

# Peruvian non-cisgender memory. Remnants of rupture and agency

## Memoria peruana no-cisgénero. Vestigios de ruptura y agencia

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### ABSTRACT

This essay explores agents and spaces of enunciation regarding Peruvian non-cisgender memory. Namely, points of contact where the institutional, societal, and ideological dimensions converge (or collide). Firstly, the piece reviews prominent mnemonic initiatives during the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Secondly, the essay reflects opportunities and tensions around non-cisgender memory actors. Finally, it briefly analyzes discourses that depart from contemporary activism. To address such approaches, existing literature, stakeholders, and their dynamics of alliance were examined. As seen throughout the piece, questions arise regarding how non-cisgender identities relate to traditional ontologies of remembrance and deal with the historical voids of a dissident past. Beyond particular differences, the same continuum of violence estranges individuals from democratic plenitude. Remains thus the question of how to further an opaque legacy in conditions of citizen precariousness.

### KEYWORDS

Memory, non-cisgender, gender, trans, activism

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## RESUMEN

Este ensayo explora agentes y espacios de enunciación de la memoria no-cisgénero en el Perú. Puntos de contacto en los que convergen (o colisionan) dimensiones institucionales, sociales e ideológicas. En primer lugar, el ensayo revisa destacadas iniciativas mnemónicas de principios del siglo XXI. En segundo lugar, refleja oportunidades y tensiones en torno a actores de la memoria. Finalmente, analiza brevemente discursos que parten de activismos contemporáneos. Para abordar tales aproximaciones, se examinó literatura existente, agentes clave y sus dinámicas de alianza. En el transcurso del ensayo surgen interrogantes sobre cómo las identidades no-cisgénero se relacionan a ontologías tradicionales del recuerdo y lidian con los vacíos de un pasado disidente. Más allá de diferencias particulares, el mismo continuum de violencia les enajena de la plenitud democrática. Permanece entonces la interrogante sobre cómo urdir el recuerdo en condiciones de precariedad ciudadana.

## PALABRAS CLAVE

Memoria, no-cisgénero, género, trans, activismo

## Introduction

The recognition of non-cisgender citizenships<sup>1</sup> is pivotal for collective memory endeavors. López Sánchez (2022) argues that Human Rights are a relatively recent indicator of legitimacy and measure of democratic quality in Latin America. According to the author, the last decades of the XX century configured a supranational terminology which leveraged fundamental claims for non-cisgender individuals. Nevertheless, organized political groups are not only recent but conflicted within this population. Although they respond to different sexual identities, non-cisgender individuals represent a distinctive agenda within the LGBTQ+ community. Therefore, difficulties around defining the political subject are understood as discursive challenges for action.

As from early 21<sup>st</sup> century, Peruvian non-cisgender memory was mainly subject of aesthetic exploration and counter-hegemonic disruption. From this regard, Giuseppe Campuzano's work posed a seminal critique

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1 Non-cisgender identity is an umbrella term present throughout the essay to refer to people who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. Among others, it is possible to associate such term with trans, queer, genderqueer, or non-binary individuals.

to gender binarism around Peruvian history conceptions. It has however become urgent to conceive remembrance initiatives beyond artistic activism and reflect upon the trail of their shared horizon. Thus, archival under-recording of non-cisgender population traces narrative power. Simultaneously, systematic omission still configures a public sphere shaped by historical absence. It is therefore necessary to reflect upon current discursive strategies channeled as both an aesthetic and political response. Hence, non gender-conforming collectives do not only answer to their own political demands but to particular ontologies of remembrance.

Despite digital platforms stand as privileged scenarios for the communication of mnemonic statements, non-cisgender memory practices are not restricted to these environments but also extend to official physical places of remembrance. Although it could be predominantly mobilized by traditional memory activism, ritual practices are interwoven with spaces that departed from transitional justice achievements. In this regard, both *El ojo que llora* memorial site and the Lugar de la Memoria, la Tolerancia y la Inclusión Social (LUM) represent relevant nodes of encounter. Through the years, these spaces dedicated to the victims of the Peruvian internal armed conflict (1980-2000) evidenced openness to intervention.

Finally, the alarming situation of vulnerability of non-cisgender people should not go unmentioned. In slightly over a month, between January 20 and February 21 of the year 2023, seven trans women were tortured and assassinated in different Peruvian regions. Presumably perpetrated as a menace to sexual workers who resisted extortion, crimes were recorded and later shared (Zelada, 2023). The continuum of violence that non-cisgender individuals experience represents an urgent need to highlight their recent losses and mnemonic perceptions. These precepts become more salient when considering the resistance of Peruvian Congresses to discuss at a plenary session the Gender Identity Bill<sup>2</sup> since 2016. In contrast with other countries of the South American region, dignity and full fledged citizenship are systematically denied. It is therefore necessary to address how and where non-cisgender identities deploy memory narratives towards democratic plenitude.

