The Call for Dialogue Creation and Narrative Mapping in the Context of Narco-tourism: Medellin, Colombia

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Preface

Prior to starting my Masters in the Netherlands, I discovered my affection for the tourism sector in Colombia. Over the course of three years I went back and forth between what became my South American and North American homes. During that time, I began to notice a difference in the amount of foreigners that I was experiencing in places that I felt were untouched and kept for my own personal explorations. Little did I know at the time that I, too, was a part of the 'tourist boom'.

When it came time to think about a case in tourism that was problematic, I wanted to focus on a place that I knew in order to attempt to not only be on the receiving end of our relationship. As I began to think about my experiences in Colombia, I mostly thought about the amount of photos that were beginning to service on social media. Photos of places that just a short period of time before, were unimaginable to find a tourist. A backpacker maybe, but a rolling-luggage-having-tourist? Most certainly not. The term 'sustainable' frequents headlines and conversations on tourism, now more than ever, but I believe that we all default to thinking about the natural environment. As a result the individuals whose lives we penetrate are far less considered; particularly when it comes to those who are not directly involved in creating our itinerary.

This research serves as an incredibly minute means of expressing my gratitude to a country and its people who are a myriad of things and most earnestly, remarkably human. I am incredibly thankful for the opportunities and obstacles that brought me to where I am today. A mi familia colombiana and my mother, my champion- ¡Vamos pa'lante!

Cassandra Lynn Bendaña
Nijmegen, 2019

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Chapter One - Introduction

1.1 A 'Difficult Heritage'

Colombia has experienced the longest-running internal conflict known to the Western Hemisphere (The Center for Justice and Accountability, 2016; Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, 2019). Over the course of 50 years, the triangulated war has adorned Colombia with one of the world's most severe internal displacement situations associated with conflict and violence (Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, 2019). It was not until 2016 that former President Juan Manuel Santos struck -- the most recent -- deal in an attempt to bring about lasting peace to the nation. His efforts to end the 50-year-long civil war in combination with his post-conflict reconstruction plans awarded him the Nobel Peace Prize. The administration under President Santos called for the investment of billions (USD) towards infrastructure between 2015-2030. This made for great headlines and promotion for the ever-evolving country. Less than two years later, news sources such as *The New York Times*, ranked Colombia the number two destination to visit in the article "52 places to go in 2018". What more, the webpage *TripAdvisor* reviewed Medellin as the number one place 'on the rise' in Latin America and *Booking.com* placed Bogota in its top ten 'up and coming destinations' in Colombia 2018. According to Colombia's Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (2019), 4.2 million non-resident tourists arrived in 2018. This marks a 7.8% increase from 2017, a year that is marked by record highs for tourism-generated revenue. To the outside world Colombia has done a one-hundred and eighty degree turnaround; but this transformation did not occur overnight.

With the help of the most recent peace-treaty and expanding investments, Colombia has steadily seen the largest growth in tourism in the country's history. The sector of tourism that has caught the attention and curiosity of many new visitors is that of dark tourism, more specifically narco-tourism. A sector of tourism that this paper will address in the country's second largest city, Medellin. Although Medellin has shed its former status of 'murder-capital of the world', violence has maintained a prominent role within society and is once again on the rebound (Amnesty International, 2009). Dark tourism in Medellin, or what will be referred to as 'narco-tourism' in this paper, was recognized by Patrick Naef (2018) during his fieldwork on the topic to be an unregulated sector that is highly controlled by urban middle-class entrepreneurs. The

overpowering discourse given on these tours has been noted to be somewhat sympathetic or iconizing. With that, the role of the victims is greatly overlooked and further silenced, as tours allow guides to diffuse unverified myths on their own accord (Naef, 2018). This is in fact duly executed as the presence of official narratives within the education system and museums, with the exception of Museo Casa de la Memoria, fails to exist; and there is no official memorial of the victims of narco-trafficking as of today. In 2012 Museo Casa de la Memoria (Museum House of Memory), realized as part of the municipality's 2004 Victim Assistance Program, opened and is viewed as having recovered parts of public space that had been overtaken by the paramilitary; an act recognized as 'recovering spaces from war' (Rodriguez, 2008). This serves as an important note on the steps towards the amplification of voices of victims of the armed conflict. Nevertheless, it was not until 2014, through a statement given by the State Council, that the victims of narco-trafficking were considered victims of the armed conflict.

Legislation such as Justice and Peace Law (Ley de Justicia y Paz) or Law 975 was passed in 2005, including segments such as Article 56, which addresses the 'duty of memory' or 'the duty of the State to preserve historical memory'. For the sake of this paper, the framework of these laws is the most relevant for referencing. In particular, the Justice and Peace Law was created in an attempt to establish a framework that provides incentives for peace while respecting the rights of victims to truth, justice, and reparations. These laws, however, have not been formulated without criticism and contestation. Principally the guarantee of the rights to reparations and truth has been deemed unsatisfactory. The right to truth has been conceived as expansive and includes knowledge of the causes and circumstances of rights violations. The Justice and Peace Law mandates a 'duty of memory' that requires the Colombian Government to preserve historical memory through archives created via the judicial proceedings conducted in order to establish facts of individual cases and criminal responsibility (Ley 975, 2005). Duty of memory looks to dignify victims through the clarification of circumstances which lead to mass suffering in addition to the establishment of a public discourse on the truth and counteracting of denial or censorship (International Court of Transitional Justice, 2013; Jelin, 2014). González Jácome (2007) notes that implementing initiatives seeking reparation via artistic, cultural, and memorialization formats have enduring social impact. What this paper will focus on is immaterial, what Bonner (2014) declares to be 'discursive accountability'. Discursive

accountability involves state actors and civil society actors reframing acts once deemed acceptable or tolerated as unacceptable and as a wrongdoing; whereas the reframing of the past is used as a lens to interpret similar acts in the future (Bonner, 2014, p. 237). This is not a remark that addresses the municipality or government as a whole when stating that this has not generally been done when discussing the violence of the past. It does however address the discourse of narco-tours whose consequences seemingly lack this accountability.

1.2 Tourism: Medellin's Skeleton Key

In the case of tourism, the 'touristic master narrative' is not only left open for interpretation but also highly influenced by the standpoint of the tour guide. Bruner (2005, p. 12) deems a key narrative question of contested sites to be "who has the right to tell the story". Of course there are many levels of memory, be it individual acts of remembering in a social context, group memory, or national as well as transnational memory. The aim is not to contest those memories being shared on a transnational level, but to acknowledge the need for a well-rounded narrative in order to hinder further collateral damage. The issue that withstands is that of representation within the storytelling process that takes part within these tours. As the adverse to cultural memory is social forgetting.

Considering the theme of tourism as a development strategy, which brings about economic progress, the stakes for all individuals involved are heightened. Many individuals view the use of dark tourism to talk about the Medellin Cartel as exploitation. A means of commodifying their pain and iconizing a criminal. The oversimplification of the perspective on narco-traffickers in media, tourism narratives, popular culture, and political discourse has allowed for the image of them as against authority; to such a degree, that they are imagined as somewhat of an alley. But the situation is much more complex in Colombia, where every aspect of society has been infiltrated and used to these groups advantage. Thus creating blurred lines between victims and victimizers. In an attempt to assist in the preservation of the cultural and historical heritage of the people that reside in the neighborhoods of Medellin, multifaceted relationships that makeup the communities are important to focus on in order to codify their impact on the growing industry of tourism. More so, how conflicting forces which one way or another deals with power relations,

can potentially work together to formulate an even more constructive environment for locals and tourists alike.

Drawing a complete portrait of Medellin does not require one to have actually visited the city - or so some might deduce from international media representations such as the *Netflix* hit series '*Narcos*'. As the images they draw from and reenactments they perform in order to strengthen the vision of past violence reifies negative representations of the country and its culture. This too materializes in the tours that are being given and highlighted in the series '*Dark Tourist*': the exact tours of which are the main focus of this study. Yet the romanticization of traumatic events of the past, in addition to, conducting and promoting tours from a partisan viewpoint only further the 'othering' and exclusionary processes that stratify society. Although it too focuses on Colombia as being exotic, a notion in tourism studies that runs parallel to othering, the connotation of dark is at the forefront of the conflict as authorities try to promote the image of a city recovering from its past. The controversy surrounding the popularity of this type of dark tourism in Medellin is accredited to 'narco-heritage' and the touristification of the former drug lord Pablo Escobar. 'Narco-heritage' is described by Naef (2018, p. 2) as "objects, sites, and practices embodying and representing the illegal production, as well as consumption of narcotics". Pablo Escobar was native to Medellin and became notorious for his monopoly of the cocaine trade and the Medellin Cartel in which he founded. His criminal resume lists innumerable mass assassinations of Colombians inclusive of blowing up a commercial airplane and bombing public places.

1.3 Contribution

The contribution of this paper aims to present the point-of-view of Medellin's locals who have experienced the drastic transformation of the city. These locals, who fulfill the role of underrepresented stakeholders in tourism, will be able to share their narratives on the issue of discourse surrounding narco-tours. The spaces in which they inhabit and conduct their daily activities have become littered with foreigners seeking to satisfy their curiosities. As 'traditional' tourism continues to grow in the city and country, sentiments about this reality are explored. However, the main form of tourism that is discussed and which lays at the center of this dialogue

is that of narco-tourism, which finds itself categorized in the sector of dark-tourism. Dark tourism entails travelling to sites that are associated with death and public tragedies. This study examines how the tours given fall short of 'trauma-tourism' as that would require them to emphasize the social responsibility that the site and history of which it recalls imposes on the tourist (Bilbika & Payne, 2011). The tourism industry has long included trauma sites and memory museums. However, it is the case in Medellin that these trauma sites are not those where innocent lives were lost but instead the focus is on places where the main perpetrator met his fate. A perpetrator that has evolved into the protagonist of the story. Important questions arise from the connotation of 'trauma-tourism' that marks the places in which they highlight as 'memory sites', another relevant issue of this phenomena. That is, the memory of who, what memory of the past and why remember? The first two are the more pressing as the third may bring about a more common sensical and abridged answer which is: as to not repeat the past. The findings of Bilbija and Payne (2011) show overlapping tensions in the memory market as well as tensions between the needs of local and international demand for and consumption of these sites. Risk of commercialization, trivialization, or depoliticizing the past through tourism lays at the foundation of this tension (Bilbija & Payne, 2011).

In attempt to fill the knowledge gap, the goal of mapping narratives is to acknowledge any common themes which can allow for potential development of a more 'accurate' story that can be shared. A story that has the potential to simultaneously promote a sense of social responsibility, in regards to these tours, and that highlights the present day status; of which aspires to note the dark past without celebrating it. Legrand et al. (2017) claims the role of memory to be a tool of critical social expression that informs how conflicts unfold. It is embedded in the ways social groups and institutions consider how they can live together again, as well as both the possibilities and obstacles set in front of them for reconciliation (Legrand et al., 2017). The intangible culture of a society gives awareness to living heritage and empowers promotion for debate in the context of space and place. If the performativity that takes place within the narco-tourism context of Medellin is confronted with new dominant narratives, then what Salazar (2013, p. 113) refers to as the "refashioning [of] general discourses as tourism tales" can be utilized beneficially for the larger population. A secondary aim includes adapting a more mindful tourist gaze while visiting such a destination. Therefore, the representation of

narco-tours that disseminates on a global scale makes visible the voices of victims whose stories have been excluded from the commodification of their pain.

In accordance with Colombia's Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism program on 'Tourism, Peace and Coexistence', objectives for tourism growth include the construction of a social fabric and a culture around tourism and peace, allowing for generating value chains and improving the quality of life of host communities via responsible and sustainable practices (mincit.gov.co, 2019). The first strategic principle (the following principles are not exhaustive) regarding the construction of social fabric considers the dignifying of communities to be critical; further the empowerment of communities requires progress in paradigm shift and the transition of lifestyles towards a peaceful coexistence. Lastly, sustainable development which is characterized by social, cultural, environmental, and economic development of these destinations looks towards the United Nations Organization- UNWTO framework through the actions of respect and conservation of cultural practices, in addition to, inclusive and equitable tourism practices. Therefore this study lays within the scope of the Colombian tourism sector's ambitions for viable harmonious development.

1.4 Scientific Relevance

The work of Gregory and Duncan (1999) remark imaginative geographies as having contributed to the legitimization of violence and exclusion. The issues surrounding socio-spatial ordering and the demarcation of spaces of 'security' stem from the framing of space in a way that promotes practices of othering and hierarchical labelling. Although there are systems in place to counter the perception of the unsafe nature of particular peripheral spaces in the city; the growth of dark tourism within this context perpetuates the promotion of harmful activities, thus diminishing progress. Cultural geography examines the plurality of society, how this is distributed over space, how identities are produced, and further how people produce and communicate knowledge and meaning. In terms of tourism studies, the cultivation of techniques for viewing and circulating images is highly important. Consequently, the preservation of the cultural and historical heritage of the people that reside in these places of interest is crucial. The multifaceted relationships that makeup the communities are important to focus on in order to codify their

impact on the growing industry of tourism. Research highlights the imbalance of the shared accounts of the lived history of city and 'comuna' dwellers. Additionally, it further endorses the notion that socio-spatial ordering has impeded on the harmony within society.

