing knowledge production between academia and people's real-life experiences. Besides this, some informants expressed a sense of relief and said they could let their guard down, whilst participating in a project they believed to be important. Therefore, I consider the mutual gratitude as a strengthening element in this knowledge production. What the data collection and produced knowledge has shown, and how it contributes to the field, will be exemplified in the chapters to follow.

## Results

The following chapter aims to respond to the research question, which reads:

What life domains are under attack in hate violence targeting LGBTQIA+ persons, and how do the attacks take form in their testimonies?

The analyses and results will be divided into 3 sub-chapters, each of which present a life domain that has shown to be under attack, based on testimonies from the 21 interviews in the case study. The three domains have been identified as respectively: the body, the identity, and the future. In many aspects, all three life domains are interlinked, thus the structure and divisions created in the

presentation of results pose as artificial boundaries, in order to organize the findings, which would otherwise reflect the fluidity and chaos of real life.

## Attacks on the body

As Butler (1990) writes, the body becomes a subject for inner, outer and public negotiation of ‘correct’, dignified, and normative social participation. This chapter will examine the ways in which LGBTQIA+ persons’ bodies are constructed as a surface and medium for negotiation, through which violence is carried out. The following results show how the body is evaluated and regulated based on physical expression, appearance, mode of speech, bodily movements, and the body’s movement in various spaces. Ultimately, the targeting of non-normative corporeality, produces a rejection of individuals through violence, as will be demonstrated. Thus, the body presents as the first life domain under attack, in anti-LGBTQIA+ hate violence.

## Regulation of LGBTQIA+ bodies

Bodies are our materiality. We carry ourselves in and through them. They are not all that we are, and yet corporeality is inherent to our lives and integrity. Centered on the collected testimonies, the following sections will elaborate on how bodies are regulated and attacked, based on normative perspectives on corporeality.

### *Walk like a man! Talk like a man!*

Sometimes I like to dress well, sometimes I like to dress a little badly, let’s say. But of the times I went out, I remember once there were two guys [...]. And they came after me and at that moment they started to call me “maricon<sup>6</sup>” and things like that, and I was ignoring them, when I started to walk fast because I thought they were going to mug me. One of them came and I know that he kind of ran or got right up next to me and grabbed me. [...] At that moment, one of them gave me a blow, he told me, “walk like a man!”. And I said “mae<sup>7</sup>, but”. I mean, “I’m not walking like, I mean I’m walking normal” and they started attacking me, they hit me, they hit me in the face, in fact they broke my lip that time. (Francisco)

In the excerpt above, Francisco, a homosexual cisgender man, describes an incident of physical assault, in the streets of San José, when he was attacked, presumably because of the way he was

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<sup>6</sup> Spanish and Latin American slur for homosexual men, equivalent to calling someone “faggot”

<sup>7</sup> Neutral or friendly Costa Rican expression for addressing other people

walking. He also attributes aspects of the attack to the way he was dressed “badly” at the time, when referring to a non-normative form of dressing in a male body. In this example, it is apparent that something as benign as walking down a street whilst expressing oneself, presumably non-heteronormatively, is used by assailants as a justification for violence. As the attackers first verbally assaulted him, by calling him ‘maricon’, it seems they perceived him as homosexual, which caused a severe reaction leading to physical assault. Francisco’s testimony presents a verbal act of violence, through the usage of a slur, that when weaponized, by yelling ‘maricon’, established linguistic vulnerability. The continuation of the attack and physical assault was verbally supported by “walk like a man!”. This indicates a perception of wrongdoing through a corporeal expression that did conform to the presumed gendered expectation of how to walk in a male body. Here, the body becomes a surface which is observed and judged by strangers, and then punished for not conforming to an expected corporeal movement (Butler, 1990:179). Moreover, the non-normative expression transcends the material and becomes a symbolic challenge to hegemonically masculine (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) forms of movement, to which the attackers felt the need to react. Hence, it becomes evident how the body transitions into a structural and symbolic medium that unites both the material body and what the body in turn represents. Following the excerpt above, Francisco explained, how he went home in a distressed state, whereafter the experience limited him in going out and expressing himself freely in public for a long period. The attack was then extended to how his body and movement were, not only violated, but regulated by the attack later on.

Examples of regulation of bodily movement have been presented by informants, not only as executed by others, but also internally by themselves, through prolonged exposure to hate violence. Michael, also a homosexual cisgender man, describes how he feels self-conscious, when visiting certain public institutions such as hospitals, and therefore regulates his way of physically being and communicating in such spaces. He explains feeling “uncomfortable because I can’t be myself, I have to watch how I move my hands or some gestures, in order not to feel discriminated”. Through stating that he avoids discrimination by regulating or inhibiting himself, suggests that there is a perceivable, less acceptable form of using hand gestures and body language. This entails, what presumably is a less tolerated way of moving one’s hands and using gestures, is what is considered less hetero-normative, which subsequently can result in discrimination from people who would not accept a more effeminate or less hegemonically masculine (Connell &

Messerschmidt, 2005) corporeality. Thus, the body once more is portrayed as a medium of communicating a rigid, gendered binary existence (Butler, 1990:182), and not simply negotiated upon expression, but also negotiated within an individual, prior to self-expression. This suggests that the policing of bodies, transmits into a self-inflicted form of policing and censorship, when critical views of others are incorporated internally by the individual. It becomes clear, how stigmatization and discrediting (Goffman, 2009:46) of non-heteronormative bodies, proceeds into anticipative behaviour of individuals, and is thereby internalized in the bodily experience. According to Michael, this also extends into public spaces and affects partners' expressions of affection, when he says "we cannot hold hands. Not feeling free to kiss someone, for example, in the street or to hold hands, for fear of being hurt, does affect me. It is a reality that is present". The pressure to conform, then comes from an expectation or "fear" of others reacting to two men expressing any form of homo-amorous affection for each other, in ways that would otherwise be considered normal with heterosexual couples. Thus, the affectionate behavior between male bodies becomes a display of disaggregation, which in turn will disturb the fiction of heteronormative stability (Butler, 1990:185). The fear and present "reality" of potential attacks, which Michael describes, is transmitted from the public negotiability of the body, into a regulation of his own and possible partner's bodies, in a way that inhibits their public, corporeal interactions.

Paulo, a homosexual cisgender man, explains how his childhood friend, an adolescent homosexual boy, started receiving pressure, seemingly from intrafamilial hate violence. Paulo describes how his friend suddenly seemed to be under a lot of stress, and how he began to change his behaviour and mode of speech, which led to a tragic end for this young man.

The way he spoke as if he was being told that he spoke too effeminate, I don't know if it was from the father's side. [...] but I did see him making an effort to speak louder, more like, I mean, I know it wasn't him. He didn't talk like that, right? [...] And this young boy committed suicide at 16 years old.

According to Paulo's description, his friend's suicide was a result of an assumed pressure from within the family, which pushed him into changing his way of speaking and expressing himself, to a point where he seemed like a different person. The following suicide became a terrible end to the young man's life, and a final response to not fitting into a hegemonic format. When applying



the lens of Butler, Paulo's friend altered his corporeal behaviour after receiving attacks, arguably exposing him to lingual injury (1997:47). The process Paulo describes, indicates that his friend reacted to deprivation of context and power within the experienced circumstances. There seems to be a continuation from regulation, and pressure to bodily conform, transcending into interpellation, followed by recontextualization, (ibid.:47,147), as seen when the young man attempted to change his demeanor in order to satisfy hegemonic expectations. The interpellation becomes salient, as the pressure was internalized, and attended to. Finally, the distress caused by injurious deeds, becomes apparent when he saw no way to regain context (ibid.:4) and stability (Jenkins, 2014:136), and led him to put an end to his life.