## Development

Nora (1984/2008) regarded history as rationality and rigorous construction of knowledge. On the other side, he associated memory with subjectivity, affections and vulnerability to intervention. Jelin (2002/2012)

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2 Bill N°790/2016-CR submitted by congresswomen Indira Huilca and Marisa Glave with the signatures of other ten congressmen and a congresswoman.

understood history and memory through their multilayered interplay, underlining memory as a pivotal stimulus for the consolidation of a historical research agenda. When tackling mnemonic narratives and non-cisgender identities, such intertwining comes to the forefront. In this sense, Ilmonen and Juvonen (2015) locate «queer memory» closer to a «counter-memory» which privileges remembrance based on creative approaches and the setting of a new scenario for different versions of history. Thus, transgender archival endeavors transcend a dominant centralized authority (Rawson, 2014). Such idea can be expressed through digital archival initiatives that, without a formal affiliation to traditional centers of historical record, provide insights of intimacy and social movement<sup>3</sup>.

Beyond a sole focus on trauma or a specific timeframe, this piece explores non-cisgender memory as a sphere of agency. Hence, the essay overviews how different collectives and individuals mobilize historical meaning in order to propose a shared horizon. Initially mobilized by an emerging landscape of Peruvian LGBTQ+ organizations, non-cisgender memory discourses were subordinated within a broad sexual diversity agenda. Although a transformation should not definitely be understood as categorical<sup>4</sup>, changes in narrative agency are pivotal. It is therefore noteworthy that nowadays non-cisgender memory endeavors are also proliferated by predominantly transfeminist, transmasculine, and non-binary collectives. In contrast, an early 21st century recorded mainly cis-gender agents carrying out significant sexual diversities' memory endeavors.

The Retablo de la Memoria TLGB (2003), was an initiative from the Movimiento Homosexual de Lima (MHOL) and Movimiento Raíz that gathered more than 100 names of victims of hate crimes victims between 1989 and 2003<sup>5</sup> (Infante, 2013). Also in 2003, a coalition of LGBTQ+ organizations proposed the 31<sup>st</sup> of May<sup>6</sup> as the «National Day to Combat Violence and Hate Crimes against Lesbians, Trans, Gays and Bisexuals». Two years later, LGBTQ+ organizations carried out the Quipu de la Memoria LGBTB

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3 Through an Instagram and Facebook account, the citizen initiative @memoriadiversaperu discloses private and public pictures relevant to the past of the Peruvian LGBTQ+ community. Among the published material, it is possible to find valuable images that offer a scope into non-cisgender life within the last decades of the XX century.

4 Evidently, sexual diversities still represent alliances and agents of non-cisgender memory, especially organizations that include trans workers/collaborators. Among them we can find Más Igualdad, Presente or Lesbia Arequipa and also citizenship initiatives like the Archivo de la Memoria Marica.

5 It is alleged by voices of activism and academia that this initiative influenced the inclusion of hate crimes during the period of violence (1980-2000) in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report (Infante, 2013; Ferrari, 2019; Cornejo, 2022).

6 The date was chosen in remembrance to the sexual diversities' victims of Las Gardenias massacre, a crime perpetrated in 1989 by the Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (MRTA) terrorist group.

(2005) for the first time. Participants of the Quipu de la Memoria LGTB collectively knotted threads in a bigger rainbow-flag pattern and voiced out the names of victims of violence due to sexual orientation or identity (Cornejo, 2014). Evidently, such advances must be considered in the context of the first years of Peru's democratic transition and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2001-2003, CVR) which aimed to elucidate decades of internal armed conflict. Thus, windows of participation and interpellation were regarded as open for previously neglected actors. It is rather illustrative that the «Retablo de la Memoria TLGB» was held during a commemoration of the National Bank fire. As detailed by Burt (2011), the fire was orchestrated by Alberto Fujimori's regime to delegitimize the opposition *Marcha de los Cuatro Suyos* (Four Quarter's March). Similarly, the Quipu de la Memoria LGTB (2005) was proposed within the second anniversary of the CVR Final Report and sought to integrate sexual diversities' to the legacy of a broad reparative narrative (Infante, 2013; Cornejo, 2014).

When it comes to transitional justice and sexual diversities in Peru, the inclusion of violence against this population in the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR)<sup>7</sup> (2003) represents a pivotal moment. Among registered historical events<sup>8</sup>, Las Gardenias massacre on May 31<sup>st</sup> of the year 1989 was the most prominent. This episode comprised the assassination of eight individuals of the LGTBQ+ community by members of the *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru - MRTA* terrorist group in Tarapoto (San Martín Region). The victims were attending a LGTBQ+ bar named Las Gardenias and, as part of a targeted community, were also previously harassed by the MRTA through death menaces which claimed the need of a social «cleansing» (CVR, 2003). After the crime was committed, a MRTA-supporter newspaper named «Cambio» proudly claimed the group responsibility of the slaughter (Montalvo, 2017). Due to the scarcity of archival material referred to sexual diversities, the criminal media coverage of «Cambio» provides valuable information to date, disclosing the underlying ideology of perpetration and a climate of violence

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7 Carlos Iván Degregori, influential Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission declared being part of the LGTBQ+ community (Agüero and Sandoval, 2015). Degregori has been pointed out as a crucial stakeholder for the inclusion of Las Gardenias in the CVR Final Report (Infante, 2013; Cornejo, 2022).