The scientific study of tourism as a means for development in conflict-ridden societies is actively growing in popularity and recognition. Cultural interpretations of tourism need to be analyzed in order to understand the ways that behaviors and meanings are formed by society and varies from place to place, or in this case, from varying observations in one particular place. The role of power in multifaceted relationships is unavoidable in addition to how culture survives and surfaces in the context of spatial boundaries that are both literal and figurative. The examination of the role of mindfulness in these contexts, too, has surged. What has not been explored extensively is how these factors manifest in the context of the unexpected coupling of war and tourism within a newly characterized 'post-conflict' country in the New Media Age. Violence is a threat to globalization and hinders population growth and the pursuit of new livelihoods (Naef, 2018). The lack of corporal mobility for community members in the peripherals of Medellin has facilitated a supplementary vulnerability in terms of the expression of historical accounts. Extremely densely built areas are experiencing a multitude of layers of exclusion: where the physical boundaries of the mountain range in which they reside are met with invisible borders as well. Social innovation can be viewed as the epicenter of urban transformation. With that, empirical insights that are expected to be revealed from the mapping of narratives include how the role of dark or 'narco-tourism' and globalization actively manipulates community identity and further stratifies the region. Additionally, documented accounts from these local stakeholders, those who have thus far been overlooked, should fill in gaps in questions about the ideals of society and a more well-rounded historical perspective of events. All the while identifying whether or not conceptual research is personified within the empirical realm. Time and place are further supportive of the relevance of this work, as Colombia has become a 'hotspot' in the news and media. The topic raises important issues for the future growth and sustainability of dark tourism in Medellin.

1.5 Societal Relevance

Media attention, which can be identified as a challenge of contemporary society, has focused on the lifestyles of narco-traffickers as something to be revered, simultaneously as community members continue with the process of healing from a violent past. We know that there are a multitude of interpretations of individuals that were directly and indirectly affected by the drug-war that occurred in Medellin. Through the works of Ojeda (2013), it has been deduced that the production of everyday spaces of 'security' and 'insecurities' have been created by virtue of the dominant discourse that is circulating. Whereas there are material and symbolic qualities that manifest through imaginative geographies and the creation of a socio-spatial order of 'here' and 'there'. Further, there is no official documentation of the events that have unfolded over the past thirty years, thus, encouraging the negating and othering processes. Zheng et al. (2018) has observed that visitation to dark tourism sites has validated and heightened the belief of such historical accounts; accounts that as of today, lay solely in the hands of tour guides. The research of Van Broeck (2018) has confirmed the fears of tourism stakeholders in Medellin of transmitting wrong or incomplete information, of which places them at risk for perpetuating problems of the past and potentially attracting unwanted visitors. What needs to be further investigated is the impression of locals -- who are categorized as the victims of the narco-trafficking conflicts -- on how the discourse of these tours affects their lived memory and the perception of their heritage to the outside world. The term victim is used in accordance with Articles 5 and 56 of Law 975 which defines victims as all civilians or military forces whom have suffered either direct or indirect damage from violent acts (Ley 975, 2005). Their opinions will fill a missing information void and allow for further insight into how the tourism sector, focusing in on dark tourism, can build sustainable practices in a country that is still in the process of conceptualizing a unified image.

Colombian educators have also advanced by using narratives as a resource in pedagogical practices, the mass media, and political action; a phenomena that projects the dignity and greatness of small lives above powerful metanarratives within the current cultural-transmission crisis (Arango, 2015, p. 155). However, the topic of violence in the context of history, ethics, and civics courses is still omitted from the official curriculum. Regardless of one's desired role in

these tours, tourism is on an upward ascent. It is imperative, now more than ever, to grasp how the memory of the history of the country is being disseminated before further tensions exacerbate within. In the case that community members involve themselves directly with the rhetoric and discourse used to describe past events to foreigners, this would limit the demarcation of socio-spatial boundaries and feature the progress of the currently under highlighted community unity. All the while addressing the city's history that has grown within the popular culture mediascape at exponential rates, reviving the overcast that is the memory of the Medellin Cartel. Therefore, an increased visibility of the plural memories contributes to historical clarification and presents assurances of non-repetition.

1.6 Thesis Structure

As this first chapter has outlined the importance of this study's investigation, Chapter Two will identify the main objectives and research questions, as well as outline relevant literature on the topic. Chapter Three details the methodology behind data collection and analysis. Following this in Chapter Four, respondent's narratives are shown in accordance with the interview questions of which they were presented. The final Chapter addresses the narratives that have been given, details conclusive remarks, considers recommendations for further investigations, and discusses the limitations within this study.

Chapter Two - What are we looking for? What do we know?

Chapter One detailed the broad sociological implications of this study. The following Chapter will allow for a further understanding of the study objectives and research questions. Additionally, it will outline existing literature that allows for a better grasp on the topic and relevant theories that assist in the search for these answers within the specific frame of this study.

2.1 Do Not 'Burst My (Tourist) Bubble'

The concept of spaces of exclusion has been a common theme in the daily lives of those who reside in the comunas -- or, districts, for the sake of clarification -- of Medellin. The structural violence that manifests within this space is exacerbated by the exploitation of the local people and environments as it is the basis for capital accumulation that is repatriated elsewhere (Mowforth & Munt, 2013). The recent visible flare up of narco-tourism has helped to reveal a multifaceted relationship between tourism and violence; one that has many moving pieces and cannot be attributed to the existence of tourism in this place, alone. Therefore, the perimeters of this paper will focus in on the role of the dominant discourse disseminated in narco-tours and the absence and overshadowing of narratives. In consideration of what Ashworth et al. (2007, p. 61) state about the dynamics of urban cultures 'powerful groups will attempt to determine the limits of meaning for everyone else by universalizing their own cultural truths'. This type of destructive creation, that is, what can be perceived as destructive for inhabitants and can be creatively enjoyed and consumed by tourists, is contributed with the violence demonstrated here. Devine and Ojeda (2017) detail this destructive creation through tourism as a means to alter and produce new socio-spatial regimes of governance, resource management, and racial, gender, and national inequalities. Whereas the tourist in accordance with the guide place themselves outside the socio-historical context regardless of whether or not the tourism product is derived from or even dependent upon the very context itself (Buscher & Fletcher, 2016). Here the tour guides serve as the creators of the 'tourist bubble' when considering their lack of critical analysis of their business and the discourse they promote.

It is to be acknowledged that since tourism is specific to contextual time and space, findings can and should be used as guidelines for varying localities that identify that tourism growth is perpetuating internal conflict (Devine & Ojeda, 2017). The lack of an official narrative within Colombia and more particularly, a 'touristic master narrative' in this sense, seemingly permits tour guides to elicit a blurred context where a certain legitimization of narco-business is put forward and internalized by the tourist. This is due to an oversight on the part of a large majority of tours to include a post-tour reflection or debrief on the larger impact of the topic.

2.2 Research Objectives and Questions

The objective of this research is to employ the practice of narrative and cultural intangibles mapping that has not yet been utilized within this context by utilizing narrative research. This is done with the hope of highlighting commonalities and strengths that can be built upon to prepare for more effective cultural planning and implementation of dark or 'narco-tourism' development planning and discourse dissemination. The study upholds an ambition to bring forward new knowledge and to highlight issues that have been previously marginalized and for practical implications, to open constructive dialogue.

With regards to the aspects previously stated, the main research question is as follows:

1. What are the local's sentiments on narco-tourism in Medellin and how can their perspectives be integrated into the discourse that is disseminated during these tours?

The following questions allow for individual argumentation to be presented as a means for the foundation of the main research question:

2. What are local's sentiments of narco-tourism as it relates to Colombian heritage and memory?
   Sub question: How does this compare to sentiments of (general) tourism?

3. How has transnational media representation, on the lives of narco-traffickers, affected how people in Medellin internalize their projected image in the world?

Sub question: Has narco-tourism had the same perceived affect?

This research takes on a narrative inquiry approach whereas 'narrative' is the phenomenon being studied. Beyond valorizing individual experience, it evokes an exploration of the social, cultural, familial, linguistic and institutional narratives within which individual experiences are shaped, harvested, and enacted (Clandinin, 2013, p. 18). From these overarching questions, observations of community opinion and behavior can be made in addition to how proximity and accessibility to growth within the sector possibly alters opinions. Further, questions were included within the storytelling process -- with the audience of this study in mind --that direct the respondent to express feelings towards, community, change -- in whatever sense they deemed necessary to share, be it environmental or social, etc. -- media representations, the role of schools and museums, and of course tourism. A list of these questions is provided within the Appendix.

2.3 Significant Literature Sources

The following text will provide an overview of the literature that is relevant and supportive of the methodological process of this study, as will be outlined in the next Chapter. Each theory referenced provides a foundation for the research questions mentioned in the previous section and are backed by conceptual underpinnings that justify this research.

2.3.1 The 'Tourism Imaginary' and Performativity

Salazar (2012) describes the 'tourism imaginary' as a conceptual framework that describes the overlapping and conflicting ways imaginings drive tourists and tourism service providers. Particular attention is given to "how personal imaginings interact with and are influenced by institutionally grounded imaginaries implying power, hierarchy, and hegemony" (Salazar, 2012, p. 865). This notably manifests within the context of otherwise lived spaces that have been transformed into attractions for tourism activities. These spaces are becoming shaped by the practices and fantasies of the tourism industry, where the role of a seductive discourse is an

undeniably dominant factor in enticing visitors. Both origin and impact are two prominent factors to recognize in the analysis of the tourism imaginary. Mass-mediated master narratives have been created through dominant discourse and media representations of space that are maintained through Judith Butler's (1990, 1993a, 1993b) theory of performativity. Throughout this paper the language of performativity will be drawn upon in order to recognize individual roles within the tourism sector and, more pressingly, how visibility emphasizes them. As a theory, performativity is regarded as 'the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names' (Butler, 1993a, p. 2). More specifically, this paper will explore how this applies to dark tourism practices and place. The performativity of discourse will be utilized in regards to the critical sense of discourse formation, where discourse has been formulated with time and stabilized by some interpretations at the expense of others (Gregory et al., 2009, p. 166). The use of this concept is to be characterized by its situatedness. As in, discourses, their formations, and economies are regarded as the product of historical practices and geographical location. Discourses are seen to provide situated knowledge; knowledge that heavily relies on power, but "is always open to contestation and negotiation, even as they seek to obscure their historicity and specificity" (Gregory et al., 2009, p. 167). This idea of openness provides the passageway to recognition and rectification of which this thesis attempts to harvest. For performativity molds the norms -- or, at least those that are perceived -- of a community or group.

Such narratives are enforced through the mutually negotiated relationships between the consumer and the producer, and as a result they both produce culture while simultaneously being a cultural product (Salazar, 2012). The circulation of these products and ideals allow for their reification but create ethical dilemmas within the local setting. The usage of this theory within geography has explored, amongst other topics, struggles for recognition and the appropriation of space (Sibley, 1995). The theory of performativity will be useful in understanding how local populations perceive their own 'otherness' and their sentiments towards the narratives of narco-tours -- that are disseminated within their own communities for the sake of foreign commissions -- that seemingly perpetuate such ideas. The concept of 'othering' is essential to this thesis and will be detailed in the sections to follow.

Nelson (1999) has detailed a critique on the usage of performativity in geography. He states that the use of the term within the field lacks a critical review; that the subjects position within the given discourse is ontologically assumed and "thus provides no space for conscious reflexivity, negotiation, or agency in the doing of identity" (Nelson, 1999, p. 332). He notes this point to be crucial as intentional human practice -- that is spatially embedded -- lays at the center of inquiry of identity and space. It is also highlighted that without a critical reworking the theory of performativity actually undermines the relevance of history and geography in the creation of a subject's identity (Nelson, 1999). An identity that is constituted by dominant discourse. However, the abstraction of subjects from their personal and lived history, furthermore from their historical and geographical embeddedness, is in opposition to what is sought after in this research. Instead of negating this critique, this research accepts the shortcomings noted within previous works and is wary of the potential of its presence. In addition, supporting theories that will be detailed within this section, are utilized with the aim of avoiding such shortsightedness. Therefore, it is with great optimism that this issue will not be of concern. Although it is still relevant, it is also important to note that this critique was developed prior to a more recognized usage within the field of tourism. What more, locating these performances and theorizing how they are situated within this specific time and space are the two elements that authorize this research and thus cannot be omitted. The crisis of identity can be viewed as inexhaustible and consequently outside the scope of this paper. Instead of determining what is and is not the identity of the people of Medellin, particularly based off of the narratives of narco-tours and media, this research seeks to shed a light on those who have not been given the opportunity to share their story as they have yet to be granted a seat at the proverbial table.

Within the nexus of these imaginaries are firmly enforced and established concepts that are difficult to depart from, definitively so when the foundation of the tourism taking place claims such dominant ideals and holds historical truths. The role of global media streams reaffirms specific impressions and Salazar (2012) contends that in the case of developing countries, the circulating imagery is often negative; I would add to this that it, too, is often partisan. However, considering imaginaries are co-created, then it must be claimed that those tourism service providers are complicit in perpetuating biased narratives of "time-frozen social identities and cultural traditions" (Salazar, 2012, p. 874). Taking this stance allows for the distancing of the

provider from the local and closer to the position of the tourist, in an attempt to heighten symbolic capital and in order to highlight their privileged place within the local social hierarchy. Thus, narratives and imaginaries maintained are grounded by a position of power. Therefore the social practices that derive from the dominant narrative and imaginaries influence the ways in which those in power position themselves against and engage with the 'other' (Tucker, 2009). The process of 'othering' consists of the 'objectification of another person or group' or 'creating the other', which is characterized by putting aside or even ignoring the complexity and subjectivity of the individual (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2003). It is a form of social representation that is highly linked to stereotypes and permits marginalization. This type of boundary maintenance creates a distance between 'in-groups' and 'out-groups' of a social nature and can even be constructed abroad based off of tourism narratives.

