

# Mothers of Peace:

## The Motherhood of FARC Ex-Combatants in Post-Accord Colombia



© Catalina Martin-Chico

**Anna Floor Straatsma**

Wageningen University and Research  
November 2019

## **Master Thesis**

Of Master International Development Studies  
Sociology of Development and Change group  
Thesis Disaster Studies SDC-80736

For Wageningen University and Research

Title: Mothers of Peace: The Motherhood of FARC Ex-Combatants in Post-Accord Colombia

**November 2019**

**Anna Floor Straatsma**

Student number: 930828810080

Contact: [anna.straatsma@wur.nl](mailto:anna.straatsma@wur.nl), [annastraatsma@live.nl](mailto:annastraatsma@live.nl)

## **Supervisor**

**Dr.ir. G. (Gemma) van der Haar**

Sociology of Development and Change  
Wageningen University and Research

## **Second Reader**

**Dr. E.D. (Elisabet) Rasch**

Sociology of Development and Change  
Wageningen University and Research

Title page image of a FARC mother with her baby and her older son was taken by **Catalina Martin-Chico** in the Colinas FARC transition camp, Colombia, in 2018. The photo is part of her project on former FARC fighters in Colombia (Colombia, (Re)Birth) for which she received the Canon Female Photojournalist Award in 2017. She was also nominated for the World Press Photo of the Year 2019. The photo was used with the permission of the photographer.

The rest of the images in this thesis were taken by the author.

# Abstract

This thesis offers insights into the gendered experiences of reintegration by studying the motherhood of the recent FARC mothers in post-accord Colombia. After a decades long conflict, these FARC mothers are able to live and experience motherhood together with their new born babies. During reincorporation they are finding themselves in the transition from *guerrilla* life to civilian life. This thesis shows the reality of the FARC mothers by analysing their everyday experiences and how they give shape to their motherhood in this new context. It offers an interesting approach as it studies the motherhood phenomenon from a social and relational perspective. This thesis also analyses the reconfiguration of FARC mothers' gender roles during reincorporation. Additionally, it considers post-accord Colombia a setting where different individual as well as collective 'transformations' and 'accommodations' are possible. The performance of motherhood is one of the many accommodations that female ex-combatants started to make during reincorporation. These accommodations bring along particular experiences, feelings, challenges and processes, which offer insights into the broader reincorporation context of post-accord Colombia. All in all, this thesis captures how FARC mothers shape and experience their motherhood in post-accord Colombia, while it tells these stories through the eyes of the FARC mothers themselves.

Key words:

FARC, FARC mother(s), motherhood, post-accord Colombia, reincorporation, experiences, challenges, gender roles

# Resumen

Esta tesis ofrece nuevos conocimientos sobre las experiencias de género de la reintegración a través del estudio de la maternidad de las recientes 'madres de las FARC' en la Colombia pos-acuerdo. Después de décadas de conflicto, estas madres son capaces de vivir y experimentar la maternidad junto a sus bebés. Durante la reincorporación se encuentran en una transición de la vida guerrillera a la vida civil. Esta tesis muestra la realidad de las madres mientras estudia sus experiencias del día a día y cómo dan forma a su maternidad en este nuevo contexto. La tesis estudia el fenómeno de la maternidad desde una perspectiva social y relacional y es por ello que la tesis ofrece una perspectiva interesante. También estudia la reconfiguración de los roles de género de las mujeres mientras se están reincorporando. La tesis considera la Colombia pos-acuerdo como un contexto donde diferentes 'acomodaciones' y 'transformaciones' individuales y colectivas son posibles. La maternidad es considerada como una de muchas acomodaciones que mujeres excombatientes empezaron a hacer durante la reincorporación. Estas acomodaciones conllevan ciertas experiencias, sentimientos, dificultades y procesos, los cuales ofrecen conocimientos sobre el contexto de reincorporación más amplio en la Colombia pos-acuerdo. En definitiva, la tesis recoge cómo las 'madres de las FARC' dan forma y experimentan su maternidad en la Colombia pos-acuerdo, mientras cuenta las historias a través de los ojos de las mismas 'madres de las FARC'.

Palabras claves:

FARC, 'madres de las FARC', maternidad, Colombia pos-acuerdo, reincorporación, experiencias, desafíos, roles de género

# Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisor, Gemma van der Haar, for guiding me throughout this thesis journey. She has been able to challenge me, to ask the right questions and to support me to expand my academic knowledge and skills during this entire process. I very much appreciate her professionalism as well as her empathy. She did not solely supervise my thesis and guide me through the process in the Netherlands but she was very involved and helpful when I was in Colombia. It was certainly not always an easy process but she has been able to continuously motivate me to go on and to get the best out of myself and this thesis. I am very thankful for her supervision and the time she took to read my thesis and to provide feedback. She is a very dedicated supervisor and she was always full of attention during our meetings, I am very thankful for that.

Secondly, I would like to express my gratitude to all the FARC mothers, in Bogota and Icononzo, who participated in my research and who talked openly about their experiences as recent mothers. They were willing to share their stories and to support my research, I am very thankful for that. I would also like to thank all the other research participants from the FARC community, NGO's and governmental institutions in Colombia. Thank you for your time and patience. I would like to give a special mention to Julian Cortes, PhD candidate at Wageningen University and Research, who provided important contacts in the field and who helped to arrange my trip to Icononzo. Without his help I would not have been able to conduct the research.

Lastly, I would like to thank my friends and family. To the friends I made in Colombia, who contributed to the amazing experience I had, thank you. I also want to thank my roommate Sol and her brother Danny, who received me with open arms and who were always willing to listen to my stories, to help me and to give me advice. I would like to thank my best friends, whom, despite of being far away, I can always count on. Thank you for your endless support during the beautiful as well as challenging moments, which go beyond the thesis. Without your moral support, the thesis process would have been much more challenging. I would also like to thank my roommates in Wageningen who helped me through my ups and downs during the thesis writing. Ultimately, I want to thank my parents and my family for their never ending support. They always encourage me to pursue my dreams and to get the best out of myself. Without your patience, support and care, I would not have been able to pursue my Master's degree.

# Table of Acronyms

ACR	Alta Consejería para la Reintegración (High Counseling for Reintegration)
ACR	Agencia Colombiana para la Reintegración (Colombian Agency for Reintegration)
ARN	Agencia de Reincorporación y Normalización (Agency for Reintegration and Normalization)
ASODEMUC	Asociación de Mujeres por la Paz y la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer Colombiana (Association of Women for Peace and the Defense of the Rights of Colombian Women)
AUC	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defenders of Colombia)
CNR	Consejo Nacional de Reincorporación (National Council of Reincorporation)
CONPES	Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social (National Council of Political, Economic and Social Affairs)
CSIVI	Comisión de Seguimiento, Impulso y Verificación (Commission for Follow-up, Impulse and Verification)
DDR	Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration
ECOMÚN	Economías Sociales del Común (joint social and economic solidary organisation of the FARC)
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army)
EPL	Ejército Popular de Liberación (Population Liberation Army)
EPS	Entidad Promotora de Salud (Health Promoting Entity)
ETCR	Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación (Territorial Training and Reincorporation Spaces)
FARC	Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (Common Alternative Revolutionary Force) (Political Party of the FARC (-EP))
FARC (-EP) <sup>1</sup>	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (-Ejército del Pueblo) (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (-People's Army))
ICBF	Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (Colombian Institute of Family Wellbeing)
JEP	Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz (Special Jurisdiction for Peace)
M-19	Movimiento 19 de Abril (19 <sup>th</sup> of April Movement)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OACP	Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz (Office of the High Commissioner for Peace)
PRVC	Programa de Reincorporación a la Vida Civil (Program of Reincorporation in Civil Life)
PTN	Puntos Transitorios de Normalización (Transient Normalization Points)
RUV	Registro Único de Víctimas (Unique Victim Registry)
SENA	Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (National Training Service)
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
ZVTN	Zonas Veredales de Transición y Normalización (Transitional Local Zones and Points)

---

<sup>1</sup> In this thesis 'FARC' will be used to refer to the FARC (-EP)

# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Resumen</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Table of Acronyms</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Research Puzzle .....	8
Set-up of this Thesis .....	8
<b>2. Theoretical Framework</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Post-Insurgency .....	11
Militarized Femininity .....	14
Gender Performativity .....	19
Research Questions .....	21
<b>3. Methodology</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>4. FARC Women in Conflict, the Peace Process, Peace Agreement and Post-Accord Colombia</b> .....	<b>32</b>
The Armed Conflict & The FARC .....	32
Peace Process & Peace agreement .....	35
Post-Accord Colombia .....	37
Conclusion .....	40
<b>5. Becoming Mothers: the Reasons for FARC Ex-combatants to become Mothers</b> .....	<b>42</b>
Introduction .....	42
Motherhood during Conflict .....	43
<i>Impossible Motherhood</i> .....	44
<i>Possible Motherhood</i> .....	47
Motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia .....	49
<i>Planned Motherhood</i> .....	50
<i>Unplanned Motherhood</i> .....	54
<i>No Motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia</i> .....	57
Conclusion .....	58
<b>6. Being Mothers: the Experiences of FARC Mothers during Reincorporation</b> .....	<b>61</b>
Introduction .....	61
Beautiful Motherhood .....	62
Challenging Motherhood .....	65
<i>FARC Mothers' Reincorporation Challenges</i> .....	65

<i>Reincorporation Challenges in Bogota</i> .....	70
<i>Reincorporation Challenges in Icononzo</i> .....	72
How FARC Mothers imagine their Future and that of their Babies.....	75
<i>Personal Dreams and Future Plans</i> .....	76
<i>Dreams for the FARC Babies</i> .....	77
<i>The Values of the Insurgency</i> .....	78
Conclusion.....	79
<b>7. The Reconfiguration of FARC Mothers' Gender Roles in Post-Accord Colombia</b> .....	<b>82</b>
Introduction.....	82
Gender Roles in the Guerrilla.....	84
<i>Tasks versus rights</i> .....	85
FARC Mothers' Gender Roles in Post-Accord Colombia.....	87
<i>Patriarchal Colombian Society</i> .....	88
<i>Motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia</i> .....	89
<i>Partners &amp; Fatherhood</i> .....	94
<i>Transformed Gender Roles</i> .....	96
Conclusion.....	97
<b>8. Conclusion</b> .....	<b>100</b>
<b>9. Discussion</b> .....	<b>104</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>108</b>
<b>Appendix</b> .....	<b>113</b>

# 1. Introduction

*‘Un hijo representa la vida’*

*‘A child represents life’*

Sara [Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January]

While I was drinking a coffee with Sara in a café in Bogota she told me, clearly moved: ‘A child represents life’. It was a precious moment where she managed to transfer the overwhelming happy feeling she had been having ever since she became a mother. During the conversation it soon became clear: giving life and taking care of life were incredibly special after many years where taking life and death were not uncommon. She was not afraid to show her emotions while she spoke about her recent motherhood. According to her, she was one of the first women who became pregnant during Colombia’s historical peace process, and many more would follow her. The conversation with Sara was my first encounter with a FARC mother<sup>2</sup> and stayed on my mind during the entire fieldwork [P.O., Bogota, January].

Since the historical peace process and the peace agreement between the Colombian government of President Juan Manuel Santos and the Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2016, a significant amount of its female ex-combatants has become pregnant and given birth: a real ‘baby boom’ as it has been referred to by many journalists (Al Jazeera, 2017; Cosoy, 2017; Otis, 2017; Wright, 2017). Approximately 168 women (7,2% of the 23% demobilized female ex-combatants) were pregnant in 2017 when they had just entered the reincorporation<sup>3</sup> program (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2017). Other sources claim that around 300 babies would be born in 2017 while FARC ex-combatants were moving into the transition zones (ZTVN’s). This number could increase rapidly with the formation of new couples in the ZTVN’s (Moreno, 2017; Telesur, 2017). Female ex-combatants have not only started to give life to children, but since the peace agreement they are also being able to fulfil their mother role with children they had before or during the conflict. This is a significant difference from how motherhood looked like for female combatants when they were actively participating in the conflict and unable to fulfil their mother role in a similar way.

Becoming a mother during the armed conflict was unacceptable unless you would leave your child with relatives outside combat, who would be in charge of the caretaking. In fact, female FARC combatants have been exposed to forced contraception and (forced) abortions during combat. The impossibility of a conventional motherhood<sup>4</sup>, where a mother would be spending motherhood alongside her children, illustrates FARC’s priority with the armed conflict instead of with creating families (Stanski, 2006: 148). I consider this a rather straightforward decision from an insurgent group. It is in line with their Marxist ideology which, according to feminists, ignore the reproductive and domestic roles of women (Barth, 2002: 12; Gjelsvik, 2005: 55). According to the FARC, pregnancy and children did not only form a risk to the female combatants who were having babies, but they formed a risk to the entire unit (Herrera & Porch, 2016: 626; Wüstner, 2017: 16). For those reasons, during the time as female combatants in the FARC, performing the *guerrillera*<sup>5</sup> role conflicted with the conventional mother role. Because motherhood was so strictly controlled during the guerrilla, the peace agreement brought along the possibility to think about children and the formation of families, which many may have never imagined doing so during the decades long conflict. The recent motherhood therefore illustrates a radical change in the lives of the former combatants, which makes the ‘baby boom’ an even more interesting phenomenon to study.

---

<sup>2</sup> FARC mother: throughout this thesis I use ‘FARC mother(s)’ to refer to the female FARC ex-combatants who became mothers during the peace process or after the peace agreement.

<sup>3</sup> In this thesis ‘reincorporation’ will be used to refer to the reintegration of FARC ex-combatants who demobilized as a result of the peace agreement in November 2016.

<sup>4</sup> When I mention ‘conventional mother role’ or ‘conventional motherhood’ throughout this thesis, I refer to the mother role which we, as society, are most familiar with: the mother role where a mother is able to share motherhood alongside her baby or child, where she is actively involved in the upbringing and is able to share the experiences of childhood of her baby or child.

<sup>5</sup> Guerrillera: Spanish for female guerrillero.



## Research Puzzle

Today, almost three years after the signing of the peace agreement, it is the right moment to reflect on the ‘baby boom’ phenomenon. Questions that arise are: what were the reasons for female combatants to become pregnant when peace is around the corner? How do these women experience and give shape to their motherhood in post-accord Colombia? What does the mother role imply for the gender roles of these ex-combatants? For the reason that this phenomenon started recently, little is known about what it means for female FARC ex-combatants to give life and take care of life after a usually long period where taking life was not uncommon. Instead, most (academic) literature has focused on sexual violence, the unwanted pregnancies or (forced) abortions within the FARC. Other literature has been ignoring women’s agency and multiple roles in armed conflict by victimizing combatants (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo, 2018: 89; Smet, 2009: 154; Gjelsvik, 2010: 52; Farr, 2003: 26).

The reincorporation in post-accord Colombia, where gender inequality and patriarchy are deeply rooted in society, implies a significant change from life within the FARC where tasks were said to be equally distributed among male and female combatants. Besides that, even though women were considered equal to men in combat, this equality does not necessarily continue when the conflict is over (Avoine & Tillman, 2015: 221; Smet, 2009: 159). Female ex-combatants often face a double stigmatization for firstly being a woman and secondly being a combatant (LIMPAL Colombia & FARC, 2018: 42). The potential challenges that the FARC mothers have to deal with during their reincorporation process make it particularly relevant to study this recent performance of motherhood. Also, the challenges these FARC mothers are confronted with serve as a reflection on the overall current reincorporation process in Post-Accord Colombia. All in all, this thesis aims to contribute to the knowledge about how female FARC ex-combatants experience and give shape to their motherhood and gender roles during the process of reincorporation in post-accord Colombia.

By looking at motherhood I aim to contribute to the understanding of the gendered experiences of reintegration through the eyes of the recent FARC mothers. In my opinion this is a unique lens and a rather new approach of looking at the reintegration of former combatants in society. By adding motherhood to reintegration, reintegration is being studied from a very human and social point of view. The knowledge that will be gained by answering the above questions will not solely contribute to the knowledge about the processes occurring in post-accord Colombia, but these insights will also be relevant for other post-conflict and post-war settings, especially in those settings where there has been a significant amount of female combatants inside the ranks. In that regard, answering these questions can ultimately add to the wider knowledge and theory about female ex-combatants. This makes this thesis not only relevant for the Colombian post-accord context and our understanding of it, but it contributes to similar global processes as well.

In order to understand how FARC mothers experience and give shape to their motherhood and gender roles in post-accord Colombia, I have used three theories in this thesis. The first theory, *post-insurgency*, serves as the theory that this thesis departs from. It allows for an analysis of the ‘baby boom’ and the recent motherhood from a social and relational point of view instead of from the international policy point of view. The second theory, *militarized femininity* and the third theory, *gender performativity*, together form the gendered perspective on the lived experiences that post-insurgency studies. This gendered approach is crucial because the recent motherhood of FARC ex-combatants is a highly gendered phenomenon. Militarized femininity helps to understand FARC mothers’ femininity during the insurgency and its implications in post-accord Colombia. Gender performativity assumes that different genders can take up different roles in different settings. It therefore studies those gender roles during reincorporation by understanding those roles in the insurgency. Both gender theories are strongly interlinked: I assume that the militarized femininity of the insurgency allows to make sense of how gender roles were performed in the past, as well as in the present. The three different theories, and their interrelations, offer an interesting, relational and gendered approach to the recent motherhood of FARC ex-combatants in post-accord Colombia.

## Set-up of this Thesis

The first chapter of this thesis will elaborate upon the above mentioned theories and the connections between them. In this chapter the research questions of this thesis will also be presented. The second chapter is the methodology chapter, where I will explain how the research was conducted through my

fieldwork in Colombia. The third chapter 'FARC Women in Conflict, the Peace Process, Peace Agreement and Post-Accord Colombia' serves to contextualize the Colombian armed conflict, peace process, peace agreement and post-accord Colombia. In this chapter the role of FARC women<sup>6</sup> is underlined. After this introductory chapter, three empirical chapters follow. The first empirical chapter is 'Becoming Mothers: the Reasons for FARC Ex-combatants to become Mothers' which studies the reasons for motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia. The second empirical chapter is 'Being Mothers: the Experiences of FARC Mothers during Reincorporation' which elaborates on how FARC mothers experience and give shape to their recent motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia. The third, and last, empirical chapter is 'The Reconfiguration of FARC Mothers' Gender Roles in Post-Accord Colombia' which studies how gender roles are reconfigured as a consequence of the recent motherhood during reincorporation in Post-Accord Colombia. This thesis will finish with a conclusion chapter and a discussion chapter where I will provide a coherent final analysis based on the previous chapters.

---

<sup>6</sup> FARC women: throughout this thesis I use 'FARC women' to refer to the female FARC ex-combatants who participated in the conflict.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The aim of this chapter is to explain the different theories that are used in this thesis, which have served to analyse the results of ten weeks of fieldwork in Colombia. Using these theories will help to answer the research questions of this thesis.

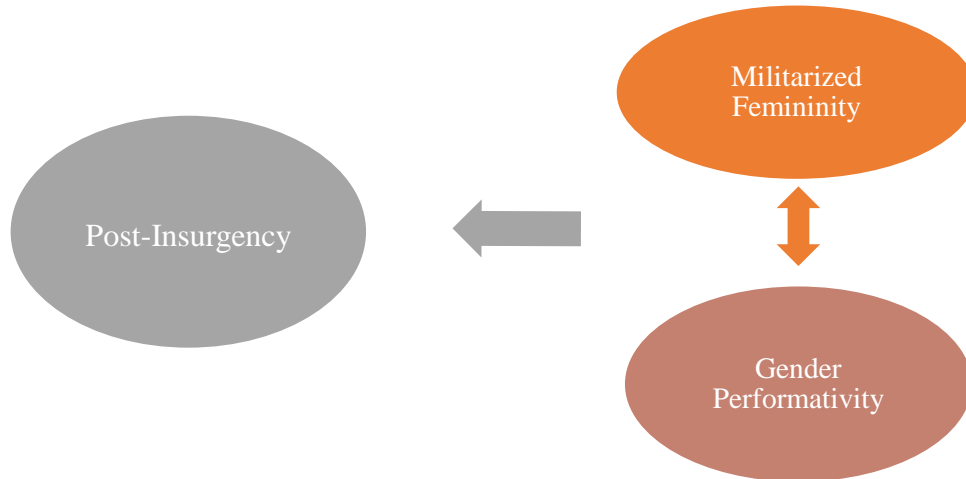


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of Post-Insurgency, Militarized Femininity and Gender Performativity

The nexus between motherhood, reincorporation and gender roles is central in this thesis. Therefore, the theories used are structured around this particular nexus. However, the main focus of the theoretical framework is on theories related to reintegration, femininity and gender roles instead of on motherhood. Figure 1 illustrates the construction of the theories *Post-Insurgency* of Ralph Sprenkels, *Militarized Femininity* of Cynthia Enloe among others, and *Gender Performativity* of Judith Butler.

While the three theories are of equal relevance throughout this thesis, post-insurgency has a different role: it serves as the theory that this thesis departs from. The particular reincorporation process in postaccord Colombia that FARC mothers are going through, has a significant influence on how motherhood is shaped and experienced. Post-insurgency allows for an analysis of this process from a social and relational point of view instead of from the international policy point of view. Post-insurgency is therefore applied to make sense of the lived experiences during the current reincorporation. The theory considers the importance of the experiences during the insurgency (the past) in order to make sense of reintegration (the present).

As can be seen in figure 1, militarized femininity and gender performativity together form the gendered perspective on the lived experiences that post-insurgency aims to study. This gendered approach to the phenomenon of the recent motherhood of FARC ex-combatants is crucial as it is a highly gendered experience during reincorporation. Without such an approach, it would be hard, if not impossible, to study the recent motherhood in a correct way. While they are both gender theories, they clearly complement each other as each has a different focus and approach to the phenomenon.

Militarized femininity serves to understand FARC mothers' femininity during the insurgency according to FARC's ideology. Here it is particularly interesting to apply this theory to the sexual and reproductive health and rights, and to motherhood: how motherhood was shaped during conflict (the past) has an impact on how it is given shape to and experienced currently in postaccord Colombia (the present). Gender performativity typically studies the performance of gender roles during reincorporation (the present) by understanding those performed roles in the insurgency (the past). In the case of the motherhood in postaccord Colombia, it is particularly interesting to study how this recent mother role is performed in the context of reincorporation. This theory allows to make sense of how different gender roles can be performed in different settings and at different moments in time. Both theories are strongly interlinked and for that reason they complement each other: I assume that the militarized structure (with its controlled femininity) during the insurgency plays an important role in how gender roles were shaped

in the guerrilla (the past) as well as how they are shaped after combat in postaccord Colombia (the present). Then, gender performativity allows to make sense of these different gender roles.

The three different theories, and their interrelations, offer an interesting, relational and gendered approach to the recent motherhood of FARC ex-combatants. The use of the theories differs per chapter. In the first empirical chapter ('Becoming Mothers: the Reasons for FARC Ex-combatants to become Mothers') militarized femininity is central while it is combined with gender performativity and post-insurgency. In the second empirical chapter ('Being Mothers: the Experiences of FARC Mothers during Reincorporation') post-insurgency is central. In this chapter gender performativity and militarized femininity are also relevant. In the last empirical chapter ('The Reconfiguration of FARC Mothers' Gender Roles in Post-Accord Colombia'), the main focus is on gender performativity, while combining it with militarized femininity and post-insurgency.

I will first explain the dominant reintegration theory and post insurgency. I will then elaborate on the theory of militarized femininity, followed by gender performativity. I will lastly introduce the main research question and the sub-research questions of this thesis.

### Post-Insurgency

The first theory is that of *Post-Insurgency* of Ralph Sprenkels<sup>7</sup>, a Dutch historian and anthropologist who studied armed conflict and their aftermath. During his PhD research in El Salvador he used post-insurgency in order to look at the reintegration of former insurgents<sup>8</sup> in Salvadorian society. So far, using post-insurgency as a theory to understand reintegration processes has been quite uncommon and little has been written about it. However, his particular view on reintegration and the fact that it is relatively unknown, gave me the incentive to use this theory and to look at the reincorporation of female ex-combatants in postaccord Colombia from a different angle. Before I elaborate on Sprenkels' post-insurgency, I introduce the dominant reintegration policy of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) in order to understand why and how Sprenkels developed post-insurgency.

#### *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)*

By developing post-insurgency, Sprenkels criticized the dominant peacebuilding theory of *post-war reintegration*. This concept is generally linked to the international policy of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), which the past decades has grown into the "crucial groundwork for durable peace" of the United Nations (UN) (Sprenkels, 2014: 28). According to the UN: "*United Nations peace operations are the leading international partner of national institutions implementing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration initiatives, designing context-specific programmes for members of armed groups.*" (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.). The UN describes DDR as follows: "*Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration lays the groundwork for safeguarding and sustaining the communities to which these individuals return, while building capacity for long-term peace, security and development.*" (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.).

An important part of these programs is the reintegration of former insurgents. The UN has helped to remove weapons and ensure that ex-combatants reintegrate in society through more than sixty DDR programmes between the late 1980's and 2008, of which a majority was implemented in Africa (Muggah, 2008: 6). This has been achieved through United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in, for example, the Central African Republic, Haiti and Mali. DDR also supports operations in Somalia, Yemen and Colombia. In the case of Colombia it is evident that the DDR policy was immediately implemented after the signing of the peace agreement. The ex-combatants started to move into the zones where they handed in their weapons under the supervision of the UN. After the disarmament and demobilization the reintegration process started in these zones.

In 2010 the UN introduced the 'second generation DDR', which moved beyond the 'traditional DDR' in order to improve its policy. Second generation DDR uses the same approach as the traditional DDR as it focuses on the support of peace processes, the creation of political space and the contribution to a secure environment (UN, 2010). However, the second generation programmes differ in the sense that they do no longer focus merely on the combatants within the military structures, but they instead shift

---

<sup>7</sup> Sadly, Sprenkels passed away very unexpectedly on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Sprenkels used *insurgents* where I use *combatants*.

away to larger communities affected by violence. Also, they include other activities that fall outside the operational categories of DDR when it turns out that the preconditions for the traditional DDR are not the right ones for supporting the peace process and the building of trust. In addition, the second generation DDR is said to use an evidence-based approach. Through the transition from traditional DDR to second generation DDR, the UN tries to emphasize how the DDR practices have evolved during the past decades (UN, 2010: 3).

According to Muggah and O'Donnell (2015), DDR further adapted the past decade and we can observe a 'new generation DDR' since "*the United Nations Security Council and DDR specialists are actively rethinking the approach to tackling what appears to be proliferating non-state armed groups across multiple settings*" (p.4). They mention different examples of missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Libya. According to them: "*This new wave of DDR represents a move away from narrowly conceived stand-alone interventions toward activities that are purposefully connected to national development plans. The aim is to avoid unintentionally stigmatizing combatants and dependents.*" (Muggah and O'Donnell, 2015: 6). The 'new' DDR is sometimes connected to a wider geo-political agenda. In Colombia this is the case through the counterterrorism and counter-narcotics initiatives. In other programmes, DDR functions as "*social, economic and political engineering*" (ibid.). In some settings DDR programs move beyond its initial goals of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and start to be involved in other social, economic and political processes as well.

While the disarmament and demobilization of combatants are relatively easy to achieve in practice, the reintegration of ex-combatants comes along with many challenges and DDR programs are not always successful. Muggah (2005) argues that DDR is not a "magic bullet" while he offers a critical perspective on this dominant international peacebuilding policy (p. 239). He refers to the 'Brahimi Report', the UN resolution that contains recommendations and decisions on peacekeeping operations, and he argues that: "*Major weaknesses relate to the criteria invoked for measuring 'success' or 'failure' and the disproportionate focus on disarmament and demobilization, at the expense of longer-term activities such as reintegration*" (p. 246). Theidon (2009) has also critically reviewed DDR programs and she says that: "*Traditional approaches to DDR have focused on military and security objectives, which have resulted in these programs being developed in relative isolation from the field of transitional justice and its concerns with historical clarification, justice, reparations, and reconciliation*" (p. 2).

Also gender has been a point of discussion in DDR policy. Theidon (2009) continues by stating that it is important to 'add gender' to DDR processes. She is only one of the many scholars that have advocated for more gender consciousness and a gender perspective inside DDR policy and programs, it is therefore a much broader concern. According to Theidon (2009), the 'Gender and DDR' publications of the World Bank reveal a "gender deficit" in DDR programs (p.3). As she explains: "*...that both DDR and transitional justice require a gendered analysis that includes an examination of the salient links between weapons, masculinities, and violence in specific historical context*" (Theidon, 2009: 3). She is a strong advocate of more attention to gender inclusive DDR policy.

#### *Sprenkels' alternative: Post-Insurgency*

Ralph Sprenkels was, just as the previous mentioned scholars, rather critical about DDR programs and therefore proposes post-insurgency as an alternative perspective. He argued that actually little is known about how successful DDR programs really are for the reintegration of ex-combatants, whether they are better off with the program or without. He also questioned whether these programs are actually about achieving the reintegration of insurgents. Sprenkels (2014) claimed the following: "*I argue that these programs and their popularity in the international community might be better understood in relation to the practical and discursive functions they perform in facilitating the international actor's engagement in (post-) conflict settings*" (p. 31). He therefore considered DDR, as a discourse, a powerful policy instrument for political bargaining and international corporation but it only serves limited relevance when it comes to understanding reintegration as a social process (Sprenkels, 2014: 33). He also spoke about how DDR aims for ex-combatants to leave their identity behind and to take the new 'citizen identity'. As he argued: "*In taking an individual by the hand and leading him or her from combat to citizenship, reintegration stands as a parable for the country's imagined post-war transition to democracy by the international community*" (Sprenkels, 2014: 34). All in all, he was convinced that

DDR is limited as it does not provide a lot of understanding about the nature of the insurgencies and it therefore does not make sense of the accommodation processes among these insurgents.

By using post-insurgency as an alternative perspective to mainstream reintegration theories in academic literature, Sprenkels' purpose was to consider what happens to insurgents after war ends as a relational process which is embedded in a particular political and historical process (Sprenkels, 2014: 35). When he referred to 'relations', he used the perspective of Zelizer (2007) who claims that "*Relations, in my conception, are not thin, flat relations of network analysis but the rich relations of ethnography*" (p. 1063). We need the alternative of post-insurgency: "*A thoughtful consideration of the process of insurgency and of how insurgency was organized. A historically grounded study of post-insurgency calls for a clear and concise consideration of the social history of the insurgent movement*" (Sprenkels, 2014: 37). Sprenkels (2014) was interested in understanding the "close interpersonal networks" that insurgents have been building before and during war which continue to be of importance to the "personal and collective destinies" of the former insurgents after war (p.22). By stressing that post-insurgency is a relational phenomenon, he also followed up on Bourdieu (1985) who claims that the social can be understood as a "space of relationships" (p.725). According to Sprenkels, reintegration is not about to what extent insurgents have 'reintegrated' but rather about all of the adjustments and accommodations that they have started to make during their 'reintegration'. He called for more attention to the social processes that imply many transformations and accommodations, individual as well as collective, which have been taking place among the insurgents in the post-war period. These insurgents have adjusted and rearranged themselves within the insurgency and society as a whole (Sprenkels, 2014: 35-37).