8 Julio José Montalvo (2017) reviews (and criticizes) the CVR Final Report recollection of crimes and discourses around sexual diversities during the period of violence. Among them, the author includes Sendero Luminoso perpetrations in Aucayacu (Leoncio Prado, Huánuco) and Pucallpa.

experienced by sexual diversities in the northeastern Peruvian jungle region<sup>9</sup>.

Although the CVR Final Report inclusion of crimes against sexual diversities represented a landmark, it has been also regarded as incomplete due to its lack of depth (Montalvo, 2017) and absence of non-cisgender memory sensitivity (McCullough, 2016; Cornejo, 2022). Specifically, regarding the particular Las Gardenias massacre, McCullough (2016) noted that all of the disclosed victim's names were legal and cisgender and that the CVR Final Report omitted non-cisgender social names. On the basis of the testimony of Tomás García Rodríguez<sup>10</sup>, brother of Las Gardenias victim Raúl Chumbe, McCullough retrieved the names of «Pamela» and «Mónica» among assassinated individuals. Aligned with such remarkable archival recovery, the author evokes a suppression of subjectivity elicited by official under-recording and misgendering.

In June 2018 the Peruvian Ministry of Justice and Human Rights<sup>11</sup> placed a plaque in Tarapoto to commemorate sexual diversities affected during the internal armed conflict. Despite being a quite laudable precedent, it is illustrative that it was dedicated «in memory of the victims of terrorism due to their sexual orientation, during the period of violence from 1980 to 2000, from the communities of the district of Tarapoto». As expressed, the plaque only attributes «sexual orientation» a reason for victimization but not to «gender identity». Such consideration suggests following the CVR narrative and limitations of Peruvian state agents in relation with a comprehensive memory of non-cisgender identities. In the search for intelligibility, a reductive framework of reference defines commemorative terminology<sup>12</sup>.

Investigative journalism has also proposed sharp inquiries into the memory of violence against non-cisgender citizens. Through the multimedia project *Los crímenes silenciados* («Silenced crimes», 2023), journalist Elizabeth Salazar and photographer Marco Garro addressed the hate crimes towards sexual diversities in the Peruvian Amazon during the internal armed conflict. Although it is an exhaustive and effective investigation for judicial purposes, it results nevertheless from an external view

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9 Similarly, activists of the Argentinian Archivo de la Memoria Trans (2021) state that frequently the only available historical record of past murders of trans individuals was sensationalist news coverage.

10 Seudonym (McCullough, 2016).

11 Specifically implemented by CMAN – Comisión Multisectorial de Alto Nivel, organism in charge of supervising the implementation of the Plan Integral de Reparaciones (PIR) of the 1980-2000 Peruvian internal armed conflict.

12 According to Devor and Matte (2004/2006) historicized trans identities have been broadly typified as «gay» or «lesbian» since early XX century sexologists.

of the collective. Thus, Garro's compelling images emphasize a dramatic documentary narrative. Such focus prevails over meanings that the portrayed subjects could confer on their social environment. In this respect, it is pivotal to consider how non-cisgender individuals conceive intimate memories beyond affectation and recover their own dimensions of subjectivity<sup>13</sup>.

From another perspective, Meléndez (2021) explores the painting *La huida* («The Escape») of Christian Bendayán. This artwork poses an imagined tribute to LGBTQ+ victims of political violence during the Peruvian internal armed conflict. *La huida* pictures the escape of non-cisgender individuals on a wooden raft, caring pictures of their mourned ones. They navigate the river while burning a subversive flag. Through an imagined retrieval of agency, Meléndez traces the relevance of fiction as a response to the cis-heteronormative gaze of the Peruvian state. Thus, aesthetic endeavors thrive as an emergent strategy to confront official politics of perpetuation and oblivion. As mentioned before, imagination deals with archival absence to elicit a sense of historical depth. Therefore, it is rather difficult to conceive non-cisgender memory endeavors without aesthetic explorations. However, it is also important to articulate intersections between a formal political establishment and aesthetic, academic or activism sensitivities. In this sense, the mobilization of chronologies stands out as salient statements. Accordingly, Giuseppe Campuzano's seminal work *Museo Travesti del Perú* (2003-2013) represents a landmark for queer, performance and memory studies.

Through *Museo Travesti del Perú - MTP* (2003-2013), Campuzano sprawled a chronology of gender defiance and genealogies. On the basis of historical research, *MTP* posed an effort to collect, reinterpret, intervene and expose characters and events retrieved as relevant for a Peruvian travesti<sup>14</sup> past. Undefined between «performance and documentary inquiry» (López, 2013), the proposed timeline comprised Ancient Peru spiritual eminences such as the androgynous *qvariwarmi* shamans<sup>15</sup> to decades of press snippets referred to 20<sup>th</sup> century hate crimes.