2.3.2 A Pop of Narco-culture

In order to give a brief synopsis of how popular culture has talked about the life and times of narco-traffickers and more specifically, Pablo Escobar and the Medellin Cartel, the following paragraphs will outline major orientations that have become internationally revered. These references -- which fail to be exhaustive as detailing them is a project in and of itself -- should serve as anecdotes. Since its inception the entertainment industry has made profit from crime narratives and this certainly will not seize. However, what is more provocative is the case of these narratives that have spread post millennium with the added assistance of social media. Larkins (2015, p. 12) recognizes popular culture to be an instrument for diffusing representations related to violence and drugs, 'as virtual spaces of infotainment and leisure become increasingly militarized'. These representations have been viewed as eliciting feelings of fascination and repulsion; a common dichotomy. The recognition of portrayals in popular culture run parallel with tourism as 'organic ways of memorializing violence' (Naef, 2018, p. 3). Those mentioned below only include some of the media that has been produced within the past decade.

In 2010, a bio-documentary entitled *Pablo's Hippos* grants the exoticization of Escobar as it draws parallels to his infamous hippopotamus, Pepe and plays with cartoon animation. His collection of exotic animals lives at his Hacienda Napoles Zoo and is home to the only

hippopotamus herd outside of Africa. However, one of the hippos was killed in 2009 after leaving the Hacienda grounds, and causing fear within the community. A post-mortem photo was taken with Pepe, a photo that undeniably resembles the infamous photo taken on the day Escobar met his fate -- a photo that created a memorial site for him and for tourists to gaze upon but has since become private property. One of the films interviews is with 'Popeye', the Medellin Cartel's number one assassin and Escobar's former right hand man: it is pressing to note that he conducts his own 'Narco Fantasy Tour' where he performs reenactments which have been displayed on the *Netflix* series *Dark Tourist,* in addition to authoring a book that will soon become a series, produced by Colombia's *Caracol Television* and to be broadcasted by *Netflix*. In *Pablo's Hippos* Popeye recalls his criminal actions and aesthetics of the notorious prison 'La Catedral' (The Cathedral) that was built by Escobar and Cartel members in order to house them during their alleged time of incarceration. A place that was representative of government control although in reality was anything but. A house built to look like a prison from the outside, "for the media," he asserts. The documentary ends with a cartoon of Pablo and Pepe, equipt with angel wings and beer, looking down from the clouds onto Earth as the hippo exclaims 'there will never be an end to this herd' as the camera simultaneously zooms into his intense eyes. Pobutsky (2017) proclaims what is more pressing, which is the oversimplification of the narco 'other' that is constantly at risk when dealing with this type of account. The world-renowned *Netflix* production *Narcos* (2015) can be summarized by the series opening, a screen embellished with the line: "Magical realism is defined as what happens when a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe." This quote mostly fades but leaves the once white lettering to turn to red and "too strange to believe" is left for the viewer to gaze upon. Too strange indeed, as many historical facts are skewed and the US production ostensibly leaves Colombia to take the blame for the 'War on Drugs'. The dichotomy that the series draws throughout is that of the American hero and the inherently criminal Colombian. Unfortunately, this is only the tip of the culturally insensitive and historically botched iceberg.

Indubitably, narco-novelas (soap operas) and narco-books are cultural productions within Colombia as well. The movie *Rosario Tijeras* based on a novel went on to become a televised series adorned with the slogan 'It is harder to love than to kill' which later found itself the topic of an article in *The Guardian* entitled 'Colombians outraged by narco-soaps glamorizing cartels'

with a subtitle of 'New TV series Rosario Tijeras, which features sexy assassins and drug baron heroes, spark moral outcry' (Brodzinsky, 2010). Regardless, the show is now available for global viewing on *Netflix.* However, the most successful production over the last decade -- and in Colombian television history -- is *El Patron del Mal (The Boss of Evil)* which recalls the life of Escobar and has an international audience that spans over 66 countries (Wallace, 2013). Although it is seemingly preferred when Colombians are in charge of projecting their traumatic memory verses when internationals take on the job, mixed messages and mixed feelings result from these visuals and reified status of fame. *The New York Times* published a piece stating that Medellin's city-run Film Commission has a policy to not assist crews working on drug trafficking films, yet made an exception for an American production (Londoño, 2015). Which goes to show that bending the rules persists. What is more precarious is that these memorializations of violence -- produced by diverse sources and represented in various and often conflicting ways -- extends beyond the screen and find themselves manifesting in the daily lives of Colombians. These representations in national and transnational mediascapes make the question of how individuals feel they are received by the world ever relevant as people cross from the virtual realm into the streets of Medellin.

Naef (2018) goes on to detail the controversy surrounding the popularity of narco-tourism which places 'narco-heritage' (Naef, 2015) and what has become the touristification of the former drug lord Pablo Escobar at its epicenter. It is important to note that peripheral neighborhoods, that have been generally built by war-displaced people, continue to be sites for tours. It is concluded, through ethnographic research, that the dynamic of the social distress of the communities and strong entrepreneurship that characterizes Medellin has been pushed to the extreme, leading to the romanticization of narco-traffickers, glamorizing and glorifying them, and further leading to the trivialization of violence (Naef, 2018). Tourism and popular culture have served as important instruments of representation of this dissonant heritage. When a traumatic past is central to an issue, memory studies tend to focus on 'legitimate' institutions of memory such as museums and official memorials (Naef, 2018), as discussed in the introductory chapter concerning the 'duty of memory'. Borowiecki and Castiglione (2014) found that foreign tourists, in contrast to locals, prefer visiting museums; a statement that was nonchalantly confirmed by two of this study's respondents. Espinal Monsalve and Ramos Ramirez (2016) explored this further within the

context of Medellin and noted the positive correlation between both Colombian and foreign tourists and visitation to these sites. However, the majority of these institutions lack acknowledgement of this history. Lobanyi (2007) reported that repressed memories only intensified the harm experienced by victims and has been seen to delay the emergence of their experiences for years thereafter.

2.3.3 'Imaginative Geographies' and Real World Consequences

The work of Ojeda (2013) explores the production of imaginative geographies that formulated in both official and media narratives regarding tourism based initiatives. She details the production of everyday spaces of 'security' and 'insecurities' in Medellin that have been created as a result of the dominant discourse circulating. There are material and symbolic qualities that manifest through imaginative geographies and the creation of a socio-spatial order of 'here' and 'there' which too corresponds with 'our space' and 'their space' and the production of 'us' and 'them' (Stein, 2008). The research of Devine and Ojeda (2017) explores the notion of tourism as a violent practice through a critical geographical approach. Their work has framed tourism as a means for land privatization, the extraction of cultural resources, and an eraser of existing histories and peoples from the landscape. Further they remark how the concept of 'destructive creation' has led to new socio-natures, identities, and commodities that are based on partial and power-laden tourism imaginaries (Devine & Ojeda, 2017). Their conduction of ethnographic research in Colombia yielded the consideration of violence as a multidimensional and relational phenomenon. Whereas the development of tourism is promoted as a means for a 'peace-building' strategy, that in reality enables and justifies intensive militarization and new forms of state-sanctioned violence (Devine & Ojeda, 2017). Their work also refers to tourism in Colombia's Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta, where symbolic and epistemic violence manifests in acts of cultural appropriation in performances and postcards, to the erasure of people, languages and landscapes in touristic historical narratives (Devine & Ojeda, 2017). The notion of the 'erasure of people' from touristic historical narratives is the catalyst of this studies inquiry; as the representation of the victims of narco-trafficking is absent. This leads to the studies second question regarding local sentiments of narco-tourism as it relates to Colombian heritage and memory.

The work of Naef (2016) explores the touristification of peripheral neighborhoods in Medellin and the promotion of the cities transformation. He examines the role of different stakeholders such as community leaders, private entrepreneurs, and state representatives through ethnographic research supported by online tourism resources and personal communication. The research concludes that transformation in Medellin can be considered a tourism product. The ongoing research project of Van Broeck (2018, p. 291) explores the attitudes of stakeholders regarding the demand and supply of dark tourism. These tourism stakeholders include policy makers, official entities, and tourism agencies. The method of data retrieval implemented is that of interviewing which revealed that there is a strong preference to eliminate the past and instead focus on the transformation of the city. It is stated that the partial results that are presented are extended and contextualized in accordance with empirical research over several years living and working in Colombia (Van Broeck, 2018, p. 301). Thus I will draw from the two authors who have focused work on this particular topic and continue to employ interview methods but with new empirical implications and conceptual underpinnings.

2.3.4 Communicative Action and Discourse Ethics

The theoretical underpinnings of Habermas' (1984a and 1987) theory of communicative action suggests meaningful interactions between people. This entails the establishment and maintenance of social relationships which is expressed through language. Such an act is deemed meaningful and all further action is an attempt to establish communication. If this attempt results in failure -- for one or more parties involved -- those persons will employ more language to make sense of or find meaning in what is going on. This takes into account the fact that people do various different things while communicating: threatening, promising, etc. Thus three functions that communicative action can perform are identified.

1. To convey information
2. To establish social relationships with others
3. To express one's own feelings and opinions

All of these functions embody action oriented towards reaching common understanding. The third function is what this study seeks to produce as an output, in hopes to give momentum to the

first and second functions. Communicative action (Habermas, 1987a) refers to a process of argumentation within a presumed unrestricted 'competent' communicative community that is produced outside of a sterile vacuum. Thus differentiating the real from the ideal communication community, where the meaning of an argument is understood. Edgar (2006) regards this concept to be a critical tool that highlights the imperfections within actual communication. Participation within argumentative discourse requires, as a precondition, that those involved remain open to persuasion.

Common understanding is dependent upon shared unproblematic convictions that stem from what Habermas (1987b) refers to as the 'lifeworld'. A lifeworld serves, more or less, as the background to one's environment, that consists of interpretive patterns that are socially and culturally transmitted and linguistically organized. An issue that immediately arises in the use of such communication is the understanding of the speaker on a common level. Basic assumptions about the individuals involved in a communicative act are: that they would share the same language, understand the external world in a similar way, social norms and conventions would be shared, and lastly, self-expression would be understood (Habermas, 1990). It cannot go overlooked, however, that these common understands are not guaranteed and are often lacking within the process. Although perspectives and lived experience varies, all respondents within this study, and the tours addressed, originate from within the same region of Colombia. Baxter (2002) calls these elements 'structural components' which are defined as culture, social institutions, and personality; the lifeworld serves as a basis for communicative engagement. However, one's cultural baggage, from a 'lifeworld', must accompany them when engaging in moral discourse, meaning participants are not purely rational beings but real humans (Habermas, 1990). Humans that have been shaped by their personal realities, diversity of experiences, values, and needs; all of which make practical discourse constructive and justifiable.

Discourse ethics (Habermas, 1984b) is a normative theory that lays implicitly in the rules of communication. Through the observation of how people use their communicative skills in everyday life, to both create and maintain social relationships, Habermas (1990) suggests and recognizes four 'validity claims'. These claims signify four levels at which a speaker can be challenged by the listener.

What can be brought into question includes:

1. The meaning of what is stated
2. The statements truthfulness
3. The sincerity of the speaker
4. The right or authority of the speaker to make such remarks

There is a freedom bestowed upon the listener to challenge anything the speaker is saying -- particularly when the validity of a statement is taken even partially as hypothetical -- therefore the participants resort to discourse. Yet, this idea falls short when carried into the practical realm. As any statement can be challenged, the process of which the listener justifies their questioning must be based off of ethical rational. Therefore, the exclusion of a 'competent language user' within the discourse would be noted as an injustice.

Two key principles stem from the reconstruction of one's moral competence: the principle of universalization (U), and the principle of discourse (D) (Habermas, 1990). The principle of universalization (U) claims that moral decisions are valid only if those who are affected can consent to them. All consequences of a decision are recognized and must be preferred to varying options. However, the problem with the (U) lays in the fact that in practice it does not require stakeholders to actually talk to one another. Therefore, the principle of discourse (D) is necessary in order to prevent this. (D) specifies that the agreement needs to based upon truly open and rational debate. Meaning that all speakers and actors are permitted to take part. All may question what is being said, introduce new assertions -- including attitudes, desires, and needs -- and the coercion of participants into withholding or withdrawing their role is seen as unfit (Habermas, 1990, p. 89). Thus, if the discourse is constructed in a manner that disallows the proclamation of certain issues, then the discourse cannot be characterized as being morally valid.

In the case of the dominant narratives of narco-tourism, the tourist's curiosity for the 'morbid' -- a word unanimously determined by respondents -- steers the discourse. Based on the principle of universalization (U), where decisions are declared if those affected give consent: it can be stated that this has not occurred. Whereas locals have not been included in the dialogue on the consequences of these tours actions, reaffirming the unfulfilled practical shortcoming of (U). Further, since the functions of communicative action, in particular the expression of feelings and

opinions on the part of locals, has not been realized, then the principle of discourse (D) is not suggested either. As (D) affirms the permission of all actors to take part and introduce said attitudes. This discourse disseminated disregards the role of the locals, whom are rightfully considered 'competent language users'. This omission disallows for the expression of issues raised and thus, in accordance with discourse ethics, is an injustice.

The role of discourse ethics is to maintain that the process of finding a solution to moral issues is reached in a just and fair manner. The process of moral decision making is highlighted rather than the outcome. The use of this conceptual framework is vital to the process of the 'duty of memory' in Medellin in order to provide the local people, who have been witness to and victims of violence at the hands of narco-traffickers, the space and place to debate their points-of-view. Calling into question the performativity of this discourse and the discursive accountability of these tours -- whom pave potential pathways for the forgetting of social consequences -- makes visible the silenced role of the living heritage of the victims. These individuals inhabit the tourism conceived imaginary geographies that reify the production of 'us' and 'them'. As the performativity of these tours maintains the dominant negative narratives of media representations, the mere visibility of the feelings of locals towards this type of tourist activity is a first step in the stimulation of a constructive discussion, in accordance with the Habermasian process of communication.