*Be less transgender if you want a job*

Regulations of bodies are particularly visible in the experiences of transgender women. Rebecca, a transgender woman, describes being discriminated in her former workplace, where her coworkers and employer would treat her in an undignified way. She explains, how they would continuously refer to her with male pronouns, in spite of her correcting them and presenting as visibly female. She describes the experienced hate violence in her place of work as more subtle, but nonetheless painful and harmful to her. In the interview she said:

Because I am a trans woman, I have been discriminated against by not recognizing my legal identity, and also in the way I dress, the way I speak, the way I express myself.

She continues, to elaborate on how the way she dressed and presented herself was problematized in the work environment, "because I have always dressed femininely, because I consider myself a woman". Although being transgender, and expressing herself femininely, was not relevant to Rebecca's job, the people in her workplace created a problem of it. Understandably, this was a discomforting experience for Rebecca, who first reported the employer, and later resigned.

Through the coworkers' and employer's responses, as they seemingly subscribed to what Butler describes as *hegemonic order* (1990:180) within the regulatory fiction (ibid.:185), as Rebecca says, the violence was based on how she was dressed, spoke and expressed herself. Thus, the way in which she was in her body, became a target for violence. These regulatory forces within cis-normative perceptions are bodily inscribed and thereby denigrate anything that falls outside of the normative, binary construct. As these regulatory forces are fragile to disorganization (Butler,

1990:185), an openly transgender woman, who carries herself with her feminine identity in-, through-, and on her body – her *surface* and her *skin* (ibid.:179) became perceived as challenges within the workplace culture. Further elaborating on Butler’s work (1997), the lingual vulnerability against already marginalized or stigmatized bodies, was then applied, both in subtle and direct forms. This took form through purposely misidentifying Rebecca and committing verbal attacks on her physical presentation and her corporeal gender expression. Moreover, Rebecca explains how this treatment, which presented as verbal and symbolic hate violences, was a painful experience to her, as she says “the word is always there. [...] one focuses on just what they’re telling you, what happened to you from experience, only on this, and that’s harder than a blow”. Thus, Rebecca, in her own words, connects what is said in the moment with previous experiences, which solidifies the words used against her in the present. Here, an exemplification is presented of how lingual vulnerability is established, as words are generative and historically linked (ibid.:74). Therefore, the re-iteration of violence through words, is experienced as a lingering violence within the individual. In addition, she adds that the injury of words supersedes a physical attack, due to the longevity of verbal violence. Thus, linguistic vulnerability manifested in Rebecca’s life and job, although it was directed at her physical being, expression, and body.

In the sections on bodily regulations, it becomes apparent how bodies are regulated and attacked, when challenging hegemonies of how bodies are ‘supposed’ to look, move, and speak. Bodies are submitted to violent regulation by people, for whom the corporeal appearance and expression has no specific nor material significance. Nevertheless, the attacks take form in specific and material functions. The examples presented above contain elements of bodies being attacked, or made vulnerable to attacks, in various spaces, such as the street and workplace. This connects directly to how hate violence is utilized in an undertaking of exclusion of LGBTQIA+ bodies from various spaces. Therefore, the next section examines how hate violence attacks bodies in spaces.

### LGBTQIA+ bodies in spaces

As demonstrated in the previous section, there is a connection to spatially specific forms of violence against the body. In this context, spaces can be considered as both culturally and geographically manifested (Bourdieu, 1997:20). The following sections remain centered on the body, but as an element within spaces, and how LGBTQIA+ bodies are regulated according to *where* they are identified.

### *Work, a cis-normative space*

Below, an excerpt from Emanuel, an educator at IRCA CASABIERTA, presents the first example of spatial regulation. Similar to many informants, Emanuel describes a prominent aspect of hate violence within the labor market and professional spaces. In one example of this, concerning two transgender women he had worked with, he says the following:

now with digitalization [...] they even do an interview, an online interview and there is no problem. But when they came to the job to interview in a face-to-face manner. In a hostile and violent way, the people, the person in charge, or in charge of recruitment, looked her up and down and said “no, what a pity, we can’t hire you and we can’t hire you”, and they don’t say why – it is not necessary, right? Well, that is much more violent [...] they made several attempts, and because they were trans-women, expressed as trans-women, it was not possible.

Earlier in the interview he mentions how these two women arrived in Costa Rica with good qualifications and were both initially accepted for the job. As Emanuel describes, when they met the employers in person, the situation changed. It was upon seeing their transgender bodies, that the employers rejected them. In examples such as this, there are clear demarcations of a particular space, not allowing access or displaying intolerance for transgender bodies. Here, the professional space did not give access to qualified people, with transgender bodies, to work, although they had been accepted beforehand. Emanuel added “Why are trans-women involved in the sex trade? Because they have no other possibility. In order to survive, there is no other possibility”. Here, Emanuel moves from a specific case to a generalization based on his experience with the population of interest.

This particular consequence of hate violence against transgender people seeking employment, has likewise been brought up by other informants. Adrian, a social worker, also describes the general problem, when saying “The trans population is the most vulnerable. Because of their gender expression. [...] when it comes to finding a job, it is more difficult”. Again, it is made clear how professional spaces, tend to discard transgender applicants, based on nothing other than the ways their bodies present. This is problematic, as it especially pushes transgender women, into the sex work industry, whether they want to or not, as is also described by Emanuel. Other professionals

have described aspects of this observed tendency, with how transgender women are forced to alter their gender expression, in order to obtain employment.

many of them, if they want to have access to formal employment, they are required to cut their hair or dress as, well, with their masculine expression. So, for me that is an absolute violation of their rights. (Sofia, social oversight professional)

Like many of her colleagues, Sofia explains how transgender women are victimized through a denial of how they express their gender identity through their physical appearance. These testimonies suggest that a transgender body is seen as ‘unfit’ for a professional environment. I will not attempt to speculate on how this is justified by potential employers, as this is a violation of civil- and human rights (United Nations, 1948), and there is no ground for justification. Nonetheless, this can be explained and elaborated upon through the Butler framework (1990). As Butler underlines the contingency within gender and gender expression, they describe how the regulation of said fiction or fantasy is negotiated politically via corporeal surfaces (ibid:184). This manifests gender border control and is thereby used to determine an assumed *integrity* of a person (ibid.). Through this perception, it is suggested that the control of the body in working spaces, as produced by employers, however unintentional or uninformed, inscribes a lack of integrity to transgender persons. Whether or not transgender people are qualified for a job, their gender expression is what deems them unfit for the working environment. Thus, the body and how it is presented becomes the locus of control and assessment, rather than professional qualifications.

As Emanuel explains, employers were said to look “up and down” the otherwise accepted applicants, and then discard them, upon this visually executed border control. The argument for the body being the only determining factor for rejection is thus affirmed. Hence, ability, quality, and integrity in a person, which are typically considered internal, cognitive, and moral qualities, are judged upon external and surface-level attributes. The process of assessing internal characteristics, departing from superficial ones, establishes a connection to what Butler explains about the body being conceptual (1997:5). It is not the physical materiality of the body, but the conceptual understanding of the body, which alters the interaction – as the perceptions of a person are altered by their perceived ‘unqualified’ or ‘unfit’ bodily presentation.

### *The park, a hetero-normative space*

Moving away from cultural spaces of work and professionalism, informants have given testimonies, which describe other spatial connections to experiences of hate violence. In the interview with Francisco, he gave an example, where he and his friends, a group of homosexual men, had gone to a public park to enjoy an afternoon. They were simply spending time there, whilst eating and relaxing, when a police vehicle drove up to them, two police officers stepped out of the vehicle and approached them with an immediate attitude of suspicion and hostility.

they told us, “no, we don’t want love scenes, we don’t want it”. And we were like “we’re not doing anything wrong”. [...] at that moment they told us, “well, they are ‘playos’<sup>8</sup> anyway, so what can you expect?”. So, we felt like we couldn’t even be there in a park sitting with our partner, or with a friend, or with friends, we couldn’t be there. They were literally kicking us out.