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13 Both Jelin (2002/2012) and Agüero (2015) stressed the need to recognize victims beyond categories of affectation.

14 Although it could stir a derogatory past, nowadays the appellative «travesti» departs from a collective resignification within Latin American transfeminisms. It does not exclude trans identities and mainly corresponds to persons who perceive their gender as feminine (Sentiido, 2021).

15 Horswell (2005/2010) refers to *qvariwarmi* (man-woman) as religious authorities of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and to *Chuquichinchay*, as the revered deity of jaguars and «patron of dual-gendered indigenous peoples» (p. 2). His historical research is referenced by contemporary activists that claim antecedents of non-binary presence (and power) in ancient Peru.

Campuzano's enterprise does not aim a traditional academic approach and stands out as a disruptive critique to binary historicity. Departing from a multifaceted decolonial practice, the interdisciplinary artist sought to address dominant Western museum epistemologies of perpetuation. Although this artistic and research legacy has been assumed by contemporary activism, it did not further intended association with a (formal) political sphere. Namely, it was not originally conceived to directly approach agents with legislative influence or power to mobilize State resources<sup>16</sup>. Evidently, this does not mean that the artist remained estranged from the urgency of influencing formal political stakeholders. For example, within the framework of the 2006 Peruvian General Elections, Campuzano and other activists conducted a disruptive performance in Lima as a response to the conservatism of leading political campaigns. On that occasion, they deployed on the street and handed out excerpts from the «Archivo Travesti (1966-1996)», a documentary recollection that consisted of newspaper clippings referring to non-cisgender identities. Through this collective action, they sought to shed light to a history of experienced violence and urgent historical affirmation (Campuzano, 2013). S/he left an expanding body of work which oscillated from activist political interventions to traditional exhibition contexts of a mainly Lima-based cultural landscape. These contexts of agency involved urban performances, museums, art galleries, and cultural platforms of progressive diplomacy<sup>17</sup>. Such performance/exhibition contexts evidenced distance between spheres of public disruption and formal State-acknowledged spaces of mnemonic recognition. This scenario rises questions around the possibilities and limitations of non-cisgender memory statements within official instances of symbolic reparation.

On the other hand, the LUM<sup>18</sup> opened its projected museography to sexual diversities since its early conceptual foundations<sup>19</sup> (2014). During

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16 This does not confirm that Campuzano was exclusive from interaction with cultural centers, galleries, museums or stakeholders who belonged to public funding. In 2004 s/he set up the exhibition «Certamen (Proyecto para un Museo Travesti)» in the Museo de Sitio Batalla de Miraflores. This institution is managed by the Miraflores Municipality (local government) and is dedicated to the Pacific War between Chile and Peru (1879-1884) (Campuzano, 2013).

17 For example, Spanish International Cooperation financing in Lima through the Centro Cultural España (CCE-Lima).

18 Cultural and civic public institution dedicated to foster education, awareness and research concerning the memory of the period of violence experienced in Peru (1980-2000). It was mainly financed by the German International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Peruvian State. During its projectual phase, LUM was dependent of the Peruvian Foreign Affairs Ministry and was later transferred to the competence of the Ministry of Culture in 2016. Although not formally considered a museum but a «Place of Memory» (Ministerio de Cultura del Perú, 2018), it is currently part of the General Museums Direction.

19 Conducted by Ponciano del Pino and Jose Carlos Agüero.



LUM initial consultative meetings with activists and NGO representatives, MHOL founder Gio Infante discussed the lack of sexual diversities within the proposed exhibition contents (del Pino and Agüero, 2014). Subsequently, the permanent exhibition included a video with the testimony of Roger Pinchi, a gay survivor of MRTA violence and brother of non-cisgender hairstylist Fransuá Pinchi. Fransuá was tortured and assassinated by the same terrorist group in 1990. Through the years, Roger Pinchi's became more than a content support for LGBTQ+-themed visits mediated by LUM Educational Area. Thus, this video is included as sensitization material in the Peruvian Ministry of Justice and Humans Rights' «Guidelines for the adoption of differentiated actions in the Implementation of the Integral Plan of Reparations for Women and LGTBI Population»<sup>20</sup> (2019).

Even though Roger Pinchi's testimony meant a relevant precedent as mnemonic narrative from the State, it is important to highlight the format in which it was incorporated in LUM's museography: as a standardized audiovisual. Hence, the testimony is reproduced in the same format as other testimonies in the room «One person, all the persons». His body looks straight ahead as he speaks with a pitch-black background behind. It is a museographic document of standardized solemnity, sobriety and silences. Images of Fransuá Pinchi do not appear in the video except in the words of her brother Roger. As suggested by Wilson-Sánchez (2022), a *travesti* epistemology can contribute a vocabulary to how dissident bodies are linked to history and politics. In this sense, the standardization of non-cisgender memories in this permanent exhibition is an account of narrative subordination to traditional memory ontologies.