2.3.5 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative is used as both the method and phenomenon within this study, however, the design for data collection encompasses a mixed method approach. Clandinin (2007) regards narrative inquiry as having the ability to problematize experience as it is an act within the stream of experience that generates new relations, that then in turn become a part of future experience. Narratives are a form of representation that describes human experiences as they unfold through time and a pragmatic ontology of experience emphasizes continuity (Clandinin, 2007). Experiences are not only connected via time but are continuous. The conceptual roots of this inquiry lay within a John Dewey's (1976) Theory of Experience. Two pertinent features are that experience is the fundamental ontological category that all inquiry stems: where experience is

defined as 'a notation of an inexpressible' where continuous interaction of human thought with the personal, social, and material environment is ever changing (Dewey, 1981b). The second feature emphasizes ontological continuity. Narrative inquiries explore the stories that people live and the stories people tell, stories that consist of social influences, encompassing both the inner and outer self and environment, and unique personal history (Clandinin, 2007). Arguments have placed narrative inquiry into the role of the 'epiphenomenal to social inquiry', however, Dewey (1981a) warns against this view that submits and impoverishes experience as a source of knowledge.

> "In casting aspersions upon the things of everyday experience, the things of action and affection and social intercourse, they have done something far worse than fail to give these affairs intelligent direction...to waste of time and energy, to disillusionment with life that attends every deviation from concrete experience must be added the tragic failure to realize the value that intelligent search could reveal among the things of ordinary experience" (Dewey, 1981a, pp. 40-41).

The respect for lived experience brought out through narrative inquiry valorizes the exploration of the social, cultural, and institutional narratives that reside. These narratives constitute, shape, express, and enact with the experiences of the individual. It is by collecting and highlighting the viewpoints of the locals that allows for our greater understanding of their lived experiences and formulation of potential enrichment. Through these means we are capable of determining internal and external borders.

Philosophical assumptions that underlay other forms of scholarship but are not included in this study, are that of post-positivist and post-structuralist thought. Post-positivist thought pursues methodological means to help communities critically deal with their experiences of the world while identifying a shared reality amongst the population (Clandinin, 2007). However, the disadvantage and negation of its use within this study lays within its attempt to produce a stable consensus which omits factors such as personal meaning, aesthetic considerations, and narrative coherence of individual lives. Additionally, in contrast to post-structuralist practice, narrative knowledge is discursive by origin. Post-structuralists seek out signs which rely on other signs for their meaning and therefore does not deal with lived experience. Instead, once something is spoken, the listener defaults to the process of representation; these representations rely on other

representations and discursive systems for meaning (Clandinin, 2007). The post-structuralist interpreter does not view the experiences spoken as immediate sources of insight, instead seeking out broader social discourses that shape these stories. Narrative inquiry encompasses a pragmatic ontology that holds lived experience at the epicenter of inquiry. At the center of post-structuralist thought, arbitrary relationships exists between the signifiers and the signified as well as academic disciplines and the object of study. Post-structuralists uphold an ambivalence within social science to seek out interventions within the lives of those studied.

Narrative inquiry research provides narratives -- in this instance, expressed via oral histories -- which are seen as 'a form of representation that describes human experience as it unfolds through time' (Clandinin, 2013). This framework calls for dialogue where the text will be obtained via interviewing respondents and allowing them to openly speak about their lived experiences in relation to the topic at hand. With consideration of the theories previously outlined, questions regarding specific points of provocation such as the role of tourism, media, cultural products, physical space and of course the current discourse, are addressed. Narrative inquiry permeates the bounds of framework and method and allows for flexibility in choices (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These specific choices, including the methodology for obtaining respondents and interpreting the data provided will be outlined in the following Chapter 'Methodology'.

Chapter Three - Methodology

"Stories operate within 'interpretive communities' of speakers and hearers that are political as well as cultural actors. They build collective identities that can lead, albeit slowly and discontinuously, to cultural shifts and political changes. Thus personal stories often operate as bids for representation and power from the disenfranchised"

(Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2013, p. 55).

Information regarding the study design and approach are detailed in the following Chapter. This includes means of data collection and analysis.

3.1 Design and Approach

"The ability of contemporaries to conceive of themselves as historical products of specific periods opened the way for them to think of themselves as active agents"

(Philippe Lejeune in Le Pacte Autobiographique, 1996)

Qualitative research stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the relationship between the researcher and the research, as well as the situational constraints that shape inquiry. In order to hear marginalized voices a researcher must talk directly with people and allow them to tell the stories without burdening them with what is expected to be found or what has been read in the literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A qualitative research design is appropriate in cases where researchers look to empower individuals to share their perspectives while minimizing the power relationship between researcher and respondent. One of the qualitative approaches to inquiry is narrative research, which looks to capture the stories of the lives of a small number of individuals. The emphasis on small is based on the desire to obtain detailed accounts and is duly appropriate as this study has met some time limitations. As this study focuses on narco-tourism, questions were asked along the way in order to probe respondents' feelings. The means for incorporating these questions followed the guidelines of a problem-centered interview. The following paragraphs explains more about this process.

The practice of mindfulness, both within the intake process and the interpretation process is something I deem to be of utmost importance. The concept of mindfulness while observing, based off of culturally relevant means for interaction, is essential when trying to read nonverbal cues and the overall mood of an exchange between individuals. In order to actualize the most appropriate means for interaction, the nexus between a problem-centered interview and study of narrative inquiry is utilized. The problem-centered interview invites respondents to co-construct and reconstruct problems, in a discursive dialogue where the researcher's prior knowledge meets the respondent's practical knowledge (see Figure 3.1 below) For the sake of coherence throughout various dialogues A semi-structured interview guide was formulated which has been translated to English and is available in the 'Appendix'. It proves to be beneficial to have an outline in order to streamline the thoughts and concerns of individuals, as one can imagine, they have great potential to go beyond the scope of tourism. The topics of conversation include social, temporal, and historical probes. Spatial probes were also experimented with but proved to be more of an academically driven notion. This is stated in regards to how the culture of the people is viewed, depending on the neighborhood, many view themselves as being from Medellin (more generalizing) then say, from a specific barrio (neighborhood) unless it has been given notoriety. This discussion will continue in the following chapter, 'Discussion'.
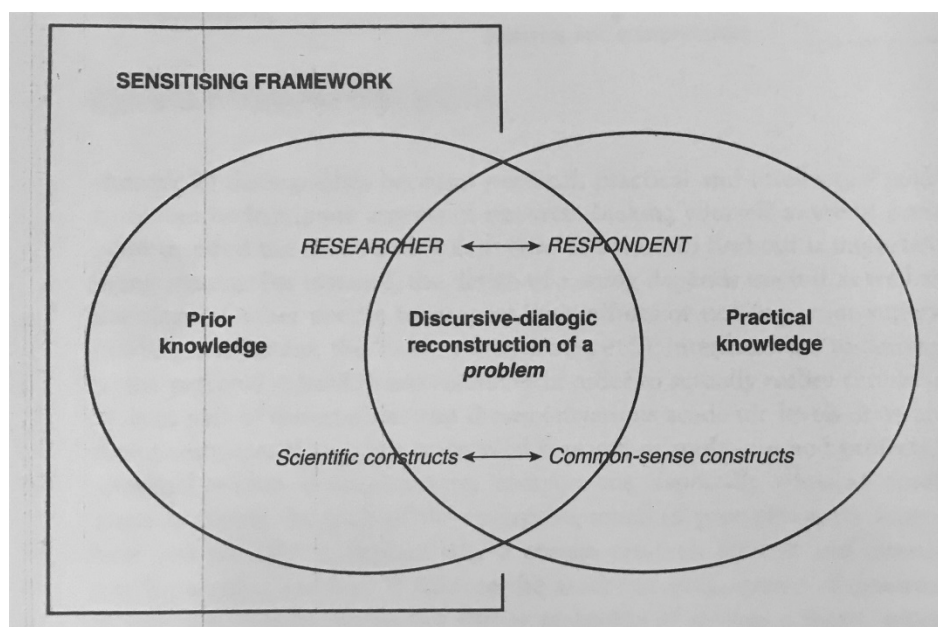

Figure 3.1 'The epistemological challenge of the PCI' (Witzel & Reiter, 2012)

3.2 Interview Questions

The semi-structured interview guide consists of six main questions, these questions are adapted in individual contexts in order to maintain the flow of conversation. After various warm-up questions, the first several inquiries focused on the individual's feelings towards a sense of community in Medellin and how they would describe the culture of the place. These socially based questions are used as a means to direct thoughts on the theme of change, what is and what was. The following questions addressed observations on how Medellin has been affected by the amount of foreigners that have recently -- determined as within the past 3-5 years -- come into the city. Temporally focused questions on discourse, media, and tourism created a space for sentiments about local interactions as well as how advancements in technology have allowed for the spread of information in both beneficial and detrimental ways; although these ways cannot be exclusively categorized as novel. These questions warrant a more in depth look at how individuals perceive themselves through the eyes of the other. How they view their heritage is evolving and whether or not they estimate narco-tours as having a role in that evolution. Lastly, there are questions based on channels of history disbursement, such as museums and schools which involve the depiction of their lived history from both a Colombian and foreign standpoint. These questions help the respondent contemplate how the conversation is being held at the macro level and their individual perception of preparedness for a unified narrative.

Considering the topic is of a sensitive nature, questions are asked and formulated with empathic neutrality. That is, various responses are sought after without judgement by showing openness, sensitivity, respect, awareness, and responsiveness. A minimum of one day was spent with each respondent. Although each individual understood the basis of our meeting, it was not until we completely understood each other's motivations that a more in depth exploration into the topics theme took place.

The procedure for preparing and conducting the interviews is as follows: determine the research question that will be answered based on open-ended questions, identify interviewees based on snowball sampling (detailed in the 'reaching out to respondents' section), evaluate based off of narrative inquiry styles, how best to approach the respondent i.e. initiating a relationship based

off of trust and assuring a safe and open environment to speak freely -- both physical and social environments apply. Next, acquire adequate recording materials and permission from the respondent to utilize them, prior to the interview one may design an interview guide or in this case, a semi-structured guide in order to assure topic points are addressed during said interviews: refining questions along the way, as seen fit. One does not want an inorganic flow of conversation just to assure the question is inserted. Lastly, write-up a postscript of each encounter in order to detail impressions, descriptions and any non-verbal observations. Further information about this non-fixed sequence can be obtained by Creswell and Poth (2018).

3.3 Sample Size

Narrative inquiry typically centers around one respondent or a 'limited' number in order to focus on detailed accounts. Since this study employs mixed-techniques, the typical number of phenomenological studies is utilized bringing the sample range to 6-10 respondents. The number of 'official interviews' obtained is six. This is said with the acknowledgement that the issue of theoretical saturation is less likely to arise. But due to time and funding constraints which will be addressed later on, the idea of representation -- without bias -- as a focus point need not be overlooked. An initial aim was to collect at least two respondents from each generation; what would be considered by the Western generation model to be 'Baby Boomers', 'Generation X', and 'Millenials' (a ratio of 1-2-3 was ultimately obtained). Before the start of this research it was taken into account that those members of the 'Traditionalist' generation would perhaps be less likely to converse on this specific topic as well as less likely to be encountered. An informal conversation was had with one individual from this group but as expected, the comfort level was low in comparison to other cohorts and personal details of the past were largely omitted. Further limitations of data collection will be addressed in the 'Discussion' section.

3.4 Reaching Out to Respondents

The particular time in which I chose to conduct my fieldwork is deemed as high tourist season throughout Colombia; which is in part thanks to the Northern Hemisphere's summer vacation schedule. This time of year is most beneficial to discuss the topic of (dark) tourism as locals are

constantly reminded of the presence of foreigners as they are almost unavoidable. Thus, their feelings and concerns on the topic are fresh and the topic has more potential of being relevant to their daily lives. Again, the stakeholders of which I regard in this research are the locals. Other 'official' stakeholder groups such as tourism operators, both private and government run, and policy makers have been previously approached (Van Broeck, 2018; Naef, 2018). In highlighting the locals I aim to break the cycle of othering by placing respondents in the role of 'us' in an 'us versus them' narrative, where they have been defaulted to the role of 'them'. Their individual experiences compose storied lives and 'storied landscapes'; landscapes that tourists crave to gain a sense of.

The data collection for this study is based off of a snowball sampling or chain referral design. Although the selection of respondents is mainly based off of a snowball sampling technique, this was implemented only after the primary respondent was allocated based off of the individuals' suitedness to the representative population. This individual -- as is the theme of the method -- was identified via my personal network in Medellin. The primary respondent was chosen based off of preselected criteria based on the research questions, then a chain referral sampling was adapted.