In this excerpt, there are various themes interplaying. First of all, there is, as presented previously, a superficial identification of non-normative bodies, here with homosexual men, which police officers determined was a reason for approaching the group as if they were actively breaking the law. This is an exemplification of authoritative and institutional regulation of bodies, which were considered as challenging the heteronormative and hegemonically masculine (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) ideologies of the police officers. Furthermore, it is a manifestation of corporeal border control, which determines which bodies are qualified as being with adequate integrity (Butler, 1990:185) to be granted access to a cultural and social space (Bourdieu, 1997:20). This comes into play, as the police officers executed their authority to eject a group of citizens from a park – a space for relaxation, in which they had an indisputable right to be in. Moreover, the police officers called them “playos”, a slur (Butler, 1997:52) for homosexual men, which institutes the use of generative linguistic vulnerability. In this case, the use of “playos”, by established, societal authority figures, had the function of harming Francisco and his friends in the moment, as it is a derogatory term and thereby contains an injurious effect (ibid.), through the power the word has gained over cultural use for stigmatization (Goffman, 2016:46). In addition, the police officers instrumentalized said slur in order to further discredit the group, and ultimately remove them from the park. In this sense the culturally established linguistic vulnerability, once

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<sup>8</sup> Central American slur for homosexual men

applied by the police officers in this situation, was physically manifested as a reason for expelling Francisco and his friends from a public space, without legal justification. Again, this is an example of how bodies, when identified as or perceived to be homosexual, and not conforming to the heteronormative hegemony, are regulated spatially. The message is thus not only that of “we do not accept homosexual people”, but more so “we do not accept homosexual people *here*”.

*They could do it here*

As mentioned previously, the hate violence experienced by informants in this study, also impacts their inner, emotional lives. These phenomena also transmit to inner, corporeal, spatial experiences, such as feeling potential risk within the body, in places which could deem LGBTQIA+ bodies as unwanted. In the next excerpt, Marta, a homosexual cisgender woman, describes how experiences of hate violence in public have altered her emotional experience of moving through public spaces. Marta explains how strangers have approached her with verbal volatility, particularly when out with her partner, in parks and on the street. She talks of men harassing them based on their homosexual relationship, with threats of sexual violence.

I've had comments like “I'm going to give you a good fuck” or something like that, “to make you a woman”. That kind of comment generates fear in me because I know that for a man to grab me and sexually abuse me, they could do it.

Violent verbal assaults as seen in this example, presented a threat to Marta and her physical and sexual integrity. The fact that some people see entitlement to approach a homosexual woman, with threats of sexual assault to turn her into a heterosexual woman, shows a severe form of bodily regulation. Concepts of threat, as according to Butler (1997:12,16), has multiple layers and effects. In Marta's description, the chiasmic nature of threats becomes highly applicable, as there is a presence of violence in the verbal attack itself, and as it generates a fear of material action and sexual violence in the future. Thus, the threat of sexual assault, is an illocutionary speech act (ibid.:16) as it is a violent statement in itself. Furthermore, there is a present perlocutionary (ibid.) verbal act, as the potential follow-through on the threat takes a life of its own, as Marta also states that it “generates fear”, because “they could do it”. Subsequently, the generation of fear, which Marta addresses, continues to have emotional consequences for her in her day-to-day life. This then proceeds into a continuous attack on the body, through feelings of risk and unsafety, by an awareness of potential attacks on the body in public spaces, which Marta describes as:

Sometimes it is exhausting not to be able to walk freely in the streets, because you know how exposed you are, for simply being of diversity or for being a woman too. That is another thing. [...] Because you can't walk freely and you can't be sure that nothing is going to happen to you, because 100% security is not there, so that makes you anxious, it makes you uneasy.

Marta's description above opens for an understanding of how violations and hostile approaches, have changed her experience of venturing out in public spaces, which then become symbolic spaces (Bourdieu, 1997:20) in her life. She describes how she has been pushed into a state of vigilance, whilst simply being in public – something that is hardly avoidable, for most people. The vigilance then transmits into constant calculations of space, other people in it, and consequently of whether or not it is safe to be there. When stating that she cannot “walk freely”, since “100% security is not there”, her testimony indicates an absence of agency in certain public spaces and a feeling of potentially being exposed to violence at any given time. As seen with other informants, these attacks were exercised through a judgment of her homosexuality, by walking with her partner. Thus, her body, and how it can be seen as challenging a societal, heteronormative structure, is not simply exposed to attacks, as the corporeal existence in public spaces, is continuously evaluated internally. This example gives an understanding of how spatial regulation of bodies transcends into an “uneasy” existence in a spatially regulated body.

As has been illustrated, the body is considered a surface and medium for violence and negotiation of superficial attributes of a person (Butler, 1990:179). Not simply with how the body is and moves, but also in which spaces the body moves. These negotiations intrude on, make assumptions about, discredit and interfere with internal, private, and personal matters, such as emotions and self-perception, which become channels for self-regulations. For this reason, it becomes evident that internal matters, are equally central in hate violence attacks on LGBTQIA+ persons. Therefore, the following analysis will focus on how hate violence attacks target identities, and how identities are affected thereby.

## Attacks on the identity

The following chapter centers around the inner workings of people, who have been targeted with hate violence, and how these attacks impact their identities, senses of self, and self-purposes in life. Here, theoretical concepts of identity (Jenkins, 2014) will be incorporated to supplement and

accompany Butler's theories (1990; 1997). The forthcoming sections, which draw on experiences, spanning from intrafamilial violence, relationships, and circumstances of labor, give a well-rounded image of how identities are attacked and, as repercussions thereof, harmed. Although the attacks on bodies and identities are interlinked, an artificial boundary is drawn between the two life domains, to employ a clear analytical instrumentalization of attacks on identity.

### The interpellated self

The identity is established in, between, and amongst people. Upon opening this chapter, the first section will focus on how individual and internal experiences of hate violence can interfere with identity processes.

#### *Monster in the mirror*

A repressed person, a person who had no security, no self-esteem. I felt very bad with everyone and sometimes I didn't even want to look at myself in the mirror because I thought I was literally a monster, because of all those kinds of scenarios and things that made me believe that, well, in the end either one of two things - I don't even know what I was born for, but if I am here, I came to think, I mean, I don't understand. (Francisco)

In the interview with Francisco, he describes how other people had continuously attacked, bullied, criticized, abused, and rejected him, based on how his persona and self-expression were different from expectations of masculinity and heteronormativity. When comments arose about Francisco, his father would become upset and violent with him both physically and verbally. Francisco says that his father had said "he would rather, literally saying, that my mom had had animals or a, or something that would work better for him", alternative to an effeminate and homosexual son. As violence persisted in the home, it also continued to develop in other spheres of Francisco's life, growing up. Later, it evolved into sexual violence, violence in relationships, and as seen in the previous analysis chapter, in public. Francisco also testifies to having people telling him "I would rather see you dead, than you being like that". Through these examples, Francisco depicts a pattern of attacks on who he is, not just his non-heteronormative self-expression or aspects of his appearance, but attacks on his existence. This absolute form of rejection and degradation had severe effects on his identity.

When Francisco describes how hate violence affected him, as exemplified in the initial excerpt above, it is clear how the perceptions of others had invaded his perception of himself. His father



had said, he had preferred the birth of an animal, rather than his son, and peers had said they would prefer to see him dead – both undeniably dehumanizing verbal attacks. Then, opinions of others had become internalized and thereby incorporated into his own self-perception, as it came to a point where he despised the sight of himself, as others had said they did. Instead of seeing himself as a whole person with myriad traits and qualities, he saw a “monster” in the mirror.