Furthermore, Sprenkels (2014) mentioned that: "*A focus on post-insurgent relations implicates significant sensitivity for the internal power differentials within the movement, and suggests the rise of variety of responses from different individuals and subgroups in the insurgent movement to post-war transition, giving way to a series of contingent and possibly contentious accommodations in internal relationships*" (p. 56). I interpret this as the following: because of the differences between insurgents in the insurgency, also in terms of power, insurgents may have a variety of accommodations in post-insurgency and can therefore not be considered to be a homogeneous group. In the FARC there were a lot of power differentials, combatants had different backgrounds and have lived different experiences. Therefore, it is likely that there are differences in terms of accommodations and adjustments of the ex-combatants in post-accord Colombia (of which one is the recent motherhood). In addition, Sprenkels (2014) considers the post-war period a very dynamic social field which is constituted by historical relations (p.37). Also, in order to get a relational understanding of how an insurgency has served as polity, it is important to move beyond insurgency as a solely military movement. In fact, Sprenkels argued that the shift from an insurgent movement to a political party has become more common in post-war transition processes. In Colombia this is the case as the guerrilla FARC has established the FARC political party, which I will come back to later in this thesis.

I argue that Sprenkels' (2014) conceptualization and the importance he gave to the "*historically constructed space of relationships between multiple social agents*" (p. 72), is very relevant for studying post-conflict situations. These insurgents were previously connected through their participation in the insurgency. Therefore, post-insurgency must include a social history perspective which contributes to the understanding of the interpersonal relationships between former insurgents during their active time in the insurgency. It helps to put the many "stories, losses and gains inherited from their struggle" in perspective (Sprenkels, 2014: 72).

Since I am looking into the recent motherhood in post-accord Colombia during female ex-combatants' reincorporation, I argue that applying Sprenkels' conceptualization is particularly useful. By using Sprenkels' lens I will be able to look at motherhood as an accommodation that many female ex-combatants are making in post-insurgency. This accommodation is one of the many accommodations they started to make in post-accord Colombia, and it comes along with particular experiences and challenges. By looking at FARC's female ex-combatants' motherhood during reincorporation as a social process, I have moved beyond dominant DDR theory which serves as a policy instrument. I focus on the everyday experiences of motherhood, which are influenced by the current reincorporation conditions. Hereby it is important that even though motherhood can be considered to be a 'collective phenomenon', the way it is given shape to and experienced is very personal. The different backgrounds

and experiences in the guerrilla therefore play an important role. Post-insurgency allows me to look at FARC mothers' everyday experiences from a social and relational perspective rather than by studying it from the perspective of the international DDR policy, which is likely to oversee social processes.

### Militarized Femininity

The second theory of this thesis is *Militarized Femininity*. My interpretation of this theory is not based on one scholar in particular but it is based on various scholars' understandings. Cynthia Enloe is one of the most prominent academics who has approached the concept of militarized femininity in the United States army. She is a well-known American feminist writer and professor who is mostly known for her work about gender and militarism. Other important scholars are Laura Sjoberg and Andrea Méndez, who further discuss the militarized femininity through their studies in the United States and Colombia.

I am convinced that this theory is of crucial importance to make sense of how femininity was given shape to in the FARC and how this has brought along consequences in post-accord Colombia. I aim to apply this theory in order to get insights into the sexual and reproductive health and rights of female combatants during the conflict as well as in post-accord Colombia. Furthermore, I am convinced that the theory facilitates insights into how gender roles were performed during conflict as well as in post-accord Colombia. Before I turn to the theory of militarized femininity, I will briefly emphasize on the differences between militarism and militarization. I will also discuss women soldiers and what their entry in militaries implies for the masculinity of the military.

### *Militarism versus Militarization*

According to Cynthia Enloe there are clear differences between *militarism* and *militarization*. Enloe (2016) argues that it is not simple to define *militarism*. It is a concept, ideology, a complex package of ideas which "foster military values in both military and civilian affairs" and justifies the military priorities and influences in political, economic and cultural affairs (p.11). In the 'militarism package' she includes, among others: "*The belief that men are natural protectors and that women should be grateful for manly protection*", "*the belief that soldiers deserve special praise for their contributions to their countries*", and "*the belief that hierarchies of command are a natural part of society*" (ibid.: 11). When she refers to *militarization* she is referring to a process that is social, political as well as psychological, where individuals as well as groups or societies are absorbing the practices of militarism. Hereby she argues that "*women and men each can become militarized, though usually they are militarized in rather different ways because militaristic ideas are so deeply imbued with gendered assumptions and values*" (ibid.: 11).

Enloe (1993) argues that: "*Militarization relies on distinct notions about masculinity, notions that have staying power only if they are legitimized by women as well as men. And the ending to a particular war cannot undo decades of deeper militarization*" (p. 3). This last statement implies that even though a war or conflict may be over, this does not necessarily lead to a complete end of militarization but rather to a disruption of it, something which also turned out to be the case for the FARC in post-accord Colombia, which I will come back to later in this thesis. The process of legitimization is shaped according to how the patriarchal society is organized (Méndez, 2012: 29). Here it becomes clear that militarization is, according to Enloe, a particular masculine practice since militaries were and still are mostly dominated by male soldiers and their masculine behaviour. In fact, Enloe (2000) argues that: "*Masculinity has been intimately tied to militarism, yet the two sets are not inseparable*" (p. 235). There is therefore space to think about femininity because, "*...for the military to obtain and keep the number and kind of men in the ranks that officials think they need, military policy makers have to control not only men but women*". This argument demonstrates that for the benefit of the military it is also important to consider notions of femininity. However, this mostly refers to femininity in the sense of female companions (wives, girlfriends, mothers) and not of active female soldiers.

Enloe (1993) talks about a 'three-part feminist analysis' when she speaks about how we can understand militarism from a feminist point of view. "*First, social constructions of masculinity, not just elite interests or state bureaucracies and their cosmologies, entrench and extend the grip of militarism. Second, militarism's reliance on particular forms of masculinity is apparent in societies with otherwise dissimilar cultures and uneven levels of industrialization*" (p.73). How militarism and masculinity are

given shape to depends per culture (Méndez, 2012: 30). *“Third, militarizing masculinity cannot succeed without making women also play specifically feminine parts in the militarizing process; these feminine parts, although vital, must be kept ideologically marginal”* (Enloe, 1993:73). Here Enloe’s focus is on the women who accompany male soldiers, such as girlfriends, mothers or sex workers (Méndez, 2012: 31). In Enloe’s analysis it becomes evident that militarism is a socially constructed concept and depends on the masculinity of the society. She also argues that in the analysis of militarism we cannot overlook the role of women when we militarize masculinity. However, I argue that in this analysis Enloe still focuses on women as companions instead of women as active agents of violence.

Theidon (2009) uses militarized masculinity when she looks at masculinity in the DDR processes and why and how gender should be added to DDR. She identifies militarized masculinity as the *“...fusion of certain practices and images of maleness with the use of weapons, the exercise of violence, and the performance of an aggressive and frequently misogynist masculinity”* (p. 5). Through this militarized masculinity a particular image of the male soldier is developed: a soldier who has certain characteristics and who has to behave himself according to the rules and ideology of the military. Méndez (2012) agrees with Theidon by saying that: *“Militarized masculinities create an ‘ideal soldier’ who is strong, threatening, aggressive, loyal, rational and heterosexual. This ideal soldier represses emotions, vulnerabilities, and compassions, all of which are perceived to be feminine qualities”* (p. 29). According to her, a male soldier performs the ultimate masculinity and is everything which femininity is not. She says that: *“the concept of militarized masculinities, which refers to a soldiering process in which masculine identities become hyper-masculine, is key in attempting to develop a conceptual lens through which to study the experiences of women combatants who have joined illegal armed groups”* (ibid.). In her understanding, militarized masculinities refer to a process where maleness is taken to an extreme: male soldiers are performing the ultimate maleness. If we understand how masculinity is organized in a military it is easier to study how female soldiers have to adapt to this masculinity and what it implies for their own femininity. In the case of the FARC, insights into the masculinity of the guerrilla would serve to clarify how femininity was being shaped during active combat.

Méndez (2012) continues with *“...femininity, not just masculinity, can also be directly militarized in complex ways in illegal armed groups. Women who join illegal armed groups as combatants do not simply become like men; they go through different and contradictory processes which affect their feminine identities in a context of militarization”* (p.32). I argue that the last part of this statement is particularly relevant for studying FARC’s female ex-combatants. If we would assume that women soldiers simply become male because they join a military, then the entire process of militarizing femininity is overlooked. I argue that this militarization of femininity is a crucial concept in order to understand the particular experiences, in relation to their femininity, of female ex-combatants in the guerrilla. I will further go into militarized femininity below, but I will firstly stress what has been written about what happens to a military and its masculinity when female soldiers start entering.

### *Women Soldiers*

Enloe (2007) argues that there are various debates in military affairs of what occurs to a military when women enter. When women start joining militaries, they become, just like their male counterparts, militarized as well. The first option is that by increasing the amount of women in militaries, the military will become less patriarchal and a military can become less militarized. A second, less optimistic, option is that the women who serve in the military also become more militarized. Enloe argues for a third possibility where patriarchy is challenged by women entering the military. Hereby she adds that it is rather difficult for a military to become less masculine because it would imply less effectiveness and it would be less appealing for men to join the military (p.92-93). I find her view on the role of women in militaries particularly interesting and relevant to apply to the case of the FARC. Questions that come up are: Were female combatants challenging the patriarchy inside the ranks? Or did the entry of women in the FARC mean that they were strongly militarized as well?

Méndez (2012) refers in her dissertation to various scholars who question whether the entry of women in militaries or non-state militarized organisations, such as guerrillas, have actually challenged patriarchy and led to more gender equality. She presents cases of Karen Kampwirth (2001) where women in Latin American guerrillas, such as in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Mexico, entered these groups in order to escape traditional gender roles at home. She continues with the example of Melisa



Mulinary (1998), who argues that in the revolutions in Latin America, equality was said to be ‘women fighting as men’. While in other movements women were not actively combating but merely functioned as companions of the male soldiers (Méndez, 2012: 27-28).

While it is not completely obvious that women achieved gender equality by joining (non-state) militarized groups, Méndez (2012) stresses that: *“Many of the gains made by women in terms of participating in non-traditional activities during war are reversed once the fighting is over”* (p.28). She emphasizes that even though, in some cases, female combatants transgressed traditional gender roles by entering militaries or non-state armed groups, this did often not lead to the transformation of the gender roles. Once the women soldiers came back to ‘normal society’, outside the military, they were again subjected to the roles traditionally ascribed to them. She adds that, in contrast to the loss of gains, the different roles that women have performed in conflict has enabled the creation of new opportunities in terms of social relationships and identities, particularly in terms of their gender (Méndez, 2012: 28).

In addition, Cockburn (1991) and Cockburn and Zarkov (2002) argue in Sjoberg (2007: 93) the following: *“That women have the same jobs as men in the American military does not mean that the organization is somehow gender-equal or gender neutral”*. In their opinion, the fact that women started entering the military and they were able to perform the same jobs does not mean that gender equality is achieved. Instead, Sjoberg (2007) argues, *“...these women are allowed to participate in a military force still dominated by masculinities. Discourses of gender subordination constitute the self-perpetuating exclusion of women’s agency from the political arena. The masculinities that win discursive contests perpetuate the symbolic order by discursive validation”* (p. 93). Even though women became part of a military, where their femininity was strongly militarized, they became part of a world that is dominated by masculinity. In regards to that, a female soldier can make it as a man because she adopts masculine values without the masculinity to have changed. When she can adopt traditional masculinity through maintaining her femininity simultaneously, she is allowed to participate in the military (Sjoberg, 2007: 93). Furthermore, when it comes to committing crimes, Sjoberg (2007) refers to Keitner (2002) who argues that a violent woman has committed a double violation: firstly a crime and secondly being a woman and committing that crime (p. 96). Also this point is very relevant for the female FARC fighters, who are subject to a double stigmatization for firstly being a fighter and secondly being a woman.

Jordan and Denov (2007) studied the female emancipation in Sri Lanka’s Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), where women soldiers entered and started to adopt new roles by participating in the armed struggle. They explain that in the majority of militarized groups it is likely that patriarchal structures that lead to female subordination and victimization, ultimately lead to increased gender inequality. However, some settings allow women to participate as active agents in war and therefore take up non-traditional roles of women and girls. These can empower them and create ideological and practical space (Jordan and Denov, 2007: 43). They may therefore be enabled to enjoy greater emancipation by the access to non-gender stereotyped roles and the responsibilities they gain in the movement (ibid.: 58). In contrast to that, in post-war the experience of equality that female combatants enjoyed does not mean they will be treated equally upon their return to community life (ibid.: 59).

Jordan and Denov (2007) furthermore argue that *“...while females may benefit from more egalitarian relations within the LTTE than within traditional Tamil society, women’s empowerment is made possible through the adoption of masculine behaviours as opposed to consciously attempting to ‘feminize’ the military subculture. This reinforces the assertion that female actors are permitted in armed conflict as long as their inclusion does not disrupt the masculine image of warfare. Moreover, it suggests that women may maintain a status subordinate to men even in radical movements”* (p.57-58). I argue that this statement is, again, particularly relevant for the FARC case that I am studying: did the entry of female combatants allow them to enjoy more equal relationships with their male counterparts? Or did their entry imply having to adopt masculine behaviour and hereby giving up on their femininity? This is where the theory of militarized femininity starts to play an important role.

The above views on what happens to gender and femininity during and after conflict are interesting to apply to the FARC because of the large amount of female combatants in the guerrilla. In terms of their motherhood it would be interesting to observe whether having left the guerrilla has particular implications on their performance of gender roles. The idea of challenging gender roles and a possible

transformation of the gendered relationships between men and women, male soldiers and female soldiers, is particularly relevant to apply to this thesis. By entering a militarized guerrilla movement, female FARC combatants challenged the masculinized identity. It would be interesting to observe the changes this may have brought along in post accord Colombia, particularly for those who are now performing motherhood, a role which is traditionally ascribed to women.

### *Militarized Femininity*

Enloe (2000) emphasizes the need for attention to ideas about femininity in the militaries, instead of only the need for women as flesh and blood creatures. She particularly refers to femininity in terms of women companions, not in terms of women soldiers. She speaks about how the militarizing of femininity became important through the example of military wives: *“A woman’s wifely femininity, as a result, is valued by military officials only insofar as it enhances militarized masculinity. Femininity and wifeliness must not be permitted to interfere with or dilute the male bonding that remains the preferred glue holding together military units.”* Here it becomes clear that femininity is desired as long as it serves as an advantage to men, and the military in general. Wifeliness is undesired if it weakens the military structure.

Enloe (1993), also talks about women as soldiers as she argues that, after women soldiers started to enter combat zones during the Gulf War in 1991, female soldiers in the United States army received a large amount of media attention, which is disproportionate to the rather small amount of women in the United States army (p. 202). She argues that the increase of women’s participation in militaries came hand in hand with extraordinary political salience of the idea of femininity. In her opinion this is not solely particular to the United States, but it has been observed in many other societies as well: *“When the state’s military – or an insurgent military aspiring to replace the state – comes to rely on women inside its uniformed ranks, that military provokes wide public concern about the meaning and uses of femininity. This provocation, in turn, makes the content and function of masculinity more problematic”* (Enloe, 1993: 203). Something similar occurred in the FARC: the entry of women soldiers came along with having to deal with their femininity. According to Enloe, women who started to enter militaries generated a lot of (disproportional) attention to the role of women soldiers and the use of femininity. The entry of ‘femininity’ into military structures can, according to her, be considered ‘problematic’ to the dominant masculine character of militaries. This is where militarized femininity becomes important.

In her book *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link*, Enloe (2016) mentions that there is not one femininity that is being militarized. When she refers to the US militarization of Japan she says that *“...the militarizing transformations of the ideas, hopes, aspirations, fears, and work of diverse women”* (p. 157). Hereby she stresses the diversity of women and the diversity of femininities which are being militarized: *“If we are not curious about the complex workings of femininity in particular women’s lives, we will not be able to reliably explain why and how the subtle process of militarization occurs – or is reversed”* (ibid.: 157). If we are ignorant to the differences between women’s femininity that is being militarized, we will be unable to understand how the militarization takes place. We therefore have to take the daily experiences of women seriously as it “comes in more than one form” (Enloe, 2006: 155). We should be receptive to “diverse femininities being militarized separately but often simultaneously” (ibid.: 155). The women that enter militaries have different types of femininities because of their different lives and different backgrounds. It is important to be aware of those while studying militarized femininity. This is also applicable to the FARC, where we can observe female combatants who have different backgrounds, education and likely also have different perceptions of femininity.

Enloe (2000) furthermore stressed that most government policy makers use women soldiers only in the way that is beneficial for them. Women as soldiers are only ‘desired’ when they *“simultaneously would serve the military’s own operational goals and sustain the culture of militarized masculinity”* (ibid.: 263). Hereby women are being used in particular ways where they have a “perpetuated and respectable brand of femininity” but to “be mannish” is considered to be bad, to be a “defiler of femininity” where you offend not only femininity but masculinity as well (ibid.: 263). It becomes clear that, in Enloe’s eyes, being a woman soldier means having to adopt a certain femininity which is beneficial for the

military and which respects both femininity and masculinity. This is a crucial argument for the theory of militarized femininity.

To continue, Sjoberg's research has particularly focused on militarized femininity through the stories about women soldiers and their femininity which started to be diffused after their entry in militaries. Sjoberg (2007) stresses that women were traditionally seen as subject to militaries instead of participating in them. For that reason, the relationship that Enloe makes in 2000, between women and the US military, that of women soldiers, is a rather new story (p. 84). According to Sjoberg (2007) this is where the 'political salience' that Enloe describes took the shape of 'militarized femininities' which are "*stories about women's roles as soldiers told on the basis of their gender*" (p. 82). She adds to this that "*Women soldiers were not 'soldiers' but 'women soldiers'; their gender marked their identity on the battlefield*" (ibid.: 83). The increase of the amount of women in the military came along with a significant increase in the coverage of these women soldiers as well, just as Enloe (1993) argued above.

Sjoberg (2007) distinguishes three developments in militarized femininity in the United States: "*Increasing sophistication of the ideal image of the woman soldiers, stories of militarized femininity constructed in opposition to the gendered enemy and evident tension between popular ideas of femininity and women's agency in violence*" (p. 83). These developments show how the attention shifted from illustrating women's entry in the military to understanding what the entry of women and their femininity signifies to the military. Sjoberg (2007) also mentions that: "*The new militarized femininity expects a woman soldier to be as capable as a male soldier, but as vulnerable as a civilian woman*" (p.93). Here she supposes that a female soldier is expected to perform the same tasks as her male counterpart, but that her vulnerability, part of her femininity, is desired. She therefore has to adopt a particular military identity that has desirable masculine as well as feminine characteristics.

In relation to that, Méndez (2012) mentions that "*...militarized femininity in the US army relies on the idea that women soldiers should be masculine, but not above femininity*" (p.33). Militarized femininity implies that women behave according to male values but that they do not completely leave behind their femininity. Méndez (2012) further understood Enloe's (1993) interpretation of militarized femininity as follows: "*Militarized femininity relies on the manipulation of women and ideas of femininity in generating dominant ideas of militarism. The presence of militarized femininity implies that some aspects of femininity are acceptable and desirable within militarized organizations*" (p.32-33). In that sense, militarized femininity is a kind of militarism that implements a control over femininity (Sjoberg, 2007: 84). Méndez (2012) adds the following: "*Just as Enloe argues that some values (strength, aggression, rationality) are necessary for militarized masculinities, so are specific feminine values associated with militarized femininity*" (p.33). Women soldiers are, through militarized femininity, guided into particular behaviour that benefits the military, and its masculinity, as a whole. There is certain behaviour that is desirable in the military, while other behaviour is not. In my understanding taking up the militarized femininity is a kind of obligation: as a woman soldier or female combatant you simply have to adopt this femininity in order to be able to join the military or the non-state armed group.

Enloe (1993) also talks about *demilitarization* of masculinity (and femininity) when war is over. She argues that it is always a problematic process and we need "*feminist monitoring as close as that required for militarization*" (p.125). Hereby she stresses that if we take women's experiences seriously, one would gain a much better understanding of the consequences of demilitarization (ibid.: 103). In addition, masculinity cannot be demilitarized equally because not all male soldiers have gone through a similar process of militarization and not all forms of militarized masculinity are identical (Enloe, 1993: 132). She uses the example of the cold war and argues that: "*The post-cold war world is being fashioned in part out of new – or freshly painted – ideas about what is natural and right for men and what is natural and good for women*" (ibid.: 252). However, she emphasizes that it may be possible that men and women will adopt the identities which they are expected to adopt, while others may not. She argues that there is hardly any information about the choices that ex-combatants or ex-soldiers make during demilitarization (ibid.: 257-259), which makes this thesis of even more relevance. I find this point, and her understanding of demilitarization, particularly relevant to apply to the FARC case since FARC combatants are demilitarized and find themselves in reincorporation. It will allow me to gain a good understanding of masculinity and femininity (by studying the gender roles) in the post-agreement setting.

Interestingly, Enloe (1993) begins her book *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War* with an anecdote about a Salvadoran ex-combatant who had her coil removed after the war was over. In fact, it was one of the first post-war acts as “...she was being urged by men in the political leadership to imagine her post-war life as one devoted to being a good mother” (p. 1). Enloe continues with other decisions that women made now that the war was over. The fact that Enloe already stressed in 1993 that motherhood was something she saw occurring among ex-combatants, makes it even more relevant to study the ‘baby boom’ phenomenon of the FARC through the lens of militarized femininity. It will allow me to understand the phenomenon as something which is not specific to post-accord Colombia, but which is likely to occur in other post-war and post-conflict settings as well.

Even though Enloe’s conceptualization of militarized femininity is based on her experiences of the United States army, I argue that this theory is applicable to non-state armed groups, such as guerrillas, and to the FARC in particular. The other scholars who have further explored this theory also demonstrate how this theory is relevant for studying the femininity of female soldiers once they enter the masculine dominated structures of militaries and non-state armed groups. In my opinion, the theory of militarized femininity is of crucial importance to understand how femininity was given shape to, experienced, and most importantly, controlled in the guerrilla. In terms of motherhood it is particularly relevant to look through the lens of militarized femininity as it allows me to observe how the sexual and reproductive health and rights of FARC combatants were controlled. While Enloe (1993) stresses that the most controversial aspect of mobilizing women is motherhood, she does not further go into depth in this topic (p.12). She does not talk about the difficulties of becoming a mother as a woman soldier, something that was particularly the case in the FARC and which I will extensively elaborate upon in this thesis. I therefore argue that the approach I take, using militarized femininity to understand how reproductivity and motherhood (as crucial parts of femininity were controlled), is therefore very relevant. An important side note is that many women soldiers who experience militarization do not consider it necessarily as something negative but instead consider it a liberating opportunity, something which before seemed impossible (Enloe, 2000: 129). In that sense, it could be said that there is an interesting tension between the feeling of control and the feeling of liberalisation. Lastly, militarized femininity will also help to examine to what extent FARC’s female combatants were able to challenge patriarchy and masculinity and whether they could enjoy more equal gender roles than they were used to in Colombia. This is where the theory of militarized femininity and gender performativity are clearly combined.

### Gender Performativity

The third theory of this thesis is *Gender Performativity*, which is based on the ideas of Judith Butler, an American philosopher, gender theorist and feminist. This gender theory serves as a valuable contribution to militarized femininity as it studies the performance of gender roles in post-accord Colombia by making sense of how these roles were performed in the past. It supposes that genders can take up different roles at different moments in time, that these roles can have different implications and that they can be culturally restricted and transformed. I argue that the performance of those roles in the past, as well as in the present, have been influenced by how masculinity and femininity were militarized during the guerrilla. In that sense, the two gender theories are interestingly combined.

Gender performativity can be categorized within the notion of the *Social Construction of Gender*. This notion derives from the theory of knowledge of *Social Constructionism* which, in general terms, “contends that knowledge is sustained by social processes and that knowledge and social action go together” (Young & Collin, 2004: 376). Butler’s work has been very influential in challenging assumptions which underpin the politics of identity (Lloyd, 1999: 195). She is also argued to be one of the most influential and innovative scholars in the world who deals with questions of difference and identity (Olson & Worsham, 2000: 727).

Butler builds on the ideas of Simone Beauvoir and her ideology about women being *the second sex*. Beauvoir claims that the idea of a woman is a historical and not a natural fact. She therefore makes a distinction between *sex*, which is biologically determined and *gender*, that is the “cultural interpretation or signification of that facticity” (Butler, 1998: 522). Butler argues that, in that sense, gender cannot be understood as a stable identity but should be understood as an identity that is being formed over time in which the repetition of it is crucial (Butler, 1998: 519). A gender identity is “a stylized repetition of acts” where the repetition of bodily gestures and movements constitute the particular gender identity

(Butler, 1990: 191). In that regard, Butler agrees with Beauvoir by stating that *the body* can be understood as a historical situation, which is “a manner of doing, dramatizing and reproducing a historical situation” and is therefore not a naturally given or stable identity (Butler, 1998: 521; Avoine & Tillman, 2015: 220). Thus, it is through repetition and reproductions that specific gender roles and identities can be formed and maintained.

Furthermore, Butler argues that gender identities are *performative*, which means that there is no pre-existing identity. Performativity of gender is both linguistic and theatrical and it is therefore inscribed on the *surface* of the body through particular corporeal signs and discursive means rather than an *internal part* of the body (Butler, 1990: 185; Méndez, 2012: 36). Gender can be performed through particular *acts* of gender which are not true or false, real or distorted. There is therefore not one gender reality and “gender identity is always open and incomplete” (Lloyd, 1999: 200; Butler, 1990: 192). Even though Butler mainly talks about *gender identity*, which generally refers more to how we perceive our gender internally instead of how we express this to the outside world, I find her ideas about gender identity particularly relevant to position this thesis theoretically. I argue that it is relevant to use her view on gender identities to look at gender roles in a similar way. With this I refer to the idea that women, as well as men, can take up different gender roles at different times. Gender roles are therefore not static. They are instead imposed through social values in society. With that in mind, a gender would not necessarily be linked to particular roles but gender roles can be taken up by the different sexes or genders. In that regard, Butler’s explanation of gender performativity would link to the different gender roles of ex-combatants during and after combat: the role of a *guerrillera* versus the conventional mother role. Or by taking up different roles at the same time: in combat there were also *guerrilleras* who were ‘mothers on a distance’ and therefore performed their mother role different from the conventional mother role.

Related to the different gender acts, Butler argues that gender performativity is not a fully individual matter, neither is it completely imposed or insisted on the individual. However, the gendered body does act in a space which is culturally restricted and which includes existing directives and conventions where “performing your gender wrong” implies cultural punishment or marginalization (Butler, 1988: 526). In addition, Butler argues that individuals work within the cultural norms that constitute us and that a particular performance of gender is compelled by these norms that no one chooses. With that in mind, our agency is conditioned by those norms but also limits our individual agency (Olson & Worhsam, 2000: 729). This is what according to Butler distinguishes *performance* from *performativity*: a performance<sup>9</sup> is a bounded act which turns into a performativity when it is subject to cultural norms that may limit the actor (Butler in Méndez, 2012: 38). I interpret this particular idea of Butler as follows: a gender identity is not solely constituted by individuals, but it is the result of a collective process which occurs in a space that is bounded by powerful existing cultural and social norms and ideas. With this in mind, individuals may feel pressure that they should perform their gender according to those social norms and ideas since they may alternatively be confronted with *social punishment*. I find this idea relevant for the gender roles that ex-combatants perform during and after conflict. During the guerrilla these roles were likely influenced by the militarized structure (and its militarized femininity) that was dominant. Outside the guerrilla these roles may be performed according to the cultural and social norms of the larger community. It is therefore particularly interesting to depart from this viewpoint when studying the motherhood and the recent conventional mother role of female ex-combatants during reincorporation in post-accord Colombia.

Since, according to Butler (1988: 520), gender identity is not a “seamless identity”, gender identities can also transform. This *gender transformation* refers to the repeating of different acts as the consequence of a sort of failure or deformity of the repetition of the substantial grounded identity (Butler, 1990: 192). I would like to take this idea of the possibility of transforming gender, the transgression of the traditional gender roles<sup>10</sup>, as an important starting point because FARC’s female combatants broke with the traditional gender roles by joining the Marxist guerrilla. In addition, the recent motherhood of

---

<sup>9</sup> An important example of performance which she constantly uses is the performance of *drag*.

<sup>10</sup> When I refer to traditional gender roles in this thesis I refer to the roles that, by larger society, are traditionally considered to be characterising men and women. Men are traditionally considered to be the breadwinners, while women are traditionally seen as the ones at home taking care of the household and the children.

these ex-combatants, the identified phenomenon which is currently occurring and which is central in this thesis, illustrates that many women give shape to their gender by performing the conventional mother role. This role differs significantly from their *guerrillera* role during combat. Here it is important to keep in mind that there were also women who already performed motherhood during conflict but did so ‘on a distance’, therefore the mother role they perform currently is significantly different from the mother role during conflict. I make sense of these different roles by drawing on both militarized femininity and on gender performativity.

Gender performativity enables me to understand whether taking up the conventional mother role has led to the performance of more traditional gender roles in reincorporation circumstances. I argue that Butler’s theory on gender performativity is of crucial importance to help answering the research questions. The connection with militarized femininity offers an interesting and alternative perspective. Militarized femininity serves to make sense of the current gender roles which FARC mothers are performing in post-accord Colombia. More importantly, militarized femininity functions to understand the particular gender performances during conflict. In that sense, gender performativity and militarized femininity interestingly complement each other.

The construction of the above mentioned theories allow for an interesting approach to a new phenomenon: the recent ‘baby boom’ and motherhood of FARC ex-combatants after decades of armed combat. This construction departs from post-insurgency, which focuses on the importance of studying relations in the past (the insurgency) to make sense of the accommodations and transformations in the present (reincorporation). By using the combination of the two gender theories (militarized femininity and gender performativity), this thesis offers an interesting gendered approach on post-insurgency. This approach is certainly crucial for making sense of such a gendered phenomenon during reincorporation: the recent motherhood. I therefore consider the theoretical construction a very interesting tool for studying motherhood in post-accord Colombia.

### Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to gain insights into how female FARC ex-combatants are shaping and experiencing their motherhood during their reincorporation in post-accord Colombia. I will be able to offer a perspective on reincorporation from a social and relational point of view, by shedding light on this recent motherhood. Through the use of the theories of post-insurgency, militarized femininity and gender performativity and the collected qualitative data in Colombia, I aim to answer the following research questions that I have formulated for this thesis.

#### **Main research question**

*How do FARC ex-combatants experience and give shape to their motherhood during the reincorporation process and how does this reconfigure their gender roles in post-accord Colombia?*

#### **Sub-research questions**

1. What were the reasons for FARC ex-combatants to become mothers in post-accord Colombia?
2. How do FARC women experience and give shape to their motherhood during reincorporation?
3. How does the motherhood of FARC ex-combatants reconfigure their gender roles in post-accord Colombia?

### 3. Methodology

This chapter includes a clear description of how the research was conducted and how the fieldwork was used to write this thesis. This chapter starts with a description of the research period and the research locations. Then I talk about the research methods and the research participants. This is followed by a description of the data analysis. This chapter also touches upon some personal reflections and the limitations of the research. In the last part I describe the differences between the two research locations (Bogota and Icononzo).

#### Research Period and Research Locations

The research was conducted through qualitative fieldwork in Colombia, where I stayed from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 2019 until the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2019. During that period I conducted ten weeks of fieldwork. This period was an interesting time to realize the research because FARC ex-combatants were finding themselves in the middle of reincorporation. At the same time the provisions of the government were coming to an end (August 2019), which strongly impacts the experiences of the ex-combatants. Only later it turned out that these provisions were extended until December 2019.

Prior to my departure to Colombia I had already established a lot of contacts with the FARC community, mainly through Julian Cortes Urquijo, PhD candidate at the Sociology of Development and Change group of Wageningen University and Research. I also contacted governmental institutions and relevant NGO's by email. For that reason I did not lose a lot of time orientating during the first weeks because I already had some important contacts and points to depart from.

The capital of Colombia, Bogota, served as the starting point for the research and as I expected, I spent most of my time there. Most governmental institutions and NGO's are situated in Bogota. Also, the collective FARC organization ECOMÚN is based in Bogota. During the first week in Bogota I mainly oriented, which was particularly useful in order to establish contacts, arrange meetings and to get familiar with the city and the research field. In the second and third week I had a lot of useful conversations and interviews with governmental institutions, the FARC community and NGO's. These allowed me to establish a solid base of contacts, such as some of the FARC mothers which I would speak with during the following weeks.

In the fourth week I managed to get an important permission to conduct my research and to start interviewing FARC mothers from a higher rank FARC ex-combatant who is particularly in charge of gender inside the FARC, Olga Lucía Marín. She confirmed that, in order to continue my research, it would be necessary to travel as soon as possible to one of the Territorial Training and Reincorporation Spaces (ETCR's) where the FARC ex-combatants are currently reincorporating. Because of security and logistical reasons I decided, in consultation with some of my informants, that it would be easiest to travel to the ETCR which is outside the town of Icononzo, in the province of Tolima. I will come back to the security issue in the section 'Limitations'.

By the end of the fifth week I travelled for one day, a trip of a total of nine hours by car, to Icononzo<sup>11</sup> with a woman working for the FARC political party. This day served as an orientation of how to organize the trip to Icononzo by myself the next week. It did not go as expected because we were unable to organize any meetings. But, I was able to get some first impressions which would make it easier for me to prepare myself correctly. A few days later, approximately one month after the start of my research, I travelled with a car of the FARC delegation to Icononzo. Upon my arrival someone from ECOMÚN introduced me to the leaders of the ETCR, who arranged my stay and some further contacts. I spent a total of eight nights in the ETCR (12<sup>th</sup> of February – 20<sup>th</sup> of February). During that period I did not leave the ETCR, except from one occasion where I visited a civil woman who works closely with the ex-combatants. I stayed in a 'normal house' between the ex-combatants, I had meals at the community restaurant and I spent my free time with some of the teachers who were also coming from Bogota.

---

<sup>11</sup> The ETCR is called Antonio Nariño but by most people (particularly outside the ETCR) referred to as Icononzo. Therefore, throughout this thesis I will use 'Icononzo' to refer to the ETCR Antonio Nariño.

After my trip to Icononzo, it was still unsure if I would go back or if I would stay in Bogota to continue the research. I finally decided that going back was slightly complicated in terms of logistics. But more important, I was convinced that staying just a few days more in Icononzo would not necessarily result in more data collection and I therefore decided to stay in Bogota. During the last three weeks I had more interviews with FARC mothers in Bogota, higher rank FARC ex-combatants and NGO's. These allowed me to reflect upon the data collection that I had done during the previous weeks.

### Methods & Research Participants

For this thesis the use of ethnography has been of crucial importance. Madden (2017) argues that: “*ethnographers are social scientists who undertake research and writing about groups of people by systematically observing and participating (to a greater or lesser degree) in the lives of the people they study*” (p. 1). He furthermore points out that being in the “same social space” as the participants of the research is central (ibid.).

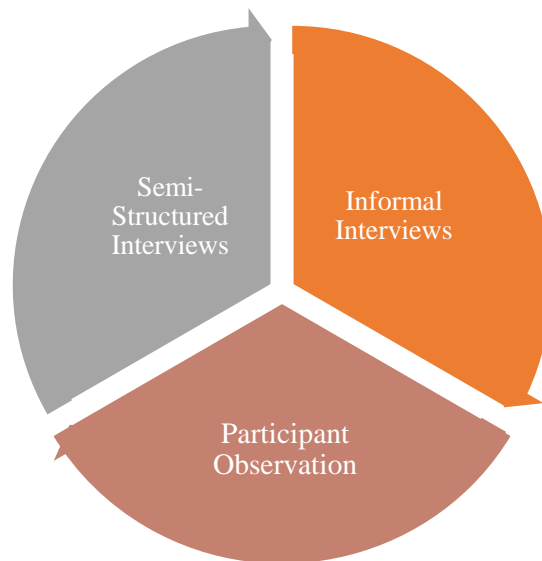


Figure 2: The combination of methods used during the research

In order to conduct the ethnographic research I used a combination of various methods (figure 2): semi-structured interviews, informal interviews and participant observation. The research participants were mainly collected through the *snowball effect* and through contact over *WhatsApp*, which turned out to be much easier for establishing contact and arranging meetings than using email or phone calls. The most important method for the research was the semi-structured interviews. These interviews were based on an interview guide I designed during the research. The conversations took between thirty minutes and two hours. The informal interviews mainly served as a guidance tool at the beginning of my research, as well as during my time in Icononzo. The participant observation method was particularly applied during my stay in Icononzo because I was finding myself inside the FARC community. This experience allowed me to gain a lot of informal insights and to learn a lot about the reincorporation of FARC ex-combatants by observing how daily life looks like for them. In Bogota this method was more difficult to apply because research participants are diffused throughout this metropolitan city.

### FARC Mothers

During the ten weeks of fieldwork I conducted 12 semi-structured interviews with FARC mothers<sup>12</sup>, my main research target. These FARC mothers had a lot of differences in terms of time in the guerrilla, partners and daily activities: some work, for example in the political party, one of the productive projects or have a job outside the FARC, others are still studying to finish primary school, high school or are

---

<sup>12</sup> Throughout this thesis I refer to the FARC mothers by using their first names. Sometimes I also explicitly say she is a FARC mother. I talk about ‘other ex-combatant(s)’ or ‘higher rank ex-combatant(s)’ when I speak about the ex-combatants who are not recent mothers. When I refer to an expert, the institution is mentioned behind the name or it is described in the following phrase.



pursuing a university degree. What all of them have in common is that their children are all between half a year and two years old, which means that the majority of them got pregnant towards the end of the peace process and up to one year after the peace agreement was signed.

I conducted six interviews in Bogota, of which five were recorded. In some occasions I visited the mothers at home where they were together with their babies. This allowed me to gain extra insights into how their life in post-accord Colombia looks like. Even though the presence of the babies was sometimes distracting, because they were on their mothers' lap or being breastfed, I did consider their presence as a very added value. The way they were interacting with their babies indirectly gave me a lot of insights into how they are shaping and experiencing motherhood. In other occasions I met the FARC mothers in public spaces in different parts of Bogota. One of the FARC mothers I interviewed in Bogota is currently residing in Cuba, but she was staying in Bogota for half a year at the moment I interviewed her. Another interview with a FARC mother was conducted over Skype as I was unable to visit her at her house.

The other six interviews with FARC mothers were conducted in Icononzo, where they are going through their reincorporation process. The large majority of the semi-structured interviews with the FARC mothers in Icononzo took place inside their houses in the ETCR. One FARC mother was of crucial importance as she introduced me to various other FARC mothers. With her I spent a few hours during my first days to get to know other FARC mothers. Later I would later be visiting them and asking if they would have time to talk with me. This approach turned out to work very well since I was lacking further guidance from the direction of the ETCR, something I will come back to below. During those interviews the babies of the FARC mothers were present and the mothers were often distracted by them. The interviews were not recorded because I strongly felt that asking to record the conversations would limit the conversation and its spontaneity.

When I spoke with the FARC mothers about their experiences with motherhood in post-accord Colombia, they reacted very positive in general. They seemed very pleased and generally surprised to answer questions that are related to their personal feelings, experiences and dreams which come along with motherhood and reincorporation. This gave me the impression that this might be something they usually do not reflect upon and do not talk about with other mothers, friends, their partners or with outsiders in particular. During my time in Icononzo, I was often witnessing meetings between mothers, but the conversations were mostly about how the babies are doing, how old they are, if they already walk, if they eat well and so on. When the FARC mothers spoke about themselves it was mostly about if they are studying or working for one of the productive projects for example. This, combined with their slightly surprised reaction to my particular questions, gave the impression that they maybe do not talk much about their personal feelings and experiences related to motherhood. However, here I must keep in mind my role as an outsider and my relatively short amount of time in Icononzo.

In addition, at the beginning of the fieldwork I was a bit hesitant to start talking with FARC mothers about motherhood in conflict. I was thinking it would maybe be too confronting, too sensitive or they were maybe tired of answering these kind of questions. Typically the FARC mothers themselves started talking about what it implied to be a woman in the FARC in terms of sexual and reproductive rights. I was surprised and happy that they were sharing these experiences with me while motherhood in conflict became more visual, clear and real. Some women shared very personal stories about why having children was not an option, about abortions and about contraception.

#### *Other Research Participants & Methods*

Apart from the FARC mothers I also spoke with five (higher rank) ex-combatants in Bogota. With two of them I spoke twice, which was very beneficial for my research as it allowed me to reflect upon the findings that I had been able to collect until then. Approximately half of the conversations with those ex-combatants was informal and not recorded, while the other half was semi-structured and recorded. Especially the two conversations I had with Olga Lucía Marín, who was a commander in the guerrilla and who continues to be key in FARC's gender discourse, turned out to be very important for my research. As I mentioned above, she had to approve my research, which seemed more difficult at the beginning than it was in practice: she was very helpful and willing to collaborate. In fact, she provided some important contacts which allowed me to continue my research. She also provided me with very useful insights into the role of gender during the guerrilla, as well as in post-accord Colombia.

Besides the interviews with the FARC mothers and other FARC ex-combatants, I conducted 12 semi-structured interviews with government institutions and NGO's in Bogota. These were very important in order to orientate myself during the first weeks of my research. They were also particularly important in the last weeks because I was able to reflect upon my findings through those conversations. They offered me a different perspective as an alternative to FARC's discourse. Some of the institutions and NGO's I spoke with were: the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP), The Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the National Council of Reincorporation (CNR) (FARC component), the NGO Geneva Call (focused on the protection of civilians in armed conflict) and the NGO ASODEMUC (Association of Women for Peace and the Defense of the Rights of Colombian Women). The majority of these conversations was recorded.

I have aimed to incorporate the many ideas and opinions about motherhood in conflict and about the reasons of female FARC ex-combatants to become mothers in post-agreement Colombia. It became very clear that while some experts do not always have a direct connection with the topic, everyone has opinions and thoughts about it. I encountered many similarities, tensions and differences between the FARC mothers, higher rank FARC ex-combatants and outside experts. The FARC mothers are the ones living their motherhood personally, while others have only witnessed it and have opinions based on an outside point of view. Especially in terms of how motherhood was shaped and experienced during conflict, it is interesting to incorporate different viewpoints. This is a sensitive topic because of the stories about forced contraception and forced abortion in the FARC. Some of the practices are considered to be illegal in Colombia, for which they are yet to be prosecuted by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP). This fact may have influenced the answers of FARC ex-combatants with regards to the more sensitive aspects of motherhood during conflict.

Informal interviews have also been of crucial importance to the research. At the beginning of my research, the informal conversations allowed me to become familiar with the research topic and the research locations. Those conversations also provided me with a lot of other useful contacts through the snowball effect. During my time in Icononzo I had many informal interviews with ex-combatants as well as with FARC mothers. The many ex-combatants I spoke with always offered me *tinto* (black coffee) or a juice while I was visiting them in their houses. The informal conversations turned out to be of great importance in Icononzo because they managed to keep the spontaneity between me and the ex-combatants while they still provided me with a lot of information.

The last method I have used during the research is participant observation. I was mainly applying this method in Icononzo as I was freely moving myself around the zone, visiting different houses, places and participating in the daily life of the ex-combatants. One evening I helped baking bread in the community restaurant, I visited the different projects in the zones a few times and I had various meals in the house of the FARC mother who helped me to provide the contacts of other FARC mothers. One day was particularly special as she brought me to a birthday party of a child in the ETCR. I was able to enjoy a delicious lunch surrounded by FARC mothers and their babies.

During my time in Bogota I was not able to do a lot of participant observation for the reason that there was not one place in particular where I conducted the research. The FARC mothers, governmental institutions and NGO's are spread throughout Bogota. However, as I mentioned above, when I visited the FARC mothers inside the houses I was able to gain a lot of insights into how their daily life looks like. I could also observe how the contact with their babies is like. During the conversations with FARC mothers in public spaces, I asked them if they could show me a picture of the baby and if they could tell me what I could see on the picture. The way they were speaking about their baby provided me with a lot of insights into the emotions they experience.

Besides the semi-structured interviews and informal interviews in Bogota, I also attended two film screenings of the documentary *Nunca Invisibles, Mujeres Farianas, Adiós a la Guerra*<sup>13</sup>, which was produced by female ex-combatants. Both screenings were followed by interesting discussions in which ex-combatants were also participating. I also visited various museums where I learned a lot about the Colombian conflict and its victims.

---

<sup>13</sup> *Nunca Invisibles, Mujeres Farianas, Adiós a la Guerra*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzmMzDwYe4Y>

## Data Analysis

During the semi-structured interviews I wrote fieldnotes down in my notebook. During some informal interviews I also wrote down some important notes, or I would write them down afterwards in order not to interrupt the spontaneity of the conversation. Furthermore, I also took note of my observations on a daily basis, especially in Icononzo. Every two weeks I reflected on the interviews and observations I had done so far and I tried to formulate some preliminary conclusions. From those conclusions I could see what information was still missing or which topics I would like to discover further. I collected all of the written fieldnotes in a document and during the fieldwork I already added some codes to those notes. I furthermore wrote my important observations, my activities as well as my very personal feelings and emotions in a diary on a daily basis.

The majority of the conversations has been audio recorded and transcribed accordingly. Obviously, this has only been done when I had asked the participant for consent. In some occasions I felt that using my recording tool would serve as an obstacle during the conversation and I therefore decided to not interrupt the conversation. In those occasions I immediately wrote down my fieldnotes after the interview so I would not forget the most important parts of the conversation. There were only very few interviews where the participant told me that he or she did not want me to record the conversation. When I use “.....” throughout this thesis I refer to a direct quote from one of the transcribed conversations. When I use ‘.....’, it means that the conversation was not recorded nor transcribed. I have therefore formulated these ‘quotes’ according to my own fieldnotes.

When I finalized the transcribing after my return from Colombia, I could start the coding. I first did the coding manually on the printed files of the fieldnotes and transcribed interviews. Then I put those codes in the digital documents and based on that I could make a coding scheme where the mostly used codes came up. Here I organized the codes per interviewed category: FARC mothers (Bogota versus Icononzo), other FARC ex-combatants and experts. I organized the codes into different categories, which resulted in the different chapters of this thesis. Hereby I used a mix of previously determined categories (based on my sub-questions) and categories based on the interviews.

In order to protect the FARC ex-combatants I have spoken with, all of their names have been changed in this thesis. Only the name of Olga Lucía Marín was not changed because she plays an important role in the gender discourse of the FARC, and I therefore thought it was crucial to recognize her in this thesis, with her permission to do so. I have also changed two of the names of the experts I have spoken with because they explicitly told me not to use their own name. The FARC mothers and other ex-combatants told me that they do not mind if I would use their names because they are still using their *nom de guerre* in post-agreement Colombia. I thought this was an interesting fact which demonstrates that the FARC continues to play a crucial role in their life during reincorporation. They do not identify themselves with their official name that is registered on their identification card. Also, the fact that we mainly had ‘positive conversations’ about motherhood, where we hardly spoke about very controversial or sensitive topics, seems to have played a role in the fact that the ex-combatants did not mind if I would use their names. Hence I am convinced that confidentiality, privacy and security are of greater importance and therefore I still decided to change all of the names of the FARC mothers in this thesis.

## Personal Reflections

The fact that I speak fluent Spanish has been very beneficial for the research as I was able to communicate in the native language of my research participants. Of course, some participants speak clearer than others, but in general there was no language barrier. In some cases I may not have understood what they meant exactly, but I was able to easily ask for clarification. My Spanish skills also made it easier to make a connection with my research participants and to gain their trust. In addition, it allowed me to improvise and to have informal moments during the semi-structured interviews.

During the entire research I have been very aware of my position as a young, Western, female researcher travelling to Colombia doing research about this topic in the context of reincorporation. It soon turned out that there was a lot of frustration with the current reincorporation process, which from time to time made me feel uncomfortable with my position as a researcher. I was ‘just’ there to conduct research and I could not offer possibilities to the problems they were, and still are, facing on a daily basis. It was

therefore sometimes a struggle to legitimize the research: why I was doing this, why I went all the way to Colombia and why I was interested in talking with the FARC.

On the other hand, I think that my position as a non-Colombian was also very beneficial because I was in that sense 'neutral' and open to all kinds of stories: from the government, NGO's and the FARC. I am aware that complete neutrality is impossible in research but I think it has helped that I am an outsider in Colombia and I am not marked by its history. Because I did not speak with victims of the armed conflict, it was easier to be intrigued by the stories of the FARC ex-combatants. However, I tried to reflect on those and to keep my neutrality as much as possible.

Another struggle I had when I was doing the research was something I had already expected to be confronted with: how to find research participants who would be willing to talk with me. I noticed that the FARC has been studied a lot since it has demobilized. Especially the role of gender and women inside the FARC turned out to be a very interesting research topic. I sometimes felt uncomfortable as I realized I was clearly not the first one wanting to talk with this research group. This was particularly the case with the FARC mothers, I did not really encounter this struggle with governmental institutions or NGO's. I was sometimes overwhelmed with this uncomfortable feeling as I tried to put myself in their position. I dealt with this by clearly keeping in mind the additional value of my research and the positive approach that I was taking. I also ensured to keep contact with my research participants and to inform them about the progress of my research.

In addition, it was a conscious decision to study motherhood, which is a topic generally related to positive feelings. Therefore I mostly avoided to talk about controversial themes. I focused instead on the very personal experiences of motherhood during reincorporation. Only in rare occasions I was confronted with strong emotions of FARC mothers. I think I managed to deal with this correctly and let them explain their emotions. Furthermore, it turned out that this positive approach was beneficial in terms of FARC mothers who were willing to talk with me. In fact, one FARC mother told me that she had never spoken with journalists or researchers because she did not want to, but when I told her that we would be talking about how it is like to be a mother, she was happy to share her experiences.

### Limitations

I have identified a few limitations which I was unable to overcome during the research. Most of these limitations were caused by outside factors and were therefore largely outside my control.

Firstly, since the armed conflict in Colombia is still present in some areas, I have been unable to travel to these regions. However, the large majority of the ETCR's and FARC ex-combatants find themselves there. I had to respect the Dutch travel advise for Colombia, which meant that my research was somehow limited. I was only allowed to visit the ETCR of Icononzo and one other ETCR in the same province (Tolima), while there are 26 ETCR's in the entire country. I have therefore received a rather one-sided understanding of how life looks like inside an ETCR. Icononzo has received a lot of interventions and help from the government, international organizations and NGO's because it is the closest ETCR to Bogota. The reality in Icononzo is for that reason different than the reality in many other ETCR's.

The second limitation is related to the previous point: Icononzo has received a lot of attention and help as well as journalists and researchers. This means that Icononzo is slightly over studied, which has resulted in resistance of participating in researches. While there was a lot of willingness from the FARC community in Bogota to participate in my research and to help me out with the questions I had, the willingness was strongly lacking in Icononzo. The leaders of the zone were very busy and basically had no time to speak with me. I was motivated to organize a focus group or a workshop but it turned out that there was no space or no interest in this. Sometimes I waited a few days for certain meetings which never happened. I realized that my research was not one of their priorities. At some point I decided to move on and to go back to Bogota, particularly because of this reason.

This limitation links to the third limitation: the rather short research period. If I would have had more time to conduct the research I maybe would have been able to stay for a longer period of time in Icononzo. This would have been beneficial for the trust of my research participants. I could potentially have organized the focus group or workshop in consultation with the leaders of the zone. However, I slightly doubt if this would have served as a solution to the fact that Icononzo is over studied. But,

having stayed in Colombia for a longer period of time would have enabled me to also visit the second ETCR in Tolima which I was allowed to go to. This would have facilitated different and additional insights into the reincorporation inside an ETCR. Furthermore, more time would have allowed me to speak to more FARC mothers and to potentially also include more stories of FARC fathers, which would have provided me with a different view.

#### *Bogota versus Icononzo*

Reincorporation was, at the beginning of the process, particularly taking place in the ETCR's, but it gradually started to take place in spaces outside ETCR's: rural areas, towns and cities. More and more ex-combatants have left the ETCR's. They have continued their reincorporation in their preferred areas. I therefore decided that I wanted to conduct the research in an ETCR and in a space outside, to have a more complete impression of the reincorporation process and the differences between the experiences in different places.

For the purpose of this thesis, it is crucial to stress upon some of the most important differences between both research locations: Bogota and Icononzo (ETCR). Some ex-combatants live outside ETCR's because they are unsatisfied with their reincorporation process there, they wish to be reunited with family members or they have job opportunities outside the ETCR. Some have also moved to other urban or rural areas because of their partners' jobs or because of work in the political party (particularly the case in Bogota). Whether the FARC has a particular policy of deciding which ex-combatants should live in which location is still unclear to me.

The differences between the two research locations are relevant to mention because these differences also implied that I handled my research differently in each location. Especially since the settings of these two places are significantly different in terms of size, mobility, collectiveness, living circumstances and opportunities, the experiences of FARC mothers with regards to their recent motherhood are different in both locations. This should therefore be clearly kept in mind during the analysis of their experiences of motherhood and reincorporation throughout the entire thesis.

#### *Bogota*

Bogota, with a total of more than eight million inhabitants, is mostly unknown to FARC ex-combatants because most of them were born and raised in the more rural areas of Colombia. The FARC ex-combatants live individually, mostly with their partners or family, in all kind of places throughout Bogota. The ex-combatants who are connected to the political party FARC meet each other in *La Sede* (the headquarters of the FARC political party) in an anonymous building close to the centre of Bogota. I also visited these headquarters during various occasions.

Bogota is also in terms of mobility a very different setting. When I was meeting FARC mothers or other ex-combatants in Bogota for interviews, I usually moved around by public transport or taxi to meet them in coffeeshops or at home. It generally took me between thirty minutes and one hour to get to an interview, while in Icononzo everything is at walking distance. In addition, in Bogota the FARC identity is mostly hidden for security reasons. Therefore, meeting with ex-combatants in public spaces was sometimes challenging for me because I did not want to put them in a dangerous or uncomfortable position. For that reason I always let it up to the ex-combatant to decide where we should be meeting.

#### *Icononzo (ETCR)*

Icononzo is a completely different scenery than Bogota. It is one of the safest ETCR's and the closest to Bogota, which means it receives a lot of attention and interventions from outside parties. In approximately 3,5 hours by car you get from Bogota to the town of Icononzo. Then it takes another 40-45 minutes by motor or car to get to the ETCR outside town. There are a few four wheel drives of the FARC available in the ETCR. There is usually one driver and one security guard (also FARC ex-combatants) who drive these cars and who drive the leaders of the ETCR around the area or to other places in Colombia. Some ex-combatants have a motor in order to easily get to Icononzo for example, other ex-combatants are dependent on the bus which only drives a few times per day back and forth between a place close to the ETCR and the town.

The ETCR is located in a mountainous area where it can be quite warm during the day when its sunny, but it get colds during a rainy day or at night. To get from one place to another in Icononzo you have to

walk up and down the hills. Icononzo is separated into four different *comunas* (zones), with each zone having its communal building that previously was used as a community kitchen. Besides approximately 200 ex-combatants, Icononzo, like many other ETCR's, has also received *civiles* (people who are not ex-combatants: 'civilians') in its zone: partners, parents, or children of ex-combatants have moved into the area. While every person or family has its own house with basic facilities, life in Icononzo is still very collective since bathrooms and washing facilities are shared and most people know and greet each other. Besides that, ex-combatants in Icononzo get along with the civilians outside the ETCR quite well. They even work together on some agricultural projects, in contrast to other ETCR's where ex-combatants are threatened by civilians or paramilitaries.

In Icononzo there are agricultural projects, a tailoring project and a small artisanal beer brewery of *La Roja*. Besides these projects there is a community restaurant where ex-combatants as well as visitors such as the ARN, UN and other outsiders can have breakfast, lunch and takeaway dinner for a reasonable price. This restaurant is run by a few women who are ex-combatants and a woman who is civilian. The restaurant is also a meeting point for (international) organizations or individuals as it is rather close to the entrance. During the time I spent in Icononzo there were regularly meetings between the ARN, the UN and the military. In fact, the military gets along with the ex-combatants in Icononzo very well and they like to buy their lunch at the restaurant, something no one could have imagined a few years ago when these parties were fighting each other. Because I did not have cooking facilities in my room and I was unable to easily move outside the ETCR to go grocery shopping in the town of Icononzo, I was having my breakfast and lunch in this restaurant.

However, there is *La Tienda* (the shop) where basic household and cooking items, drinks and snacks are sold. *La Tienda* is also the place where some ex-combatants gather during the afternoon to have some *Poker* (Colombian beer) while chatting, playing *rana*, *tejo* (typical Colombian games), or billiard at one of the pool tables, while enjoying loud Colombian or *guerrilleros* music. There is also a small cafeteria where the women who work in the restaurant during the day are selling hamburgers, *empanadas* or sausages at night. I spent some time there having some snacks or drinking a beer while chatting with the ex-combatants. Another cooperative of ex-combatants in Icononzo is a small hostel where visitors pay 25.000 Colombian pesos (almost seven euros) per night to stay in a shared room. I did not stay in the hostel since I would be the only one sleeping there and it gets quite lonely during the night.

I felt very safe during my entire time in Icononzo and I walked around alone in the dark, something I tried to avoid in Bogota. I stayed in a 'normal house' in a 'row' with other ex-combatants. These are very simple houses, made of plasterboard, where it gets cold during the night. In the ETCR there is one house available where ex-combatants have access to a WIFI network. Here they often come together to make homework or to watch online videos. During my time in Icononzo there were classes provided for those who had, prior to entering the FARC, not yet finished primary school or *bachillerato* (high school). Friends I made in Icononzo shared pictures with me over Whatsapp of the graduation that took place at the beginning of April. Besides these facilities, there is a colourful house available that used to serve, and could be serving, as a kindergarten, there are sports courts, community gardens and a small building for the doctor who visits the ETCR various times a month. This 'clinic' was accorded upon in the peace agreement and is present in other ETCR's as well.



*Figure 3: part of the ETCR*



*Figure 4: part of the ETCR*



*Figure 5: FARC's ideology paintings*



*Figure 6: female FARC combatant painting*



*Figure 7: collective memory painting*



Figure 8: tailoring project



Figure 9: La Roja in the small artisanal brewery



Figure 10: aloe vera garden run by female ex-combatants



Figure 11: sports court



Figure 12: 'my' house



Figure 13: the room



Figure 14: breakfast at the community restaurant



Figure 15: lunch at the house of an ex-combatant



Figure 16: evening snack at the cafeteria in La Tienda

The above pictures illustrate some of my impressions during my stay in Icononzo in February 2019. figure 3 and figure 4 show parts of the ETCR in the mountainous area with beautiful views. Figure 5, figure 6 and figure 7 demonstrate a couple of the paintings on houses in the ETCR, there were many of these throughout the entire ETCR: FARC's ideology is clearly present. Figure 8, figure 9 and figure 10 show some of the productive projects in Icononzo: the tailoring project, the small artisanal beer brewery and an aloe vera community garden run by female ex-combatants. Figure 11 shows one of the sports court on a Saturday afternoon when both female and male ex-combatants sometimes play volleyball. Figure 12 and figure 13 illustrate the house and the room where I was staying. I spent eight nights with lots of blankets during the night. Figure 14, figure 15 and figure 16 show some of the meals I had during my stay. Figure 14 is the typical Colombian breakfast: eggs, arepa and caldo (soup). Figure 15 shows a simple lunch which an ex-combatant made for me: sopa con pasta (soup with pasta). Figure 16 is an evening snack that I bought at the cafeteria in La Tienda: a sausage and a potato.



## 4. FARC Women in Conflict, the Peace Process, Peace Agreement and Post-Accord Colombia

This chapter provides a contextualization of the FARC mothers. It does so by elaborating on the armed conflict and the FARC, the role of women during the armed conflict, the peace process, as well as their presence in the peace agreement and in post-accord Colombia. I aim to provide insights into why women started to join the guerrilla and what tasks they performed. This is followed by information about the peace process and the peace agreement, where the role of FARC women and gender is highlighted. This chapter lastly provides insights into post-accord Colombia, where I touch upon the reincorporation process, the current situation and challenges.