The reasoning for not following through with a purposeful sampling design include its non-random selection of participants. The culmination and consideration of the period of time allotted and likeliness of losing participants, in addition to the necessity to identify 'information rich individuals' made chain referral design both more appealing and realistic. Although snowball sampling has been considered to be a relatively informal method, it too has been conceived in a more systematic manner. Goodman (2011) sheds light on the fact that this sampling technique was originally developed as a design to assist the study of social networks in easy to reach populations, which began with a random sample. The snowball sampling of hard to reach populations -- of which began with a convenience sample -- was a later adaptation that has been proven to be distinct. The earlier works of Heckathorn (2011) is another layer to the distinction later made by Goodman, which makes note that there is a distinction from 'respondent driven sampling' (RDS). Snowball or chain-referral sampling methods differ from RDS in that RDS involves a dual incentive system (Heckathorn, 1997). This involves the respondent being

rewarded for participation in the interview as well as for recruiting others to participate in the study. A mixture of monetary and symbolic awards is not uncommon within this method. Another difference between RDS and snowball sampling is that respondents are not asked to identify their recruits but rather simply recruit them. These two distinctions, the first having to justify a type of reward for participation and getting others to do so felt counter to the premise of this study. The reward in and of itself is meant to be the ability to speak freely on a matter that is often difficult for many to address and sharing this perspective. Albeit us living in a world where money talks, it is the mere ability to share on the premise of exploiting a personal truth or observation that is of true value and serves as the push-pull motivations here. Secondly, giving someone a name or stake in the conversation, too, is a highlighted feature and thus the anonymity -- although granted within the confines of this paper -- within the dialogue, is not fitting. Therefore, the respondent-driven sampling technique is not utilized within this study.

It has been shown that snowball sampling has its advantages when attempting to reach the socially marginalized (Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2004) and it is viewed as a valuable tool in studies that address particularly sensitive or private matters (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). In preparation for individuals' decline to participate in this study due to stigmatized group membership -- as is defined based on lack of narration -- allows for the categorization of respondents to the group of 'hard-to-reach' or 'hidden' populations. Although a gatekeeper bias is a looming possibility when using this method, the formal and informal factors that open doors are of greater concern. That is, as an informal method, snowball sampling is used to reach target populations in studies where aims are particularly exploratory, which this study is. Also, as "a more formal methodology for making inferences with regard to a population of individuals that has been difficult to enumerate through the use of descending methodologies such as household surveys" (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2004, p. 2). The main value of the snowball technique lies within its ability to deal with the issue of obtaining respondents where levels of trust are required in order to initiate contact.

Particular methodological procedures and the problems and solutions that accompany them are to some degree reflective of the singularities of the social phenomena addressed (Becker, 1970 via Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). As tourism grows in a country that does not quite satisfy the

demands of the categorization of 'post-conflict', many unique obstacles are bound to be discovered while making headway and must be addressed in a situationally applicable manner. Key informant sampling (Deaux & Callaghan, 1985) addresses concerns that arise from snowball or chain-referral samples such as inferences relying heavily on the initial sample that have the potential to lead to bias. This is done by selecting the first respondent based on their knowledgeability -- capping off here at the border of professional -- and asking about others' behavior which moves the conversation away from exaggerated social behavior and underplayed deviance.

The location of residence of each respondent was of high priority, however, this too can prove to have its own difficulties within the field. Every respondent either lives in an area where there is a good deal of tourism movement, has a job that was located near a site of interest or a job that has the potential to bring them there (ex: taxi driver etc.), or simply has a desire to talk to an outsider about dominant tourism narratives.

3.5 Analysis

Basic coding of narrative inquiry does not follow a fixed format. For this study, I have chosen to utilize the qualitative data analysis software of Atlas.ti. Once all of the interviews have been uploaded, the marking of important quotations is the first step in organizing the data. Key elements are determined in consideration of the semi-structured interview guide. Grouping quotations based off of codes of topic headers such as social, systemic, tourism leading to change, change leading to tourism etc. allow for the classifying of codes into key themes. The overarching categories are then determined from these themes. These themes help describe patterns across experiences and feelings in order to develop and assess interpretations based on meaningful units. In attempt to identify themes or generalizations that are commonplace or counter to those within the dominant discourse, analysis involves clustering these invariant constituent themes that will be useful in marking the differences and similarities of standpoints and there modes of appearing. This format aims to capture the elements that are not easily quantified but are key to understanding a place and meaning. The codes designated to each main theme will be specified within 'The Narratives' Chapter. The data will be presented in a way that

allows for 'restorying' of respondents accounts in order to formulate a coherent sequence of narratives: writing via reduction downward approach that looks for common threads and elements across respondents. The focal point of analysis is based on themes of 'what' is being said. An interpretation of themes vary from one respondent to the next, so a conceptual storyboard will be produced as the final element. An interpretive approach is used only to examine contextual features of experiences in relation to outside influences such as culture. These concepts recognize shared symbolic structures and individual variations. An example of code grouping is provided below:

In Group:		Not In Group:	
environmental	18	belief that violence has changed	10
generational	18	change due to tourism	24
social	49	change leading to tourism	20
systemic	27	fear (past)	15
4 Code(s)		generalized tourist activity	17
		image of community	33
		local representation	14
		neg image from foreigners	10
		negation of foreign perception	12
		negative	33
		negative feelings towards narcoto...	19
		negative perception of tourist mot...	17
		neutral feelings towards narcotour...	11
		pos comparison to other cities	12
		positive	33
		positive perception of tourist motiv...	7
		religion	9
		role of drugs	28
		role of family	11
		role of municipality/gov	19
		role of tourguide	25
		tourism causing tension	12
		victim POV	28

Figure 3.2 Grouping codes in Atlas.ti

Chapter Four - The Narratives

The following chapter will detail the information collected from six individual respondents. Their personal opinions about tourism growth within the country as well as the current state of narco-tourism in Medellin, including its influential factors, are detailed. All quotations have been translated and contextualized for sense making purposes.

4.1 A Look from the Inside

The stereotypical 'Paisa' -- a person from the region of Antioquia, where Medellin is the capital -- is characterized as a friendly person who is always looking to help. They are also viewed as hard workers that have a true entrepreneurial spirit, that is to say: 'they could sell water to a well', if need be. This perception of Paisas generally overlaps with what actual Paisa people would consider themselves and their community members to be and embody. When asked how they might describe their community, respondents resorted to terms such as: friendly, helpful, and servicial.

> We are friendly people, always very accommodating, overall very human; always trying to help regardless if you are a neighbor or mere stranger. (Respondent 2)

> The common Paisa, we are the people that are pretty kind, we are a big family group. Most of the people here [live here their whole lives] with the whole family. You can see the grandparents with the grandfathers, with the grandchildren, with their stepmothers… everyone is together in one or two houses. (Respondent 1)

> People here are happy, positive, and loving. They are disinterested in general and always have some type of business; but they are caring family people. In all of Medellin they have these values. (Respondent 3)

But of course, as one size cannot fit all, there are many contradictions in how respondents see their communities. The word 'ambivalent' was even used to address characterizing terms for the

people in their environment. A culture that was described as 'contrasting and full of opposites'. A culture full of binaries.

> The thing is that… like now we are either very conservative or very liberal, very opposite. There are many who always go to church, they want you to go to church, they want to pray. Then there is the party side [where they are always] throwing parties and there's noise in all of the neighborhood [...] But yeah, we say at the end the society is either conservative or liberal and there is no point in between. (Respondent 4)

> You have one side where there are warm people who are really welcoming, really social and they are really prone to community [...] jolly people. However, you also have the down-side, where people here are [...] they are kind of shady! They are treacherous they want to take advantage of you because they assume you want to take advantage of them. So it is kind of a fake hospitality. It's everywhere, it's just a part of the culture. (Respondent 5)

When discussing the change that has been witnessed throughout the past several years, many respondents immediately resorted to the thought of foreigners roaming the streets and contributing to their local economy. But this thought often coincides with the idea that some foreigners still think that the violence that once wreaked daily havoc still prevails on the same level.

> People that are afraid to come... they know that the city is pretty and friendly and want to come here to get to know it. But they still think that you cannot leave the house to go to the next street and that is a lie! (Respondent 2)

> Compared to 10-15 years ago ...people aren't afraid they will be randomly killed in the street, or, they aren't as afraid [as they used to be]. Although personal safety is still one of the top concerns of the population, also one of the top complaints [towards] the government, as it is viewed that they are not doing enough ...like Jesus! What do you want them to do? They cannot put a Police guard in every corner and even if they did, the

Police will probably be a part of the problem... yeah, we do not trust Police here. (Respondent 5)

The people of Medellin are marked by the pride they have for being such resilient people that reside within the lush mountains of the region. Several respondents, almost stated verbatim, that people are more proud of being from Medellin than from being from Colombia.

Medellin is exemplary. When I arrive [back to the city from another place] I call out, ah thank you! I have arrived to my city! What a blessing! What rest! Ah! [...] I feel like I was born in paradise, that I was born in the best city in the world. (Respondent 2)

However, this city pride can also be used as a tool to blind people to the reality of the bigger picture.

Part of the pride of the people [makes them] tell other people, 'we have to support Pablo' because he was from here, he was from Medellin and the people [against] him were [from] Bogota. We should support him because [...] he was helping the people in Medellin.' And the truth is that he never really attacked the people in Medellin. Most of the bombs that he [set off] were in Bogota. The bombs that we had [go off] here were [placed] by the Cali Cartel [who was] trying to fight Pablo. (Respondent 1)

We have always had this culture of speed… speed in which you want to sell your stuff fast, you want to be a billionaire one day [...] and that combined with taking advantage of everyone that you can because 'it's their fault that they aren't being smart enough' then you get the narcos. [...] The game of outsmarting the law and everyone else [made them] admired by many people. Not because things were done for them, as is the case in the neighborhood, but because they are the embodiment of those values that people seem [to want] to have. (Respondent 5)

Historically speaking it has been very difficult for the people of the region to be in contact with those from other parts of the country. It was said that at one point the idea of the city becoming

independent from the country even circulated. The landscape does not permit for easy passage and factors such as past seizing of land by guerilla groups have led to the further isolation of the population. But the fertile lands produce a plethora of flowers and produce. August hosts the Feria de Las Flores (Flower Festival), one of the most important social events of the year -- particularly for farmers -- and lasts for ten days; a statement that was exclaimed by one respondent, as I was being instructed to sit at the computer desk in order to watch videos of the parades of the past. For over sixty years it has been one of the biggest attractions of the city and has gained international notoriety. Every year there are more foreigners who come to watch, too. But the tourists' 'welcome mat' can be overturned depending on where their main intentions lay.

> There is one side that I like, the part where people come to know the land, to fall in love with it, [to see] what good there is in the people here in beautiful, Medellin. But what makes me sad is the other part, the reputation we have with many tourists who come looking for escorts, prostitution, looking for drugs -- because we have that, obviously we have that, but it is a marginal part [...] There are even areas who have become commercialized for foreigners who only come to look for this. (Respondent 2)

> There are three types of international tourists that I have identified [...] Those that come here lured by stories of Pablo Escobar and his [associates] -- which some people love, some people hate -- it's a heated debate over here [..] The second are the hipster tourists [...] because Colombia [...] was the new hot thing in world tourism! So people were coming here in troths because they wanted to see the social change and be inspired and do the graffiti tour! Which is weird because I think they have idealized the situation we have since the agreements were signed [...] that's also the kind of tourism that the government likes, in order to bring investors into the city [...] they put up this facade [...] The third kind is the sex tourists. (Respondent 5)

> Tourists in general do not bother me, not really. The thing is, maybe they are searching for drugs and prostitutes and this happens a lot [..] or they are looking for the stereotypical Latina, a 'Latin lover'[..] These are the only things that make me say, 'why did you come here', go somewhere else. (Respondent 6)

There are many tourists who come and they are in their bubble. This is my country [...] [I know] it is an exotic place, and they come [for the heat, the tropics, the Caribbean, etc.] and they don't care about the society. (Respondent 4)

Isolation can most certainly oblige individuals to appreciate what they have in front of them. However, there is a fine line between enjoying what the culture has to offer and deliberately seeking out well acknowledged taboos. As these are certain aspects that the culture accepts but does not care to boast. The awareness of the many faces the city wears and how this stratifies the community is something that serves as a very human attribute. Nonetheless, another very human feature is wanting outsiders to view only the best aspects of what you have to offer.

4.2 A Tour of Renewal

Colombian news sources have reported that violence is once again seeing a steady rise in the city -- a contested statement between the Truth Commission and community members as some believe it has never seized and that the framing of this information verges on the falsification of history -- a dangerous theme in today's media climate. Regardless, respondents believe that the general security of the people has heightened and a certain level of protection has been given to tourists. A truce of sorts that during the day allows backpackers and flip-flop sporters to roam the streets and take photos of the murals that adorn the city walls. There are no-go zones where this general rule does not apply, but if the tourist chooses to stay along the path most traveled, they will encounter no problems. While some cities may see the overwhelming number of people coming in as tiresome:

The Paisa likes this kind of visit. In spite of many years carrying on like a novela, unlike other countries where people are tired of so many tourists...oh, no! Here in Medellin [tourism] is growing and the people feel very content that people are coming to know the city, the customs, the culture. (Respondent 3)

It was striking, in one day to see four groups of tourists [..] in one day, four groups of 15-20 people [...] Do I like this? To see that the world is coming to know the new Medellin...to see that people want to come to know Medellin...to see that people want to invest economically in Medellin [...] they are [getting things out] of our city, and this is nice. (Respondent 2)

The recent Peace Treaty that was signed in 2016 is also attributed with bringing more tourists in and is seen as having delivered a different image of the community to the outside world. Thus, allowing their curiosities about the country and infamous city to heighten. The monetary gains lay at the majority of positive sentiments towards people coming to visit. Whereas locals tend to negotiate the prices of products, tourists do not seem to attempt to haggle and many businesses prefer this advantage. Another added layer to the international exposure is that more people, in less affluent neighborhoods, are learning English as a second language. A situation that is believed to be the direct cause of tourism in the area. A statement that was made and reinforced, in fact, in English. In the case of Comuna 13, an area that is highlighted on tourism sites and lays at the foundation of many conversations on the 'transformation of the city' -- as the tours that go on there are government endorsed -- people see tourism bringing community members away from the criminal lifestyle. Further, tourism forces the municipality to think of the picture that is being projected and pressures them to continue funding the area.