Thus, perpetual attacks of hate violence, appear to target the identity in a highly experiential form. This suggests an absolute form of lingual interpellation (Butler, 1997:47), where the injurious words of others, identifying Francisco in dehumanizing and undignified ways, transcended into his perception of himself. Identity, as defined in the theory chapter, is constantly produced through how individuals perceive themselves, and is equally impacted by others’ perceptions of them (Jenkins, 2014:40,51). The interpellation of verbal attacks, accompanied by consistent physical violence, interfered with Francisco’s identity, to the point where seeing a monster in the mirror, was a manifestation of said lingual injury (Butler, 1997:4). As he also says, “I don't even know what I was born for”, he had also begun to question his existence, and by extension, the value of his life. Connections can be made to the words of his father degrading him to the point of his birth, while others had said his mere existence was undesired. Here, the loss of legitimization of his own existence relates to decontextualization (Butler, 1997:100), as his identity and purpose in life, were denied stability, sense, and healthy context. Derogatory conceptualization and devaluation of an individual challenge their position and experience of their social context (ibid.). Through this lens of decontextualization, Francisco’s experiences can be described, when he came to lose a connection to any social position that made sense for him, to see himself in.

Impacts on identity are not isolated to individuals, as identities are formed socially and furthermore collectively, as will be demonstrated in the following theme.

### Collectively excluded identities

The interference with the identity, as a repercussion of hate violence, can further be transmitted into effects on whole groups, and social or societal perceptions of non-normative people, as will be presented in the following.

#### *They cut off our wings*

A trans woman once told me “Sofia, it’s that transwomen – in this country, they cut off our wings”, which means that there are no opportunities, leaving them with sex trade as the only

way to survive here in Costa Rica. It is like the only way they have to earn an income and survive here in Costa Rica, because there is too much transphobia in the country. (Sofia, social oversight worker)

As presented previously, transgender women are widely marginalized in Costa Rica and Latin America, and arguably globally as well. In the excerpt above, Sofia, is asked how the persons of interest talk about hate violence in their lives, to which she gives this answer, as part of her explanation. As seen in the excerpt, one of the transgender women whom Sofia attended through her work had described, how transgender women experience being unwanted in workplaces, which pushes them into sex work, as a final option. By focusing on identities, the structural and institutional violence, which forces transgender women into sex work, will thus be unpacked by understanding how identities are dealt with in this context.

When stating “there are no opportunities, leaving them with sex trade as the only way to survive”, Sofia addresses a continuous problem of not finding employers, who will accept transgender identities. Previously, this was conceptualized as an attack on the body, which transcends into a devaluation of potential transgender employees’ integrity, and thereby also encroaches on the perception of their personalities – their selves. The connection to identity is thereby established (Jenkins, 2014:52). Furthermore, the perception given in the statement, indicates an absence of power and influence for transgender women, in the search of desired employment. Although, depending on one’s political standpoint, it can be argued that there is no inherent problem with sex work in and of itself. The problem is rather found in forced sexual labor, especially in precarious working environments. This unfortunately is usually the case for the transgender sex workers in Costa Rica, and other Latin American countries, as they work in the streets and are therefore more exposed.

Anita, a transgender woman and sex worker, addresses the topic, when she says “unfortunately, the world of prostitution is a very dangerous world and at any moment something can be done to you”. Thus, the hate violence targeting transgender women working in the streets, as many of them do, is an undeniable factor of oppression and risk to their safety. Employees at IRCA CASABIERTA, elaborate on the hate violence exercised against transgender women in sex work, when saying that some have been “been threatened with a weapon”, “one of them had a glass table thrown at her” (Paula, social worker), “they are beaten”, “they are assaulted”, and “transwomen

and migrants have to have sex with police officers, to not be deported” (Amelia, communications professional). From the experiences of professionals working with the population of interest, the expansive, consistent hate violence against transgender women as a group, is thus further affirmed. They are perpetually treated inhumanely and forced to work in a highly precarious field, due to a structurally and systemically generated lack of acceptance of their gender identity. In the first excerpt, where a transgender woman said, “they cut off our wings”, illustrates a rather poetic and tragic metaphor, which depicts the loss of social mobility (Jenkins, 2014:115), as the wings in this context signify a person’s freedom and desired way of life. The identities of transwomen in the given examples, do not have the opportunity to develop in professional or educational aspects, as they are given no option to do so. Jenkins (2014:114) also describes identities as highly affected and constructed by others, both in smaller social groups but also in wider, public spheres through categorizations of, similarities, differences, selves, and others (ibid.,104). Thus, the transgender identity is collectively regulated, rejected, and attacked.

As argued by Butler, the conceptualization of transgender identities as ‘other’ (1990:181), then becomes part of generative lingual vulnerability structure (Ibid., 1997:2,50). Expressing this tendency, by claiming that “they cut off our wings”, shows a further established categorization of an ‘us’, as in “our wings”, and ‘them’ – “they”. This suggests that transwomen, at least through this statement, experience a great disparity between themselves and general society, which is constitutive of a segregated identity process (Jenkins, 2014:114). Hence, an identification process in the group of transgender women as perpetually violated by society, is transmitted.

In the case of Rebecca, as presented previously, who had acquired a formal job, the violence against her identity was nevertheless still present. This experience, she describes later in the interview, resulted in an identity crisis. She says “I lost myself. Rebecca was lost, I didn’t even know who I was anymore. Because it affected me so much emotionally [...] and without identity as well”. Rebecca, who had gotten a job, where she had to work long and odd hours, was still ‘othered’ at work. In this statement, she describes how the continuous misidentification and verbal attacks had rendered her feeling “without identity”. Later, she explains how she was affected by the hate violence to the extent, where she had “lost the desire to look for a job” and follows up by saying “I don’t want to go through the violence and discrimination that I just went through, again”. Here, another element, which is sense of purpose and direction, and ultimately a sense of self-

determination (Jenkins, 2014:175) is shown to be affected through attacks on the identity. Rebecca's personal example deepens the understanding of how attacks on collective identities impact transgender women, also outside of sex work. The metaphor of "cut off wings" thus leads this section back, to what effects attacks on identity can have on transgender women, both in sex work, and seeking opportunities outside of it.

### Attacked identities in relationships

Thus far, individual, and collective identities are at play in the examined data. The middle ground between individuals and collectivity, can arguably be found in relationships, which are equally relevant to identity processes. Therefore, the following section presents how attacks on identities can affect and harm relational elements.