### The Armed Conflict & The FARC

*“What began forty-two years ago as a war waged by Marxist revolutionaries against an exclusive political system has devolved into a bloody struggle over resources; military, paramilitary, guerrillas, domestic elites, and multinational actors vie for control of this resource rich country. In the struggle, all groups have committed serious human rights violations; the vast majority of the war casualties are unarmed civilians, and the escalating violence and fear for one’s life have prompted massive internal and cross-border displacement.”*

Theidon (2009: 6)

The above quote of Theidon (2009) summarizes the core of the Colombian civil war from her perspective. Colombia’s civil war is the longest armed conflict in the western hemisphere. It has led to the involvement of many different parties such as the Colombian state, guerrillas, paramilitaries, domestic elites and multinational actors. According to the Unique Victim Registry (RUV), in 2017 there were 8.376.463 victims of the armed conflict. Of this amount almost one million persons have been killed, almost 35 thousands have been kidnapped and over 7 million are internally displaced persons. Victims have been tortured, disappeared and illegally recruited by armed groups (Portafolio, 2017). This long-lasting conflict has experienced very grave human rights violations (Theidon, 2009: 6). In order to understand the Colombian armed conflict and how the FARC was established, it is crucial to understand Colombia’s violent past.

Colombia has a long history of violence which goes back to before *La Violencia*, a ten years long violent conflict between the liberal party and the conservative party of Colombia, which started in 1948 and ended by 1958. It gave rise to paramilitaries, guerrilla groups and armed self-defence groups which were fighting against each other. One peasant guerrilla that arose from the liberal uprising was Manuel Marulanda Velez (*Tirofijo*), who later became the main commander of the FARC. When *La Violencia* was brought to an official end, the land disputes, which were a cause of the conflict, were not yet resolved and therefore violence continued in Colombia’s countryside. During the decade long conflict approximately 300.000 people have been killed (Molano, 2007).

### The FARC

The FARC was established in 1964 after the ‘Independent Republic of Marquetalia’, a communist commune that was established during *La Violencia*, was attacked by the Colombian government. The survivors of this attack regrouped and five months later declared themselves the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) at their first conference under the lead of *Tirofijo* (Bargent, 2014). The oldest and most powerful Marxist-Leninist guerrilla movement of Latin America, with its roots in rural self-defence groups, was officially established and would remain intact for 53 years (1964 – 2017) (Saskiewicz, 2005: 2). While it was a relatively small guerrilla at the start, it grew significantly in numbers as well as in influence (Theidon, 2009: 7). Between 1970 and 1982 the FARC grew from a small movement of approximately 500 persons to a small army of 3.000 combatants (Molano, 2007). The increase continued during the years and has eventually resulted in the disarmament of a total of approximately 10.015 FARC combatants after the signing of the peace agreement in November 2016 (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2017).

In the late 1970's and 1980's the FARC started to be involved in drug trafficking. The drug trafficking, as well as drug trade protection, extortion and kidnapping, served the FARC to finance itself. This made an enormous growth possible during those decades (Theidon, 2009: 7). It soon turned out that drugs (coca) was the most profitable commodity. The FARC therefore started to demand a "higher financial contribution" from the fronts which were rich in coca (for the production of cocaine) (Labrousse, 2005: 177). It is estimated that during the first years of 2000, the annual "drug-related revenue" was around 300 million dollars a year, which represented 40 to 60% of FARC's total funding (Labrousse, 2005: 179).

An important shift in the FARC was the Seventh National Conference in 1982 where the FARC presented its Strategic Plan (1982-1990). This plan included an enormous increase of the organization through the initial goal of the expansion to 48 fronts. Eventually, the FARC grew from seven fronts to 42 between 1978 and 1986 (Labrousse, 2005: 177). While the FARC was initially dominantly entrenching itself in rural and isolated areas of Colombia, the splitting of fronts occurred. This split took place in order to recruit combatants and to protect themselves from enemies. Also, in this way the FARC could establish itself in middle-sized cities and areas rich in coca, coals and oil (ibid.).

The expansion of fronts did, besides an increase in funding, result in an increase of manpower as well. The FARC expanded to its peak of over 20.000 combatants by 2002. These combatants were divided into 70 fronts which were organized in seven regional blocks. The majority of the recruited FARC combatants comes from a predominantly rural and peasant background which included women, 'younger recruits', peasants and combatants with a relatively low education level (Saab & Taylor, 2009: 459-460). Saab and Taylor (2009) argue that even though the FARC initiated an "urban bombing campaign", the FARC has been unsuccessful in the attempt of establishing a strong urban ground and therefore remained predominantly rural (p. 459).

The FARC also had a significant amount of members who were not active in the armed combat: *Las Milicias* (The Militias). These were finding themselves in small towns and cities. They were part of a political and military mechanism of the FARC which have a partisan and political life, they did their work, they lived with their families and they have not realized a commitment to membership. They were not the same as guerrilleros (members participating in armed combat) because they did not fulfil FARC's military career. They lived a sedentary life while the guerrillero is characterized by migration.

*"The FARC used the drug trade to become institutionally wealthy; this institutional wealth was used to further its political objectives. The FARC was able to leverage the support of the local population into territorial control, which led to economic growth, and then military strength".*

Cook (2011: 24)

Apart from the military force of the FARC in the communities where it moved into, the FARC also provided state-like functions and public services to the local populations. These served to gain support of the local population, as Cook (2011) mentions above. The FARC was in charge of the collection of taxes, solving of disputes, the provision of health and educational services and the improvement of the infrastructure such as roads. In that sense, the FARC took over the role of the state as it further started to control issues which were related to carrying arms, violence, drug abuse, prostitution but also fishing, hunting and working hours (Cook, 2011: 23-24). This construction was particularly beneficial for the FARC as it enabled the guerrilla to expand its territory and control while the local population could benefit from the provided services.

#### Other Guerrillas & Paramilitaries

Besides the FARC, many other guerrillas and paramilitary groups arose during the armed conflict. The second largest guerrilla movement of Colombia, with between 1.000 and 2.000 combatants, is the ELN (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019). In contrast to the rural roots of the FARC, the ELN originated in university campuses from a mixture of Cuban revolutionary theory and extreme liberation theology. They eventually turned to the engagement with illegal activities (Theidon, 2009: 7). The ELN has also been active since 1964 but, in contrast to the FARC, remains in force. There have been various 'peace intentions' since July 2004, but these have so far been unsuccessful. In fact, according to the Colombian state, the ELN is responsible for the auto bomb that exploded at the police academy in Bogota in January

2019, which killed more than twenty and injured over seventy (El País, 2019). Another important guerrilla movement in the Colombian conflict has been M-19. This guerrilla was active since 1970 and became a political party (M-19 Democratic Alliance) after its demobilization in 1990. Also the EPL, which has been active since 1967, played an important role during Colombia's armed conflict.

Paramilitary groups, also called 'self-defence organizations' which started to evolve during the 1960's, have been a third actor in the Colombian conflict. These were aimed to defeat the leftist guerrillas of Colombia. According to Theidon (2009), paramilitaries assumed an important responsibility in the state-organized elimination of the guerrillas (p. 7). Spencer (2001) argues that the paramilitaries have enjoyed more popular support from society than the guerrillas have. In addition, he argues that they have been able to seriously challenge Colombia's guerrillas. Also, they have been successful where the state has not, which has caused people to see them as a possible solution to the conflict (p.1).

Colombia's paramilitaries have been generally involved in the illegal drug trafficking (mainly cocaine), which caused a new phenomenon to occur: *paramilitarismo*, which is "the transformation of paramilitary groups into an economic, social, and political force, that has infiltrated Colombian society" (Theidon, 2009: 8). This was mainly a consequence of the enormous growth in the drug trade, initially starting with marijuana and later moving to cocaine during the 1970's and 1980's. One of the most well-known and most notorious paramilitaries of Colombia is the AUC, which was active between 1997 and 2006. The demobilization of over 30.000 combatants started after the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the AUC which was signed in July 2003 (Pardo et al., 2005: 31).

### Las Guerrilleras

During the armed conflict, *las guerrilleras* have played an important role in the FARC. In 1974, ten years after the establishment of the FARC, women were officially recognized as combatants with rights and duties equal to those of their male counterpart (LIMPAL Colombia & FARC, 2018: 27). During the 80's a lot of women started to join the guerrilla because it gained increased attention through the (failed) peace negotiations with the Colombian government that were occurring at that time. As a result, the FARC has one of the highest percentages of female combatants in illegally armed groups in Colombia, namely between 20 – 40 % depending on the ranks (Herrera & Porch, 2008: 612). According to a Socioeconomic Census of the National University of Colombia in 2017, 23% of the 10.015 demobilized ex-combatants were women. These female ex-combatants are particularly from rural, indigenous and afro-Colombian backgrounds (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2017).

*"I did not want to study, I saw these women in the guerrilla and I said I want to be one of them. I want to be able to endure hunger, I want to be in combat, I want to live that experience [...]. Deep inside I wanted to be a 'guerrillera' here, which one forms in pure sacrifice."*

Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February]

The quote above of Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February], one of the FARC mothers I spoke with for this thesis, shows the reason she decided to enter the guerrilla. She was only twelve years old when she became a *guerrillera*. She was inspired by the female combatants and she did not want to go to high school like the other girls of her age. Many female combatants joined the Marxist guerrilla as girls or adolescents because of domestic violence, general insecurity, poverty or like Elena mentioned because they looked up to the female guerrillas who visited their villages (Wüstner, 2017: 15; Herrera & Porch, 2008: 616). The FARC mothers told me that they entered because family members were connected to the FARC, because of abuse, poverty, the killing of family members, domestic violence and because of being inspired by the cause. Ten of the twelve FARC mothers I formally interviewed were between 13 and 16 years old when they joined the guerrilla. Some female ex-combatants also said that they had joined the FARC after they pursued a degree. Those women have a different background, one which later turned out to be beneficial during their reincorporation in post-agreement Colombia.

The significant presence of women is also a consequence of their search for social equality and justice. By joining the FARC, women challenge the traditional gender roles and ideas about femininity and masculinity established by society (LIMPAL Colombia & FARC, 2018: 27). The FARC therefore not only served as an escape, but it also offered an alternative to traditional gender roles of Colombian

society where, as in most parts of the world, women are seen as peaceful, caring and givers of life, while men are considered as being more aggressive and conflictive. The participation of Colombian women in the armed conflict demonstrates that they cannot solely be considered passive victims of the conflict but that they have actively participated in the use of violence and thereby transgressed traditional gender norms (Avoine & Tillman, 2015: 217-219; Arostegui, 2013: 535).

However, while the female combatants eventually managed to receive a similar status as their male counterpart, they were initially protected and they were not involved in the armed fight (Méndez, 2012: 128). It was a women's struggle inside the guerrilla to obtain the same status, on paper and in practice, as the male combatants. They were initially performing supporting jobs related to nursing and the caretaking of the camps and fellow combatants (ibid.). Later on the female ex-combatants started to demand that they would be brought to the armed fight instead of staying in the FARC camps. They eventually achieved to fully participate in the armed fight and were armed just as much as the male combatants (ibid.:129). Women were equally participating in tasks of intelligence, explosives and the battle line, something they were unfamiliar with [Olga Lucía Marín, FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January].

In contrast to the equality in terms of the above mentioned tasks, female FARC combatants who left the guerrilla earlier during earlier years mentioned that they have been exposed to gender discrimination and gender inequality in the guerrilla. Most female combatants have been exposed to forced contraception and (forced) abortion during active combat (Theidon, 2009: 29; Herrera & Porch, 2008: 626). Since the priority of the FARC was with the armed conflict instead of with the formation of families, FARC women were restricted to become mothers and their reproductivity was controlled. In the following chapters of this thesis I will extensively go into this control and what has been its implications for the current motherhood of FARC mothers.

## Peace Process & Peace agreement

### A Successful Peace Process

The historical peace process between the FARC and the Colombian government under president Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) started with negotiations mainly taking place in Havana between 2012 and 2016. This peace process was however not the first attempt of an agreement between the largest guerrilla group of Colombia and the government. The first attempt occurred during the presidency of Belisario Betancur (1982-1986), who named a peace commission which marked the start of peace talks between the FARC and the government. The solution the government offered to the conflict was the formation of a political party where FARC's military forces would be converted into political forces and would therefore be legalized. A ceasefire followed in 1984, which led to the formation of the Patriotic Union (UP), a party that was affiliated with the FARC while it was supported by the communist party and other Colombian leftist groups (Molano, 2007). The peace negotiations that had started were abruptly ended after the assassination of the UP presidential candidate (BBC, 2016).

A second attempt for peace started in May 1991. Again, these peace negotiations soon came to an abrupt end after the assassinations of former liberal minister Argemiro Durán Quiñero and FARC's diplomatic representative Daniel García. A third round of negotiations between the FARC (*Tirofijo*) and president Pastrana of the Colombian government started in May 1999. This attempt was terminated by president Pastrana in February 2002 after the FARC hijacked a domestic flight which carried 24 passengers (BBC, 2016). The peace process that took place between 2012 and 2016 was therefore the fourth and last attempt for peace between the FARC and the Colombian government.

Simultaneously there have been various peace agreements with other non-state armed groups (guerrillas as well as paramilitaries) and the Colombian government. The demobilization of the guerrilla group M-19 occurred in 1990, the EPL demobilized in 1991, the AUC in 2006, while the ELN remains active. The collective demobilization of thousands of combatants was a result of these peace agreements as well as a result of individual demobilization. Among those combatants were members of the AUC (paramilitary), the ELN (guerrilla) and the FARC (who demobilized individually or during earlier negotiations) (ARN, 2018a).

The fourth and last peace process between the FARC and the Colombian government is outstanding for the reason that Colombia is the first Latin American country that has explicitly included *gender justice* in its peace process (Meertens, 2016: 89). It therefore acknowledges the important role that female combatants have played during the active combat of the FARC. Traditionally, the voice of female ex-combatants was displaced from the field of negotiations, forgetting their needs and discarding the knowledge they have to contribute to the construction of peace and the maintenance of it (Díaz et al., 2017: 47). Just like many other scholars, Theidon (2007) argues that successful reintegration processes should have a gender approach which touches upon the existing links between weapons, violence and masculinities (p. 71). The peace process in Havana also started without the presence of women and gender. However, under international pressure<sup>14</sup> and the pressure of women's movements, two years after the start of the process (September 2014) it was decided that a gender sub-commission would be installed. This sub-commission revised the gender focus in the agreement and spoke with female ex-combatants from all over the world (Meertens, 2016: 96).

The strong gender discourse and focus on the role of women that was developed during the peace process, remains of crucial importance to FARC's ideology in post-agreement Colombia. FARC's vision on gender equality is also reflected in its current political party. Victoria Sandino Palmera<sup>15</sup> (2016), senator of the political party FARC, uses the term *insurgent feminism* to explain that feminism is not just a women's issue, but it is an anti-patriarchal struggle which must be assumed by the whole revolutionary movement, with the combined struggle of both men and women. This type of feminism is not only against the oppression of women, but against all kinds of oppression (Sandino Palmera, 2016; Phelan, 2017). Politically active FARC ex-combatants seem to use *insurgent feminism* to keep their gender discourse in tact while ex-combatants are reincorporating in post-agreement Colombia.

### The Peace Agreement

The conflict between the FARC and the Colombian government officially came to an end with the signing of the peace agreement on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2016 in Cartagena, Colombia. The organized Colombian peace plebiscite, which allowed Colombian citizens to vote in favour or against the agreement, delayed the signing. It was held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2016 and it turned out negative as 'no' won with just a small majority of 50,22%. One of the most important opponents and campaigners against the agreement was former right-wing president Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010), who has been critical of the peace negotiations initiated by Santos since the beginning (El Tiempo, 2016). As a result, the peace agreement had to be revised and after adjustments it was eventually signed in November 2016.

The peace agreement consists of five chapters: 1. Comprehensive rural reform; 2. Political participation; 3. End of the conflict; 4. Solution to the problem of illicit drugs; 5. Agreement regarding the victims of the conflict (Presidencia de la República, 2016: 3). As mentioned above, the gender sub-commission revised the entire agreement and ensured that 'gender' was included throughout every chapter. This has resulted in the inclusion of gender throughout the entire agreement. In addition, on page 61<sup>16</sup> of the agreement it states: "*The reincorporation process will have in all its components a differential approach and gender perspective, with emphasis on women's rights.*"<sup>17</sup> (Acuerdo Final, 2016). The implementation of the peace agreement is being verified by CSIVI (the Commission for Follow-up, Impulse and Verification) which was created as a result of the peace agreement.

Only a limited amount of pages of the peace agreement is dedicated to the economic, social and political reincorporation of the FARC in civil life. The section 3.2 about reincorporation starts on page 61 and ends on page 68, while the entire agreement consists of a total of 297 pages (Acuerdo Final, 2016). A lack of practical actions formulated in the peace agreement in order to enhance the reincorporation of ex-combatant in civil life, especially in terms of gender, has led to the creation of CONPES 3931: the National Politics for the Social and Economic Reincorporation of Ex-combatants of the FARC. This

---

<sup>14</sup> The international pressure is motivated by the *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* adopted on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2000. This resolution acknowledges the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on girls and women. It therefore calls for the inclusion of a gender perspective in peace processes (OSAGI, n.d.).

<sup>15</sup> Victoria Sandino Palmera is an ex-commander of the FARC and she has played an important role in the negotiation processes of the peace agreement. Currently she is a senator for the political party of the FARC in the Colombian government.

<sup>16</sup> Page number of the original peace agreement document in Spanish.

<sup>17</sup> Translated from Spanish to English from the original peace agreement.

strategy was created by the National Council of Political, Economic and Social Affairs (CONPES) and includes concrete and practical actions. It took a relatively long time for this document to arrive as it was only released on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 2018, 1,5 years after the signing of the peace agreement while ex-combatants were already in the process of reincorporation. It was particularly supported by the National Council of Reincorporation (CNR<sup>18</sup>), who stressed the need for these actions on behalf of the FARC ex-combatants (CONPES 3931, 2018: 3). The CNR achieved to include seventeen gender actions and nine affirmative actions in the CONPES 3931. Those are orientated towards the promotion of sexual and reproductive rights and the strengthening of active citizenship, among others.

## Post-Accord Colombia

The international policy of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) was enforced after the signing of the peace agreement. This mission was supervised by the UN and included the disarmament and demobilization of thousands of FARC combatants. The ex-combatants started to move into the 20 Transitional Local Zones and Points (ZVTN) and seven Transient Normalization Points (PTN) which were established as part of the DDR program (UN Mission in Colombia, 2017). The 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2017 marked an important day for Colombia's peace because the United Nations Mission in Colombia announced that the disarmament of FARC combatants had concluded. The Mission received and stored a totality of 7.132 arms in the ZVTN's (ibid.). In August 2017, approximately 7.000 ex-combatants were already demobilized and going through the DDR program in the different ZTVN's (BBC, 2017). These ZTVN's and PTN's were converted into the 26 Territorial Training and Reincorporation Spaces (ETCR) after finalising the disarmament. These ETCR's<sup>19</sup> are crucial for the reincorporation of ex-combatants as they serve to reincorporate FARC ex-combatants through technical training and the preparation of collective and individual productive projects, as formulated in the peace agreement.

## Reincorporation

Besides UN's important supervising role, the ARN (Agency for Normalization and Reincorporation) has been crucial in the reincorporation of FARC ex-combatants in Colombian society. ARN's existence dates back to 2003 and has been through various name changes as well as function changes ever since. The Program of Reincorporation in Civil Life (PRVC) was created in 2003 and it was part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Justice. It was created with the objective to attend the persons who, individually or collectively, abandoned illegal armed groups. In 2006 PRVC's name was changed to High Counseling for Reintegration (ACR). The most important change was that it now included 'reintegration'. It was created in order to respond to the demands of the demobilization process in Colombia, related to the increase of persons who entered with the massive demobilization of the AUC. Also, the change was a consequence of the need to understand reintegration as a sustainable program. In 2011 it became necessary to create an institutional framework with technical, administrative and financial autonomy to tackle the challenges of reintegration in the face of the increase in individual demobilization. This institution was now called the Colombian Agency for Reintegration (ACR). In 2017 the ACR changed to the current ARN in order to address the challenges of the process of collective and individual reintegration of former FARC members and their families (ARN, 2018b: 8-9).

The ARN makes a clear distinction between two kind of programs: the 'reintegration program' and the 'reincorporation program'. The reintegration program is aimed at those ex-combatants from paramilitary groups, other guerrilla groups and individually demobilized FARC members. The reincorporation program is for those FARC ex-combatants who collectively demobilized after the peace agreement. The term 'reincorporation' was decided upon by the FARC in the peace agreement. The reason for this clear separation between reintegration and reincorporation is the fact that the FARC ex-combatants, who demobilize through the reincorporation program, go through a different process. They do not follow the same path as those ex-combatants who complete a six years long reintegration trajectory based on eight dimensions: citizenship, security, personal, productivity, education, health, habitat, family (ARN, 2018b: 9). Instead, FARC ex-combatants are provided a reincorporation program where they were

---

<sup>18</sup> The CNR is, besides the CSIVI, also one of the organizations that was established as a result of the peace agreement. The CNR consists of a government component and a FARC component.

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix I for a map of the different ETCR's throughout Colombia.

guaranteed rights, education, health and the support of economic projects. *Proyectos productivos* (productive projects or cooperatives) are economic initiatives where ex-combatants have the opportunity to work. In addition, the social reincorporation and the societal acceptance of FARC ex-combatants are central in their reincorporation in post-accord Colombia.

The activities and initiatives that would enhance the reincorporation of ex-combatants were particularly planned for the ETCR's. In these ETCR's the government would provide basic housing, energy, gas and the alimentation (food such as rice, beans, vegetables, meat) for ex-combatants during two years: from the official end of the disarmament in August 2017 until the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2019. After this date ex-combatants were expected to be self-sufficient and the help of the government would no longer be needed. It was also decided in the peace agreement that FARC ex-combatants would receive a monthly basic income of 740.000 Colombian Pesos (approximately 200 euros) for two years after the official end of the disarmament (Acuerdo Final, 2016: 67). However, an important point is that while I was writing this thesis (after August 2019), it turned out that the two years period has been prolonged initially until December 2019. I assume that this has to do with the fact that ex-combatants are not yet able to completely maintain themselves. This means that up until the end of 2019 the ex-combatants are able to continue living in the ETCR's, where they also receive the alimentation. All of the ex-combatants still receive the monthly basic income.

The ARN has 32 offices throughout the country from which they keep track of the reincorporation of the FARC ex-combatants. The employees of the ARN are active in the ETCR's and they work closely with the FARC community. FARC ex-combatants are not obliged to stay in the ETCR's and when they leave those zones it does not mean they will not be attended by ARN staff anymore. They will still have the right to the basic income, but all the other facilities (housing, energy etc.) are no longer provided.

As part of FARC's reincorporation in Colombian society, and in order to stimulate their economic activity, it was agreed in the peace agreement that the FARC would legally set up a joint social and economic solidary organisation. The organization called *Economías Sociales del Común* (ECOMÚN) would cover the entire country and would have territorial-based sections. FARC ex-combatants can join ECOMÚN voluntarily (Acuerdo Final, 2016: 64). Two years (November 2018) after the signing of the peace agreement approximately 51 cooperatives with 3.070 ex-combatants had been created (Consejo de Seguridad, 2018a: 7). It has not been easy to establish cooperatives and many of the projects do not yet guarantee a stable income for the ex-combatants involved (LIMPAL Colombia & FARC, 2018: 37). In fact, this was one of the most important points where the FARC ex-combatants I spoke with were very disappointed about: there have been very few (approved) economic projects neither in the ETCR's nor outside ETCR's, which results in a continuous dependence on the states' provision of housing, alimentation and basic income. Many of the projects which are functioning are a result of their own efforts or financed by international institutions or individuals. The fact that the FARC community continues to depend on the state was particularly worrying because the end of the provision of services was coming close as August 2019 was approaching during my fieldwork.

Despite the disarmament, demobilization and current reintegration, the FARC has not lost its Marxist-Leninist goals as it expects to gain political power and thereby change the nature of the state in a legal way (Ospina et al., 2016: 41). In fact, as part of the peace agreement the FARC established its political party: The Common Alternative Revolutionary Force (FARC) in August 2017. Their reincorporation process in post-accord Colombia can therefore be considered as two-fold: an individual transition from fighter to civilian and a collective transition from a military organization to a political party (Wüstner, 2017: 5). The peace agreement guaranteed ten seats in Congress<sup>20</sup> even if the FARC would receive less votes. During the presidential elections in May and June 2018, when current president Iván Duque Marquez<sup>21</sup> was elected, the political party FARC received over 85.000 votes. This amount is less than

---

<sup>20</sup> Five in the house and five in the senate

<sup>21</sup> Duque is from the same party as Álvaro Uribe, the Colombian president (2002-2010) before Santos (2010-2018), who was an important advocate against the peace agreement.

1% of the total votes, which demonstrates that Colombia is still resisting to accept the FARC in politics (El Tiempo, 2018).

### Challenges of Reincorporation

Today marks over two years since the official start of the reincorporation of FARC ex-combatants in post-accord Colombia. And, as I mentioned above, this reincorporation period has been prolonged. There have been significant achievements, such as the demobilization and disarmament of thousands of combatants, the establishment of the ZVTN's which turned into the ETCR's, the FARC political party and their say in politics and the creation of some cooperatives. In addition to that, according to data from July 2019, 11.226 reincorporating ex-combatants receive the basic income, which represents 86% of the total amount of ex-combatants, 12.768 ex-combatants (98%) are affiliated with the Colombian 'Health Promoting Entity' (EPS) and 1.773 ex-combatants are enrolled in academic education (ARN, 2019: 6). The FARC and the Colombian government are, almost 3 years after the signing of the peace agreement, still together on the road to peace after the decades long conflict.

But while the large majority of the FARC ex-combatants is still going through the reincorporation process, it has not always been easy for them to do so. Many argue that the state should work harder to keep its promises. They argue that there seems to be a lack of interest from the government since the current right-wing president, Duque, does not agree with many of the points of the peace agreement and the implementation process is going relatively slow.

An example of Duque's resistance against the peace agreement and the current reincorporation of FARC ex-combatants are his objections against the JEP. The JEP is a transitional justice system which was established as a consequence of the peace agreement. This special justice system investigates, judges and sentences those ex-combatants who are considered responsible for crimes during the active combat of the FARC. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2019, Duque presented objections to 6 of the 159 articles of the Statutory Law of the JEP (Peoples Dispatch, 2019). His objections are by some interpreted as the lack of political will to establish peace between the Colombian government and the FARC. These have provoked negative reactions from the political party FARC as well as from many Colombian citizens, which resulted in peaceful demonstrations in Bogota. His resistance to the peace agreement is considered to be an obstacle to the current reincorporation process of FARC ex-combatants. However, Duque argues that the objections are necessary in order to look for "truth, justice, reparation and no repetition" (CNN Español, 2019a). The current legislation is, according to him, unsuccessful in establishing the primary obligation of the perpetrators [FARC] to repair the victims. Nor does the law determine the scope of it. Therefore, in his eyes, his objections seek to ultimately advance the construction of a peace "which unites us" (ibid.).

### Dissatisfaction

Besides some political objections and the difficulties to establish cooperatives, there are deficiencies in terms of health, education and security inside and outside the different ETCR's (Consejo de Seguridad, 2018b: 3; LIMPAL Colombia & FARC, 2018: 37-39). According to Arnault (2017), the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and Head of the UN Mission in Colombia, it is the lack of perspective of long-term productive reincorporation that affects the confidence of ex-combatants with regards to their reincorporation. For those reasons many ex-combatants have left the ETCR's and moved to rural zones where the FARC was present before the peace agreement (Consejo de Seguridad, 2018a: 4). In fact, in November 2017, 55% of the total population of ex-combatants in the ETCR's had already left the ETCR's (Arnault, 2017). Based on information of the ARN (2019), in February 2019 the total amount of ex-combatants living in ETCR's had decreased to 3.602, compared to 8.146 living outside ETCR's and 1.291 who were unable to localize. It is expected that by now<sup>22</sup> the amount of ex-combatants living in ETCR's has further decreased. Ex-combatants have not only left the ETCR's because of dissatisfaction, but also because they wished to reunite themselves with their families, to participate in politics, or to look for individual reincorporation (Arnault, 2017).

Another concern is the increase of FARC dissidents: FARC ex-combatants who decided to take up arms again (Consejo de Seguridad, 2018a: 3). These dissidents include FARC ex-combatants who have not

---

<sup>22</sup> November 2019



been demobilized as well as FARC ex-combatants returning to arms after demobilization. This return to arms is attributed to the dissatisfaction with the peace agreement in general, with the reincorporation process in specific, or because of continuous threats of paramilitary groups (Casey & Rios Escobar, 2018). The news agency Reuters (2019) says that there were 2300 FARC dissidents operating from 31 dissident groups in areas which are rich in coca and illegal gold mining in June 2019. They underline the enormous increase from only 300 FARC dissidents at the time of the signing of the peace agreement to the current figure (Reuters, 2019). However, experts question this amount, since they argue that those dissidents are not solely FARC combatants but also newly recruited members (Di Salvo, 2019). Actually, at the end of August 2019 a YouTube video appeared where two former commanders, Iván Márquez and Jesús Santrich, announced that they will turn back to war. They expressed their dissatisfaction with the Colombian government, which is according to them, not respecting the peace agreement. They therefore aim to form a ‘new guerrilla’ with other dissatisfied FARC ex-combatants. However, FARC’s political leader, Rodrigo Londoño, responded to this by saying that the FARC will keep honouring the peace agreement (Parkin Daniels, 2019).

### Stigmatization & Killings

The stigmatization ex-combatants are exposed to for the role they have played in the conflict and the violence they have used, is yet another challenge (Camargo, 2019). This stigmatization can have very serious and problematic consequences. Since the signing of the peace agreement, at least 130 FARC ex-combatants have been assassinated<sup>23</sup> (Ramos, 2019). The political party FARC announced that lately the amount of threats against ex-combatants has increased (Ramos, 2019). They argue that the killings are a clear violation of the peace agreement (CNN Español, 2019b). The large majority of these killings remain unsolved and it is therefore unclear who is responsible for the assassinations. It seems that either paramilitaries, still active guerrillas or criminal organizations are behind these killings. There is one case where it is said that the Colombian army assassinated a FARC ex-combatant (González, 2019).

Not only FARC ex-combatants have been killed during the past years, also social leaders, who are not necessarily related to the FARC, are killed in very large amounts. FARC’s political party often refers to these killings when they speak about the killed FARC ex-combatants (RCN Radio, 2019). Between the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2016 and 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2019, a total of 462 social leaders has been killed (Angarita, 2019). As a response, president Duque announced on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2019 that the state will make security efforts: “*We will face the criminals behind the assassinations of social leaders, ex-combatants and any Colombian, because this government has a commitment to legality*”, he mentioned on Twitter (González, 2019). The new measures include the creation of an elite police group to investigate threats and the creation of an information center (ibid.). These state initiatives could result in the prosecution of those responsible for the killings and they could assure increased protection of ex-combatants and social leaders.