For example, in Comuna 13, I believe that place would be dead without the foreign people. [...] That changed life there because now most of the people [in the touristy areas] have a shop or a store, [or they are] dancing for money or selling something… and that's cool because without that, most people would probably just be asking for money or doing illegal things. [...] So yeah it's a really good opportunity [...] they are receiving foreign money so that's another good opportunity. And people are starting to talk about the city and after that [Colombians] are going to be recognized in the world in another way. (Respondent 1)

Tourism has improved a lot...we say that there are two great touristic [actors], right? One that is the mayor's office, or the government of Antioquia, who is pushing for the

improvement of the city and [who have been] implementing this for many years, implementing motivations for tourism [...] creating hotels, creating parks, making plans... yes, all of this. For example, the graffiti tours. But there are other touristic [actors] who are directly opposing what the government is saying and they are the people who do the narco-tours: who display another interaction, not the beauty that we are and not how nice we are, not, here we are not violent. [Instead] they demonstrate everything on the contrary. (Respondent 6)

Other themes of transformation -- within tourism and beyond --include the heightened desire to be educated and the availability of more job opportunities. Even the change in dynamics within the household and the idea of abstaining from having children -- a concept that in a Catholic country seems novel -- as concerns about the country's economic instability and the evolution of a woman's role were expressed. The infrastructure of the metro system is also a feature of this conversation. It has allowed for a connection among the city inhabitants, particularly with those in neighborhoods higher up on the mountains, that are known to be peripheral areas that have conceived some of the city's most turbulent groups. Yet, the metro exists within a vacuum where 'cultura metro' regulates the tracks. Propaganda does not line the walls of any car, noise levels are managed, and chivalry is practiced. It is seen to have spread a concern for maintaining cleanliness and order for the spaces in which the city inhabitants feel proud.

4.3 A Dissonant Heritage

When it came to the topic of the influence of narco-traffickers on the culture of the community, the evolution of language and the stereotypical female aesthetic were most prominently noted. Local jargon that was once viewed to be of the streets or 'los malos' has infiltrated the everyday speech practices of the people, calling on each other as 'parce' or 'parcero'. Phrases such as 'no da papaya' that embody the idea of not being foolish or letting people take advantage and not to be inattentive on certain streets, particularly during certain times at night. Even ways of thinking have been coined, such as 'la malicia indigena' which represents the malice in assuming that someone will do something or has intentions apart from what they are saying.

The Museum of Antioquia is preparing a [one day] exposition [...] called 'Original Conversations' where there are lectures on what it is that people are looking for: at the end what is it that I look for, because it is weird. What is the interest? And because [...] the narco-culture changed the architecture of the city, the way people speak, and dress and move. The stereotypical woman, everything, everything, everything changed. It permeated us in a way that makes it necessary to talk about [it]. I think narco-tourism should include this too, because it is odd to see these changes. (Respondent 4)

Without the narco story we would not be where we are today, for good or for bad. [...] It doesn't mean that we are a good city because of that, but it shows that we are a culture after that. Because we survived that Cartel story. Being the 'most dangerous city in the world' leaves a scar, a scare that [never goes away], I mean the scare is no longer on the skin but in the memory it remains. (Respondent 1)

We say that the people are very friendly, always occupied with giving good service, in spite of the history of the violence...and the thing is, it is complicated... we say that people are very friendly but they are advantageous. They are trying to get things out of other people, but that is not all of us. [But it is] a sad reality that makes you not want to open yourself completely to anyone and instead have a fear of everyone. (Respondent 6)

Indeed, for decades fear was an unstoppable force within the city and can still be seen as internalized today. Fear that can be passed down inter-generationally both via actions and words. Words are the highlighted feature that holds the weight for both remembering and learning.

But you see parents around the city take the same precautions [as when the violence was at its height] and suffering because their children don't [take the same precautionary measures]. [...] It certainly has affected our memory, we as a society are kind of traumatized by the violence. But there is a definite generational gap. If you look at people who were in their 20's in the 80-90's, they live much more fearful than we [do], they have carried those fears [from the past] into their current lives, [you can see it] in the way they raise their children. (Respondent 5)

There was always a fear to leave your own house, [...] you couldn't leave during certain hours of the day, if you left during those hours you knew for sure you could be killed by the Police or a hit-man. At any moment the people could begin to fight, at whatever hour. [Even] if the kids were in school studying, the moment shots began to fire [the children] had to hide under the table and wait for it all to finish. In whatever place you were you could always have a threat of violence [a threat] that you could die. It seems to me that [tours are] missing recounting these types of things. (Respondent 3).

Yet, the same image of fear that once kept foreigners away from the city has now turned into something they yearn to know more about.

Before there was a fear of Colombia, for what it was, and now there is a morbid [desire] for it. This is what I believe has changed because before the foreigners would just say 'no, I will not go there' but now [they say] 'ah, what is this?' (Respondent 6)

People come here with an interest for the city but, specifically they come with an interest in narcos, this we cannot negate because it is very particular … And, yes, I understand but at times it seems to me like a vision that should not be. Well, it is okay to want to understand the history and I understand the curiosity in general but not, for example, to come here to consume drugs [...] or talk with a hit-man [...] it seems that they are returning to the same [ways], that they are reinforcing the same evil as if it is the positive. (Respondent 4)

This curiosity to know and see more about this history has created both internal and external tension within individuals. Although there is a great deal of acknowledgement of the dual nature of the culture, and the unwanted adaptations that have been made along the way, many see tourism as a means to show the world another side of their heritage.

[We should show] a city of progress, a city that through many difficulties, came out better. For this the city has been renovated and transformed, because we want to say

'what happened with narco-trafficking is thrown away and behind [us]'. [It is] part of the history, obviously, but not our present or what we are trying to construct. (Respondent 2)

Economically tourism can change the dynamics of a city. I believe that it is a positive measure. But it can bring tension because it is not sustainable. [...] It is all based on the guide, who is always looking to better their services so then they make you cover more [than before], or they go to a place where [the guide] is being paid to bring the people, it is not sustainable [...] Or, for example, you have to pay the government [to officially be a guide] so there are a mountain of obstacles to do it and do it well [so people don't do it that way]. (Respondent 4)

These are people, foreigners, who want to feel what they have seen online or in the novelas. They want to go to the most dangerous zones [...] to feel this adrenaline or something...this kind of tourism is very strange [...] [they are] the morbid tourists. (Respondent 6)

Of course history cannot be erased and one high hope is that it is something that can be learned from and not repeated. Life as these respondents know it, has been altered by the powerful influences of the past. Influences that did not ask for individual permission but took it upon themselves to dictate change. Influences that are significant but not totally defining of who the people are today.

4.4 Reflections on Narco-tourism

Although there were a few remarks of disgust and faces of exhaustion made, respondents showed a general comprehension for why they believe these tours exist and what it is that will allow them to continue. As Colombia does not exist in a bubble, the flow of internal and external forces has increased with the spread of globalization and social media platforms. From this stereotypes are reinforced and reification occurs as images are combined with the world's number one influencer, money. However, this kind of motivation can allow for obscurity.

I believe that narco-tourism was partially birthed for the curiosity of the foreigners. [For them] to know the sad story of Medellin. Because narco-tourism practically only happens here in Medellin, and the thing is, we are people who are always making business out of everything so we seize the opportunities. Like 'well this foreigner has this curiosity, okay, [have them] take out their money and we will sell them narco-tourism'. (Respondent 3)

It is very uncomfortable thinking someone only thinks of Medellin as Pablo Escobar. [...] [But] this is what people are looking for and we will find a way to take advantage of that. So, saying 'no it is terrible' would be placing a double standard. [..] You know what the government wants? Money, right? So if you can get money out of that, good, [just] do it in a positive way. Not by procuring it, procuring has never solved anything. [...] People coming to see [the Monaco] building, that is no longer there, I cannot understand [this] because I am from here, but for me it's weird. And I think the same goes if you wanted to go to the house of Hitler [...] and they show you the space [and they say, look] 'here lived Hitler' ...for what? And this is another thing here, they sell t-shirts, things, souvenirs and I have asked Germans [if they have that] and they said, 'no, it's prohibited, it is illegal'. (Respondent 4)

There is not one singular tour that explains culturally what evolved, what is happening, and what is the actual situation. Because...many, I don't know, come to see the grave of Pablo Escobar and say 'oh, look, he was the best of the kingpins', and there are still kingpins...it's a little bit of ignorance, right, because they don't know the actual situation and equally, for example, in the graffiti tours. It is beautiful and everything but one has to be very conscious of all the things that are going on in the background. And I think that the only ones who are affected, we say, are foreigners who have a vision that is very blind to what the culture is here. They only see this and they don't know what is behind or below. [...] To look beyond the [filters], is very complicated. (Respondent 6)

For me it all depends on the way people tell the story. Many people tell the story and say, 'Pablo Escobar was a great guy, he was the hero of the city'. Other people will tell you

'he was a monster'. Then others will tell the story and then the [tourists] can judge, it's up to [them]. [...] If it is ethical is a difficult question to answer [...] It is up to the tourists to decide. [...] [But] in these tours people are using drugs most of the time. Their excuse is that it is a tribute to Pablo...yeah, that is the part when you learn that they are not learning anything from the tour. They are just doing some '*Netflix* Special Tour' which is not really [factual] because most of the places that you can see when watching the *Netflix* series, most of those places are not real. They are not real. (Respondent 1)

Personal opinions were also met with proposals for recommendations in order to create a socially profitable discourse within the tours without negating the basis of the tours as a whole. This was done particularly by pointing to the role of the municipality.

Perhaps if the municipality was in charge of directing [tours] in a way, like they have promoted the tours in Comuna 13, they can promote a tour that is about the narco-trafficking in Colombia. Starting first with respect for the families and respect for Colombians in general. Use it to tell the historical tales for tourists to get to know. Not, 'Pablo Escobar the star, the protagonist' because this is just a prize for the massacres and the destruction that was caused in the country. (Respondent 3)

If we see that people are coming here to Medellin to look for narco-tours, well then here we are not going to reject them socially. But at the end when they finish the tour we [need to] say, 'here, reflect on the city, and don't continue with desires to consume cocaine'. Reinforce the other side. But I think that is the cities duty, not the tourists, the tourist doesn't have to come with that responsibility. They just have to come and [experience] what it's like. I think about if I went to Germany, I should [look to learn] about World War II and this cannot be negated because it is a part of the history [...] I believe it is the responsibility of the city to drive the conversation on narco-tourism. Also, that we do not come alone with this idea. [...] There needs to be a little more investigation, because as it is, is morbid. This is what Pablo Escobar wanted. (Respondent 4)

The 'right' to tell the story and whether or not society as a whole is prepared is another topic of contestation. Framing not only the 'what' but also the 'how'.

> The local people have the power to say 'I lived this, I didn't like that, my family lived this… you will believe what local people say, even if you read the opposite things. I mean depending on the places you go, you find a different story. But what happens here is that many people are divided. [...] [I think] factors are affected by what happened to you and how much you study about what is still happening. (Respondent 1)

> It's the form in which they sell the things...if people don't talk about narco-tourism then maybe they can talk about nicer things, I don't know, but if they show the reality of the life of narco-trafficking in Medellin… the thing is that it is something that still exists. The violence is not as tough, but narco-trafficking is [still] here. [...] If tourism were different then what would happen is many more calm tourists would come [...] It all depends on how we demonstrate it. If [there is] someone, someone very creative, who can come up with a creative way to do the tour - because there is a lot of curiosity that comes from foreigners- than good, ready, let's do it but by flattering the people. Making it a very distinct market where the protagonist is Medellin and its pollution, not a person who created a lot of damage. (Respondent 3)

> Narco-tourism, that creates a lot of interest, but [it] should have a different discourse. [To] utilize narco-tourism [to talk about] the change [of the culture] would be interesting, organize the discourse in a way that is more reflexive. Because at the end the most important thing for the [tourist] is to be there [and their attention has already been received]. [...] [So, tours] need to add a reflection. Because you cannot blame someone for what they think or believe, because I too have wrong ideas. [But] we are all moving away from this. We need to arrive at a place [where we need to] open our minds to reflect. But if [your mind] remains closed and you continue to do the same, that's your problem. If things don't change though, well that's something difficult. (Respondent 4)

If you don't know what there is surrounding or beneath then you don't understand culturally and this is the same blindness that can permit foreigners to interpret [the history] in their own way. Because there are obviously different ways to educate and clearly a situation like this on narcos is different. And they can blame the locals even… if you don't know the whole history, you don't understand and it is very difficult to see it as it really is. [...] Perhaps if [our] education was a little more integrated or if they showed the children how to 'be in someone else's shoes', it would be efficient to demonstrate the side of the victims [there, too] because they can say 'see the bad this is doing, you should not do this'. But still they are, I don't know, so immature and our culture continues to be very immature, the education, too. Therefore, the recounting of historical narratives could have the exact same effect as the novelas. (Respondent 6)

Education stands at the epicenter of what several respondents believe to be the key to disseminating more empathetic and historically inclusive stories of the past. The negation of one's point-of-view never arose, as contested perspectives are viewed as natural as one needs to consider another's proximity to the opposing side. However, the personal role of the tour guide seems to have to be negated as they are in the position of power when it comes to expressing these diverse realities to foreigners.