#### *Who is going to love me?*

Say, first there is abandonment, loneliness. I don't know, what there is left in this world, what do I do? Because if my family doesn't love me, who else is going to love me? If my family rejects me, who else is going to reject me? And that contributes over time to feeling lonely. One feels sad, one feels abandoned, one feels rejected, one feels useless. (Juan)

In this part of the interview with Juan, he describes his thoughts and emotions, in the aftermath of being kicked out of home by his family, for being homosexual. He depicts an experience of a sense of loss of love, as it was replaced by rejection. He explains, how these emotions turned into a profound experience of loneliness, abandonment, and furthermore left him questioning if other people in the future would love him, when the people who were supposed to love him the most, did not. Previous to this statement, he explained how they had initially accepted him after coming out, but 7 years later, told him "you disgusted us" and "you embarrassed us", upon rejecting him from the house and the family. He explains his immediate reaction, by saying "one has no words in that moment". And as he states in the excerpt above, he was left unsure of what was "left in the world", for him. In this case, there are a great many things at play, in terms of identity and positioning. Firstly, Juan's description shows how the experience of the social world that resides within the family, had given him a false sense of safety, when they suddenly showed him their true perception of him. This can be described as decontextualization (Butler, 1997:100) in Juan's situation, where the words of his family, rendered him speechless, followed by a confusion about where to go, and who to turn to. Thus, his positionality in his family was ripped apart, as he was

asked to leave, and was told that his identity was not welcome at home. Moreover, the rejection, followed by being told that he “disgusted” and “embarrassed” his family, would suggest that the words used to explain their actions, further exposed him to linguistic interpellation (ibid.:24) causing decontextualization, which becomes further apparent, when he describes a loss of words and asking himself “what do I do?”. As he describes feeling useless and worried that he would not be loved by others, the actions of the family caused injury (ibid.:4) and interpellation, why it affected Juan to the extent that he himself was questioning his own value as an individual. As Jenkins (2014:104,134) writes, the sense of social coherence in collectivity, as is oftentimes found within families, is imperative to a social identity, as is experienced connectivity with others. Moreover, the identity is both tied to a sense of stability within the self, but is further qualified by the perceptions of, and relationships with others (ibid.:136). In Juan’s case, losing love was undeniably a painful experience, but the further fear of being unlovable, suggests a deep injury caused by the words of his family, leading to wounding perceptions of other, future relationships. Thus, connections are made between Jenkin’s arguments, regarding the importance of stability in the self and in the perceptions of others, and Butler’s concepts of lingual interpellation. As described, the interpellation in Juan’s case also led to a loss of context, since the belief system, he had in past, was ruptured in a mere moment. Building further on this, the words of the family were both illocutionary (Butler, 1997:16), as they harmed him effectively, by claiming he had disgusted and embarrassed them. They were likewise perlocutionary, as they did what they said they would, which was to reject him both psychologically and materially from the family home.

#### *A violent, little ray of light*

Francisco experienced continuous bullying from an early age, both with verbal violence, usage of slurs, and was attacked systematically for being a feminine boy, growing up. These aspects of himself, he describes as others noticing him being “a little more fragile or more delicate”. The bullying further contained a lot of physical violence, which Francisco gives many examples of, such as “they would come and lock me in some place. Or they would arrive and start hitting me over the head or pushing me and saying things to me”. As these experiences continued through Francisco’s life, combined with the violence he experienced at home, his self-image was changed, as also presented in the section prior to this one. Later in the interview, he explains how his altered self-identification had a great impact on his relationships, leading to a cycle of abuse in

relationships, particularly intimate ones. Francisco describes this in a plethora of ways, which all display great value for the analysis, why the following contains a few excerpts from the interview.

Because as soon as we see a little ray of light, or as soon as we see a little bit of affection, a little bit of love, we jump right in, right? For that little bit of affection. And sometimes we are satisfied with a little bit of affection too. Because we do not understand, and we do not value ourselves. [...] I suffered aggression when I had my first relationship experiences, obviously I was very inexperienced, I was very young. So, I confused everything with love. I thought aggression was love.

[...] Then you meet someone who is close to you, they hurt you, and no, you do not find a way to repel. [...] sometimes you reach a point where you become disoriented. I reached points where I became very disoriented and did the same thing again. Most of the cases were against myself, the very person who assaulted me.

In these excerpts, Francisco touches upon several elements which in various aspects relate to shared experiences with others, whilst pulling directly from his individual experiences within himself and his relationships, as he now reflects back on these, with a more informed perspective. These testimonies carry a great deal of significance relating back to many years of hate violence experiences in Francisco's life, besides those in intimate relationships. It becomes difficult to determine what forms of violence in intimate relationships are tied to hate and biased motivation, as a result of internalized homophobia and structural oppression of LGBTQIA+ persons, and what is isolated to intimate partner violence. This, however, is not the aim of introducing these excerpts, but rather to show how prolonged exposure to explicit, interpersonal hate violence directed Francisco to accept poor treatment from partners, as a result of a skewed identification process of, what love, and relationships are ideally meant to consist of.

Earlier, we saw Juan describe how he became unsure of if and how he would be loved again, after a drastic rejection from his family. Now, the analysis brings forth aspects of how continuous violence has also led to actual difficulties identifying love, through Francisco's words. In his testimony, it becomes apparent how Francisco muddled aggression and volatility with love and affection, in the attention and identification of someone showing interest in him. The "little ray of light", which was perceived as romantic interest, unfortunately turned out to be harmful. It became difficult to "repel" these forms of relationships, as he had learned to accept harm and aggression

from people in his life. This later is connected to a lack of “value” within him as a person, arguably from being devalued throughout his life by people close to him. “I confused everything with love”, then takes on a meaning of believing love is supposed to be hurtful, as a form of disorientation. This disorientation and skewed understanding of love and affection can thus be placed within the realm of social identity development, where Francisco’s self-reflexivity (Jenkins, 2014:51) was affected by devaluation and acceptance of harm, as these had become intrinsic to his perception of relationships. Again, relationships and interpersonal interactions are equally important to a person’s identity, as is the self-perception (ibid.:114;115). For this reason, continuous hate violence in interpersonal relationships had an effect on Francisco’s identity and self-development, as well as it became formative of new relationships down the line.

Combining this statement, with the comment on “disorientation”, a form of decontextualization (Butler, 1997:100), seems equally appropriate for this case. Nevertheless, recontextualization (ibid.:39) elements also takes place, as Francisco states that these processes would repeat themselves, and had become patterned in his pursuit of forming intimate relationships – why another context was arguably established in response to said disorientation. Finally, Francisco describes how processes of forming harmful bonds, and accepting harm and aggression were also inflicted upon himself, by himself. Herein lies an additional element of identity development and self-determination, albeit in a destructive form, as he explains how he retrospectively considers himself as a harming agent in relationships and social identity development. Later in the interview with Francisco, on the theme of harmful relationships, he adds “one loses a lot of one’s identity, one’s self-esteem. So, there are moments when you... These kinds of things happen, and you say, maybe I deserve it”. Thus, further elements of internal harm in the self-reflexive identity (Jenkins, 2014:51), such as self-worth and self-deprecation, become central to understanding how individual identity processes are connected to the formation of relationships, and can be deeply affected by prolonged exposure to hate violence.

As seen in this chapter, prolonged exposure to hate violence, has implications for personal, interpersonal, and collective identity development, and outlook on social life. This regards structural attacks, as well as personal ones, and affect how life circumstances unfold for LGBTQIA+ persons, both in terms of prosperity, safety, and love. Development and prospective

patterns are inherently non-static nor fixed in time. Thus, temporal elements are deemed salient to the analysis, why the following chapter will focus particularly thereon.

## Attacks on the future

Evidently, incidents of hate violence and the connected developments do not appear in temporal isolation – they are formative and continuously produced and reproduced. Hate violence moves within and between people, as they move through their lives. Seeing as there are clear temporal aspects residing in hate violence attacks and experiences thereof, it becomes critical to uncover the prospective repercussions of hate violence. Thus, connections between incidents of hate violence and the futures of the people who are targeted by said violence, will be examined.

Here, the theoretical application of Butler (1990;1997) will be used similarly as before, however with a slightly different focal point, when focusing on temporality, supported by Bourdieu's (1994) concept of *habitus*, as well as a continuation of concepts from Goffman (2009) and Jenkins (2014).

## Institutions and trust

What defines a prosperous and stable future may be a question of subjectivity. Nevertheless, analyzing the data from the interviews in this project has uncovered various situations, in which hate violence from public institutions, has been exercised in ways that have limited future opportunities for persons of interest.