Museological efforts that depart from sexual diversities have adopted different focus and deployments in the South American region. Most noticeably, «Memória LGBTQIA+» was a project from the Museu de Favela (MUF), an open-air «territorial» museum that comprises the Pavão, Pavãozinho and Cantagalo favelas (Brazil, South of Rio de Janeiro). The Memória LGBTQIA+ project prioritized a community-based approach to collect and convey memories of sexual diversities from the alleged «urban periphery». Boita and Baptista (2023) underline such enterprise as a necessity to tackle particular languages, codes, and survival strategies. Towards a perspective of recognition drawn in the terms of such collective, they demand distinctive conceptions of heritage.

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20 Original: «Lineamientos para la adopción de acciones diferenciadas en la Implementación del Plan Integral de Reparaciones a Mujeres y Población LGTBI».

It is also relevant to address that LUM has been a place of institutional non-cisgender memory intervention. Within the framework of 2019 LGBTQ+ Pride month (June) and the Trans Memory Day (November 31<sup>st</sup>), messages that featured historical information about hate crimes committed against sexual diversities were displayed throughout the permanent exhibition. Among the disposed information, details of Las Gardenias massacre confronted LUM visitors. Gabriela Eguren, LUM Education Specialist was responsible of the design and implementation of this action and understood it as a necessary defiance:

Our area assumed the intervention as a call to attention of exhibition voids. However, despite having established a relationship with relatives of victims, it was extremely complicated to deal with historical silences. Namely, to be able to amplify queer identities relegated from the official record without leaving aside academic rigor. It was thus important to be aware that we worked from a different temporality, carrying theoretical foundations that sharpen but also generate bias. For example, for the sake of neutrality we decided to use the umbrella term «trans» to refer to the group of victims whose gender identity has been difficult to establish. This decision was taken due to contradictory gender self-identification data we retrieved from those who knew them (G. Eguren, personal communication, February 14, 2024).

As expressed, the intervention was approached in terms of a dialogue with memories invisibilized by hegemonic notions. However, Eguren highlights the difficulty of an «official» standardization of memory when dealing with shifting gender identities, silences from those who personally knew the victims and their personal biases. It is thus relevant to note the difficulties of fixing non-cisgender memory by traditional historicities. Moreover, considering a perceptive skew from contemporary vocabularies regarding gender identity.

Besides a continuous educational and cultural program that includes LGBTQ+ discussions, LUM stands out as a space of remembrance with a tradition of integrating non-cisgender memory citizen endeavors. Held on 7 June, 2022, «La Memoria Silenciada» (The Silenced Memory) events by the Archivo de la Memoria Marica and the Callao LGBTQ+ Movement represent a key indicator of it. «La Memoria Silenciada» comprised a LGBTQ+-focused mediated tour, a commemorative ceremony and a dialogue that included trans-identifying activists (LUM, 2022). Despite structural shortcomings, LUM has proven to be an exemplary space functional to coalition and reparative proposal. A distinctive public institution that provides conditions for theoretical negotiation and remains (to date) permeable to the intervention of non-cisgender remembrance.



**FIGURE 1.** Educational intervention at LUM  
 Note. LUM, 2019.

*El ojo que llora* (*The eye that cries*) is another public<sup>21</sup> site of remembrance of the period of violence (1980–2000) which has also been permeable to non-cisgender memory. Conceived by Dutch artist Lika Mutal, *El ojo que llora* was inaugurated in August 2005 in the Campo de Marte Park (Jesús María, Lima) and took inspiration from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission *Yuyanapaq* photography exhibition. The monument displays an abstract granite sculpture from which a faint thread of water flows. A circular maze-patterned display of thousands of commemorative stones visually outgrows and surrounds the central sculpture (Drinot, 2007). The names and dates of death/disappearance of citizens featured in the Peruvian Unified Registry of Victims (RUV) are inscribed on each rounded stone. As from 2018, a commemorative stone with the names of the victims of Las Gardenias massacre was integrated to the monument. As well as the LGBTQ+ rainbow symbol, the colors of a trans flag were also engraved on the mentioned stone.

Remarkably, Jáuregui (2019) provided a detailed account of the rituals and actors around the 2018 «National Day to Combat Violence and Hate

21 Although it does not belong to the Peruvian State and it is managed by the civic coalition Asociación Civil Caminos de la Memoria, *El ojo que llora* is a place of frequent exchange with formal political stakeholders from the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights. In 2022, the monument was declared National Cultural Heritage by the Ministry of Culture within the historical-artistic category (Ministerio de Cultura, 2022).

Crimes against LGBTQ+ Population» ceremony at *El ojo que llora*. An event that takes place since 2014. Within this specific ceremonial framework, the author noted the protocol participation of trans organizations, NGO's representatives, activists, progressive-left congresswomen, and government officials. Such account illustrates a vital point of convergence between non-cisgender memory endeavors and formal political stakeholders linked to legislative initiative and the implementation of transitional justice reparations. Moreover, the author noted absence of direct relatives of victims. Instead, a mobilizing sense of historical commonality was shared by activists who paid tribute to the relevance of non-cisgender memory.