4.4.1 The Nexus between Narco-tourism, Media, Heritage, and Memory

In terms of opinions about how the discourse of narco-heritage and narco-tourism has influenced the ways in which each individual sees the city's history, heritage, and memory: respondents shared their awareness that they have been projected as monotonous. This is matched with the knowledge of the lack of reflection, that should come after discussing such a topic at face value.

For sure a tourist who goes on this tour can [generalize and] think that we are all narco-traffickers and that everyone in Medellin consumes... consumes cocaine and whatever other type of drugs, [but we have] another reality. We have an atmosphere that is very familial. But specifically speaking about the abilities of the tours. I imagine them to do a lot of harm to the image of Colombia, too. Because the tourists believe it's not just

Medellin, they believe that it is all of Colombia. [...] Yes, it enormously affects the image of our country in front of the world. It's incredible how something supposedly so simple, like a tour, can affect the image of a country in front of the world. It seems to me that the tourist, after killing their curiosity [by going on] the tour, will leave with a perspective that totally discriminates Medellin, despite everything [else]. We say that their morbid curiosities and desires to know a place, a place that is maybe dangerous, serves [as a catalyst] for them to come and to know [Medellin]. (Respondent 3)

If the [discourse] is reflexive, for me, it seems that it can function [well] [if they are] talking about the story while respecting the memory of the victims [...] We never talk about them. The people who suffered, and this for me is what seems horrible.. Talking about the theme of narco-trafficking is [talking about] Pablo Escobar and not the people who have suffered. [...] But it is difficult, too, because there are tourists who come specifically to look… to try cocaine... but if we talk about the memory and heritage here differently… I don't know. [...] All the places, [...] like Hacienda Napoles, everything is very expensive… [and] what is it that [guides] are looking for? Money. They are not [being] respectful or doing anything for society or something to support the victims. No, [they are] simply seeking money on account of what they say. I think, still, they miss changing the vision, they are missing a lot of reflections of the city. [...] We cannot say do not take the tour because it is a necessity- like in Germany- but what is important to talk about is the theme. We have to search for the reflections. (Respondent 4)

The image of a certain group of Colombians that has been projected both within the country and transnationally, has made many wonder about the bigger implications of violent media. Particularly as many representations only show the nominal part of Colombia.

Here in Colombia, there are so many novelas that are purely [about] narcos, about drugs [and] prostitution. They are vilifying [our] world, the narco-novelas, and this is not what we have here. It is only a minimal, minimal part, but that is what calls attention [...] it's what people want to watch. (Respondent 2)

Money isn't the biggest [cost] associated with drug use, but human life. [...] I believe that Pablo Escobar really did a deep damage to the country. Because after that people saw that there are easy ways to get money and many people see [selling] drugs as an easy way to get money and television shows are repeating that, all the time. (Respondent 1)

There are many documentaries and movies focused on negative themes, that want to leave you to relive [the past]. It is like they have 'a finger in the wound' all of the time, making you relive these stories that are not necessary. We are learning from this and moving past it. In general, I feel like no one wants these types of productions, movies, events; all that has to do with narco-trafficking and violence in general. (Respondent 3)

People, like foreign people, don't ask about anything else. They are like, 'oh, you're Colombian have you seen *Narcos*?' Um… no, no I have not. I don't want to. People who actually come here… yeah... a lot more people have come here because of that because they kind of romanticize the whole thing. (Respondent 5)

Representations of the destructive are made visible in sites such as Museo Casa de la Memoria, too. Here victims voices lay at the forefront, yet, the antagonist still receives time in the limelight.

Like in the series [here] and in *Narcos* they are shown like the heroes who help the poor people and you have the idea that they give you. [...] In the reflection in the museum [Escobar] is very represented [too] and it is the idea that he didn't have anything and then became very powerful, he is a symbol here for that [reason]. (Respondent 4)

While some named institutional responsibilities, others noted attitudes of individuals as determining what people get out of these tours and a visit to Medellin, in general.

Every person in every city will find what they are looking to find. If you look for the good in Medellin you will find it [...] I believe it [all] depends on the attitude that each person brings. If you bring an attitude where you want to get to know a country, a city, a

culture, to see what happened in the past but [also] see, discover, to try to know what is now in the present: you will encounter another reality. But if you come with the attitude and thoughts that Medellin is drugs and prostitution -- that was the past -- but if you keep on thinking that it is the same then you will find that. Because we have that, too. [...] [But] you can [also] find a city that is totally transformed. (Respondent 2)

Considering other social dynamics within the country, some expressed their skepticism in adapting and utilizing this type of tour.

[Can these tours be helpful?] No. Given the way business works, [tours] will either fold to romanticization or misery porn. Because they need to cash out. There are problems with those extremes, with romanticization you end up re-victimizing the people who actually suffered from that. You tend to sustain the idealization of those values, which led people there in the first place [...] and that can lead to the perpetualization of narco-trafficking, gangs [etc.] And those are the things that… I very much rather have to deal with as a society without the romanticization of it provided by the international media and the tourists. (Respondent 5)

We are not culturally or historically prepared for the whole picture... to demonstrate it all like a story because it is not finished. And because people are still suffering from this and there are people whose realities are very similar [to that of the past]…So, it's complicated because we say that 'we didn't have a problem with this' [but only] on one-side. If it included all of the parts of the story, not just the story of the kingpin. But the stories of families and how they felt, the stories of the victims, repercussions on a social and political level…many things, right, that they need to recount. But I don't believe that we are prepared to recount them because it hasn't finished. (Respondent 6)

Regardless of the city's preparedness, a call for adaptation seems to be the overarching theme. For Medellin is a city in motion, looking to continue forward, not backward.

I have encountered two discourses: one that is more reflective, about understanding. For instance, [...] [some tours] look at the reality and [say] look why we are the way we are. In order to know why we have the right to talk about this. The other is the morbid… where they go to [Escobar's] house and... they focus [the discourse] on how big he was… his power. [...] [There are] many cases like this and for me it seems horrible, because they reinforce the same [negative image], [tourists] do not learn anything, they just want to see what they saw in *Narcos* and they feel emotional. But what did you do for this city? What did you change? Nothing. (Respondent 4)

Nevertheless, as is the custom of Paisa rational, there is a silver lining.

I believe [narco-tours can be of benefit,] yes. I believe so, yes, in every way. Tour guides only show part of the history and also show part of how the city has developed and changed and this is good. In any city you visit in the world [...] they always show you a part of the history and culture of the past to see how things have changed for good and for bad. This is good, this is good to say that this is a part of our past. But in the middle [display] how we move forward, how we progress, how we are a better city, how we have grown, [that would be] the best. We are in a marvelous time right now. (Respondent 2)

[Media has] changed what tourists [think they] know. They have watched everything, and what have they watched? *Narcos.* So yeah it has influenced people a lot [...] it has brought a lot of people. [...] We cannot say, 'no, do not take those tours' or 'it is prohibited' because it is equally important to talk about the theme. Like it is important for people here [to talk about it]. Not to look at it like a negative thing. [...] The coolest thing about tourism is that everyone can win/gain something. If we all do what needs to be done, [do] our part [...] without disrespecting our environment. (Respondent 4)

Our culture at this moment is not so simple to change. Our culture is [expressed] in a conservative way, after the violent way and narcos way. [But even so] many people have many projects [trying to] change that. And with time maybe the culture will change a little bit and I think if the culture can change then the society can change, without a

problem. It's just a matter of time. I think that that's the positive thing [about] other foreign cultures that arrive here, we are learning many things from other cultures that have really good things to copy. (Respondent 1)

Whether concerning themselves with general tours of the city or with narco-tourism, whether they have lived through the times of terror or were birthed during the aftershock, this diverse group of individuals all seem to agree upon one thing. Tourism has its extremes and not every experience will be ideal for the host community. But what is more important, is that a well-thought out discourse needs to be shared with those who come to visit; as well as with those who live within these shared spaces that emanate curiosity.

Chapter Five – Discussion

"The immense power of narrative in education lies in its ability to promote the cognitive and moral development of individuals through the process of decentering- that is, opening oneself to another" (Arango, 2015, p. 165)

The following chapter will portray narrative synthesis, which includes the description of stories, commenting on the methodological quality (risk of bias), and highlighting similarities and differences while exploring patterns within the narratives collected. What more, concluding statements and recommendations for the continuation of research on this topic, as well as, a reflection on this studies limitations will be addressed.

5.1 Narrative Themes

Each and every individual experience has an innumerable amount of influences. Some lay at the forefront and can be addressed by measurable categories such as age, while others are constructed in the subconscious and only see the light of day when confronted head-on. The respondents that make up this investigation vary in age and socio-economic status but all identify with the same ethnicity. Even though one might experience the same society in a different way, it is the language, culture, and nation that tie them all to the same history. When addressing personal opinions it is likely that an unforeseen -- or perhaps foreseen -- bias has embedded itself into one's thoughts. This is simply undeniable. But it is the mere acknowledgement of different points-of-view that creates a platform for these sentiments to be shared and considered. Although each individual's life experience and perspectives varied, several patterns arose.

5.1.1 Reading Across the Lines

The first Respondent placed a very heavy emphasis on the role of tour guides and indicated the ways in which they make the situation visible to foreigners as their main responsibility. The idea that tourists have a curiosity was not necessarily viewed as problematic but rather something that gives the power to the locals. It was repeatedly stated that being educated on the topic's past and

present needed to be put into action on a larger scale. This is considered necessary in order to tell stories in a neutral manner and permit the audience to digest the information in a way that allows them to construct a personal opinion on the lifestyle of narco-traffickers. Individual judgement, on behalf of the tourists, is seen as highly acceptable but only after all aspects are considered.

Respondent two was very adamant that the history of the past need not consume the present. It is viewed as a stepping stone to the future and needs to be talked about but not dwelled upon. An emphasis on the co-creation between tourists and tour guides was made; as each holds the power to both seek-out and provide whatever the other is looking to experience or receive. This thought extended to all types of tourism and life in general. Media was discussed to be a simple means for entertainment, although the ruthlessness of it is not understood. As someone who lived through the city's darkest times she views the minimal aspects that have been reified for entertainment purposes as something that just is. Personal attitudes and motivations towards tourism are recognized as the driving forces for interpretation, transforming them were not necessarily considered.

The third Respondent also placed the power of discourse in the ways in which things are being told. Tours that take place in indigenous communities in Santa Marta were cited as something narco-tours should model themselves after. That is, sharing a historical perspective without extremism playing a part in the response of the audience. Talking about the history of violence was noted to be of utmost importance but that was also countered with the idea that other realities need to be explored. The continuous existence of both violence and the drug trade were seen to be relevant factors in her personal perspective on how tours need to be addressed. Considering and comparing the experiences of today with the past, permits violence to be something that is generally overlooked. However, violence as being 'cool' was a concern as a parent and resident. There is a belief that narco-tours cause pain to the city and the country as visitors create blanket statements that discriminate against them. Tour guides were again seen to be the catalysts for change or despair.

Looking at the current reality for children in the neighborhoods of Medellin was viewed as somewhat medicinal for Respondent four. The childhood that she recalls did not authorize the

liberty to run freely in playgrounds and in the streets. The main theme within her personal discourse was a city of contrasts. The necessity to reflect and have people consider the consequences of a narco lifestyle was also of utmost concern. The idea of a middle ground between critics and fans is viewed to be possible if individuals are more educated on the realities of the 'others'. The curiosity that motivates tourists is also seen as comprehensive, although the cultural inclination to turn a profit out of this curiosity causes her to place blame on locals. This shame is not in indulging foreigners but in doing so in a way that is considered reckless. The role that these individuals take on is seen to extend beyond the Paisa borders and placed onto every Colombian. For this reason, balancing a discourse or at least offering space for rumination post tours, is desired. There was a clear frustration with the lack of victim's perspectives being shared in many different arenas, both nationally and internationally.

Respondent five was perhaps the most critical and unenthusiastic when it came to considering a possibility for improvement, both socially and within the tourism sector. The consideration of utilizing museums for dispersion of truths was overthrown by the fact that people live these truths daily and culturally they do not feel the need to be taught in such a way. The ways in which individuals are viewed to be fully emerged in their own daily reality makes him feel as if there are 'unrealized toxic dynamics' that interrupt attempts to progress. He feels that the community is somewhat falsified as city life is overbearing and a more individualistic attitude prevails. History is seen to have created polarization within the society, something that 'permeates every aspect' of the Paisa life. The lack of conversations held in schools about narco-trafficking history makes the household the authority on the topic. High-school idealizers were recalled as another generation internalizing the values of a fast and lucrative lifestyle. However, seeing history from an outsider's perspective -- one other than your families -- is seen as something that could help people view this story as 'strange' and not as something that is common; in hopes of opening their eyes to the toxicity. Regardless, local people actual seeking out adversary perspectives is seen as lacking.

Respondent six, too, views the city and life within as conflicting. The ways in which media has displayed stories of narco-traffickers makes her believe that the fear that once lay within foreigners has been transformed into a morbid curiosity. The image in which is being presented

through these tours is seen as eclipsing the true culture of the people. Allowing foreigners to openly interpret what they are told, is thought to be worrisome as the information is currently skewed. She holds a belief that there can in fact be an equalizing of discourse within such activities, however, this is contingent on if and when there is a change in the political environment. As it is observed that the current day cartel situation is still reminiscent of the past, the expansion of job opportunities needs to be explored in hopes of leading to social change. She does not believe that the country is ready to address the history head-on as many drug related issues and violence remains. Money allows for the continuation of conflict but it is time, something you cannot buy, that she believes they need.