### *Homophobia, reputation and education*

When asked how he experienced hate violence in his own life, Paulo gives two examples from his country of origin, both relating to educational institutions. First, Paulo describes a time, when he applied to study tourism and had passed all tests but was nonetheless not accepted, as the school conducted inquiries on applicants in their local community.

They gave a series of false testimonies about me. That I was not a decent person, I was not an ethical person, that people of all kinds came to my house because I had friends of all kinds, so on account of their own homophobia, by scandalizing trans-people, gay people. [...] The director came clean with me [...] he came to me and said, this is what happened in your case, you passed all the tests, everything was fine. But in your neighborhood, they spoke very badly about you.



In this incident, Paulo was rejected from an educational institution, due to homophobic opinions in his neighborhood, which undoubtedly has no relevance to whether or not, he would make a good student. Education is a way to expand qualifications and opportunities for the future, why denying a person access to education can have severe impact on how their life proceeds. As Paulo says, the neighbors had given “false testimonies” about him, saying that he was “not a decent person”, nor an “ethical” one. Accusations such as these, suggest a persons’ sexual orientation or gender identity being controlled as a border (Butler, 1990:185), where discrediting (Goffman, 2009:83) occurs and later targets the individual. Furthermore, the slander targeting Paulo, did not only have an impact on how his neighbors saw him or diminished his ethical standing, but were weaponized against his pursuit of education. The slander was taken seriously by the school, Paulo had applied to, why he was not accepted on his first try. This incident both demonstrates the direct injury that comes with violent words (Butler, 1997:4), as the neighbors needed only vaguely claim that Paulo was not “decent” nor “ethical”, based on their opinion on his sexual orientation and choice to participate in the LGBTQIA+ community. In addition, the subsequent rejection from the school shows the causality between words, conceptualizations, and positioning, which furthers Butler’s concept of generative language as sovereign (ibid.:74) to reproduction of hateful and biased opinions. Another concept to consider in this analysis, is that of habitus, which, albeit from a different angle, coalesces with Butler’s idea of generative actions. The habitus, which consists of a person’s cultural background, experiences, and preferences, is not only a product of the active differentiations produced in social spaces, but further reproductive of social differences (Bourdieu,1997:20). Thus, the difference between Paulo and his neighbors was established in the way they perceived him, but also further generated how he would be perceived elsewhere.

In his second example, Paulo talks about how, when he later in his life studied medicine, had his HIV status publicly exposed. People at the university had accessed a database, where they found and released a list of people in the university, who were HIV positive, something which is protected as sensitive information. As Paulo describes it, there was no formal nor educative objective that legitimized the release of the list. Later on, when Paulo approached the faculty contesting the release, the list had been deleted and was nowhere to be found.

In that case I was discriminated at school because of the list in which my name appeared, I could not do anything. The document or the proof obviously disappeared with full intention.

[...] And, of course, I distrusted the people who were close to me in that sense, because they were people that I knew, I trusted, and I don't know why I was part of that situation. And I couldn't do anything. I had to frustrate my desire to take action.

In his testimony, Paulo also mentions that he did not feel personally overwhelmed by the exposure, as he had dealt with his health situation, and was not ashamed of being HIV positive. Nevertheless, he acknowledged the incident as discriminatory and was therefore concerned for other people, who were exposed. HIV remains tightly connected to assumptions of homosexuality, why this form of hate violence is arguably highly symbolic, as it serves as a sweeping attack on a whole community of non-normative bodies. It had the potential to “out” people, who concealed their HIV status, and held their potential LGBTQIA+ representation closeted. What the particular intentions behind the disclosure of such sensitive information was, remains unknown. However, Paulo explains that the incident had a violent impact, as his peers did not respond to the information in a respectful, nor informed way. This meant that Paulo lost trust in them moving forward, which affected his social life, within the university. Later on, Paulo responded to the incident by establishing an awareness event, in order to advance information concerning HIV within the university. This reaction, however, was only necessary due to the collective attack. This became a clear signal of differentiation (Bourdieu, 1997:20) between students who were HIV positive, and those who were not and had potentially severe implications for HIV positive students' futures, as their social positions and opportunities for social mobility could become limited.

This scenario shows elements of control over bodies that were considered non-normative, which further re-affirmed a heteronormative standard. Through the Butler (1990) lens, the release of the list can be perceived as a practical instrumentalization of bodily border control, through which people could identify non-normative bodies, and subsequently categorize them as they saw fit. This categorization additionally has the potential to serve as a form of identification, thus asserting belonging to groups or absence thereof (Jenkins, 2014:116). Moving on from this, could become difficult for many people on the list, since the stigmatized individuals (Goffman, 2009:83), who wanted to maintain their HIV status hidden, could do nothing to reclaim the privacy that had been breached. As is also described by Paulo, he initially felt that he “could do nothing” to prevent, nor change the circumstances, which the incident had created. As it seems, the purpose was simply to expose individuals. Through the hate violence manifested in this scenario, the people whose names

appeared on the list were vulnerable to objectification, as reduced to an illness, and potentially a sexual orientation. Because stigmatization (ibid.) follows a person in life, the exposed individuals had thus lost their option to present as non-infected or heterosexual. As trust had been lost, and opportunities to go back to former positioning within the educational environment, likewise had been removed, the future of the individuals on said list, was now changed – and their prospective risk of future hate violence – increased.

#### *Health, accusations, and feelings of unsafety*

While on the topic of HIV, violence within healthcare institutions seems inevitably relevant, as the topic has also occurred on multiple occasions throughout the interviews. In the following excerpt, Francisco describes an incident he had at the hospital, during a health check-up. As Francisco is HIV positive, and a sex worker, he relayed this information to his doctor, whose response was rather drastic.

She started judging me and telling me that I was getting to people and making them sick and I said, “I am not making anyone sick, I mean, I take care of myself, I go to, I take my treatment”. If I do that, it is out of necessity, but people know the diagnosis. So, she told me that I could go to jail, but I said, “but why am I going to jail if I am not making people sick?”. I mean, no, and I always try to be responsible, and she insinuated that I was doing things wrong. And that, what I was doing practically, I mean, it was wrong. [...] the doctor asked me “Do you attend men or women?” And I told her “men”, and then I clearly saw that this bothered her more.

In his testimony, Francisco describes a situation, where a doctor, instead of attending him medically, accused him of transmitting HIV to his clients. She suggested that he would be criminalized for the actions, she assumed he was committing against other people, without accepting his declarations of being responsible with his treatment and conducting his work safely. In this case, it seems the conceptualization of an HIV-positive, homosexual body and identity, supersedes that of a patient, for the doctor in question, why the discreditation (Goffman, 2009:83) concept again finds relevance. This form of conduct, by authority figures, such as doctors, which extends outside their profession, whilst neglecting their actual responsibilities, signals that their prejudice or need to discriminate surpasses their professional role. Following up on this incident, Francisco adds that he did not feel comfortable arguing further with the doctor, as he felt unsafe in the situation, due to the false accusations. He also experienced his health being threatened (Butler,

1997:22), as he says: “I also need the medicine and all that, right?”, and could potentially be denied care. He adds that he, following this incident, felt disempowered, and did not wish to go back to the hospital, in case he would be attended by the same doctor.

When trust in authorities is broken, it further extends the marginalization of the very people, who depend on the services of public institutions. Similar points have been made by employees at IRCA CASABIERTA, as many of them turn to structural and institutional factors, when describing hate violence against LGBTQIA+ persons. Several examples have been given, corresponding with the presented testimonies, as many professionals have described how persons of interest have given up on pursuing the services, to which they are entitled. Therefore, many individuals move through their lives without proper healthcare, continue working in precarious environments, and refrain from reporting crimes committed against them – as a result of broken trust in public institutions. Thus, it can be said, that accumulated discursive violence, as produced by state organs, contributes to a generative (Butler, 1997:74) production of governing (ibid.:47) hate violence, which trickles down through organizational hierarchies, and is finally weaponized against and experienced by individuals. This can disrupt proper police protection, medical care, or fair and equal treatment from educational staff or employers, as seen throughout the result chapters. Thus, opportunities for LGBTQIA+ persons to lead their lives into safer and better futures, are under threat.