As suggested by McCullough (2016), exercises of solidarity among activists are essential to deal with historical erasure. In face of the impossibility of finding lesbian and transmasculine voices during the Peruvian armed conflict, the author evidences a narrative voice that recognizes its own gravity:

I know the experience of being a non-viable subject —exposed to the symbolic and physical violence from the heteronormative matrix and at the same time invisibilized for being sexed with own and dissident desires—. That is my place of enunciation. Maybe that is why it hurts me even more not being able to reverse the non-existence of lesbians and transmasculines, as it can be assumed that they were also victims during the political violence (2016, p.147).

The researcher discloses queer identity as well as an own experience of the public sphere as a dissident body. Subsequently, McCullough expresses frustration towards the unfeasibility of contributing to repair a personally-felt historical void.

Based on the above, it is quite illustrative how non-cisgender author Giancarlo Mori Bolo tackles the presentation of three *travestis* before the Peruvian Constituent Assembly on December 6<sup>th</sup> 1978. The historical episode detailed when Damonett, Gisselle and Francis Day demanded to the Constituent Assembly members that the new Peruvian Constitution include better conditions for the «third sex». Although they achieved a meeting with an assembly member<sup>22</sup>, their requests eventually remained unsettled among sensationalist coverage (Mori Bolo, 2023a). The submitted statement of demands as well as more details about private meetings with political stakeholders remain unreachable to present day research. Mori Bolo could not avoid expressing frustration regarding sources absence:

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22 Partido Popular Cristiano - PPC partisan Lucio Galarza (Mori, 2023a).

Despite their brave deed, we do not know what happened to them. Of the three, only Giselle's death has been confirmed, but I don't know what happened to the others. If any of you are out there and reading this, I would like to tell you that, not only do I admire them, but it would also be an honor to meet them. Also, if anyone knew them and/or has more information about them please do not hesitate to contact me, any information, data or memories will be well taken care of (2023b, p. 27).

The author's abyssal calling confronts non-cisgender memory oblivion. Although this historical episode remains opaque, it settles a precedent of an active will of participation in constitution-building processes. In this regard, it is relevant to note the support of a group of trans organizations<sup>23</sup> to the December 2022 Peruvian protests and their demand of a new Constitution. Social unrest was triggered by the resistance of then vice-president Dina Boluarte and the Congress to call for new elections after the impeachment of former president Pedro Castillo (Taj *et al.*, 2022). Among the protester's demands, the drafting of a new Peruvian Constitution was mentioned by supportive trans organizations as an opportunity to include non-cisgender identities in a constituent process. Nevertheless, such appreciation collides with ideological tensions because initiatives for a new Constitution are associated to a broad leftist political positioning<sup>24</sup>. It is therefore illustrative that most of the former congressmen who supported a Trans Identity Bill (2016) from either center or right political positioning resist the popular change of the 1993 Peruvian Constitution<sup>25</sup>.

As suggested before, stakeholders close to non-cisgender memory can configure a scenario of strong ideological convictions and tensions. It is thus important to note that 21<sup>st</sup> century progressive left-oriented parties began to include trans women. Specifically, electoral efforts from the leftist spectrum with stronger ecological and/or feminist activism ties. Both Belissa Andía and Gahela Cari ran for parliamentarian charges from partisan coalitions of such characteristics<sup>26</sup>. Despite recent openness of

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23 Social media posts were published by Féminas (2023, January 20), Diversidades Transmasculinas (2022, December 18) and Azucenas y Claveles (2022, November 25). Although not in the same context, other collectives like Casa Trans Lima Este (2020, November 17) had previously appointed constitutional change.

24 With different emphasis and congruence, there is not a left self-identifying congressman/woman among the parties or coalitions currently in power that does not support a drafting of a new Constitution.

25 Public opposition to a new constitution is stated by former congressmen Alberto de Belaunde (center-oriented) and Carlos Bruce (right-oriented).

26 Andía ran for congress for the Movimiento Nueva Izquierda-MNI in 2006 and for the Andean Parliament with the ecologist alliance Frente Amplio in 2017 (JNE, 2006; ONPE, 2017). On the other hand, Cari ran in 2020 and 2021 with the Juntos por el Perú leftist coalition. Cari obtained 24,562 votes the first time and 20,034 votes the second. On both opportunities,

progressive leftist parties to trans candidacies to the Congress and Andean Parliament, the first popularly elected non-cisgender authority was not of that ideological positioning.