### Conclusion

This chapter served to provide an introduction to the armed conflict, the FARC and the FARC women, the peace process and peace agreement, and postaccord Colombia. I argue that it is crucial to understand the past in order to understand the current reincorporation of ex-combatants. Throughout this introduction the gender focus and the role of women were central.

In ‘The Armed Conflict & The FARC’ I provided a brief introduction to the decades long conflict which has dominated Colombia. The conflict has left an enormous amount of victims. I also explained how the FARC was established and how it developed into an armed force. It became clear that there were many parties involved in the conflict: the FARC, other guerrillas and paramilitaries among others. In this part I furthermore touched upon *las guerrilleras* of the FARC and how they earned their role as ‘real’ combatants completely involved in the armed conflict. *Guerrilleras* were present in very large amounts in the guerrilla and in which they have played an important role.

In ‘Peace Process & Peace Agreement’ I illustrated how the fourth intention for peace between the FARC and the Colombian government resulted in the signing of the peace agreement after four years of negotiations. I highlighted the importance of the gender sub-commission and the entire gender discourse

---

<sup>23</sup> Number of estimated assassinated combatants is from June 2019.

during the negotiations. This has resulted into the inclusion of 'gender' throughout the entire peace agreement, something which is unique. However, specific actions with regards to reincorporation as well as gender were argued to be rather limited in the agreement. This resulted in the formation of the CONPES 3931 strategy. FARC's gender discourse remains of importance in its political party through the *insurgent feminism* which it identified.

In 'Post-Accord Colombia' I explained how the demobilization, disarmament and reincorporation of FARC ex-combatants took place. The reincorporation period was prolonged until December 2019, which means the ex-combatants continue to be living in similar circumstances and under the same conditions as they were during my fieldwork. I also stressed the important role of the ARN in the reincorporation of ex-combatants in postaccord Colombia. This reincorporation has resulted in some challenges for ex-combatants. The lack of economic initiatives implies that FARC ex-combatants are still predominantly depending on the state while the end of the state's provision of services is reaching (August 2019). Another important challenge in postaccord Colombia is the fact that FARC ex-combatants are exposed to stigmatization, which in some occasions has resulted in the killing of them. The amount of assassinated ex-combatants, as well as social leaders, is enormous. I will extensively go into other challenges which FARC mothers are exposed to during reincorporation in the second empirical chapter of this thesis.

## 5. Becoming Mothers: the Reasons for FARC Ex-combatants to become Mothers

*“What is certain is that the war context is not the right context to create and form a family. These guerrilla groups moved in very difficult areas. Also, the constant rotation of the population and constantly living hiding themselves from the different attempts of the army, the armed, the force, to fight them. This is an environment which was not appropriate for motherhood in any of the aspects.”*

Milena Peralta [OACP, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of January]

*“It was not because.. well if you wanted to have children it was not possible because the circumstances were not right. A pregnancy in ‘el monte’ (the mountains). To have a child and then to have to take it out, to leave the child with family or somewhere there [...]. That is why in the guerrilla no. We had to take advantage of it when the peace process was there. To take advantage and have a baby before we would be too old.”*

Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February]

*“No it was not because I wanted to have a baby or that I was planning to have one. It was not because of that. But it does not matter. Now that I was pregnant there was nothing more I could do. And it was about time, it was time to have a baby.”*

Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February]

### Introduction

The quotes above illustrate how motherhood was interpreted during the armed conflict in Colombia, as well as some of the reasons FARC women started to become mothers right after the signing of the peace agreement in November 2016. Milena Peralta, who works for the Colombian Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP) [OACP, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of January] explains that war is not the right context to create and form a family. Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February] says that while having children was impossible in the guerrilla, now that the peace process was there, women had to take advantage of being able to have a baby before they would be too old. Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February] emphasizes the fact that she did not plan to have a baby but that it was about time to have a baby.

The post-accord ‘baby boom’ was an unexpected phenomenon for both the government and the FARC community. In the case of the FARC, it seems that this boom was so unexpected because they do not necessarily envision conventional motherhood for ‘their’ women’s future. I therefore consider it crucial to find out why so many female ex-combatants, together with their (ex-)partners, started to have babies and form families as soon as they were finding themselves in post-accord Colombia. It is relevant to gain this understanding in order to comprehend the experiences of FARC mothers’ motherhood during reincorporation, which will be discussed in the next chapter. During the fieldwork I found out that the past plays an important role in the reasons female ex-combatants are currently performing motherhood. With the past I refer to what female ex-combatants have gone through in the guerrilla as well as how motherhood was shaped during their active time in combat. This chapter therefore looks into the reasons for the recent motherhood of FARC women caused by the large amounts of planned, as well as unplanned pregnancies, during the peace process and after the peace agreement. Altogether, I aim to give an answer to the first sub-question of this thesis: *“What were the reasons for FARC ex-combatants to become mothers in post-accord Colombia?”*

The theory of militarized femininity is central this chapter. It is relevant to understand how the femininity of FARC female ex-combatants was controlled by the guerrilla. The FARC gave shape to femininity in a specific way where some features of femininity were accepted while others were not: performing conventional motherhood for example. By looking through this specific lens I will gain insights into why and how motherhood was controlled in the guerrilla. The control over motherhood has repressed

the performance of it for decades and therefore plays an important role in the decisions of FARC women to actually perform this mother role during reincorporation in post-agreement Colombia.

Furthermore, by applying gender performativity, I look at how FARC female ex-combatants perform their gender in the context of the armed, which is different from how it was performed before as well as after armed conflict. Since conventional motherhood was not possible in the FARC because it was being controlled through militarized femininity, FARC female ex-combatants could not perform their gender as being a mother. This example illustrates how the theory of militarized femininity and gender performativity complement each other in this chapter and in this thesis in general.

Lastly, post-insurgency is applicable to this chapter because I consider motherhood one of the many accommodations which FARC women started to make in post-agreement Colombia. This accommodation comes along with particular (beautiful) experiences, challenges and future dreams, where I will touch upon in the next chapter. I aim to find out why women, together with their (ex-)partners, have 'chosen' this accommodation through which I will gain an understanding of the reasons for this recent motherhood. It is important to mention that the choice for this accommodation was in the majority of the cases a common decision from the FARC women and their partners, the decision to form a family together. However, in this thesis I have solely looked at the stories of FARC mothers with regards to the choice for motherhood. This implies that I particularly speak about the reasons for motherhood from an 'individual' point of view, instead of as if it was a common decision. However, this does not mean that the (ex-)partners were not involved in the decision, nor do I aim to give the impression that the (ex-)partners are not involved in parenthood. Hence, I have not been focusing on their (male) perspective of parenthood and the reasons for it in this chapter, nor in this thesis in general.

In this chapter I will firstly explain how FARC combatants' motherhood was shaped in conflict, since this turned out to be crucial for the analysis of the reasons for motherhood. This part is separated into 'Impossible Motherhood' and 'Possible Motherhood'. Secondly, this chapter will touch upon the different reasons for FARC ex-combatants to become mothers. This part is separated into 'Planned Motherhood' and 'Unplanned Motherhood'. Also, I dedicate a section to 'No Motherhood in Post-Agreement Colombia' where I talk about female ex-combatants who have (not yet) become mothers. All of this is followed by a conclusion where I aim to answer the first sub-research question of this thesis.

## Motherhood during Conflict

*"The leadership took the decision that planning became obligatory [...]. Like an obligation, because before women were planning but it was not obligatory. But then in the 80's because of the amount of women who started to enter and the amount of pregnancies, this had to be obligatory. And they [the leadership] put it in the norms for entering the FARC. They told the women that they have to have clearly in mind that if they want to join the guerrilla they cannot be mothers. You enter knowing that you cannot be a mother and that you will have to plan, because you cannot have children in the guerrilla."*

Olga Lucía Marín

[FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January]

*"I was a long time in the guerrilla and there you could not have children because you know it is very risky to be in an armed conflict with a baby. Because how will you be fighting with one hand and attending your baby with your other hand, so no. And for example with a baby in the camp, carrying the baby, taking care of the baby, to take on the motherhood role, no. Well in the war that was impossible because of an assault, the enemy arrives to assault, so no [...]. But I would have liked to have a baby when I was twenty years old."*

Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February]

*"...anyway the women in the insurgency always had children but there was a broader concept of family that the FARC guaranteed. There were other families who took care of the children so that the women could continue to exercise their right to rebellion while there was contact with their children. Only when the conflict intensified there was a rupture in this communication."*

Maria [CNR, Bogota, 24<sup>th</sup> of January]

This part of the chapter serves to give an insight into how motherhood was given shape during the armed conflict, particularly based on personal stories. It is important to mention that despite the emphasis on the impossibility of motherhood during the conflict, there were many pregnancies and there were also women who exercised motherhood in a way which was distinct from the conventional motherhood that is familiar to us. The above quotes illustrate some of the views on motherhood in conflict from different sides: an ex-commander, a FARC mother and a woman currently working for the FARC but who was never part of the guerrilla. Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] explains how birth control became part of FARC's internal rules and policy. Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February], a FARC mother, emphasizes that becoming a mother was not possible because of the danger in the armed conflict. However, despite the fact that it was impossible, she had the wish to become a mother on a younger age. Even though the guerrilla repressed this wish, in her case it did not disappear. Maria [CNR, Bogota, 24<sup>th</sup> of January] explains that children were born in the guerrilla and that motherhood was possible under different circumstances.

I will firstly talk about 'Impossible Motherhood' where I explain how motherhood started to be controlled by the guerrilla, which measures were made and how current FARC mothers perceived and experienced these measures. It is important to underline that various FARC mothers gave me the impression that they decided on their motherhood themselves and in that regard kept their own agency, while others presume that the measures were imposed upon them by FARC's leadership. I will secondly talk about 'Possible Motherhood' where I look into how motherhood was possible in non-conventional ways. Besides that, I explain the stories of a few FARC mothers who had children during conflict.

### Impossible Motherhood

*"In the conflict it was prohibited. In the conflict all kinds of birth control that women needed were provided. The organization was in charge of the contraception, condoms and pills to address the needs in terms of the sexual health of the women."*

Maria [CNR, Bogota, 24<sup>th</sup> of January]

*'When I entered the guerrilla [with 13 years of age] I immediately had to start planning because it is very hard to have a child in the guerrilla [...]. Because I had a cyst I had to stop using other birth control methods and I was using the pill. Since I got my baby I am using the coil because I do not think about having more children, at least not for the moment.'*

Elisa [Bogota, 21<sup>st</sup> of March]

*"The war was too much, too much... It generated very difficult conditions to develop motherhood because the development of motherhood is not just nine months of pregnancy. It is a process of formation, a continuous accompaniment in all of the processes which starts when the child gets born, starts growing, starts developing. So to be there in the key moments, that is how I see motherhood. It is not like I leave the child with someone and I am a mother."*

Martina [Bogota, 6<sup>th</sup> of February]

The above quotes give an impression of how outsiders and the FARC mothers talk about the situation for FARC women in the guerrilla. Maria [CNR, Bogota, 24<sup>th</sup> of January] explains how the FARC was providing all kinds of birth control in order to avoid pregnancies. What Elisa [Bogota, 21<sup>st</sup> of March] underlines is that she was forced to start birth control when she entered and has used different methods ever since. Martina [Bogota, 6<sup>th</sup> of February] explains that the war generated particular circumstances where the development of motherhood is problematic. This part looks into how the different methods of birth control came about in the guerrilla by departing from the theory of militarized femininity.

### *'Prohibited' Motherhood*

*"...that is why there was a big increase in the amount of women, so more pregnancies. The leadership takes the decision that planning becomes obligatory."*

Olga Lucía Marín

[FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January]

During my fieldwork I had two conversations with Olga Lucía Marín and I highly value and appreciate her input about gender and the FARC mothers in particular. She was in the guerrilla for various decades, served as a commander and she was, and continues to be, key in FARC's gender discourse. For those reasons I got a really good insight into FARC's perspective on how life for female combatants was like in the guerrilla, especially in terms of their motherhood. Hence, by listening to her stories, it is crucial to keep in mind in this thesis that she, as a former commander, may have played a role in FARC's control over the sexual and reproductive health and rights of its female combatants. As Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] explains in the above quote: there was a large increase in the amount of women in the guerrilla. According to her, by the 1980's the FARC adopted in its norms the rule that female combatants could not get pregnant and that 'planning' (birth control) became obligatory for those female combatants entering the guerrilla.

Since many female combatants entered as adolescents, already in their reproductive age, the planning started immediately because: "*When there are sexual relations there is always the possibility of pregnancy*", as Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] told me. She argues that girls and women were aware that being a *guerrillera* meant not becoming a mother. Here I personally wonder to what extent the adolescents and young women were actually aware that entering the guerrilla meant being exposed to all kinds of birth control. This is something which remains unclear to me. All of the FARC mothers I spoke with this about assured that indeed all kinds of contraceptives were used: mostly the contraceptive implant in the upper arm and injections, which are very safe methods that serve for a longer period of time and which could be controlled by the FARC. Other methods which the FARC mothers mentioned were the coil and the pill. One ex-combatant told me that it was not allowed to use condoms as a birth control method because it was not reliable enough and the correct use of it could not be controlled by FARC's leadership. This illustrates how the FARC aimed to keep the control over its female ex-combatants through its strict militarized femininity, where they also decided how this strict control would be enforced.

Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] continued to explain that: "*Every rule has its exceptions and there were pregnancies so there were abortions. This was a decision of the organization and the decision of the women. Some had their children while others did not. Some had to do it because it was the norm.*" The case of (forced) abortions within the guerrilla is a very sensitive topic and yet to be prosecuted by the JEP. While higher rank FARC ex-combatants did not deny the practice of abortion during the armed conflict, it did not become clear to me whether these were forced or not. Many outside experts confirmed cases of abortion and they have particular ideas about them. According to Juanita Millán [OACP, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of January], who works for the OACP, "*...having children was completely prohibited [...]. Many of them [female ex-combatants] say that everything that has happened to them and the abortions and so occurred with the full knowledge because 'I knew that when I would be entering the FARC that I could not do this [be a mother]', that is what they say.*"

Even though I did not start talking about abortion with any of the FARC ex-combatants and FARC mothers, the topic was raised in various occasions by the women themselves. Araceli [Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March], a FARC mother, told me the following: "*For no one it is a secret, Anna, that if someone wanted to have an abortion that it could be done. This was part of the rights of the combatants.*" In fact, two FARC mothers said that they had an abortion in the guerrilla and the baby they had now was their second pregnancy. I do not exclude the possibility that some of the other FARC mothers also had an abortion. Hence, it was a conscious decision to not ask any questions about this topic due to its sensitivity.

FARC's control over the sexual and reproductive health and rights of its female ex-combatants is a very clear example of militarized femininity. While female ex-combatants were more than welcome to join the guerrilla, they could only do so according to particular rules and policies which benefited the insurgency as a whole. Pregnant women and babies in the guerrilla did not suit FARC's policy. In the case of motherhood this meant suppressing the wish of becoming a mother as long as you were a *guerrillera*. It meant being exposed to forced birth control and (forced) abortions in case of pregnancies.

Women who wanted to be a *guerrillera* had to shape their femininity according to the ‘militarized rules’ imposed on them, which implied not being a mother. In that sense, female combatants could not keep their agency and they could not take decisions over their own bodies. However, Enloe (2000, 129) also argued that female combatants may not always have experienced their strongly militarized femininity as something negative, but instead considered it as liberating. In that case I would suggest that there was likely an interesting tension between the feeling of control and the feeling of liberalisation.

*FARC mothers’ Perceptions and Experiences of Impossible Motherhood*

*“So I always said: I do not want children in the war. I do not want children for the war. I do not want to have a child and to have to leave the child with others or with my family. I want a child so I am able to share time with him, with her. To raise the child, to give my love.”*

Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January]

Most FARC mothers I spoke with about motherhood during the guerrilla told me very convinced that the guerrilla was simply not the right setting to have children. Many of them actually said that it was also a personal decision not to have children because they were very aware of the consequences of a pregnancy in the guerrilla. Some FARC mothers actively aimed to prevent a pregnancy and in that regard also shaped their femininity according to FARC’s militarized femininity. In the above quote, Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January] explains one of the most prominent reasons FARC mothers themselves argue that motherhood was not desirable during conflict. The reason is very personal: according to many FARC mothers, motherhood is defined as spending time with your child, to see the child growing up, something that was impossible to combine with being a *guerrillera*. Having a baby in conflict meant having to leave<sup>24</sup> the FARC, having to abort or having to leave your child with relatives. Some of the FARC mothers explicitly said that in case they would have gotten pregnant in the guerrilla, that they would have left the guerrilla because they would not want to leave their babies with others. This illustrates that they had a particular idea about how they wanted to fulfil the mother role, in case they would become a mother. While becoming a mother in the guerrilla was not completely impossible, exercising motherhood in the conventional way, where mothers would be together with their babies and children was incompatible with life in the guerrilla.

Furthermore, having children is an important responsibility which can be dangerous for the ex-combatants, the child or the entire unit. Silvia [Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February] said to me that: *“One can endure hunger but with a child in your arms it is more difficult.”* She also explained that sometimes alimentionation did not reach the camps, imagine milk and diapers for a baby. Another ex-combatant also said that it was very dangerous to have a baby in the camp because if the baby would cry, they would have to move to another place to remain safe. For that reason, fellow combatants usually did not like babies in the camp because they undermined the safety of the entire unit. In addition, according to Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January], some children of fellow FARC combatants were used against the FARC. She explained a case where the daughter of a female combatant was visiting her in one of the FARC camps. When the daughter was confronted with the army on the way there, they had put a microchip in her bag. The night the daughter arrived to the camp, the camp was bombed because the army had followed her. Both were killed in the bombardment.

What Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February] also stated in one of the quotes at the beginning of the chapter: to be fighting with one hand while holding your baby with the other hand was simply not an option. As Martina [Bogota, 6<sup>th</sup> of February] also explained:

*“To have a child in the middle of the confrontation, a pregnancy in the middle of the confrontation, parenting in the middle of the confrontation, well this was not possible. In the confrontation with a lot of inequality and bombs [...]. The majority of mothers who had their children had to leave them with*

---

<sup>24</sup> I use the word ‘leave’ because it remains unclear to me whether pregnant FARC women in the guerrilla were allowed to leave the FARC or whether they had to flee the FARC because it was not an option to leave voluntarily. In literature it is mostly formulated as ‘flee’ while the FARC mothers and higher rank ex-combatants I interviewed did not formulate it as such. Because I do not want to suggest it was impossible to leave the FARC voluntarily I use ‘leave’ instead of ‘flee’ throughout this thesis.

*someone else because in the forest, in the conditions of war, parenting was impossible. Not because it was prohibited by the FARC, but because the war itself generated this situation.”*

While Martina explains that pregnancy, a baby and parenting are not compatible with combat, she also mentions that it was not something which could be blamed on the FARC but which should be blamed on the setting of war in general. In fact, this is what many of the FARC mothers told me: a conflict setting is simply not a setting where you can enjoy motherhood: the war did not allow them to have children. They did not mention the fact that it was not allowed to have babies through FARC’s militarized femininity. In contrast to that, nobody denied the use of forced birth control. Here I observed frictions between the different parties that I spoke with during my fieldwork. I consider it interesting to observe these frictions as they demonstrate the sensitivity of some of the topics.

### Possible Motherhood

*“Well it was prohibited, it was not possible to have children in the war. However, there were many women who had children during the war. For different reasons they had their children. So they handed them over to family, to neighbours or to people they knew.”*

Laura Cardoza [Advisor of Senator Victoria Sandino, Bogota, 17<sup>th</sup> of January]

*“Well I feel that in the FARC there was a concept of motherhood developed that was very much ‘above logical’. Do you understand me? The people had their pets which they, better said, took care of better than of a child. Feelings were developed and this was very beautiful, right?”*

Martina [Bogota, 6<sup>th</sup> of February]

*‘I did not have time to raise my child, I only shared eight months with my baby. I spent my pregnancy in the camp and then I received the permission to have my baby. It took eight months until I had to give my baby to my mother.’*

Carmen [Icononzo, 13<sup>th</sup> of February]

As I clearly stated before, motherhood was not completely impossible during the guerrilla. There were female ex-combatants who got pregnant and who gave birth while they were in active combat, staying in the camps. This part of the chapter looks at how motherhood was possible during FARC’s militarized femininity. Laura Cardoza [Advisor of Senator Victoria Sandino, Bogota, 17<sup>th</sup> of January], explains that many women got children in the war, but they had to hand them over to relatives. Martina [Bogota, 6<sup>th</sup> of February], a FARC mother, emphasizes that there was a different, ‘illogical’, concept of motherhood in the guerrilla. Carmen [Icononzo, 13<sup>th</sup> of February], a FARC mother who had a baby during and after the guerrilla, says that she only had a short time together with her baby before she had to hand her over to her mother. This part of the chapter discovers the unconventional motherhood of the FARC described by outsiders as well as by FARC mothers who observed or lived this unconventional motherhood.

### *Unconventional and ‘Illogical’ Motherhood*

*“But there were different ways to have children in the insurgency which is very important to keep in mind. What happened is that it is from a different view of caretaking, not the traditional nuclear family, but more a kind of concept of the extensive family, community family, that everyone took care of the children, right?”*

Maria [CNR, Bogota, 24<sup>th</sup> of January]

According to Olga Lucía Marín [FARC’s National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, 28<sup>th</sup> of January], there were female combatants who left the guerrilla because they had the wish to raise the child themselves, something which was incompatible with being a *guerrillera*. The female ex-combatants who stayed in the FARC and kept the baby were forced to leave the baby with family members or others they knew. These women were therefore unable to live their motherhood in a conventional way since the caretaking was handed over to others. They could only have sporadic contact and encounters when the conflict was less intense. Some mothers completely lost contact. This illustrates



how FARC's militarized femininity made it (mostly) impossible for FARC women to enjoy their motherhood during the guerrilla.

This type of motherhood, where combatants left their babies and children with others, is mostly viewed critically by outsiders. An example is the Colombian state who considers 'abandonment' illegal and who has in some cases taken away the custody of the mothers, as well as fathers, over these 'abandoned children', explained a woman working for the political party FARC. In that sense the Colombian state did not give room for family constructions which are different from the traditional nuclear family, at least not in the case of the FARC mothers and FARC fathers. However, in the context of war, where combatants want to continue the struggle, handing over your child to others was mostly the only option.

Maria [CNR, Bogota, 24<sup>th</sup> of January] explained above that in fact it is a motherhood from a different caretaking point of view, where the FARC adopted a type of motherhood which moved beyond the traditional nuclear family. In her quote at the beginning of this part of the chapter she says that: "*There were other families that took care of the children so that the women could continue to exercise their right to rebellion while there was contact with their children.*" From this point of view it could be said that having to leave your children with family members could be 'liberating' and 'empowering' for some women because in this way they could continue their struggle in the FARC while performing the 'motherhood on a distance' role. Here gender performativity is very relevant as it demonstrates that these FARC mothers, who had children during conflict and who continued as *guerrilleras*, performed different roles at the same time: the 'motherhood on a distance' role and the *guerrillera* role.

Another important point which various people mentioned is that FARC combatants took up other caretaking roles. Martina [Bogota, 6<sup>th</sup> of February] explains in the quote above that even though motherhood was impossible in terms of caretaking of the children, a similar role was adopted by caretaking in different kind of ways: such as that of animals or of the sick combatants. Combatants had pets and animals which they took care of in a very loving way. She considers this an illogical motherhood. Her story suggests that in the guerrilla in some occasions the feeling of missing out on the caretaking of children was compensated by other forms of caretaking. I found this particular view on 'illogical' motherhood interesting as it shows that the impossibility of conventional motherhood did not necessarily take away the wish to perform motherhood, or parenthood in general, hence it was translated into other forms of caretaking. However, it is relevant to add that I do not mean to say that every combatant in the guerrilla had the wish to become a parent. Instead, those combatants who did miss out on this feeling of parenthood in some occasions compensated this feeling in different, 'illogical' ways.

Lastly, I got the impression that it was sometimes allowed to have a baby during the guerrilla if permission was requested. It seems that this mainly had to do with the rank or age of the combatant: exemptions to FARC's militarized femininity were made for those eligible to it. It looks like there was room for negotiation. For example, Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] told me: "*I entered when I was twenty years old and I was going to have my daughter when I was 35. I never had a pregnancy besides this one. And I asked for permission to have her [which she received] even though there was already the norm of prohibition. But anyhow, because of health reasons, this happened with some others as well.*" While she explains how she was able to have her daughter during the conflict, it remained unclear to me on what scale this occurred in the guerrilla. Since motherhood during conflict is not the initial focus of my thesis, I decided to not go further into this. But, the stories of most respondents suggested that women who got pregnant either had to abort, leave the guerrilla or leave the baby with family or other people instead of that they received the permission to have their baby.

#### *Personal Experiences of Motherhood in Conflict*

*"With my first child I had to go through the process. Many of us had to hand our children over to a family member when they were very small. So my first child was raised by my mother. My second child had the possibility to be closer to me. This is the reason my second child is more affected with me."*

Lorena [Female Ex-combatant, Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March]

Since it became clear that there were female ex-combatants who got babies during the conflict, I was content that I got to speak with some of these women about their experiences. Two of the FARC mothers which I spoke with had a child during the conflict. Therefore, the current baby is the second child. I also got to speak with Lorena [Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March], another ex-combatant who got her children during the conflict. This enabled me to get insights into how motherhood actually looked like from the eyes of women who have experienced this themselves.

Lorena [Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March] explains in the quote above that she had to hand her first child over to her mother when the baby was still very small, so the child was basically raised by her mother. She got her second child under different circumstances so she was able to spend more time with the child, This is also the reason her second child is closer to her than to her first child. One of the FARC mothers explained that she could not be calm during her pregnancy. It was very stressful to have a child in the conflict. A few months after the birth of her first child she was caught and put into prison, which meant her mother raised her child. Various years passed by without seeing her child and when she was reunited with the child, her child had obviously grown a lot, something she had missed out on completely. Another FARC mother told me that the pregnancy of her first child in the guerrilla was unplanned despite the fact that she was using different kinds of birth control. She had to leave her baby with relatives of her partner when the baby was only a few months old and she did not see her baby for various years. It was very difficult to be reunited with her child after so many years as they had completely lost contact. Now that she has her second baby she is very happy to see them together and she enjoys spending time with both of them, something which was impossible during her time as a *guerrillera*.

The stories of these three female ex-combatants illustrate cases where mothers had to hand over their children to family members and what this implied: motherhood on a distance, little to no contact, problems in being reunited after the peace agreement and maybe most importantly: completely missing out on the childhood of their children. These struggles illustrate how FARC's militarized femininity has resulted in various challenges for FARC mothers who got a baby during conflict. I assume that there are many female ex-combatants with a different story: those who had to abort, those who left the FARC or those who are still not reunited with their children. However, I have not further researched these stories.

## Motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia

*'I never thought of having children because the circumstances in the guerrilla were not to have children. We could not have children. I never thought of becoming a mother because I never expected that the peace process would be there. But now there were the right circumstances. Now that we were not in war anymore there was the possibility.'*

Luiza [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February]

*"Yes but this was not in my agenda, to have a baby, to be honest no, I did not think about it. I would have liked to have my daughter or son when I was twenty years old. But then this was impossible so I had already discarded to have children, to have a family because well... to start studying and to work takes a lot of time and to have to leave the child alone, well no."*

Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February]

*"I had my baby by caesarean section, so as soon as I had my baby I told them to operate me, they operated me and they did the surgery. So no more children, no. Well the dream is to just have one child and to have the child fine, to give the child everything that is needed. When you see three or four children, that is passing the need."*

Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February]

The above quotes illustrate some of the reasons for pregnancy during reincorporation in post-accord Colombia according to some FARC mothers. Luiza [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February] explains that she never thought of becoming a mother because she never expected that the peace process would occur. Reincorporation offered the 'right circumstances' to be a mother and that is why she decided to have a

baby. In contrast to that, Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February] was not planning to have her baby. In fact, she was thinking about studying and starting to work instead of spending time taking care of a baby. However, in her quote at the beginning of the chapter she explains that it was about time to have a baby, so she decided to embrace her motherhood. Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February] told me that she was planning to have her baby. After her first child she decided to be sterilized because she prefers to have just one child and to be able to take care of her baby correctly instead of having more children.

This part of the chapter will look into the reasons the FARC mothers, together with their (ex-) partners, started having babies and forming families relatively rapidly and in such large amounts. Because the 'baby boom' was unexpected by the government as well as by the FARC, there were no adequate responses. Emergency responses occurred in order to deal with the large amount of pregnant women and new-born babies in the ZVTN's. It is important to keep in mind that the amount of babies being born in the ZVTN's also depend per zone and on the policy of the camp leaders. In addition, it is crucial to underline that the ex-combatant population is a relatively young population, which means there is a large amount of young women who (still) find themselves in their healthy reproductive age.

Also, I was surprised to find out that approximately half of the amount of FARC mothers I spoke with did not necessarily plan or expect to have a baby so soon after the reincorporation process had started. Even though the amount of FARC mothers I interviewed is too small to make any generalizations, various outsiders also confirmed that many pregnancies were unplanned. For that reason, it is not only relevant to look at the reasons FARC ex-combatants decided to have children in post-agreement Colombia by listening to the stories of the FARC mothers, but also to look at the reasons so many unplanned pregnancies occurred. The combination of both will allow a significant understanding of the reasons behind the 'baby boom' in post-agreement Colombia. Throughout this analysis it is important to keep in mind that I consider pregnancy and motherhood one of the many accommodations that FARC women started to make as part of their reincorporation process in post-agreement Colombia.

While these women particularly spoke in terms of 'I' and 'me', I think it is likely that many decided for motherhood together with their partners. Actually, the large majority of the FARC mothers I have spoken with is together with the father of the baby. However, I cannot be completely sure about this as I have not spoken with their partners nor asked a lot of questions about the common decision.

In this part I will firstly talk about the reasons for 'Planned Motherhood'. It is followed by 'Unplanned Motherhood' where I talk about the reasons that have played a role in the unexpected pregnancies. Then I will briefly stress a few reasons some female ex-combatants have not been able to, or decided not to, perform motherhood (yet).