### Life on the line

For the following section, a trigger warning is in order, as the analysis moves into the most extreme of threats on the future of an individual, which is the threat to life itself. As presented in the literature review, deaths of LGBTQIA+ persons in Latin America, are frequent. This is due to high risk factors such as poor health, poor mental health, and exposure to precarious circumstances on account of marginalization. In addition, the present threat of assaults and physical attacks is also highly prevalent. Through analyzing the selected testimonies to come, the causality between hate violence and potential death is exemplified.

### *The ultimate solution*

Several informants have described points in their lives, where they felt a loss of belonging, on account of being exposed to hate violence from the people, who they thought would love and protect them. In some cases, this leads to suicidal ideation, as is also explained by Cristina, a psychologist at IRCA CASABIERTA. She explains how some informants have explained thinking

“I need to dissolve this pain and the way to dissolve it is by ceasing to exist”. Cristina then goes on to explain “we come to another issue that is very important, which is suicidal ideation, suicidal attempts and suicide”. Here Cristina relays, what is one of the most severe internal repercussions of hate violence.

Concrete examples of this, have also been given directly by persons of interest. In the following excerpt, Francisco describes how he, after prolonged experiences of hate violence, as an adolescent, found himself hopeless, mentally unstable, and at a loss of strategies on how to proceed with his life.

I was at the bottom. I was literally afraid of, of my life, that is, how to lead my life. Because that’s when I completely lost reason, I became clouded to such an extent that I said, here the solution is to take my own life. [...] I broke a glass. [...] I just reached in and cut myself. Very hard. And my hand started to bleed out. And at that moment I said well, it will be here, I’m going to die.

According to Francisco’s description, the circumstances of consistent hate violence, under which he found himself, had pushed him to a point, where he had “completely lost reason”, thus indicating a disorientation and loss of context (Butler, 1997:4). In previous excerpts from the interview with Francisco, he questioned his existence, back to the point of his creation. At this point, his existence was being questioned, moving into his future, as he had become of afraid for his life and how to live it. As he felt he “became clouded”, whilst simultaneously experiencing a great deal of fear, seeing as there was no apparent way out of the life-situation he was in, he decided to end it. Luckily, Francisco survived the incident and is alive today. Nevertheless, the harsh life circumstances he was exposed to, did not make surviving easy, as is made evident. The description from Francisco can be interpreted through Butler’s concept of decontextualization (ibid.:100). When saying he had “lost reason” and was afraid of how to live his life, indications and repercussions of an ultimate decontextualization are identified. The previously described interpellation, which led him to see a “monster” in the mirror, had now proceeded into creating an abyss, where positionality and context would otherwise be found, as he was “clouded” and saw only one solution to end his situation.

Furthermore, the Jenkins framework, once again finds applicability, as the need for connection to one’s purpose and self-determination (2014:175), which Francisco was at a loss of, is essential for

a stable identity process and self-development. Therefore, Francisco's story gives a tragic, yet exemplary depiction of how hate violence not only harms a person's life in the moment but alters the future. As seen throughout Francisco's testimonies, accumulated hate violence attacks, can be seen to severely affect a person's future, and will potentially put their life on the line. The repercussions as both externally connected to social matters and internally connected to the self, are therefore not to be underestimated in their temporal capacities.

### *Threats of murder*

Another way, in which hate violence is connected to fatality, occurs when threats on life are directly executed by others as a form of extreme hate violence. Anita, a transgender woman, explains how she left her country of origin, as a last resort, due to prolonged violence and threats on her life from a person in her neighborhood.

I had a neighbor who sexually harassed me. As time went on, the aggression began to evolve to a point of actual murder and rape. In 2021 I took the guy to court. And the laws, instead of supporting and protecting me, they went in favor of the guy. The guy was let off. The guy killed my dog and then my cat, then he was going to kill me, he was going to rape me with all the gang members of the neighborhood. Because of that situation that happened, I decided to flee and come to Costa Rica.

There is no justification for this form of violence, which Anita has experienced, as is the case for all hate violence. This testimony, however, is particularly violent, why the analysis thereof becomes increasingly sensitive. The excerpt presented above depicts a series of events, in which Anita's life was being threatened in a highly material way. The person who was consistently attacking Anita, was tried in court, but was let go without charges, which established an institutionally and legally produced disregard for Anita's safety moving forward. As the violence persisted, and further escalated after the assailant was not restrained nor held away from Anita, she found herself in a situation with no other option than to leave her home and country behind. As he had initiated the violence with sexual harassment, and continued into attempts of rape, and the threat of gang rape, the case presents elements of severe dehumanization, and a positioning of Anita as inferior or less deserving of dignified treatment, in the eyes of her assailant. Thus, the neighbor, identified her through a version of corporeal border control (Butler, 1990:185), where he saw her transgender body and identity in a way, which he perceived as unworthy of dignified

treatment but instead deserving of violence. Furthermore, the case suggests a process of categorization (Jenkins, 2014:115), where Anita was positioned as outside of the local community, on account of challenging the assailant's perception of normative bodies and identities. The case between Anita and her assailant, thus presents an extremely violent and persistent reaction to what Butler defines as disorganization and disaggregation, which disrupt the fiction of normative coherence (1990:185). This conceptualization of a disturbance to cis-normativity can thus be understood as a force, to which the assailant felt challenged and considered himself entitled to respond. As Butler describes it, individuals or states that cannot relinquish the fiction of corporeal normativity, find themselves needing to regulate those who challenge their ideologies (ibid.). In the case of Anita, this reaction was extreme, and led to a relentless and highly materialized threat on her future, and her life.

Anita escaped, which unfortunately cannot be said for all people, who's stories are now reduced to numbers, only obtained, and distributed by civil rights-, and non-governmental organizations in Latin America, as seen in the literature review. This unsettling fact, nevertheless, persists to illustrate how hate violence indisputably attacks the futures of the people, whom it targets.

## Concluding discussion

Hate violence is not a simple phenomenon. It behaves in interesting, complex, and heartbreaking ways, and as suggested in this study, it does not seem to conform to conventional categories of violence, nor hate violence. Similar to as presented in the literature review, attempts to encompass the vastness of violence and hate violence, while expanding the field (Ray, 2011), continue to connect the understanding of violence to categorical frameworks. While the sciences have departed from perceiving violence simply as physical harm, the contemporary perspective on violence continues to subscribe to typologies of violence, in various forms. What Ray makes clear, is that violence typically illustrates power inequalities between social groups, which connects to understandings of hate violence (ibid.:8). Other scholars have suggested new formats for conceptualizing violence when distinguishing between typological, judicial and severity-based concerns, and symbolically interactionist differentiations (Tutenges & Sandberg, 2024). Here, more holistic approaches have also been suggested to be salient for improvements to violence

studies, however, in the field of street violence and physical fights (ibid.), why it does not apply to hate violence per se.