In 2014, the prominent activist and leader of «Red Trans la Libertad» Luisa Revilla Urcia was elected as councilwoman in the district of La Esperanza in Trujillo (La Libertad Region). On several occasions, she claimed to be driven by strategic pragmatism rather than ideological or partisan conviction (Revilla, as cited in de Belaunde, 2017 and in Melgar, 2017). She was a member of a party<sup>27</sup> led by Elidio Espinoza, a retired Police Coronel who was facing judicial proceedings for kidnapping and homicide since 2007<sup>28</sup>. Moreover, Revilla alleged rejection within the LGBTQ+ community after she met far-right political leader Martha Chávez in order to discuss the importance of a Gender Identity Bill, among other concerns of her trans community (Revilla, as cited in de Belaunde, 2017).

In this sense, it is suggestive to think how regional political culture can shape local (trans)gender activisms and its reading of power coordinates. Thus, even within sexual diversities, there are political stakeholders who can prevail ideological partisanship and block non-cisgender memory. That is the case of far-right and openly gay congressmen Alejandro Cavero, an authority who associated *El ojo que llora* to terrorism and sought to remove its National Cultural Heritage status (Cavero, 2022a). As previously referenced, this transitional justice legacy also annually receives non-cisgender commemorations<sup>29</sup>.

There are evident complexities within the sexual diversities that involve dialogues with local, partisan or ideological agendas. Accordingly, it is pertinent to regard non-cisgender memory through coalitions between groups of the LGBTQ+ collective. Thus, it would be reductive to consider the «LGBTQ+» community as a static, cohesive and isolated political entity. Like Cornejo (2015) argues, sexual diversities' essentialism is strategic because it bases alliances on the performativity of collective action rather than on underlying moving identities. From this perspective, articulations with formal stakeholders, feminisms or indigenous leaderships could offer useful insights for further analysis.

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her voting results were among the highest of non-elected candidates (ONPE, 2020; 2021). Andia and Cari were at a competitive disadvantage because the voting ballot showed their miss-gendering legal names and not the social names they campaigned with.

27 Movimiento Regional para el Desarrollo con Seguridad y Honradez (MDSH).

28 Elidio Espinoza was later sentenced in 2019 (LP, 2019).

29 Congressman Cavero has also been known for practicing public misgendering (Cavero, 2022b).

Ideological tension within agents around non-cisgender memory activism can also be reflected through a particular course of institutional life. This was demonstrated by the No Tengo Miedo collective transformation to «Rosa Rabiosa». Since 2014, No Tengo Miedo was a Lima-based LGBTQ+ organization with academic production, performing arts presentations, external institutional alliances and political incidence actions (No Tengo Miedo, 2016). Additionally, the collective developed a line of memory activism which fostered knowledge of non-cisgender Peruvian past. No Tengo Miedo edited educational material which comprised illustrated<sup>30</sup> graphic retelling of Las Gardenias massacre and Ancient Peru non-binary *qvariwarmi* shamans (Mori, 2023a).

The 14<sup>th</sup> of October of 2020 a (de)institutional shift was announced on the collective's social media. A digital illustration<sup>31</sup> of two non-cisgender feline characters crossing out the name No Tengo Miedo on a barb-wired brick wall. The public announcement was titled «FOR JUSTICE AND REPARATION. NO TENGO MIEDO GOES NO MORE.» The textual information of the post introduced a non-canonically written manifesto which allegedly sought to end elitist views which originated the collective: «During too much time No Tengo Miedo has been conducted by a progressive, academic and feminist direction that allowed and benefitted classism, racism, misogyny and transphobia» (Rosa Rabiosa, 2020). The shift to what eventually<sup>32</sup> was named Rosa Rabiosa prioritized non-gender conforming identities as well as narratives of rupture and renaissance. Eventually, Rosa Rabiosa not only continued its own non-cisgender memory endeavors<sup>33</sup> but also developed alliances with formal State actors like the National Electoral Processes Organism (ONPE)<sup>34</sup>.

As shown by the No Tengo Miedo transition to Rosa Rabiosa, digital environments are now pivotal to understand scenarios of tension. Moreover, digital interconnectedness offers interstices of opportunity. Decades after initiatives driven predominantly by sexual diversities' collectives, an array of predominantly non-cisgender organizations demonstrate a step-forward conducting their own memory endeavors. It is thus illustrative

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30 Illustrated by Emperatriz Plácido.

31 Illustrated by Chori Chike.

32 Rosa Rabiosa name was not immediately adopted, «no t3ngo nombr3» (I do not have a name) was firstly consigned.

33 Rosa Rabiosa edited a research and graphic art project that prioritized non-cisgender historical memory. Written by Max Lira and illustrated by Emperatriz Plácido, the endeavor included episodes like the previously referenced irruption of three *travestis* at the Constituent Assembly in 1978.

34 Rosa Rabiosa was a consultative agent and communicational ally of the «Protocol to guarantee the right to vote of trans persons on Election Day». Such protocol sought to assure a non-cisgender sensitive electoral experience (ONPE, 2021).

how these organizations use their social media to commemorate, deploying an online scenario of orientations and alliances that transcend virtual platforms. Hence, they post to draw attention upon collective loss but also to call to commemorative action.

On Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 2021 a coalition of transmasculine and transfeminist organizations<sup>35</sup> held a ritual pilgrimage to the Baquijano cemetery (Callao) in order to remember their losses within the framework of Trans Memory Day. Similarly, on the same November date in 2023 Azucenas y Claveles<sup>36</sup> summoned participation to the collaborative creation of an altar in remembrance of victims of transphobic violence in Chiclayo (Lambayeque Region). On the other hand, other organizations like TRANS Perú<sup>37</sup> are characterized by a close belonging to a Latin American and Caribbean Trans Network (Red LAC Trans) and replicate Trans Memory Day messages from this international organization.

It is noteworthy that there are groups which appeal to political-decolonial reflections<sup>38</sup> while others<sup>39</sup> stick to broad factual messages (numbers, names and defense of specific Human Rights). Besides collective resources, digital discourses reveal tendencies of educational or ideological dimension. Beyond the differentiated outputs, a common emphasis is placed on a continuity of transphobic violence up to the present day. A collective narrative is extended in which decades of dissident bodies converge in parallel to parliamentary resistance towards addressing non-cisgender rights.<sup>40</sup> For example, the Peruvian Congress remains reluctant to discuss the Gender Identity Bill since 2016. Manifestations of non-cisgender memory accumulate as years of absences swirl away from formal State recognition.

Despite an adverse present, the memory of the loss of community members sustains bonds of cohesion and identity affirmation in solidarity. In this sense, Casa Trans Zuleymi is a shelter for non-cisgender people in Lima which was named after Zuleymi Sánchez, a 14-year-old trans

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35 Rosa Rabiosa, *Féminas and Diversidades Transmasculinas* (Lima, Peru).

36 Trans branch of LGTBQ+ organization Moshikas Diversas (Chiclayo, Peru).

37 Full name: TRANS - Organización Feminista por los Derechos Humanos de las Personas Trans.

38 As expressed by textual developments published by Rosa Rabiosa (2020), Azucenas y Claveles Committee (2022) or *Diversidades Trans Masculinas* (2022).

39 TRANS Perú (2023), Red Trans La Libertad (2023) or *Féminas* (2022, 2023).

40 In March 2020, after on-going insistence from trans collectives, the bill was approved by the «Women and Family» Commission of the Congress. It then passed to the Constitution Commission, a second instance before plenary debate where its discussion was delayed until the end of the parliamentary period. Although unsuccessfully, center-left congresswoman Susel Paredes (Bloque Democrático Popular coalition) demanded a reconsideration of the bill to the successor parliament in February 2022.



teenager assassinated in 2016 in Trujillo (La Libertad). Founded in 2018, an ongoing trail of violence is part of this shelter's constitutive identity but at the same time carries her name as sign of persistence for the trans population. Like Elizabeth Jelin (2002/2012) argues, plural subjects can be proposed to represent social conditions and belonging to political tensions. Still compelled to the margins of any public consideration, the memory of Zuleymi entails both rupture and possibility.

## Conclusions

It is possible to outline a transition from early 21<sup>st</sup> century narratives within sexual diversities to predominantly non-cisgender collectives that trace their own memory agendas. With stronger ties with Lima's formal cultural landscape, both aesthetic explorations and activism intervention advanced to dilute binarism. Most prominently, Giuseppe Campuzano's multidisciplinary body of work mobilized archival narratives and set an undeniable precedent. However, access to formal spheres of mnemonic recognition has been more gradual, eventually establishing points of contact with Peruvian state institutions. Such scope of opportunity is expressed through institutional efforts of the LUM and commemorations around *El ojo que llora*. Nevertheless, questions arise regarding how non-cisgender identities remember and relate to traditional historical ontologies. It is therefore necessary to reflect upon a reconciliation with the legacy of transitional justice in their own terms. Namely, collaborative actions to make loss visible and explore ways to deal with abyssal voids of under-recording. Faced with unfathomable historical absences, groups of activists, educators and researchers amplify subjectivities among elusive fragments of the past.

Definitely, contemplating non-cisgender memory agents as homogeneous and isolated entities does not represent a pertinent approach. As seen before, they can respond to ideological tensions, local political cultures and dynamic alliances. Thus, memory agents are part of a system of actors that requires negotiation and citizen initiative in differentiated contexts. In this sense, digital environments contribute to the understanding of collective orientations and coordinates of action. Beyond particular differences, a same continuum of violence estranges non-cisgender individuals from democratic plenitude. The situation is multidimensional as it carries the institutionalized denial of their gender identity. Remains thus the question of how to further processes of remembrance in conditions of such citizenship precariousness. As author Camila Sosa Villada (AMT, 2021) explains, trans people in Argentina share a different temporality in relation with traditional transitional justice periodization.

For them democracy does not start with the end of military dictatorship (1976-1983) but with the Gender Identity Bill approved by the Argentinian Senate in 2012. Without justice by public records, Peruvian non-cisgender memory is sustained between resistance and oblivion.

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