### Planned Motherhood

*"So what happens is that 'now we signed the peace agreement, I think that now there are the conditions to be a mother and that in this country we have a future'. And this replicated by 320 mothers. All of them saw the opportunity. Some women were already in their late thirties, forties, so 'this is our last opportunity which we have to benefit from', other women said that there are the conditions so 'I will have the baby' and other pregnancies were unexpected, which also happened a lot. Well this is the story of the babies, and a lot started to be born."*

Juanita Millán [OACP, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of January]

*'Before it was too late I wanted to have another child. To have another one so that they are not alone. Now that I was with my partner I wanted to have another baby.'*

Melisa [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February]

*"The motivations to be a mother? I do not know, maybe it is something that you suddenly feel, I do not know how to explain it [...]. It is something that you feel and that occurs, which you accept with happiness, with affection and with responsibility. I feel that a child in perspective is a very important pillar in our existence, like a motor."*

Martina [Bogota, 6<sup>th</sup> of February]

This part of ‘Motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia’ aims to give an insight into the many reasons women, often together with their (ex-)partners, consciously decided to form a family and to perform motherhood during their reincorporation in post-accord Colombia. In the above quote, Juanita Millán [OACP, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of January] provides various explanations for the ‘baby boom’. Melisa [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February], one of the FARC mothers in her forties, confirmed that the most important reason for her to have her second child was because she wanted to have the child before she would be too old. Martina [Bogota, 6<sup>th</sup> of February] explains that it is hard to define why she wanted to be a mother, but she thinks it is a natural feeling that just occurs, like something biological.

As can be seen, there are many different ideas and assumptions about the recent motherhood. While I particularly spoke with ‘outside experts’ at the beginning of the research, the conversations with the FARC mothers also confirmed the diversity in reasons for the recent motherhood. Hereby I noticed there were often differences in ideas between those outsiders and the FARC mothers themselves, which I considered interesting to observe. Everyone I spoke with had a certain opinion about the phenomenon, which was not always in line with the personal experiences of the FARC mothers. I will firstly go into the reason of ‘Different Circumstances’ that post-accord Colombia offered ex-combatants. Followed by ‘Before it is too late’ where I speak about the ‘older’ FARC mothers. Lastly I talk about ‘Natural Motherhood’ where motherhood is considered an ‘obvious’ and ‘logical’ step of the reincorporation process in post-accord Colombia, particularly according to some outsiders I have spoken with.

### *Different Circumstances*

*“And in the moment that his happens, obviously the peace process, this ‘baby boom’ occurs, the ‘baby boom’ of the pregnancies, which is, we could say, a sociohistorical reflection that the FARC generated. Because of the war conditions, we as women had to restrict this right and of course... Now that we were in a peace process there was no more worry that we would die, that they would kill us.”*

Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January]

One of the most prominent reasons for the recent motherhood was the fact that these FARC ex-combatants were not living in ‘the dangerous war circumstances’ anymore but instead found themselves in ‘the safe reincorporation circumstances’ in post-accord Colombia. As Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January] describes: many, including herself, did not feel the fear of dying anymore. I found it very interesting to observe how the feeling of fear and the feeling of the possibility of passing away in conflict, suddenly got replaced by a feeling of hope and of life. In the case of many FARC mothers, this got translated into motherhood and thinking about a future for themselves and their families. These different circumstances therefore allowed for different accommodations, of which motherhood is just one.

When I asked Sofía [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February] to explain her expectations of motherhood, she said that it enabled her to suddenly start thinking about a future, for her, her partner and her baby. The woman who works for the FARC political party told me that in that way the motherhood of ex-combatants also served as a ‘protection mechanism’, which ensures that these FARC mothers do not think about going back to war and taking up arms again because they are now focused on a future with their children.

Actually, a few FARC mothers stressed that they never expected a peace process would occur and that peace would ever arrive. Therefore, some of these women had ruled out the possibility of ever getting children. For those women it was an even more exciting idea that becoming a mother was not prohibited and impossible anymore. The two women of the NGO ASODEMUC [Bogota, 26<sup>th</sup> of February] interpreted this reason as the following: *‘Now that I am free, I can exercise maternity because now it is possible.’* This gave me the impression that even though there were FARC mothers who suppressed their wish of performing motherhood during combat, this wish had, in some cases, not disappeared and as soon as the opportunity was there, these female ex-combatants could benefit from it.

The, for some, sudden disappearance of the ‘war fear’, awakened the desire to live the motherhood in the different circumstances that post-accord Colombia started to offer these female ex-combatants. Here it is important not to generalize and to highlight that not every woman, so not every female ex-combatant, has the wish to become a mother, neither in conflict nor in post-accord Colombia. Some women do not (yet) have this wish, it is therefore clearly an option and not an obligation. As Olga Lucía

Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] also explained to me: *"So when the peace process arrived, you could notice that couples, not only women, but that couples were believing in the positive of the peace agreement and in the possibilities that were coming up. The reunification of families, to be in the spaces [ZVTN's], to have a place to live, to have a productive process and to be able to have a family so they start to have children."* She adds that this did not occur in every ZVTN in similar amounts, in some ZVTN's more babies were born than in others due to the different camp leaders. Some have been more active in preventing pregnancies to occur so rapidly while others have not: *"If you go to Miravalle, in Caqueta, there were only one or two pregnancies while there are many women. So, there the leader reunited all of the women and said: 'do not get children, wait until the process is consolidated so you can respond for your children'. There were not many children there. It was not an obligation but more a kind of suggestion"* [ibid.]. This illustrates how the militarized femininity in terms of sexual and reproductive health continues to play a role in post-agreement Colombia even though it takes a different shape: instead of being forced, it is being recommended. It illustrates how structures and authority relations are remaining of importance in post-agreement Colombia, something which Sprengels also identified of importance in El Salvador.

Even though the circumstances for ex-combatants during reincorporation are far from ideal, post-agreement Colombia offers possibilities for FARC ex-combatants which were impossible to imagine during the armed conflict. With regards to this, Yolvi Padilla Sepúlveda [Geneva Call, Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of February] told me: *"I think that at the moment of the baby boom, there were better prospects for the ex-combatants who were leaving the FARC, both men and women. I think that this is why they started to have children and to get pregnant. Because there were good prospects about how this process of negotiation and reinsertion was going to be, the reintegration in civil life."* The reality turned out to be more complicated for most ex-combatants due to, many persons I have spoken with, the un-accomplishment of the peace agreement. As Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] said to me as well: *"There was lot of illusion [...], now we have signed the peace and we have to move forward. But then there is the situation with a lot of frustration of many, but many continue in the fight, they continue to believe in this process."* I will further touch upon this when I talk about the experiences of FARC mothers in the next chapter.

An important factor, which is also pointed out by Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January] in the quote above is the fact that becoming pregnant was no longer prohibited by FARC's leadership while the signing of the peace agreement was approaching. With regards to this, Silvia [Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February] told me: *'They [ FARC's leadership] always told us that if one day the peace would arrive that we would be able to have children'*. And indeed, while peace was around the corner, the militarized femininity of the female combatants was disrupted and it was no longer militarized similarly. This implies that female ex-combatants were now 'allowed' to get pregnant. However, this does not mean that the militarized femininity disappeared completely through the signing of the peace agreement. This is very much in line with Enloe (1993) who argues that: *"[...] the ending to a particular war cannot undo decades of deeper militarization"*(p.3). It therefore makes sense that militarized femininity continues to play a role in post-agreement Colombia, something which I will come back to later. Female ex-combatants were able to gain their own agency over their bodies and to give shape to their femininity the way they wanted to in post-agreement Colombia. During reincorporation they were not just able to perform their identity as a female ex-combatant, but as a mother as well. However, again, that this would be occurring on such a large scale was not something the FARC, nor the government, had expected. In fact, the reason that so many women got pregnant without planning to, is particularly a consequence of the fact that the FARC did no longer control the sexual and reproductive health and rights of these female ex-combatants in a similar way.

Furthermore, the different circumstances were mentioned by the experts I have spoken with in Bogota and by the FARC mothers who deliberately decided for the formation of a family in post-agreement Colombia. Also the FARC mothers who got pregnant unexpectedly mentioned this: they decided to embrace this pregnancy, precisely because of these different circumstances. It becomes clear that it is key to understand how motherhood looked like during conflict in order to understand the reasons for motherhood in post-agreement Colombia. The drastic shift between participating in an armed conflict to life in a post-agreement setting generated particular circumstances which enabled ex-combatants to think about

parenthood. The peace process brought along the prospect of hope, peace, a different life, a life where being a mother, being a parent and being able to perform parenthood became possible.

*Before it is too late*

*'Yes I wanted to have a child, to have a child before I would be older. Now there is the opportunity to have the child.'*

Luiza [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February]

Despite the fact that the reincorporating FARC ex-combatants population is a relatively 'young guerrilla', there were various FARC mothers who explained the same as Luiza [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February]: to have a baby before it would be too late. Many FARC mothers spent the majority, if not all, of their reproductive years in the guerrilla where their sexuality and femininity were being militarized by FARC's leadership. Since most female ex-combatants entered the guerrilla as adolescents, they had not yet developed motherhood prior to entering the FARC. The years where they could have developed this they spent as armed combatants. The fact that many women had already passed their healthy reproductive age when the reincorporation process started is also one of the reasons a significant amount of them will not be able to live conventional motherhood.

A few FARC mothers I spoke with were already in their late thirties and forties but they had a baby of not even one year old. Melisa [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February], who is already in her forties and who has one older child and a small baby, said that: *'Before it was too late I wanted to have another child. To have another one so that they are not alone.'* She explained that her doctor warned her that her pregnancy was risky since she was reaching the end of her healthy reproductive age. In fact, there were more FARC mothers who had risky pregnancies for the same reason. For these women it was now or never: they had to take the opportunity to have a baby and a family before it would be too late. In my eyes this reason plays an important role in the fact that so many FARC ex-combatants got pregnant during the peace process or so quickly after the peace agreement.

*'Natural Motherhood'*

*"But in any case, it was almost obvious for women that they had to become mothers. Yes, like it was the norm. No one sat down and started thinking about planning. It was obvious that they would be mothers, and that this was part of the natural circle of life. And for them their circle of life was initially dedicated to the guerrilla."*

Laura Cardoza [Advisor of Senator Victoria Sandino, Bogota, 17<sup>th</sup> of January]

A last reason for the recent motherhood is based on what some of the persons I have spoken with stressed to me: motherhood is traditionally considered one of the most evident performances of femininity. In that regard, becoming a mother and forming a family is often seen as something natural to being a woman. Therefore, in the eyes of many, the performance of conventional motherhood after the performance of a *guerrillera* seemed a logical accommodation during the reincorporation in post accord Colombia. Laura Cardoza [Advisor of Senator Victoria Sandino, Bogota, 17<sup>th</sup> of January] argues in the above quote: it seemed like an obvious next step that female ex-combatants would become mothers. She got the impression that for them motherhood is part of the natural circle of life while they spent this time of their circle of life committed to the FARC.

During the guerrilla FARC women were restricted to the performance of a *guerrillera*. In various occasions the wish of performing their gender differently (through motherhood) either persisted during the many years of armed conflict, emerged during the guerrilla or was developed after the peace process and the peace agreement. Since the war was over, there was the possibility for 'natural motherhood' to be performed. However, this was clearly not an obligation for female ex-combatants, but an option of which many took advantage.

Some experts, as well as higher rank ex-combatants, said that the reason that parenthood is 'something natural' can often be blamed on traditional society. This society pressures women in a certain way: in order to be a 'real woman' you should perform your gender as being a mother. They argue that when

female ex-combatants started to reincorporate in postaccord Colombia, they were confronted with this traditional idea of the gender performance of a woman which is dominant in patriarchal Colombian society. This argument is similar to Enloe (1993, 257-259) who emphasizes that it is possible that during demilitarization, men and women adopt the identities that they are expected to adopt. As Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] emphasized: “*We as women to realize ourselves, we have to be mothers.*” She adds that many female ex-combatants do not seem to understand that being a woman does not necessarily imply being a mother.

However, while I found it relevant to point this reason out, I strongly question to what extent FARC ex-combatants are really confronted with this dominant gender performance in society. I do so because these FARC mothers were, and still are, especially before and during their pregnancies, mostly finding themselves inside the ‘FARC spheres’ in either ZVTN’S, ETCR’S or in outside spaces where they are mainly moving inside the FARC spheres. I therefore question to what extent this ‘natural motherhood’, particularly pointed out by outside experts and higher rank ex-combatants, can be considered to be a legitimate reason for the pregnancies of many female FARC ex-combatants.

Additionally, Adriana [Bogota, 18<sup>th</sup> of January], a FARC ex-combatant without children, argues that many female ex-combatants got pregnant in order to be accepted by Colombian society. They were adjusting themselves in postaccord Colombia through the traditional performance of femininity by becoming mothers. According to her this has to do with the double stigmatization female ex-combatants are usually confronted with. They are firstly stigmatized because they have been a combatant and secondly because they are a woman and fighting is not something considered natural to women. Therefore, the accommodation of becoming a mother could serve to increase the acceptance of the larger society or it could help to accelerate the process of reincorporation in Colombian society.

From a theoretical point of view, especially from that of Butler (1988), who says that “performing your gender wrong” (p.526) may lead to cultural punishment or marginalization, this argument could be interpreted as the following: female ex-combatants are becoming mothers and they are forming families together with their partners because then they would be ‘performing their gender right’. From this point of view it could make sense that FARC mothers unconsciously felt that society expects them to fulfil this particular role. However, this is an assumption as I have been unable to gain direct insights from the FARC mothers’ point of view. None of the FARC mothers explained the reason for their motherhood as such, it is therefore rather an outside view. However, during the interviews I got the impression, through the way they were talking about motherhood and the decision for it, that it was for some indeed a kind of natural next step during reincorporation. I base this idea on the fact that in some cases FARC mothers did not really have a clear answer to my question why they were performing motherhood. As if they did not really think about motherhood, but that it was just a logical next step.

### Unplanned Motherhood

*‘My pregnancy was unplanned. I already had the contraceptive implant for seven years so I went to a nurse but I had to take it out and be three months without birth control. Women could not use any type of birth control in those three months, only condoms. So after two weeks I got pregnant. This happened to various women here, they got pregnant this way because there were a few months that they could not take any hormones.’*

Ramona [Icononzo, 15<sup>th</sup> of February]

*“Well only one [FARC mother] I know at this moment, she got pregnant because she wanted the baby now. The others got pregnant ‘de papaya’ (because of neglect).”*

Araceli [Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March]

*‘I never had the wish to have children and when I entered the guerrilla I had to start planning right away [...]. When I was in Bogota I was very ill and I was vomiting. But I did not think I could be pregnant so I was a bit shocked. Then we had the baby, we decided to have the baby, we did not know how and how to continue but we decided to have the baby.’*

Elisa [Bogota, 21<sup>st</sup> of March]

I initially started my research with the assumption that all of the recent ‘FARC pregnancies’ were planned, but the opposite is the case: at least half of the amount of FARC mothers I spoke with explained that their pregnancy was unplanned. The quotes above present some stories of FARC mothers in Icononzo, as well as in Bogota, who said that they were not planning on having a baby. Their reasons for motherhood are therefore very different than the ones in the previous part. What Elisa [Bogota, 21<sup>st</sup> of March] mentions is that even though she got pregnant unexpectedly, she, together with her partner, decided to have the baby, it was therefore a common decision. They were, and still are, finding themselves in the process of reincorporation in post-agreement Colombia where the previous mentioned ‘Different Circumstances’ allows them to form a family and to enjoy their motherhood. In ‘Lack of Birth Control’ I will explain how such a significant amount of FARC mothers had unplanned pregnancies. In ‘Embracing unplanned Motherhood’, I will briefly talk about how the different circumstances of post-agreement Colombia have played a role in how these FARC mothers embraced their unexpected motherhood and their newly formed families.

### *Lack of Birth Control*

*“It turns out that I was planning with the contraceptive implant which you put in the arm [...]. I was using it for seven years but you have to change it every seven years, so mine was expired and I bought a new one so they could put me that one [...] So they told me that I had to wait two months so my hormones would be regulated and it turns out that in those two months I could not use pills, nothing, and in those two months I got pregnant.”*

Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February]

The foremost reason for the unplanned pregnancies is the lack of access to and availability of birth control methods. This is mostly a consequence of the fact that, while the peace agreement was approaching, the FARC was no longer militarizing the femininity in a similar way as it was during combat. The FARC was no longer responsible for the birth control of these mostly young female ex-combatants. This illustrates how militarized femininity (and the disruption of it) continues to play a role in post-agreement Colombia as well. Hence it remains unclear to me if the FARC stopped to provide and insist contraceptives on its female ex-combatants through its militarized femininity because they were not finding themselves in conflict anymore, or because they were no longer allowed to provide these.

Anyway, the female ex-combatants became responsible for their own sexual and reproductive health while they were entering the regular Colombian ‘Health Promoting Entity’ (EPS). They gained their own agency over the use of birth control, something that they were not used to in the guerrilla. In many cases ex-combatants lack sufficient knowledge of how to use birth control by themselves. The quote above of Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February] also gives that impression. She, as well as another FARC mother I spoke with, told me that she had to take out her contraceptive implant for two months and that is when she got pregnant. Both FARC mothers, as well as many others, were used to this particular contraceptive method. The only method that could have avoided the pregnancy in those months is the use of condoms but it seems that they did not use those (correctly), which could be for various reasons. Besides the lack of knowledge it is also an issue that ex-combatants often lack the access to contraceptives, particularly in the (sometimes isolated) ETCR’s. According to Catherina [Specialist on Peace and Reincorporation, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of March], there was a lot of frustration and disinformation about birth control after the peace agreement, but recently the information about contraceptives has increased while the access to it is still lacking.

According to Olga Lucía Marín [FARC’s National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March], it is important to understand that the FARC did no longer have available funds to provide the birth control since they were not allowed to earn money the way they did during the armed conflict. She adds that currently the government has the responsibility to provide birth control but that they cannot guarantee the methods. She argues that female ex-combatants have gotten pregnant because the FARC is not controlling the contraceptives anymore and women do not always have easy access to birth control. In fact, Maria [CNR, Bogota, 24<sup>th</sup> of January] also told me: *“So, there are some barriers in the access to sexual and reproductive health due to the conditions of the processes of reincorporation [...]. That in this moment many [female ex-combatants] have children. Not because they chose to but*



*more because of the lack of pills and other contraceptive methods.*” This example illustrates how the current disrupted militarized femininity, in terms of the forced contraceptives, has resulted in sometimes negative consequences for ex-combatants.

In the next chapter I will emphasize on the healthcare situation for (female) ex-combatants where it becomes clear that ex-combatants are exposed to various challenges in terms of the access to and availability of healthcare during reincorporation. For example, during my time in Icononzo I did not get the impression that there were any contraceptives available in the area. The nearest pharmacy is, according to my knowledge, in the town of Icononzo, which is a forty minute drive away. Various people mentioned that the lack of access to and availability of birth control in post-accord Colombia is the responsibility of the state. Camilo Sánchez Meertens [Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] said that there are indeed difficulties in the availability of birth control, but it is also one’s own responsibility to ensure his or her birth control. I did not further reflect upon this with the FARC mothers but my impression is that the relatively high amount of un-expected pregnancies demonstrates that FARC ex-combatants faced challenges in having to deal with this new responsibility.

While I mentioned earlier that (forced) abortions occurred because motherhood was prohibited in the guerrilla, it is no longer possible for these practices to occur during reincorporation. Since the FARC ex-combatants were entering the Colombian health system, the ‘FARC medics’ who took care of the injured and ill during combat, were no longer allowed to perform these tasks in post-accord Colombia. This also means that practices such as (illegal) abortions in the guerrilla were impossible to be practiced from then on. The FARC mothers who had an unplanned and sometimes also undesired pregnancy did in most cases not have any other option in post-accord Colombia than keeping the baby. This is another example of how the current disrupted militarized femininity sometimes implies challenging consequences for ex-combatants.

In addition, one FARC mother told me that she got pregnant when the peace agreement was not signed yet. She explained that she was extremely stressed about her pregnancy because the majority of Colombians had voted against the peace agreement. She was afraid that the peace agreement would not be firmed and that they would go back to war. For her it was simply not an option to have a baby if they would go back to war so she was seriously thinking about abortion while she was already a few months pregnant. Her example demonstrates that she does not wish to live her motherhood under the conditions of militarized femininity during conflict. Luckily for her, her partner and her baby, the final peace agreement was signed not even two months later. They decided to have the baby since peace, and different life circumstances were around the corner.

#### *Embracing Unplanned Motherhood*

*“I was not sure what it was like being a mother. I was not sure if he [ex-partner] would help me out, without a job. Now that we are in this... And I was like yes I will have the baby. And one thing: I think it was a very irresponsible decision, but I do not regret it. I love my baby, I love her with all my soul. But I was not sure how it was like to be a mother, nor how to raise the baby, how I would be able to take care of the baby. I simply said I will have the baby.”*

Araceli [Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March]

In the above quote Araceli [Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March] explains that it was a rather irresponsible decision to have her baby. She did not know what would happen and how she would be able to take care of the baby because of the insecure circumstances at the start of the reincorporation. She explicitly told me it was her decision to keep the baby because her ex-partner told her to abort. Another FARC mother, Elisa [Bogota, 21<sup>st</sup> of March], got pregnant by accident as she was not taking her birth control correctly. She was in the same insecure situation since it was still unsure whether the peace agreement would be signed. She told me that she and her partner did not plan to become parents because they first wanted to study before having a child. Therefore it was quite a shock that she was pregnant and, just like many other FARC mothers who did not plan to have a baby (yet), she was very overwhelmed with her pregnancy. Despite of the insecurity they felt at that moment, they decided to have the baby.

I got the impression that especially these FARC mothers experienced a strong mix between worries and happiness with regards to their motherhood in post-accord Colombia. And in fact, even though the ‘different circumstances’ came along with hope, being able to think of a future, a family and parenthood, especially at the beginning of the reincorporation process there was a lot of insecurity of what would happen. Despite this insecurity, various FARC mothers said that even though the baby was unplanned, they wanted to keep the baby because of the current different circumstances in post-accord Colombia. These new conditions allow FARC ex-combatants to enjoy parenthood and to spend time together with their babies. They can see them growing up and they can take care of them the way they have in mind, instead of having to hand over the children to relatives. Their lives are no longer militarized in terms of sexual and reproductive health like they had been in the past. Now that the war was over, they could establish a different life where it is possible to think about a future together with their own families.

### No Motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia

*“You will also find a lot of women from the FARC who are not mothers. They have passed the age or they still did not want to become mothers.”*

Olga Lucía Marín

[FARC’s National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January]

*“Yes it [motherhood in conflict] was very painful, very painful right, it implied a lot of sacrifices. In fact, many of them decided because of that to voluntarily postpone, to postpone their maternity [...]. Luckily I had my children before. There are other women who arrived at the process and they remained childless. But they would have liked them because maternity is definitely an option for women, but it is not an obligation.”*

Lorena [Female Ex-combatant, Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March]

*“Many women spent almost their entire life in the guerrilla and they could not have children [...]. I would say that some could not develop their maternity because the war itself did not allow them to do so. But they are developing it with their cousins, with their nephews.”*

Martina [Bogota, 6<sup>th</sup> of February]

In the last part of ‘No Motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia’ I would like to touch upon the female ex-combatants who are not able to perform motherhood, who do not wish to do so or who have decided it is not the right moment yet as the quote above of Olga Lucía Marín [FARC’s National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] illustrates. It is relevant to do so because despite of the ‘baby boom’, there is a significant amount of women who are not performing motherhood in post-accord Colombia for different reasons. Hereby it is crucial to mention that not every woman has the desire to become a mother in life and some women are therefore satisfied to remain childless.

As Lorena [Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March] explains in the above quote: many female ex-combatants preferred to postpone motherhood and some women therefore do not have children. Most female ex-combatants entered as adolescents and had not yet developed motherhood prior to joining the guerrilla. Those who stayed many years, sometimes decades, in the guerrilla have passed their reproductive age while they were giving shape to their lives as *guerrilleras* and subject to FARC’s militarized femininity. Martina [Bogota, 6<sup>th</sup> of February] explains that even though these women are not able to enjoy motherhood in post-accord Colombia, some try to shape motherhood differently and they develop similar feelings with their cousins or nephews.

Two other female ex-combatants I spoke with explained that for them it is not the right moment to become mothers. One woman told me that she is not thinking about children yet because she does not have the resources to take care of a baby at the moment, but in the future she would like to have children. Another female ex-combatant explained that she was thinking of having children one day but now that she separated from her partner she is not thinking of that anymore. Also, having children implies a lot of costs and responsibilities and she feels that she already has a lot of responsibilities. She also thought

she would have died young in the guerrilla and therefore would not have been able to ever have children. It shows how some may have never envisioned a future, so thinking about children was not something they had on their mind. These examples illustrate that some female ex-combatants are consciously deciding not to perform motherhood (yet) because of (economic) insecurity, not having a partner or because of other responsibilities they have in post-accord Colombia.

## Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to explore the reasons for the very unexpected and recent motherhood of FARC women which was caused by the large amount of planned as well as unplanned pregnancies during the peace process and right after peace agreement. I emphasized that it is likely that in many cases the pregnancies were a common decision of the FARC mothers and their (ex-)partners. However, as I have not further looked into the role of men and their ideas about parenthood, this chapter is focused on the reasons for the recent motherhood from a more individual point of view. I did so by firstly looking into how motherhood was shaped in the guerrilla and the experiences of it. By doing so I hoped to be able to give an answer to the first sub-question of this thesis: *“What were the reasons for FARC ex-combatants to become mothers in post-accord Colombia?”*

The three theories central in this thesis, and the connections between them, were very relevant for this chapter. They helped to obtain a well-developed understanding of the reasons for the recent motherhood. Militarized femininity was central in order to understand how the sexual and reproductive health and rights of FARC women were controlled during the guerrilla. The suppressed motherhood through FARC's militarized identity has played a significant role in the decisions to perform motherhood during reincorporation. In addition, FARC's militarized femininity is disrupted and it does no longer exercise the control in a similar way through forced contraceptives and abortions. However, this does not imply that the militarized femininity has completely disappeared after the peace agreement, something which Enloe (1993: 3) also stressed upon. I will further elaborate on this in the last chapter of this thesis.

In that sense, militarized femininity does not only clarify how the femininity of female ex-combatants was controlled in the guerrilla, but also how this control and the following disruption of it during reincorporation have contributed to the high amount of (unplanned) pregnancies in post-accord Colombia. First of all, the disrupted militarized femininity resulted in a radical change in the lives of ex-combatants. It opened possibilities to think about babies and the formation of families. Second of all, this disrupted militarized femininity has resulted in many unplanned pregnancies because of the lack of accessibility of and knowledge about contraceptives. This chapter therefore illustrates how this theory is, in the case of the FARC, not only relevant for studying this control in the past, but also what this disrupted control implies for the present.

In addition, post-insurgency was also guiding this chapter since I consider motherhood as one of the many accommodations that FARC women started to make during their reincorporation in post-accord Colombia. The purpose of this chapter was to find out why FARC mothers, often together with their (ex-)partners, have chosen this particular accommodation. Lastly, using the theory of gender performativity allowed me to look at how motherhood could not be performed in a conventional way during conflict because of FARC's militarized femininity. After the disruption with militarized femininity, through the signing of the peace agreement, this performance started to become possible. This illustrates how different performances are possible in different settings, at different moments in time.

The chapter started with 'Motherhood during Conflict' where I spoke about how motherhood was experienced during conflict, according to 'insiders' as well as outsiders. I touched upon 'Impossible Motherhood' and 'Possible Motherhood'. I used the contextualization of the past since the past (and the controlled femininity) plays a crucial role in the reasons female ex-combatants are currently performing their motherhood. Then I turned to the most important part of this chapter: 'Motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia' where 'Planned Motherhood' looked into the reasons for motherhood of the recent FARC mothers who planned the pregnancy. 'Unplanned Motherhood' considered the reasons for the many unplanned pregnancies. I lastly touched upon the women who do not perform motherhood in post-accord Colombia (yet) and their reasons for it in 'No Motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia'.

The first part, 'Motherhood during Conflict', aimed to contextualize how motherhood was given shape during the armed conflict as it turned out to be crucial for the understanding of the reasons for it. I firstly discovered 'Impossible Motherhood' where I aimed to gain insights into how and why motherhood was prohibited by the FARC through its militarized femininity which exposed FARC's female combatants to different kinds of birth control and abortions. This strict control has resulted in the impossibility of experiencing motherhood, or experiencing motherhood in a conventional way. Then I looked at the perceptions and experiences of the FARC mothers with regards to this 'impossible motherhood'. It became evident that being a mother in conflict was not something most FARC mothers were wishing for. They argue that the war is just not a setting for babies and children. From that point of view it could be said that this strict militarized femininity was in a way also liberating for FARC's female ex-combatants. There was in that sense an interesting tension between the feeling of control and the feeling of liberalisation. It illustrates how their perception is very much in line with the arguments for FARC's militarized femininity. Whether this perception is a consequence of the years, or even decades, long exposure to this controlled femininity or because of their own personal experiences, is something I have not been able to find out.

I secondly spoke about 'Possible Motherhood'. Even though femininity was controlled in the FARC, there were pregnancies and babies were born. This implied an unconventional and 'illogical' motherhood for those female ex-combatants who decided to stay in the guerrilla. The performance of 'motherhood on a distance', since the conventional caretaking of the children was forced to be handed over to others, was combined with the performance of a *guerrillera*. Women who experienced this type of motherhood during the guerrilla had little to no contact with their children, had problems finding their children after the peace agreement and most importantly: they completely missed out on the first years of childhood of their children. The militarized femininity they were exposed to has resulted in many challenges of motherhood during conflict.

The second part of this chapter discovered the many different reasons for the FARC women and their (ex-)partners to become parents so rapidly in such large amounts in post-agreement Colombia. It became clear that at least half of the pregnancies of the FARC mothers I spoke with was unplanned. In 'Planned Motherhood' I discussed the most important reasons for the planned pregnancies of FARC mothers. I firstly considered the 'Different Circumstances' where I could observe that the radical switch between life in the guerrilla and life in post-agreement Colombia opened up the possibility to think about a future, a family and about parenthood in general. The switch meant that the femininity of the female combatants was no longer militarized in terms of sexual and reproductive health. Therefore, female ex-combatants started to have agency over their own bodies and they could take their own decisions about motherhood.

I secondly spoke about 'Before it is too late', where I illustrated the FARC mothers who mentioned that the reason for their (rapid) pregnancy was that they were reaching the limit of their healthy reproductive age. They therefore wanted to take advantage of the opportunity of motherhood as soon as they could. I thirdly spoke about 'Natural Motherhood', where the rapid and recent motherhood of FARC mothers was by some people explained as something natural to being a woman and therefore seemed a logical next step in the reincorporation process. Here it is crucial to mention that this reason was stressed by the outsiders instead of by the FARC mothers themselves. However, my own observations also suggested that it could be that, indeed, motherhood was a rather logical step after years of being a *guerrillera*. Furthermore, I question the legitimacy of this reason because I doubt the amount of exposure to the dominant traditional gender performances for the reason that FARC ex-combatants particularly find themselves inside the 'FARC spheres'.