The commonly applied perception of hate violence, continues to conceptualize violence within categories of how it is executed and how it victimizes targets – through physical, psychological, institutional, sexual, and structural violence, etc. The present thesis does not proclaim any denial of these forms of violence. Violence has many faces, yes. Furthermore, categories arguably serve a multitude of functions, when it comes to spreading awareness about violence having non-physical forms of execution and experiences, and when it comes to addressing otherwise concealed types of violence. Throughout this thesis, typologies of hate violence have also been applied as descriptive instruments. This is, however, how hate violence can be identified, and not how it behaves in life experiences. Thus, the barriers constructed in rigid categories of violence, can be problematized, as they carry limitations, by separating violence phenomena and aiming to organize them. This thesis proposes an approach, which sees hate violence as a fluid phenomenon, which refuses to conform to any specific typology in lived experiences. The objective with the thesis is thus to build a holistic comprehension of how hate violence attacks, and which life domains are under attack, in real life and all of its entropy. It should be mentioned that this thesis also establishes differentiations between attacks on bodies, identities, and futures of targeted people, which contradictorily pose as categorical distinctions. Nevertheless, these boundaries are fluid, as the results show how attacks on the body seep into attacks on identities, and vice versa. Additionally, both attacks on bodies and identities, seep into attacks on the future. Thus, the boundaries created in the result chapters should be understood as partly artificial, but moreover as channels between attacks on the respective life domains, in servitude of further comprehension of the profundity intrinsic to hate violence experiences.

As has been shown in the result chapters, hate violence permeates the lives of LGBTQIA+ persons in non-static ways, in Costa Rica and Central- and Latin America – and arguably in the rest of the world (Perry, 2001; Chakraborti & Garland, 2015). The present thesis, focuses on a specific geo-social area, where studies as this one, are scarce, why the focus of this study, holds novelty in the field of hate violence in this particular region of the world. Nevertheless, it is not considered as a framework exclusive to any specific geographical zone.



Circling back to existing definitions, as presented in the literature review, hate crime, or hate violence, is determined to exemplify a structural pattern of hate and/or bias (Perry, 2001; Chakraborti & Garland, 2015). Per definition, it is seen as harm of high severity, as the harm inflicted on individuals subsequently attacks the represented community (ibid.). Although, this thesis carries no dispute with that perspective, there are however supplements to be made. Yes, hate violence, discrimination, and hate crime have inherent symbolic and signaling values and effects towards targeted groups, wherein lies a notion of expansion of unsafety and fear. However, other elements of expansion have been identified in this study, as the violence is argued to take on a life of its own, permeating entire life domains. A response to the research question, will therefore be formulated in the following summary of attacks on bodies, identities, and futures.

The body is usually perceived as violated when its physical integrity is under attack (Ray, 2011). Within this study, the conceptual body is shown to be equally vulnerable to the material existence of it. An attack on the body, transcends the physical surface, both upon infliction, as integrities are negotiated, and in a prolonged ways, as corporeal life, bodily expression, and movement continues to suffer harms and regulations.

The individual and mental repercussions of hate violence, have previously been identified as psychological issues, minority stress, and internalized trans- and homophobia (Dank et al., 2014; Vergani & Navarro, 2023; Lucies & Yick, 2009; Burks et. al., 2018). This thesis connects these phenomena with identity processes, and further develops upon the impacts of hate violence on this life domain. Here, identity is deeply interfered with, through self-perception (Jenkins, 2014), down to a person's reflection in the mirror. Furthermore, through expanding into identity processes connected to perceptions of love, connection and co-existence in families, neighborhoods, workplaces, student communities, and societal positionings, as equally impacted by hate violence. This contribution demonstrates an interplay between social levels of identity processes, as connections between psychological, sociological, and philosophical thought are made, and gathered in the life domain of identity.

Temporal aspects have been observed in other fields of discrimination, as seen in crimmigration studies (Stumpf, 2011). In hate violence, the expansion of violence, on the other hand, is usually connected to the spread of fear and anticipation of attacks, moving from a targeted individual to

the community. In this study, attacks are argued to also expand into the future, both causal to generated fear, but furthermore, in the limitations to people's life developments in psychological, structural, educational, professional, and physical forms. Thus, an attack on the individual is personal to all LGBTQIA+ persons, as previously argued (Perry, 2001), but also deeply interfering with the future of targeted persons. Informants have described future impacts as limitations to corporeal expressions and movements, after being attacked on account of their non-normative existence in their bodies; as self-perceptions and relational elements being torn apart; as a discouragement from pursuing justice, prosperity, and safety; and through forms of violence, which threaten their lives and existences altogether. All of which transfers into their futures.

This thesis does not negate that hate violence attacks an entire community, through individual attacks, but it does go deeper in explaining *how* attacks function and flow through the individual, the LGBTQIA+ community, and society. Thus, the way of examining effects of hate violence, as attacking life domains, identified as the body, the identity, and the future, becomes detrimental to truly perceiving the permeations of hate violence, in the lives of LGBTQIA+ persons.

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## Attachments

### Attachment 1: Codebook

Name	Files	References
Complexities of resistance	18	43
Corporeality	21	919
Attacks on migrant bodies	14	33
Attacks on non-normative bodies	19	190
Body Language - bodily movement	10	19
Clothes	8	16
Physical presentation	18	62
Space - spacial-geographical movement	16	67



Name	Files	References
Speech	8	12
Attacks on the non-heterosexual body	19	224
Domestic	0	0
Financial	4	5
Harassment	8	14
Institutional	13	28
Intrafamilial	8	23
Laboral	5	8
Physical	9	18
Political	5	13
Psychological	5	11
Sexual	4	7
Structural	9	11
Symbolic	14	41
Systemic	6	8
Verbal	12	33
Attacks on the transgender body	20	286
Domestic	1	1
Financial	10	18
Harassment	8	14
Institucional	16	38
Intrafamilial	5	5

Name	Files	References
Laboral	13	39
Physical	12	26
Political	9	14
Psychological	7	8
Sexual	5	10
Structural	13	22
Symbolic	17	37
Systemic	12	23
Verbal	12	24
Femmephobia	9	14
Intentional attacks on LGBTQIA+ bodies	11	14
Normalised violence against LGBTQIA+ bodies	18	53
Resistance - protecting the body	13	22
Self-regulation	16	83
Body Language - Movement	7	9
Clothes	5	5
Physical presentation	10	14
Space - spacial-geographical movement	11	29
Speech	10	13
Identity	21	717
Attacks on belonging	19	64
Fear	17	92

Name	Files	References
Fear of people	13	29
Fear of self expression	12	30
Fear of venturing out in society	9	15
Inter-relational elements	14	84
Cycle of abuse OR Seeking out abusive relations	7	23
Lack of protection in relationships	11	23
Negative interactions	13	37
Loss of identity	11	59
Loss of belonging	7	14
Loss of purpose	7	13
Loss of self	6	13
Loss of self love	8	16
Normalization of hate violence	19	72
Patriarchy & Conservatism	20	83
Femmephoria	7	7
Homophobia	11	20
Machismo	12	21
Transphobia	15	24
Persecution	8	32
Harassment	7	17
Intentional violence against LGBTQIA+ identities	8	13
Psychological repercussions	16	79

Name	Files	References
Anxiety	9	10
Depression	7	8
Self harm	9	20
Suicidal ideation	8	15
Reactions to hate violence against others in the community	9	19
Rejection of LGBTQIA+ identities	15	48
Resistance - Protecting the identity	19	61
Spirituality	10	24
Condemnation	5	8
Moral Exclusion	10	13
Reflections on violence	18	63
Temporality	21	756
Attacks on the future	20	237
Health	18	57
Money	13	32
Safety	18	99
Work	12	36
Consistent hate violence attacks	13	40
Effects of omnipresent prejudice or violence	19	160
Outside of the community	18	62
Un-intentional violence	5	5
Within the community	18	87

Name	Files	References
Fluctuations of violence throughout time	10	27
Immediate reactions to hate violence	7	21
Internalized homophobia or transphobia	14	44
Longitudinal reactions to hate violence	18	63
Postponed reactions to hate violence	5	11
Resilience	19	71
Resistance - Protecting the future	19	82
Singular hate violence attacks	0	0