5.1.2 Separate but Unified Voices

The connection between the belief that narco-tours can be transformed into something that is culturally beneficial if official authorities pay attention to how education is interpreting this history, as well as, how the tourism sector in general creates tension for resources, is drawn. What is most illustrious is the respondent's perception of the role of the tour guide. Although the concern for monetary incentives to supersede the moral imperative arose, the idea of educating tour guides was notably hopeful. The co-creation of the tourism imaginary -- that claims the spaces in which these individuals reside -- is anticipated as capable of being manipulated to the locals advantage. That is, if the tourist arrives with a particular perception or desire, the tour guide can use that as a means to control the discourse. As it may be, the curiosity for the morbid can be redirected into an illustration of the circumstances behind it. This, however, includes a personal acceptance -- on the part of the tour guide -- to move away from the grouping of 'us' within the tour group and taking on a more neutral stance. The unanimous output is that victims stories need to be included in the discourse disseminating via narco-tours. As respondents state that they are not fully supportive of these tours as they currently stand. If nothing more, a post tour conversation on realistic outcomes of such behavior should be applied. Nonetheless, a gray area covers the actual incentives for this inclusive narrative when considering promoting it to tour guides.

Overlapping themes in each interview were regarded and further clustered into five main categories. These categories include the grouping of attributes of the city and society, performative influencers, structural domains, effects of tourism, and perceptions of tours and tourists. Each theme cluster allowed for further exploration of the overlapping opinions and connections between what individuals believe to be the obligation of either tour guides or the municipality, and the fault of drugs, fear, media, or narco-tourism motivations in Medellin. Most language used within the narratives highlights a sense of comradery as 'we' was more frequently utilized within dialogue as opposed to 'I'. This indicates a more unified consciousness and acknowledgement that the events that unfolded in the past and those that occur today have effects on Medellin's -- and perhaps Colombia's -- people as a whole. Although I never introduced Pablo Escobar into the conversation on narco-tours, his name is seemingly unavoidable. This goes to show how prominent he is within the discourse and perhaps narco-tours are simply enmeshed with Pablo-tours. The presence of violence in the cityscape is considered somewhat banal as it manifests daily in the streets and television sets.

The idea that age might play a role in one's desire to talk about the topic of narco-trafficking and narco-tourism was also discussed. It is the belief that many individuals from the older generations choose not to speak about the past as retelling assists in reliving. Notwithstanding it has been affirmed, through these respondents coinciding feelings, that tour guides serve as the creators of the 'tourist bubble' when considering their lack of critical analysis of their business and the discourse they promote. However, it is not seen as a burden they bare alone. Having the municipality get involved is perceived, by some, as the right steps to adjusting the current situation. A more paradoxical point was made, however, when the idea of necessity arose and society's preparedness came into question. Maybe this is an example of how the 'city of contrasts' continues to be entangled.

5.2 Stepping into the Light

The intangible culture of Medellin gives awareness to living heritage and empowers promotion for debate. Within the context of narco-tours, the living heritage promoted is also contested as it omits pertinent aspects. Tour guides lubricate the demand for narco-tours as they project narratives that glorify historical tragedies. The cultural elements of which they highlight are

presented as if frozen in time but are still in fact very much alive. Destructive events continue to unfold where narco-traffickers involve themselves and locals still wear their scares, however faded they may be. It seems that there needs to be an agreed vision and strategy that makes the best use of resources for development of a dialogue between opposing groups when it comes to the narratives dominantly employed in narco-tours. Awareness of the economic importance of tourism is high, however, the focus needs to be shifted onto the social importance and impact that it has. This cohort of local respondents believe that tour guides need to become more mindful of what and how they show this history and tourists need to consider many other factors, such as how their curiosities play a role in 'othering' host communities. The spatial fetishism that presumptuously motivates tourists drives the normalization, reproduction, and consumption of fear and responses to it.

When considering the daily impact of narco-tours on locals, the proximity to these tours needs to be considered as Medellin is a city that is steadily in motion. The knowledge provided by previous research continues to be ever relevant as spaces of exclusion that are amplified by creative destruction allows for a 'Instagram-ready' touristic experiences, however morbid that may be. It is the intention behind one's presence that is most compelling to city locals. This leads back to the concept of mindfulness in tourism practices. A mindful tourist gaze, as this serves as a co-creator in the imaginary, is critically influential. However, since it is the locals that are fulfilling the desires of foreigners, a dialogue -- between all stakeholders -- on the bigger picture and how this sector of tourism can become more sustainable and socially beneficial, remains pressing.

In conclusion, as a response to the main research question, what are local's sentiments on narco-tourism, the previous chapter outlined a complicated rapport. This is due to the fact that individuals understand the necessity for such exposure of their history, but they fear that the discursive imbalance will lead to reification of undesirable and unpleasant offenses. It is not quite felt that the tour guide is at fault for the dissonant discourse because the municipality and formal educational settings, too, lack official statements. However, the majority of respondents are optimistic that integrating the voices of victims into the storytelling process will allow the audience, and host community alike, to be more reflective on the issues that both created such a

reality and the trauma that stems from it. On the contrary, the perspective that money rules all makes for the belief that those who want to perpetuate partisan talks on narco-traffickers will continue to do so, with little regard to consequences. As to how these tours relate to Colombian heritage and memory, respondents express a concern for a monotonous idea about who they are and what they are. The living memory of those walking the streets of Medellin seems to be less momentous than that of those whose lives were lost. Respecting the memory of victims is the basis for current discourse disapproval. Generally, tourism outside the scope of narco-tourism and sex-tourism, is viewed as economically beneficial and welcomed; if and when society and the environment are considered. Other than dark-tourists -- or what was more often referred to as 'morbid-tourists' -- locals see foreigners as a sign of progress and a means for sharing the culture in which they customarily feel proud. On the opposing side, the environmental distress it causes to rural areas and the change in the use of public space is scrutinized as objectionable. The motivations of tourists are also viewed as very contrasting and thus problematic in their individual contexts. Lastly, how locals internalize their projected image in the world coincides with the projection they believe is generated through narco-tourism. As dominant media discourse presents a romanticized lifestyle of narco-traffickers, respondents feel they are vilified, reduced to fast money makers, and made out to be discredited as individual entities. It is unquestioned whether stereotypical values persist within the society that birthed one of the most famous drug cartels in the world, but overgeneralizations are unconscionable.

In laying out the narratives of community members, it is with high hopes that the information provided within this investigation will serve as a catalyst to investigate further opinions on narco-tours and how the collective memory of Medellin can be negotiated. These narratives should be used to contribute to the sense making behind the commodification process that accompanies tourism and popular culture discourses that contribute to the marginalization of voices. Whatmore, these narrative serve as a reminder that tourism 'hotspots' often fade into ashes -- ashes that locals are forced to collect -- but the question is, how can one collect what has already been scattered throughout the world? The call for a more inclusive and comprehensive history still remains and until then marginality as a commercial commodity will persist. The dissonant heritage of Medellin will inherently have an impact on the interpretation and management of such tours. Nevertheless, the cultural products in which these tours produce are

enforced through the mutually negotiated relationships between the consumer and the producer, and the locals -- who do not profit from these tours -- are forced to the margins.

5.3 Recommendations

In an attempt to model a dialogue off of communicative action, the focus of a joint social construction of reality and meaning through equal interaction, was attempted in this research. The expression of feelings and opinions on narco-tours was the main focus of this topic, but just like experiences, these sentiments are ever-evolving and continuous. I advocate for the continuation of narrative inquiry in this context in hopes that the alternative functions of communicative action, that assists in the conveying of information and establishment of social relationships, unfolds. This is suggested with consideration that these objectives embody a strong action oriented towards reaching common understanding. Human experience is diverse and abundant and one voice should not simply dominate another for there is an undeniable linkage between memory and democracy. Past violence transcends the space of an individual life history and there is a need to construct public space that can carry meaning in the acts of social acknowledgement (Arango, 2015). If it is in fact the case that many Colombians do not believe they are ready for memorial sites and monuments, it can be the task of tour guides to implement such concepts gradually and perhaps in collaboration with tourists. Since the role of tourism has been viewed as a means to normalize social relationships, it can also condemn them.

I recommend that further opinions of locals on narco-tourism are collected and compared in an attempt to shed a brighter light on these sentiments. This information can provide the municipality with a better sense of how change, within this taboo sector of tourism, can be implemented in a sustainable manner. This first would require the municipality to acknowledge the tours as legitimate -- while simultaneously encouraging well rounded narratives -- instead of disparaging them as a whole. Further investigation on how to implement such a discourse would also need to be considered. The respondents in this research share overlapping suggestions with key tourism stakeholders who have been addressed in previous investigations. Therefore, a constructive dialogue on the subject between the two groups may be of mutual benefit.

5.4 Reflection on Limitations of Research

Utilizing a bottom-up approach for collecting data is beneficial in assessing the individual but also has its limitations when concerning itself with generalizations. The current amount of respondents within this investigation has the potential to impede on demonstrating divergent feelings, as this group of individuals is not exhaustive and lacks theoretical saturation. Although I argue that the collection of their voices is still greatly significant and is in line with the methodological procedures for such inquiry. The results yielded as a consequence of several parameters such as time of year, however, several individuals of whom I planned on interviewing were not in the city during the period of time that I was. With that, the most pressing issue was in fact, time. Unfortunately, circumstances both within Colombia and abroad in my personal life, forced me to leave the field early. It is acknowledged that the sample size would have to be expanded if this study were to attempt to claim a significant trend in sentiments. If this study utilized targeted sampling, perhaps results yielded may vary.

When it came to recording and having a somewhat more formal conversation on the research topic, some dynamics of the environment between the respondent and the researcher changed. Respondents that were speaking openly and full of anecdotes became more concentrated on giving well formulated responses. Additionally, the first several inquiries focused on the individual's feelings towards a sense of community in Medellin and how they would describe the culture of the place in which they lived. As a default many respondents sought after describing the city instead of their specific neighborhood. In an attempt to not limit the respondents feedback -- and to not create boundaries as to where they feel a sense of belonging -- redirecting generally did not occur. Details such as a change in behavior and an individual's concept of space should also be further considered prior to the data collection process. As time was restricted, returning to these issues with respondents did not occur so perhaps this could have been further discussed with the respondent. Placing an academic lens on the matter may have also disrupted a more free thinking atmosphere as respondents began to formulate solutions as opposed to simply stating observations. This could also be due to the fact that I myself am not Colombian and therefore am perceived to come with my own bias.

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Appendix

Semi-structured Interview Guide

Main topics to be addressed:

       A.   Location of residence/visible changes over (3-5 years)

       B.   Feelings towards tourism in general

       C.   Knowledge on narco-tourism/narco-heritage

       D.   Thoughts on education about narco-history and victims of violence

Interview questions include:

1. Do you feel a big sense of community here?
2. How would you describe the culture of your neighborhood or Medellin in general?
3. Have you noticed any changes over the past 5 years?
   A. How would you describe the changes you have seen here?
   B. How does that make you feel?
4. What are your feelings towards tourism in Medellin?
   A. What about the amount of foreign tourists?
2. How has the local meaning of tourism shifted in Medellin after the explosion of media representation on narco-traffickers?
   A. How does that make you feel?
3. How do you feel about the current discourse on narco-tourism as it relates to Colombian heritage, history, and/or memory?
   A. Do you think narco-tourism can assist in spreading information of historical events that occurred here?
4. How do you believe these tours can have an influence on the ways in which tourists/outsiders view locals?
5. What are aspects you feel are lacking from historical accounts of Medellin? Such as in schools, museums, or the media.
6. Do you believe narco-tourism can be developed in a way that allows for social renewal?

Executive Summary

The tourism market in Colombia is booming and the government has supported many programs to highlight the incredibly diverse landscapes and people within it. For decades Colombians have experienced a multi-faceted armed conflict that has dominated many aspects of their lives and their image in the world. The image of which they would like to shed the most has become the catalyst for a not-quite-authorized sector of tourism. Medellin is the country's second largest city and perhaps its most infamous. Here 'dark', or what this study will address as 'narco-tourism', is highlighting the lifestyle of narco-traffickers. The protagonist of these tours are the individuals that made up the cartels that caused mass destruction within the city and country. Further, the vast majority of these tours lack the viewpoint of victims of the violence. Thus, tension between various tourism stakeholders has emerged.

Reinforced by the 'duty of memory', this study focuses on the current partisan discourse of narco-tours which has allowed the touristic master narrative to be pushed to a more iconizing stance. The lack of recognition for the victims of these groups is what brings about this investigation. As memory is a tool of critical social expression that informs how conflicts unfold, this investigation accounts for the sentiments of locals of Medellin: people who have directly or indirectly been influenced by the actions of narco-traffickers and 'narco-heritage'. For the imaginary geographies that are being co-created by tour guides and tourists create spaces of exclusion, within these lived environments, leaving locals in the position of the marginalized 'other'.

Utilizing narrative inquiry and communicative action, the voices of six locals are highlighted and shared as a means to represent the community, the stakeholders that have been addressed the least. These individuals express their sentiments on the growing tourism market as generally positive but believe that narco-tours are in need of a more balanced discourse. Reflections within and post tours are highly recommended as an attempt to lessen the probability of history repeating itself. The endorsement of the municipalities involvement on the matter is also made. It is discussed how factors such as romanticized violence in media representations and the ongoing political climate impede on their abilities to break free of such tiresome generalizations. They

further address how these dominant discourses alter lived memory within the country as well as skew the perception of their heritage in the world. The perspectives of these individuals are presented as a means to join the dialogue on tourism management in Medellin. Perhaps of equal importance, they serve as a reminder that tourism 'hotspots' often fade into ashes -- ashes that locals are forced to collect -- but how can one collect what has already been scattered throughout the world?