In 'Unplanned Motherhood' I provided explanations for the large amount of unplanned pregnancies in post-agreement Colombia. I suggest that the unplanned pregnancies are particularly a result of the fact that the FARC has stopped its militarized control over the femininity of its female combatants in terms of the provision and obligation of contraceptives. Also, the abortions which occurred in the guerrilla were no longer possible in post-agreement Colombia. Female ex-combatants started to enter the regular health care system during reincorporation in which they lack access to and knowledge about contraceptives. The lack of access and availability of birth control can be considered to be a consequence of the switch from the responsibility of the FARC's leadership to the responsibility of the government and of the ex-

combatants themselves. The lack of knowledge is mostly a result of the fact that female ex-combatants were not regulating their sexual and reproductive health themselves while they were in the guerrilla.

Even though many of the pregnancies of the FARC mothers were unplanned, they were not necessarily undesired: FARC mothers, together with their (ex-)partners, embraced their pregnancy very happily despite the insecure times and the sometimes difficult circumstances they are living in. These women are no longer restricted in the performance of motherhood and they are able to give shape to it the way they wish to. In the last section of 'No Motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia' I spoke about the female ex-combatants who are not performing motherhood because they do not wish to, they do not think it is the right timing (yet), they are not able to or because they currently have other priorities and responsibilities.

All in all, I am confident that this chapter has achieved to answer the first sub-research question by firstly analysing how motherhood was shaped and experienced during the guerrilla before I illustrated the most important reasons for the recent motherhood of the FARC mothers. Hereby I sometimes observed frictions in terms of ideas and opinions between the different parties I spoke with during my fieldwork, which made the analysis of the reasons particularly interesting. Despite the relatively small amount of FARC mothers and outsiders I have spoken to, I am confident that the reasons that I have pointed out in this chapter serve as a realistic representation for the motherhood of other FARC mothers as well.

## 6. Being Mothers: the Experiences of FARC Mothers during Reincorporation

*“My daughter is the one who is taking me out of a world in which I found myself to a certain degree immersed.. in the sense that.. No, the war, you are only thinking about that, the dead, the fallen companions. Or of oneself, what will happen to me? When is it my turn to die, when will it happen? In this world of uncertainty.. And then after all of that, my daughter was born and it took away a lot of thoughts. Because now it was me dedicated to her, the milk, the diapers, the food.. if I have to stay up during the night, which were other things, another world, another reality. Especially the desire to fight, the future of my daughter is the future that one projects, a future that one will make.”*

Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January]

*‘The most beautiful thing is to have them together.. the most beautiful is to see how he grows since he was small, how he turns around.. From her [her first child during combat] I did not see anything. It is really beautiful to see all of the steps, how he caress you. He is a company, I do not feel alone anymore. I feel accompanied.’*

Melisa [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February]

*“‘Todo cambia mamita’ (everything changes ‘mommy’) [...]. For me it has been a beautiful experience and it continues to be very ‘chévere’ (cool) to be a mother. For me it has been an experience that leaves me something, that stays with me. It is a lesson as well, because I did not know how to be a mother, nor how to carry a baby, nor how to breastfeed, nor how to change her. No, so it has been a lesson day after day.”*

Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February]

### Introduction

The above quotes illustrate some of the experiences of FARC mothers with regards to their recent motherhood during reincorporation in post-accord Colombia. Most of these are positive and happy feelings. However, FARC mothers also come across significant challenges. The current moment is very insecure since FARC women were, during my fieldwork, finding themselves in the reincorporation process that would initially end in August 2019. This insecurity has a significant influence on how these women live and experience their motherhood. For that reason, this chapter serves to explore the different personal experiences, emotions, beautiful moments, challenges, dreams and future plans of these recent FARC mothers. These do not solely give insights into motherhood, but also into the general reincorporation process FARC ex-combatants are going through. By doing so I aim to give an answer to the second sub-question of this thesis: *“How do FARC women experience and give shape to their motherhood during reincorporation?”*

I consider FARC women’s motherhood a social process during reincorporation. It is therefore particularly relevant to look at this phenomenon through the lens of post-insurgency, which allows a closer look at their experiences as mothers. These experiences are a result of the transformations and accommodations they have been making during their reincorporation process. With this lens in mind, I study the experiences and the particular shape that they give to motherhood from a social and relational perspective instead of from the dominant DDR perspective. Here I look at the ‘different types of adjustments’, personal as well as collective, that the FARC mothers are making. Like this I will be able, just as Ralph Sprenkels, to explore FARC mothers’ motherhood after conflict by considering it a social process in a particular political and historical context.

Actually, many women referred to their experiences before and during the guerrilla in order to clarify how they feel about motherhood currently. Therefore, I aim to contribute to the knowledge about how adjustments in post-accord Colombia are being made according to their “accumulated social history” (Sprenkels, 2004: 444). The ‘baby boom’ and recent motherhood of these FARC mothers can be considered to be a collective phenomenon since so many women became mothers at a very particular moment.

However, the everyday experiences, emotions and feelings of FARC mothers are very personal, diverse and based on individual choices and decisions. It is therefore impossible to make any strong generalizations. Every mother performs her mother role according to how she thinks it should be performed. Some prefer to combine the mother role with other roles, while others do not feel this need. The performance of this role could be based on how they have been raised, how they have seen others raising children or how they think it is best. This is in line with Sprenkels (2014), who argues that there are both individual as well as collective accommodations that ex-combatants make during reincorporation (p.35-37).

In addition to post-insurgency, gender performativity and militarized femininity (the gendered perspective on the lived experience of post-insurgency) are also of importance for studying the experiences of the recent motherhood. Gender roles are not static and genders can take up different roles at different moments in time. In this chapter I study the performance of the mother role in post-accord Colombia. The conventional mother role is a new role for the recent FARC mothers because FARC's militarized femininity made this role impossible to be performed during conflict. During years, sometimes decades, the *guerrillera* role was the dominant role. This role was in some occasions combined with the 'motherhood on a distance' role, which differs significantly from the mother role they are currently performing. How they give shape to their new mother role and how they experience it are influenced by the setting (post-insurgency) and by their experiences during the insurgency (under militarized femininity).

In 'Beautiful Motherhood' I will talk about what FARC mothers enjoy most about their recent motherhood and their babies. 'Challenging Motherhood' looks into the challenges FARC mothers currently experience. These serve as a reflection on the overall reincorporation process. I lastly look into 'How FARC mothers imagine their future and that of their babies' where I discuss FARC mothers' dreams, future plans and the guerrilla values which they would like to tell their children about. I will close this chapter with a conclusion where I aim to answer the second sub-question of this thesis.

## Beautiful Motherhood

*"Ah I do not know.. from her.. like every small thing she does. I do not know how love is that you feel for them. Like the love that all the mothers in the world feel. To see the progress, every small thing she does. Today was the first time she could get up the bed herself. Now that she can get up we will write that down in a notebook. 'Las cosas más noñas' (the most 'nerdy' things) you can imagine [...]. To see a happy baby. It may be very egocentric but it is like I am doing this, I am collaborating to the fact that she is happy."*

Araceli [Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March]

*'It is really beautiful to have children because you are not alone anymore. There is something to fight for, to move forward because of her. Now I am thinking of two.'*

Gabriela [Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February]

*'I am satisfied, I am happy, at least you can stop to worry. There is no more war. There is only the job and the children. Everything is different now. Maybe you do not have money but you are without worries. Now you are free of those things. There is a lot of danger in the mountains and even more with a baby'.*

Melisa [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February]

The above quotes represent some of the positive emotions that come along with the motherhood of the recent FARC mothers. Araceli [Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of February] explains the progress her baby is making every day. In Gabriela's words [Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February] 'company' is central. While Melisa [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February] emphasized that there are no more worries when you are in reincorporation. This is in contrast with the worries she experienced in the mountains as a *guerrillera*. Most FARC mothers I spoke with in both Bogota and Icononzo mentioned similar positive feelings where 'company', 'growing', 'transformations' and '*bonito*' (beautiful) were frequently mentioned.

One of my observations during my fieldwork was that women are very *encima de los hijos* ('on top of their children'). During the majority of the interviews their babies were with them. When I was interviewing the FARC mothers they were constantly aware of their babies: Is she hungry or thirsty? Is he not hurting himself? Is she bored or tired? One FARC mother in Bogota mentioned that she does not leave her baby in a kindergarten because she is afraid that something happens to her. In general the FARC mothers I interviewed are very careful and cautious with giving the care taking of their babies to others. I got the feeling that this cautiousness could be a result of the insecure lives these women have lived during years where danger was always around the corner. My impression is that they make all the possible efforts to prevent that something would happen to their babies. While I did not further talk about this with the FARC mothers, it makes sense, from Sprenkels' point of view, that the past experiences in the guerrilla play an important role during post-insurgency.

### Growing and Transforming

*'What I like most about her is that she is growing, that she gets more 'grandecita' (bigger), that she gets fatter.'*

Silvia [Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February]

The positive feeling of seeing the baby grow, making steps forward and transform, was very prominent in the answers of the FARC mothers when I asked them what they like most about being a mother or about their babies. One FARC mother mentioned what she likes most is to see her baby grow little by little. *'It is the best experience to be a mother, I had never expected it to be like that'* [Elisa, Bogota, 21<sup>st</sup> of March], she adds. These FARC mothers enjoy the most simple things about their babies, which they pointed out very clearly. Because of FARC's militarized femininity, this positive feeling was impossible to experience with motherhood in the guerrilla. They were unable to experience the small steps of their children. Now, while being in the reincorporation process living under completely different circumstances, the FARC mothers are able to enjoy this positive feeling.

Two FARC mothers who already had a child during conflict were unable to share the early childhood with their children because they were in the guerrilla or in prison. One mother said that she had her first child during the guerrilla and had to leave the child with relatives of her partner. She is reunited with her first child but she did not see her for many years. She now has both children together and she enjoys this very much. She especially likes to see her youngest one grow, something she could never experience with her first child. The other FARC mother emphasized that she could not be calm during her pregnancy in the guerrilla because she was so stressed. In reincorporation it is different: *'Now that I was free, I could enjoy my pregnancy and I could be with my baby'* [Carmen, Icononzo, 13<sup>th</sup> of February]. She was unable to see her first child for many years and was only reunited with her child after the start of reincorporation. One of the main reasons that these two FARC mothers really wished for a second child was to actually be able to live the motherhood together with their babies instead of from a distance. In fact, seeing the baby grow and being able to share every small step gives a lot of happiness to many of the FARC mothers I spoke with.

### Company

*'He is very small but I do not feel alone anymore. My husband is leaving during the week but I do not feel alone because he is there. Raising a child is very beautiful.'*

Luiza [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February]

What Luiza explains above is another important positive feeling that came across during the conversations with the FARC women. With a baby *'you feel accompanied'* [Melisa, Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February], you do not feel alone anymore. Some FARC mothers' partners are away from home a lot because of work. The fact that these FARC mothers emphasize the importance of company suggests that they sometimes may have felt very lonely during their time in the guerrilla while they were far away from their own families. Most ex-combatants I talked with did not speak or see family members during many years or even decades. However, for many the FARC community felt like home and family. I also



got the impression that the babies and recent families avoid the feeling of a certain loneliness during reincorporation where the 'FARC family' is no longer so evident as it used to be during conflict.

Some FARC mothers would have liked this company during their time in the guerrilla but they were unable to have babies during conflict. In addition to that, one of the FARC mothers mentioned above, said that she indeed really enjoys the company of her second child. She never experienced this company with her first child when she was in the guerrilla because her first child was raised by relatives. Since the FARC mothers are currently living their motherhood in the different circumstances of reincorporation, they are having the company some may have started wishing for years ago.

### Different Worries and Priorities

*"Personally the pregnancy gave me a lot of joy because it avoided thinking about a lot of things such as the reincorporation. Such as handing in so many years of your life that you spend in the mountains. Because 'la selva' (the forest) turned into my home, my companions, the collectiveness. To leave this space, this world, to move to a city where you do not know anyone, where you have to make friends."*

Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January]

Numerous FARC mothers explained that they receive positive feelings about having different worries and priorities during reincorporation. It is a 'change': a change of worries, feelings and horizon. As Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January] explains above: the fact that she was pregnant and could focus on that served as a distraction because she was facing a lot of changes and challenges from life in the mountains to life in Bogota. This is a clear example of how motherhood is an accommodation during the reincorporation process which brings an important change in the lives of these ex-combatants. Motherhood is a kind of occupation of time which comes along with certain (positive) experiences and feelings. Thus, this recent motherhood is a social process where FARC mothers are able to avoid thoughts about for instance death in the guerrilla and challenges in reincorporation. In that sense, motherhood gives a certain direction to their new lives.

Like Melisa [16<sup>th</sup> of February] explains in the quote at the beginning of this part: now that the war is over, she feels happy because she can stop worrying and all that she thinks about now are her children and her job. Furthermore, she explained that babies change life completely, which is very joyful. Two other FARC mothers also explicitly mentioned that their lives and priorities have changed drastically with the pregnancy of their babies. They explained that they stopped studying as it is impossible at the moment because 'everything changes once you are a mother'.

Also, these recent mothers do not solely think about themselves but they think in terms of two: making sure that when they leave the house with their babies that they bring enough food, water, diapers and clothes for the baby. The mother role clearly comes with worries which are very different than the ones which come with the *guerrillera* role. You have to be aware constantly: if the baby is crying, if you have to breastfeed the baby and you are in the middle of the street. All the attention goes to the baby, as Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February] explained to me. According to another FARC mother, motherhood does not only change her lifestyle and priorities but it has also changed her personally: *"It is incredible how I changed being a mother"* [Araceli, Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March], she mentions. All in all, reincorporation, and especially performing the new, conventional mother role during this process, comes along with a lot of change for these recent FARC mothers in terms of horizon, worries, lifestyle and personal feelings.

The above mentioned positive feelings are particularly a result of the radical change in the lives of ex-combatants, caused by the peace process and the signing of the peace agreement. This change gave the FARC mothers the possibility to move from their *guerrillera* role to the conventional mother role. The above illustrate how the different shape these FARC women give to their gender role, by becoming mothers and performing the conventional mother role, gave rise to many positive feelings. FARC's militarized femininity during the guerrilla made it impossible to experience these positive emotions. For that reason, the feelings they explained are new to them because they had been unable to experience these before in a similar way.

## Challenging Motherhood

*“I was having my baby when I was alone, I was not with my family. Nobody told me what it is like to be a mother. To bathe your child for the first time is like this... So, a kind of instinct is woken up about this new role of motherhood and without even noticing nature itself tells you how to take care of your child. How to put their clothes on, the process of breastfeeding, The baby depends completely on the caretaking and stimulation of the mother.”*

Martina [Bogota, 6<sup>th</sup> of February]

*“Something that I consider very difficult, difficult in terms of the reincorporation is living in a city. Everything is expensive, everything is money. You have to live with a minimum salary of 700.000 pesos [approximately 200 euros]. You have to buy food, you have to buy everything that the baby needs. You have to pay the rent of this money. It is something that I consider so difficult that it stresses me out.”*

Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February]

*‘What is most difficult about being a mother that there is no one to take care of them. There is work available but I cannot go because the baby is there.’*

Luiza [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February]

The quotes above represent some of the challenges the recent mothers are exposed to during the current reincorporation in post-accord Colombia. What Martina [Bogota, 6<sup>th</sup> of February] describes is that she had no previous knowledge about how to be a mother and how to take care of a baby. Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February] explains how life in the city is very expensive for ex-combatants. Luiza [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February] emphasizes that the lack of a kindergarten is an important challenge for FARC mothers in Icononzo. These challenges shed light on the reincorporation process that FARC mothers, and the larger FARC community, are currently going through. I therefore provide insights into how FARC’s reincorporation process may cause problematic circumstances, particularly for this specific group.

It is crucial to keep in mind that the experiences of these mothers cannot be generalized because each FARC mother has her own struggles and faces context-specific challenges. However, since the majority lives in similar conditions in the city or in the ETCR’s, there are many similarities in terms of the challenges they experience.

It resulted that the FARC mothers experience the reincorporation process significantly different in different places (living inside or outside an ETCR), which result in different challenges. The diversity of challenges illustrates how diverse reincorporation can be experienced by a very alike group of ex-combatants. I will firstly mention the challenges of reincorporation in post-accord Colombia in general (Bogota and Icononzo). I secondly talk about the challenges FARC mothers in Bogota are facing, which are relevant for FARC mothers in other cities or outside ETCR’s in general. I lastly illustrate the challenges FARC mothers face in Icononzo, which I assume to be applicable to other ETCR’s as well.

### FARC Mothers’ Reincorporation Challenges

#### The Lack of Knowledge about Motherhood

*“They said that they have no idea about how to be a mother. Teach us how to be a mother [...]. You have to realize that most entered when they were, let’s say 18 years old, let’s say that the majority entered when they were minors and they have never touched the ‘baby theme’. Now they have a baby but the women around them also have no clue how to be mothers.”*

Milena Peralta [OACP, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of January]

One of the most frequently mentioned challenges for FARC women is the fact that they had hardly any knowledge, or no knowledge at all, about how to be a mother and how to take care of a baby. This challenge was not something I really thought about when I started the research as I was thinking more

about challenges related to their reincorporation process in particular. I was therefore slightly surprised, but I soon realized that this must have been one of the first challenges FARC mothers faced.

As Milena Peralta [OACP, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of January] describes in the quote above: as soon as the pregnant FARC mothers started moving into the ETCR's, authorities received the demand to teach both female and male ex-combatants about how to actually take care of a baby. *So it has been difficult for them to be a mother [...]. How to change a diaper, how to prepare the bottle, which signals you should be aware of, when you have to bring the baby to the doctor. And other mothers who were reunited with their children which are now bigger were wondering how to deal with a teenager*", Milena continued. The things that others may consider 'easy' about motherhood, such as changing a diaper or breastfeeding, were difficult matters for these FARC mothers. They had no knowledge about them because they had not previously performed the mother role during conflict neither prior to entering the guerrilla.

Indeed, when I attended a class in the afternoon in Icononzo where seven FARC mothers were present with their babies, I asked them about their motherhood experiences. One of the first things they said was: *'it is very difficult to be a mother because we lack orientation'* [P.O., Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February]. Even though a few FARC mothers mentioned that they had some knowledge about how to treat babies because they took care of younger brothers and sisters before they joined the guerrilla, most did not. The fact that most ex-combatants joined the guerrilla as adolescents<sup>25</sup> plays a significant role in the lack of knowledge of motherhood. At this age most ex-combatants were not (yet) thinking about becoming mothers or retrieving 'motherhood skills', instead they were about to join the guerrilla.

In addition, I find this challenge particularly interesting and relevant because it confirms the fact that motherhood was not something ex-combatants gained knowledge about during their time in the guerrilla. Instead, ex-combatants, both male and female, gained a lot of knowledge about everything related to the guerrilla. As Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] explained to me: *"Women were in intelligence, explosives, the battle line, communication and nursing. There were male doctors and female doctors who were male nurses and female nurses but with major knowledge which they learned during the combat."* In fact, *guerrilleras* have a lot of knowledge about a wide range of subjects, but cannot really put these in practice when it comes to the very 'basic motherhood tasks'. Also, the FARC mothers who already had babies during conflict had to give their babies to relatives. This means that they were unable to develop their knowledge on motherhood as they did not share the early childhood with their babies.

The accommodations<sup>26</sup> FARC mothers make in post accord Colombia in order to deal with this lack of knowledge on motherhood differ per FARC mother. This illustrates how FARC mothers give shape to their mother role in diverse ways and how they have managed to overcome this by the different accommodations. Some FARC mothers requested authorities to teach them the basic knowledge about motherhood, as Milena Peralta [OACP, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of January] explained above. Other FARC mothers asked for help from other (usually older) *guerrilleras*. Others mentioned that even though they did not have any knowledge, they could manage motherhood because it was something natural. Like Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February] told me: *"No, no one taught me how to be a mother, but it is like this maternity unleashes how to take care of a baby. That I have to breastfeed her, that I have to make sure she releases the gases. That you should talk to them, not sharply but with love, you have to talk gently to them."*

Lastly, the fact that many FARC mothers, FARC higher rank ex-combatants and outside experts mentioned this challenge confirms that the 'baby boom' phenomenon and rapid motherhood were unexpected. Therefore, there were no adequate interventions formulated which would have offered a solution to this lack of knowledge. In that sense, an insufficiently designed reincorporation process fails to meet the necessities of these FARC mothers. This complicates the reincorporation process for those women who are not solely getting used to 'being a civilian' but also to 'being a mother'.

---

<sup>25</sup> Ten of the twelve FARC mothers I formally interviewed were between 13 and 16 years old when they joined the guerrilla.

<sup>26</sup> With accommodations I refer to the moves and actions of FARC mothers in order to overcome this particular challenge.

## Healthcare

*'Something that is difficult is the health system that we have to confront like ex-combatants... It is like the system for all of the Colombians.'*

Elisa [Bogota, 21<sup>st</sup> of March]

A second important challenge for ex-combatants is the healthcare in post-accord Colombia, which can be particularly challenging for the FARC mothers and their babies. When I spoke with ex-combatants and experts about this topic, what concerns them most is the access to healthcare and the availability of it. The second depends on where the ex-combatants are located: inside or outside the ETCR's.

Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March] explained that the guerrilla had its own healthcare system. There were many FARC combatants working as doctors and nurses who provided medical care to their own combatants as well as to the civilian population close to the FARC territories. This healthcare system functioned very well because when a combatant was injured or ill, the combatant was attended rapidly. As soon as the peace agreement was signed and the ex-combatants started moving into the ZVTN's, these doctors and nurses could not put their skills and knowledge into practice anymore as it became illegal. When I asked one FARC mother about this she told me: "No, no they could not because we were not a military anymore. There was no more need. Now that we are not in war anymore [...]" [Araceli, Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March].

Ex-combatants had to enter the Colombian 'Health Promoting Entity' (EPS) once their reincorporation process started. People get affiliated to this system so they can be attended by clinics and hospitals. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Colombia was in charge of the affiliation of the ex-combatants. Many ex-combatants are not satisfied with this affiliation and the Colombian health system because they argue it does not function as well as their guerrilla health system. Now they are facing the same struggles (such as long waiting lines) as the rest of Colombia's citizens.

When I was walking around the ETCR (Icononzo) with another ex-combatant I ran into an ex-combatant in the late stage of her pregnancy. She said she was in pain but she could only have an appointment with a doctor in the town of Icononzo for next week. Having to wait various days for an appointment can be particularly dangerous for (late stage) pregnant women. Luckily there are ex-combatants with medical skills who can give assistance in case of emergencies. When I spoke with Sara [Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] about the health system and how it is like in Icononzo she told me the following: *'The health system there is very bad like in the entire country'*. Catherina [Specialist on Peace and Reincorporation, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of March] mentioned that there is a healthcare facility in Icononzo but that, indeed, the reality is the same for all the Colombians. As can be observed in Figure 17, the medical assistance in February 2019 was on Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday the 13<sup>th</sup> and Thursday the 28<sup>th</sup>. Next to that there is a white paper which says that every Tuesday and Thursday from 9 AM until 2 PM the ARN will be available in the healthcare facility to receive requests for appointments, medical exams and uncertainties that ex-combatants may have with regards to their health.

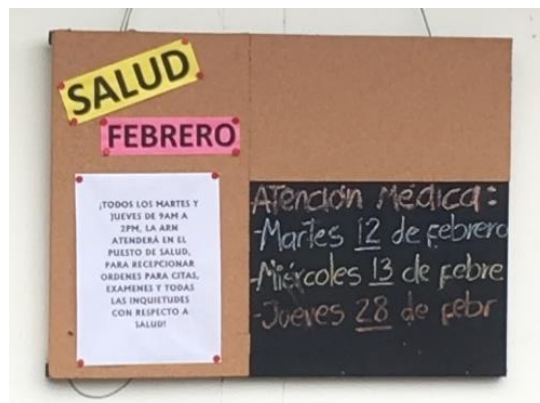


Figure 17: sign of the medical assistance in February 2019

The fact that the healthcare facility only functions a few days a week means that the other days of the week ex-combatants will have to go to the closest medical assistance facility, which is in the town of Icononzo. However, according to Carmen [Icononzo, 13<sup>th</sup> of February], medical services are limited in Icononzo and when you wish to visit a paediatrician you have to go to the next town (Melgar). Melgar can be reached in approximately one hour by public transport from the town of Icononzo. She therefore argues that the main challenge she faces is that the healthcare for children is very difficult in Icononzo (ETCR). Keeping in mind that Icononzo is one of the most easiest to reach ETCR's in Colombia, one can imagine how the healthcare situation for ex-combatants in other ETCR's looks like.

Ex-combatants in Bogota and other cities are usually closer to hospitals and clinics, but they still have to deal with long waiting lines. Therefore, reincorporation goes hand in hand with the struggle of being exposed and having to adapt to a healthcare system that these ex-combatants consider to have worked better in the guerrilla. It demonstrates how the FARC had a way of life that functioned very well for them, but how this life is drastically changed as a consequence of reincorporation. This is particularly challenging for FARC mothers, their babies and pregnant ex-combatants.

### Stigmatization and Fear

*“Wherever they know, you feel the insecurity. There are places where people know that you have been an ex-combatant, so you keep suspicious because of course, the insecurity, someone can shoot you any moment. But at the moment, here [her apartment] nobody knows, we do not tell anything about it. We live like any person who has not been an ex-combatant. And whenever they talk ugly about the FARC, about the guerrilla, that they are bad, well we do not know them [the guerrilla].”*

Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February]

Another challenge that was highlighted was the stigmatization FARC mothers are confronted with in post-agreement Colombia. Female FARC ex-combatants are generally stigmatized twice for the reason that they, firstly, took up arms and secondly, a woman who fights is not something society is used to [Laura Cardoza, Advisor of Senator Victoria Sandino, Bogota, 17<sup>th</sup> of January]. Female combatants broke with traditional gender roles, by performing the *guerrillera* role.

For that reason, ex-combatants often fear to tell civilians that they are ex-combatants and therefore decide to hide their identity, as Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February] explains above. Adriana [Bogota, 18<sup>th</sup> of February], an ex-combatant without children, argues that society is not ready to receive the ex-combatants and that it is therefore indeed better to hide your ex-combatant identity. As Araceli [Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March], a FARC mother, explained: *“But obviously I do not tell it to anyone, nobody knows [...]. In none of our papers the process appears [...]. But people ask me why we are ‘special population’, because we are victims [she tells them]. I do not tell anybody, nor in the kindergarten and at my job even less.”* She continued by explaining that she feels afraid that people may find out, that something may happen to her. And when something happens to her, who will take care of her baby, she asks herself emotionally. Another female ex-combatant, who has older children, explained that she was very moved when she noticed that people were treating her daughter differently because her mother is an ex-combatant. In fact, the stigmatization that she faces in Colombian society is one of the hardest things for her about reincorporating into society. This challenge is in that regard especially an issue for the FARC mothers who also have the responsibility over their babies.

Araceli [Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March], who now lives with her family in Bogota, said that the beginning of reincorporation was very hard. When she got back to her family her mother told her that the worst thing that could have happened is that she would have come back to her. She continued by saying that: *“My brothers told me that we do not deserve to reproduce ourselves, but now they love the baby a lot. But it was a tense process to reincorporate in the family, it is hard [...].”* If even her family does not want her, how will the rest of the society accept her, she wonders. In contrast to that, Adriana [Bogota, 18<sup>th</sup> of February], an ex-combatant without children, suspects that FARC mothers may actually be accepted easier because they are now performing the mother role instead of the *guerrillera* role. Therefore, being a mother may eventually enhance their reincorporation because civilians (particularly women) can potentially identify themselves easier with these FARC mothers. However, I have not further investigated this assumption as it is not the focus of this thesis.

Even though the stigmatization, fear and the hiding of the identity of an ex-combatant is a serious worry for many ex-combatants, the amount of stigmatization depends largely on the environment where the ex-combatant finds him- or herself or on the rank that the ex-combatant had. In fact, many ex-combatants living in ETCR's have not yet had a lot of encounters with civilians and they are therefore only partly exposed to the reality of post-agreement Colombia. It is likely that the hardest part for them is yet to come. Therefore, this challenge seems to particularly be an issue for ex-combatants living outside ETCR's, where they are surrounded by civilians or paramilitaries that could be a potential danger to them.

Lastly, I believe that reincorporation is a mutual process: ex-combatants are expected to reincorporate, but civilians and other non-state armed groups are also expected to accept the reincorporation of the former combatants. The fact that FARC mothers mention this challenge, suggests that society is still hesitant to accept the reincorporation process of FARC ex-combatants. I think this is rather unsurprising because the majority of Colombians voted against the peace agreement.

### Guerrilla Knowledge

*"I was a dentist during my time in the guerrilla. But here, to work, you need a certification to be able to work [...]. I learned it in the guerrilla, I spent 14 years with dental care in the guerrilla. I worked a lot and I was studying in Venezuela but the problem is that we had other names. Everyone had another name which was obviously not the real one. So I have the certifications but they do not serve here because they are with another name."*

Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February]

The last general challenge is what Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February] mentions above: the fact that many FARC mothers do not have certified diplomas from their time in the guerrilla. Also, many did not finish primary school or high school before entering the guerrilla since they were still adolescents. Ex-combatants who finished their (university) degree before entering therefore have an advantage. The first matter is particularly relevant for the FARC mothers I spoke with in Bogota since they are confronted with having to enter the 'civilian labour force'. The second matter I particularly observed in Icononzo where the majority of the FARC mothers I interviewed were following high school classes in the ETCR. One FARC mother was finishing primary school on Saturdays. This illustrates how FARC mothers are combining their mother role with other roles, something I will touch upon in the next chapter.

Even though these women are still trying to obtain these diplomas, this does not mean they are not educated or that they do not have specific knowledge. While talking with the FARC mothers and other ex-combatants I realized how much knowledge they have about some topics: medicine, dental care and communication among others. Most have been able to develop themselves a lot during their time in the guerrilla. For some ex-combatants this was one of the reasons they were interested in joining the guerrilla in the first place.

While entering post-agreement Colombian society, FARC mothers have been confronted with the fact that this knowledge is not acknowledged formally. As Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February], who was a nurse and in charge of communication as a *guerrillera*, explains: *"Well I do not have anything like these certificates so this is something that binds us to the cooperatives that are starting to function right now. These are purely ex-combatants and they do not ask for papers. Or there are ex-combatants who do not have a high school diploma for example. You know that nowadays even for sweeping they require a high school diploma. And the majority of us does not have that."* Even for the 'easiest' or 'most basic' jobs you need at least a high school diploma.

Because of the unrecognized FARC knowledge in combination with the (sometimes) lack of school diplomas, the reincorporation in post-agreement Colombia is hindered. The process goes on a slower pace since FARC ex-combatants have challenges finding jobs and they are therefore often restricted to the few productive projects that have initiated since the peace agreement. This was confirmed by one FARC mother who explained that she had not started her 'real' incorporation in post-agreement Colombia yet because she has not yet tried to enter the labour force as she is still at home taking care of her baby. Her comment made me realize that being able to enter the labour force is an important pillar of reincorporation for these women. This is strongly impeded by the fact that their knowledge is not

recognized. This challenge is especially worrying for FARC mothers since they do not only have to take care of themselves, but of their babies and families as well. As long as they are receiving the basic income they seem to be able to manage, but as soon as that will stop it will become an even bigger issue.

### Reincorporation Challenges in Bogota

This part will look into some of the most important challenges which were stressed by the FARC mothers living in Bogota. They live in Bogota because of job and study opportunities or because they are very politically active. Others moved to Bogota because of the job of the partner or reunification with family members. These challenges give an idea about the struggles FARC mothers, as well as other (female) ex-combatants living outside ETCR's, are confronted with.

#### Costs and Mobility

*"I prefer Icononzo because of the costs. Here there are a lot of costs. In Icononzo you do not have to pay rent or services and you have your own house. Here you live for the rent."*

Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February]

One of the challenges is what Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February] explains above: she prefers to live in Icononzo because living in Bogota implies a lot of costs. In Bogota she has to pay the rent and the services for the house while ex-combatants who live in ETCR's do not. In addition, ex-combatants living in ETCR's also receive alimentation. Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February], who lives in Bogota, explained that: *"everything is money"*. She and her partner both receive the basic income<sup>27</sup>, but the simple and small apartment she lives in, in a rather marginalized neighbourhood, already costs them 600.000 Colombian pesos a month.

Two FARC mothers in Icononzo also said that they are worried about the living costs since one of them is together with a civilian, who does not receive the basic income. The other one has to take care of two children by herself. The basic income which ex-combatants receive does not increase when ex-combatants have a child, neither does it increase when ex-combatants have more than one child. As long as ex-combatants still receive the basic income they seem to be able to manage their financial situation, but once this will stop daily life will be more challenging, especially for many FARC mothers.

Elena [4<sup>th</sup> of February, Bogota] continued explaining: *"But you know that basically the basic income we receive goes to the rent. But later you need food, you need the transport, you need the diapers. Thanks to the fact that my baby has not been sick yet, that I do not have to buy milk, breastfeeding is enough. Because if not..."* Again, this is the same reality many Colombians face: a rather cheap rent is often the same as the minimum salary. Because many ex-combatants try to save money on the rent, they have to travel far to get to Bogota's centre. A few FARC mothers explained that this is another main challenge: the mobility. It takes a lot of time to get from one place to another, something that they are not used to.

The challenge of 'Costs and Mobility' demonstrates the radical change of lifestyle that ex-combatants are exposed to during reincorporation. Keeping in mind the mostly rural background of FARC ex-combatants, it is likely that they have never been exposed to these circumstances prior to entering the guerrilla. It is a complicated challenge, particularly for FARC mothers, because it is linked to other reincorporation challenges. Because ex-combatants' guerrilla knowledge is not acknowledged, they lack a primary or high school diploma and they face difficulties in finding a job outside the FARC cooperatives because of stigmatization, the challenge of living costs during reincorporation is becoming more problematic. This example illustrates how many reincorporation challenges are interlinked and a simple solution to the latter therefore seems rather complicated.

#### FARC's Collectiveness

*"This [living away from fellow ex-combatants] has hit me very hard because there is the custom that you wake up at four in the morning and you say: 'que hubo?' (what's up?), how did you sleep? 'Que*

---

<sup>27</sup> The basic income Elena and her partner receive is two times 740.000 Colombian pesos: a total of approximately 400 euros.

*hubo socio' (partner)? How are you? If I was busy he would bring me coffee or I would bring the coffee to the neighbour. You kind of form this fraternity and help each other out. When you go to the city you do not know anyone. For example here in this house there are like three or four apartments and everyone passes each other and no one greets each other. They do not even look at each other. So here you live alone. I miss this a lot because you do not know who lives next to you, nor who lives on the second floor. Everyone in their own worlds there in their house or apartment. So yes, that has been really hard."*

Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February]

Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February], as well as the majority of the FARC mothers I spoke with in Bogota, explains that one of the hardest parts about living in Bogota is the fact that she does not live together with her fellow FARC ex-combatants anymore. During combat the combatants lived together in different *bloques* (blocks) throughout Colombia where they developed a very strong feeling of collectiveness and fraternity, which is very specific to the FARC according to Ana María Velez [UNFPA, Bogota, 29<sup>th</sup> of January]. Elena explained that fellow combatants turn into your family away from home. She also said that whenever someone would be moved to another *bloque*, she would feel very sad and it would take her various weeks to get over it.

FARC's collective character has taken up a very different form in post-agreement Colombia. In Bogota it is particularly sustained through its political party. *La Sede* (the headquarters of the FARC political party) in the centre of Bogota serves as an important meeting point for ex-combatants to spend time together, to touch upon topics related to the social, economic and political reincorporation and to achieve their political goals. Lorena [Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March], a female ex-combatant with older children, emphasizes the importance of the political party for FARC's collective identity: "*For example in the city there are many ex-combatants like me, in their houses. If we would not have the party that coincides us, we would all be living our experience [reincorporation process] individually.*" She also said that they are working on the establishment of a national FARC women's organization, which would also encourage the maintenance of FARC's identity and collectiveness.

FARC mothers in Bogota particularly miss this collectiveness with regards to their motherhood. When FARC mothers, as well as fathers, are in the same place they help each other out when necessary. In Bogota this is way more difficult to achieve than in the ETCR's. In fact, in an ETCR a child can be raised in a more collective way. Laura Cardoza [Advisor of Senator Victoria Sandino, Bogota, 17<sup>th</sup> of January] gives the example of a family in Icononzo where everyone keeps an eye on the girl. It seems that this girl is raised in a collective manner, which is completely opposite to the small nuclear urban families in Bogota. During my time in Icononzo I indeed observed that FARC mothers help each other out a lot. I started to understand why FARC mothers in Bogota are missing this kind of collectiveness. A FARC mother confidently leaves her baby in the stroller in the community restaurant as she knows other ex-combatants will look after the baby while she is busy cooking. When I was invited to a birthday party with a *sancocho*<sup>28</sup>, it seemed like one family: FARC mothers and FARC fathers were carrying each other's babies, feeding them or correcting them if needed. Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February] said the following about this: "*There [ETCR] everyone knows each other and they are familiar with the baby [...]. You can leave your baby with the neighbours because you have been sharing so much time with each other that you are like family. But here in the city, 'mamita' ('mommy'), everything is different.*"

This collectiveness illustrates how the historically constructed relationships between ex-combatants, something Sprenkels (2014) stressed upon in his study in El Salvador, continue to be of importance for FARC mothers during reincorporation. It illustrates that the FARC identity continues to remain intact to a certain extent. It also demonstrates how an insurgency (FARC) is a way of life and how this way of life is transformed in post-insurgency (during reincorporation). Actually, the FARC tries to avoid the disappearance of its collective character and therefore likes that people are concentrated in ETCR's. I consider the wish to keep the collectiveness an important accommodation during the process of reincorporation. Thus, the established interpersonal relations between ex-combatants remain crucial for keeping the FARC's identity in post-agreement Colombia.

---

<sup>28</sup> Sancocho: a kind of soup with meat and vegetables which is traditionally cooked for many hours on open fire.



An important side note is that not every ex-combatant is interested in maintaining the connection to the FARC. Some prefer to go through a more individual reincorporation process with accommodations that suit this individual reincorporation. In fact, Araceli<sup>29</sup> [Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March] said that even though she really misses the other ex-combatants, the trips, the lifestyle, she does not want to stay connected to the political party FARC because she does not feel identified with its political goals. This is in line with what Sprenkels (2014, 56) observed in El Salvador: a variety in responses from individuals in the insurgent movements. In that sense, each ex-combatant accommodates him- or herself differently in the reincorporation process and chooses an own path. Hence, there seem to be tensions between the ones that prefer collective reincorporation, generally higher rank FARC ex-combatants and politically active ex-combatants, and ex-combatants who prefer individual reincorporation.

## Reincorporation Challenges in Icononzo

This part of the chapter will look at the reincorporation challenges that FARC mothers in Icononzo identified. Even though the ETCR Icononzo can be considered to be an ‘example ETCR’ since it receives so much (international) attention and interventions and therefore is said to be more developed than other ETCR’s, I think most of these challenges are also relevant for other ETCR’s in post-agreement Colombia. The two main challenges I encountered are the ‘living conditions’ and ‘insecurity’.

### Living Conditions

For the challenge of ‘living conditions’, I identified various ‘sub-challenges’ (pillars): ‘decent life’, ‘a lack of opportunities’ and ‘no kindergarten’.

#### *Decent Life*

*‘There are many inconvenient things going on: at the moment there is no water, there are issues with the electricity. The houses drop a kind of dust that can cause cancer, imagine with the children. A decent life... but look at the houses. It has been almost two years which have basically finished.’*

Carmen [Icononzo, 13<sup>th</sup> of February]

In the quote above, Carmen [Icononzo, 13<sup>th</sup> of February] explains the practical living circumstances. Something that she finds very difficult is that her baby has to live in these hard circumstances. When I was interviewing Carmen in her house in Icononzo, there was no water in the shared bathroom since various days. The houses, which are made of a kind of plasterboard, are very basic and as it gets cold in the night, it also gets cold inside the house. Even though various FARC mothers explained that they would like to stay in Icononzo, they consider it problematic for their babies’ health that it gets so cold inside the houses and that the houses are not made of a more decent quality.

Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February], who is now living in Bogota, said the following about how it was like to have her baby in Icononzo: *“Well it was difficult but since we were used to live in the mountains... But these were not the right circumstances. Well I do not know, you get used to the area where you are. But now the ETCR is better, now the houses are arranged. But when we arrived no, because when we arrived it was like a camp, like the camps we had in the mountains.”* Because these houses came without bathrooms and kitchens, ex-combatants had to invest in their own kitchen if they preferred that over the community kitchens. Also, some ex-combatants have bought locks for the nearest toilet and shower so it kind of becomes a private facility or it is shared just between a few neighbours. It is important to keep in mind that the idea from the peace agreement was that these houses would be a temporary solution during the two years planned reincorporation process in post-agreement Colombia. I assume that is the reason there has not been invested in houses of a better, longer lasting quality.

---

<sup>29</sup> Araceli was the only one who told this to me. Here it is important to mention that I collected all of my research participants through the snowball effect. While there are probably many more ex-combatants with a similar opinion, I have not been in touch with them as I suppose that my FARC informants, who are still strongly connected to the FARC, particularly provided the contacts of other FARC ex-combatants still related to the FARC.

One FARC mother emphasized that of course, these living conditions are better than what they were used to during their time in the guerrilla, but her baby is not used to those. She asked me the question if the life they have in Icononzo can be considered to be a 'decent life'. In that regard, Carmen [Icononzo, 13<sup>th</sup> of February] told me the following: *'The change I would like to see is that we would have a decent home, because here the people can get sick [...]. But the government is not meeting its commitments, a decent life but no.. they are not meeting their commitments'*. According to Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March], the ex-combatants are not demanding a lot, but the state cannot guarantee the decent lives these ex-combatants demand.

#### *Lack of Job and Study Opportunities*

The second pillar I identified is the lack of job and study opportunities in Icononzo and ETCR's in general. There are very few functioning productive projects. In Icononzo there are community gardens, a tailoring project, a community restaurant and an artisanal beer brewery. All of these have been own initiatives or were financed by international parties. Actually, very few projects throughout the country got approved and were financed by the government. The ones that are functioning in Icononzo have very low productivity and could be functioning much better if funds would be available. When I was visiting these projects I realized that people are very eager to work but that the lack of sufficient funds limits their work and makes it impossible to upscale the production. The tailoring workshop was most of the time empty, since they have to sell products before they can produce more. The beer brewery cannot keep up with the demand for its beer (*La Roja*) and therefore only a few ex-combatants are working there. According to some higher rank ex-combatants, one of the reasons that people actually started to leave ETCR's massively is because they are disappointed with the living conditions and the few opportunities they have in the ETCR's.

The majority of the FARC mothers I spoke with did not directly mention the lack of job opportunities as a huge challenge since most of them were, during my stay in Icononzo, still busy following classes and making homework in order to receive their primary school and high school diploma. They were therefore not that much connected to the productive projects yet, but in my opinion they will be once they have finished studying. The fact that there are few job opportunities in the ETCR itself is particularly a challenge for FARC mothers as they are often limited in finding jobs outside the ETCR's because of their babies and children.

Besides limited job opportunities in Icononzo and other ETCR's, FARC mothers said that study opportunities in Icononzo are very limited. There is no superior education available, which means they would have to follow education on a distance. That would imply having to pay a significant amount of money in order to have a WIFI connection in their houses, as Silvia [Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February] explained. FARC mothers who have the wish to continue studying will have to make this effort or they will have to move to a town or a city. However, Gabriela [Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February] told me that the National Training Service (SENA)<sup>30</sup> offered courses in Icononzo last year. Unfortunately, only a few ex-combatants attended those courses which resulted in less courses this year. Not solely is education limited for FARC mothers, the educational offer for children is also an issue for them. Older FARC children in Icononzo go to a school outside and have to walk up to one hour to get there if there is no transport available. Gabriela [Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February] told me that: *'There is no transport available and this is difficult. And to let a girl walk to the school all by herself, there are many challenges.'*

#### *Kindergarten*

The last pillar, which is a challenge in Icononzo and in ETCR's in general, is the fact that there are no caretaking facilities available. In contrast to that, all of the FARC mothers I spoke with in Bogota have access to kindergartens and the majority of them leaves the baby there while they work or study. The absence of a kindergarten is partly due to not considering the provision of caretaking facilities in the peace agreement, as no one had expected such a large amount of babies right after the peace agreement.

In Icononzo there is a very colourful house which is called *la guardería* (the kindergarten). FARC ex-combatants constructed this space in order to turn it into a kindergarten where FARC parents can leave

---

<sup>30</sup> SENA is a public Colombian institution that provides vocational technical and technological education.

their children while they are occupied. The ex-combatants told me that the kindergarten had been functioning earlier. While I was in Icononzo it was not functioning because it did not have the permission of the Colombian Institute of Wellbeing (ICBF). A kindergarten has to be constructed according to particular guidelines in order to serve as a safe environment for children. The caretakers of the babies and children in this kindergarten also have to be certified by the ICBF. This means that either FARC ex-combatants need to be educated in order to receive the required certification, or professionals from outside will need to be sent to the ETCR. The FARC prefers the first as they are rather hesitant with interventions from outside parties, especially from the ICBF. In this way the FARC can control the caretaking and education of the future generation. Also, they can contract FARC ex-combatants so they would have an income. Actually, there was one FARC mother very interested in working in the kindergarten as she has the right education and experience. However, she was now sitting at home as she could not work in the kindergarten because it was not yet approved by the ICBF.

The lack of caretaking facilities limits many FARC mothers' agency enormously as they have to take their babies everywhere they go. Under these circumstances FARC mothers are more likely to fall into the traditional caretaking role of a woman, something I will extensively touch upon in the following chapter. These FARC mothers are active mothers who combine their mother role with many different other roles such as being a student. In fact, during the high school classes in the afternoon (2 PM until 4 PM) in two spaces in Icononzo there were about seven women in each class, all of them with babies. I was very happy to see that even though they really miss a kindergarten, they still attend the classes.

In addition to that, the lack of a kindergarten is a very important limiting factor for the reincorporation of FARC mothers. As Ramona [Icononzo, 15<sup>th</sup> of February] told me: *'I was working in the tailoring project but since there is no kindergarten at this moment, I cannot go.'* Luiza [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February] told me a similar story and mentioned that the lack of a kindergarten is the most difficult thing about being a mother at this moment: *'I work in the tailoring project but I have to find someone to take care of the baby because I cannot take the baby there. The baby would be a very distracting factor and it is also very dangerous with all the machines and everything. We therefore need a kindergarten.'* Luiza is one of the FARC mothers who invested in her own sewing machine which she has inside her house. This demonstrates that while FARC mothers face challenges, some of them make accommodations to adapt themselves to the particular reincorporation circumstances.

When I was already back in The Netherlands I received a message from a FARC mother who told me that the kindergarten recently started functioning. I do not know the current situation but it would be very important for these women if they can now leave their babies in the kindergarten while they occupy themselves with other tasks and roles. However, Icononzo is one of the many ETCR's with a significant amount of FARC mothers and babies and I assume that there are still ETCR's without such a facility.

I think that the above mentioned living conditions challenges are mostly a result of the fact that the ETCR's were meant to be a temporary reincorporation strategy where ex-combatants would demobilize, disarm and start reincorporation. However, the challenges FARC mothers point out give the impression that they wish for a long-term stay in the ETCR's. Hence, this was, and still is, not the initial goal of the government and their interpretation of the peace agreement. This would explain some of the limited investments in the living conditions. However, even though the ETCR's were not meant to be long term, this does not mean the temporary living circumstances should not be 'decent'.

### Insecurity

*'It is really difficult to think about a future because everything is insecure here at the moment. The government is not helping us. How can I make plans if the land is not ours, that is something very difficult.'*

Carmen [Icononzo, 13<sup>th</sup> of February]

The second main challenge of reincorporation in Icononzo, and ETCR's in general, is the current period: at the time of my fieldwork ex-combatants were approaching the end of the two years of reincorporation identified in the peace agreement. This period later turned out to be prolonged until December 2019. This means that soon there will come an end to the ETCR's, the provided facilities (alimentation, water,

gas, electricity) and an end to the basic income that ex-combatants are receiving monthly. FARC mothers in Bogota are exposed to this insecurity to a lesser extent since they already have to deal with paying their own rent, services and alimentation. They have therefore already started to make accommodations in order to deal with this sometimes hard reality.

When I asked Carmen [Icononzo, 13<sup>th</sup> of February] if she would like to stay in Icononzo, she told me what I have illustrated in the quote above: that it is really difficult to think about a future because everything is so insecure at the moment. This is one of the reasons the FARC mothers I have spoken with seem to focus more on the short term future instead of making big plans for the long run. According to various experts there were, at the moment of my fieldwork, negotiations going on between the FARC and the government about the possibility that the government would buy some of the land. In that case, there would be a chance that some of the ETCR's could continue to exist once the land is FARC's property. In addition to that, it could also be an option that the FARC pays some of the land if it has available funds, something that appears to be more complicated. However, at the time this thesis was written<sup>31</sup> I was not up to date with the negotiations and the current developments.

The other worry that comes with the end of the provided facilities by the state, is that FARC ex-combatants have to be completely economically independent in order to maintain themselves and their families. This is particularly a worry for the FARC mothers who have the extra responsibility over their babies. While the FARC had expected that the productive projects would be functioning towards the end of the two years reincorporation period, this process goes fairly slower than expected. This economic insecurity also has a disproportional effect on the FARC mothers because they are more dependent on the realization of the productive projects as they face double stigmatization when they try to find a job in the 'regular' Colombian labour force.

## How FARC Mothers imagine their Future and that of their Babies

*"I would like to travel. I would like, even if it sounds stupid, to find a good job, where I can be calm and where I can be with my daughter. Like to work part time. So far this has not been possible but I would like it. I would like to have a job where I can be fine, where I can be calm. A job that is social."*

Araceli [Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March]

*"I obviously want my daughter to live in a calm country, in peace. In a country where you can at least have education, quality education, a kind of education that allows them to project themselves. And not like many of my generation who could not study because there was no money, because their parents did not have the means to give them an education. Many parents were not able to study either. [...] I do not want my child to live what I had to go through. All the time I think about getting my daughter 'forward', which in other times would have been impossible."*

Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January]

*'Yes I will tell her everything because I do not think it is something good or bad. I want to tell her how the things are: like the politics, the very real things, the ideology, everything. Talk about the reality. It happens a lot that parents hide things for their children but you have to teach them. Not like that the women are like this and men are like this. Everyone is the same.'*

Luiza [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February]

The quotes above are related to how FARC mothers envision their future and that of their babies. Araceli [Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March] says that she would like to have a good job in the future where she can be calm and eventually even work part time. Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January] stresses the fact that she would like her daughter to have a different future than the past she had before joining the guerrilla. Luiza [Icononzo,

---

<sup>31</sup> May – November 2019

16<sup>th</sup> of February] explains what she has learned in the guerrilla and what she would like to tell her baby about in the future. By talking about the future plans, dreams and lessons for their children, I got a good idea of how FARC mothers imagine themselves and their babies in the future.

As I mentioned earlier, many FARC mothers reacted surprised when I asked them about their very personal feelings and experiences with regards to their motherhood. When I was asking about their dreams and hopes for the future they reacted similarly. Some gave me the impression that they had not thought that clearly about the future for themselves and their babies due to the current insecure circumstances. As it is still unsure what will happen to Icononzo and all of the ETCR's, it is likely that dreams and future plans may work out differently.

In this part I will first talk about the more personal dreams and future plans of these FARC mothers. Followed by the dreams they have for their children's future. Lastly, I will talk about the important values of the guerrilla, which the FARC mothers would like to tell their children about.

### Personal Dreams and Future Plans

*“My dreams.. hmm.. my personal dreams? Well if it is personally then it would be to move on, to finish my degree. I am thinking about doing a double degree, I can do the double degree in my university. [...] The dreams are there, there are many. But the principle ones for me are education, to get my daughter ‘forward’ and to continue with the political work. To continue the political work precisely so it [the peace agreement] gets accomplished.”*

Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January]

When I was asking about the dreams for the future I noticed that even though they are now mothers, most of their dreams are related to their own personal goals. They have very clear personal dreams and goals in mind. None of them told me that they would like to stay at home taking care of their babies for example. This illustrates the ambition of these FARC mothers to perform more than ‘just’ the mother role, but to be involved in other roles as well. I suppose that this is particularly the case because these women were used to work hard, learn a lot, and to have their independency in the guerrilla. They therefore wish to continue a similar lifestyle in post-accord Colombia. Another important point is that none of the FARC mothers I spoke with mentioned that they would like to take up arms again, as some ex-combatants have done. They are very much looking to move forward, to construct another future. I think this is linked to the fact that they are now mothers and they are able to live the motherhood they have never lived in a similar way. This would again become impossible when they would take up arms.

As the quote of Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January] demonstrates, she has the dream to finish her university degree which she started after the beginning of the reincorporation process. Since the majority of the FARC mothers I spoke with in Icononzo were, at the time of my visit, still finishing school, their dreams were mostly related to getting their high school diploma and to continue studying after that. Also women who are not studying at the moment told me that they would like to pursue a degree so they can further develop themselves. Luiza [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February] said: *‘I would like to finish ‘bachillerato’ (high school) and to study accounting after that. But so far I have not really investigated that since I have not finished my high school yet.’* Even though these FARC mothers have clear study goals, the living conditions in Icononzo complicate achieving those dreams as there is no superior education inside Icononzo or close to the ETCR.

Another FARC mother, who is currently working in communication in Bogota, explained that she would like to study nursing since she dedicated many years in the guerrilla to this job: *“Well I was dreaming about being a nurse, a doctor or a surgeon, something like this. I really loved it, I was doing this for nine years in the guerrilla and I had to attend the wounded combatants, so I liked it. But you do not have the theory, just the practice. So it is a little bit hard at this moment to study medicine because it is only theory”* [Elena, 4<sup>th</sup> of February]. Her example demonstrates that since the guerrilla knowledge is not acknowledged formally, she decides not to pursue her dream of getting a similar job as she finds it too hard to study after having learned the skills through practice in the guerrilla. Various other FARC

mothers also mentioned that they would like to find a job related to their guerrilla knowledge. A FARC mother who worked for many years as a dentist dreams to have her own dentist clinic in the future. Other FARC mothers would like to work for the cooperatives such as the communication cooperative in Bogota, the tailoring project and the kindergarten in Icononzo.

Most of the FARC mothers in Bogota already finished their high school before joining the guerrilla and some studied a degree prior to entering. This implies that once they started the reincorporation process, they found themselves in a different situation than many other FARC ex-combatants. One example is Martina [Bogota, 6<sup>th</sup> of February] who studied before joining the FARC and told me the following: *“My dreams for the future? To feel good with myself, to continue to feel good with myself. [...] To generate the conditions so that other people, especially those in the process of reincorporation... It is a challenge to generate conditions after so many years of fighting, that the people have the possibility to have a decent life, that they can have children, a living, because these are conditions that were not thought about.”* Martina is one of the FARC mothers I spoke with who is very politically active. These women do not only have their personal dreams but they also have collective goals for the future in mind. As Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January] explained: *“So well now that I am having my own personal project, well to continue in the political life. We dedicated our entire life to transformation, to the change of Colombian society towards the government. Now we are dedicated to political life and this is where we are [...]. But at least to keep on working [...].”* She wishes to continue FARC’s political work collectively in order for the peace agreement to be accomplished. Particularly those ex-combatants who have a higher rank in the FARC work hard to improve the current situation for ex-combatants. They are active in the political party and they pressure the government to meet its commitments. Furthermore, they also aim to maintain the collective identity of the FARC through the political party.

#### Dreams for the FARC Babies

*“Well there are a lot of dreams. That she can receive the necessary education, that she can have her house. To have a future for her, and yes of course, a dream.. the necessary education for her.”*

Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February]

Even though all of the FARC mothers I spoke with pointed out clear personal dreams and goals, most of them also told me about the dreams they have for their babies. The majority of those dreams were related to what Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February] describes above: that her baby will be able to receive the necessary education in the future, that her child will get a house and will have a future. One FARC mother mentioned that she wishes to be able to give her daughter the right tools so that she can be a good human in the future. Ramona [Icononzo, 15<sup>th</sup> of February] said that: *‘I dream of having economic stability. That I do not have to worry about the house, that I do not have to worry about anything. Now with my baby it is different, there are more responsibilities. That the baby will receive whatever he needs.’* The reason so many FARC mothers wish for education, good living conditions and a future for their babies, is something most mothers in the world probably dream of for their children’s future. However, I suggest that these dreams, emotions and feelings of the FARC mothers may be even stronger due to the fact that they have lived a different past. Some FARC mothers had never expected there would be a peace agreement or they did not expect that they would survive the guerrilla. Also, as became clear, many FARC mothers joined the guerrilla because of poverty, (domestic) violence and a lack of opportunities. Most of them therefore wish that there is a different future for their babies.

This is likely one of the reasons they are *encima de los hijos* (‘on top of their children’) as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. This became very clear when their babies were present and through the way they were talking about them. The FARC mothers aim to perform their mother role as good as possible, where they try to ensure that their babies receive everything they need, everything which some of them never had access to. They are therefore making the necessary moves, adjustments and accommodations in post-accord Colombia which make their lives and their babies’ lives as comfortable as possible. They, unsurprisingly, want the best for their babies, at the moment and for their future. I think that all of the above is clearly not only characterizing FARC mothers, but can be said to characterize mothers, and fathers, in general. However, especially in the case of the FARC mothers, the way they shape motherhood, talk about it and experience it, illustrate that their motherhood is an

important drive of continuing this reincorporation and to be thinking of a future for themselves, their families and their babies.

### The Values of the Insurgency

*'Yes I want to tell everything. I want to teach him the human values. That the things should be distributed equally. That you help each other. To fight for... To always fight for the fair things.'*

Elisa [Bogota, 21<sup>st</sup> of March]

The last sub-category touches upon the most important values of the insurgency which they would like to pass along to their children. When I was in Icononzo talking with a FARC mother and some civilians, someone asked the FARC mother if she is thinking to tell her baby about her experiences in the guerrilla when the baby is older. This question inspired me and I decided to include it in the rest of the interviews with the FARC mothers. This means that I did not speak about this with all of the FARC mothers. Hence, raising this question provided a very real impression about the lessons that these FARC mothers learned in the guerrilla and especially about the guerrilla values which they consider important for the future.

When I asked the FARC mothers if they plan to tell their children about their past in the guerrilla, all of them told me very convinced that they would definitely tell about it. Araceli [Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March] said the following: *"'Todo, todo todo todo' (todo: everything). There is a book of Che [Guevara] between her readings, there is the diary of the mountains. No, everything, and that she can take her decisions. Well at this moment I am not sure if I can manage to raise her within the Marxist-Leninist principles. But the humanity and sensibility in front of the others. And that she can take the decision wherever she wants to go when she is older."* Araceli would like to raise her baby according to FARC's ideology and she hopes that her child will appreciate that. But, of course, she gives her child the freedom to choose her own path. The fact that all of the FARC mothers were so convinced about telling their children about their experiences and lessons from the FARC suggests that they find their time in the FARC very important and a crucial part of their identity as an ex-combatant. The guerrilla allowed them to develop themselves and to learn a lot about a large range of topics. It has formed them the way they are today and they consider it important for their babies to understand this when they are older.

Afterwards I asked what the lessons learned and most important values are which they would like to tell their babies about in the future. The words the FARC mothers used to describe these ranged from 'solidarity', 'equality', 'empathy', 'sharing', 'liberty', 'collectiveness' to 'being respectful' and 'to fight together' for the goals that they aspire. Silvia [Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February] wants to teach her baby that it is very important to study and to get a good education, something she never had the chance to. It demonstrates how these FARC mothers still have this ideology very present during their reincorporation in post-agreement Colombia. They may be reincorporating in society but they do not forget the values of the guerrilla. Their accommodations are therefore made with the 'insurgency values' in mind.

The mothers find it important to speak about the reality of the guerrilla. As Melisa [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February], who was in the guerrilla for 25 years, told me: *'I think about telling everything, the reality. There is so much love for the ex-combatants, it is like your own family, but in reality these were the own combatants [...]. 'La vida guerrillera' (the guerrilla life) is an experience, with more good things than bad things. But we lived together through the good and the bad things. It is very beautiful what we have lived there.'* She emphasizes that even though there were hard moments in the guerrilla, the overall experience was very positive and valuable. Ramona [Icononzo, 15<sup>th</sup> of February] said the following about this: *'The guerrilla is very hard, you suffer, but no one is discriminated. There are missions and women also get used to that. Women did the same as men.'* Silvia [Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February] would also tell everything about the guerrilla, but she would especially like to tell that women were very brave, more brave than some of the men, especially when it came to their menstruation. For Gabriela [Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February] similar messages are important: she spoke about respect, independency, to not talk bad about others and to not depend on men, to not depend on anyone in particular. The experienced equality in the guerrilla is an important value that these FARC mothers would like to teach their children.

One thing that I was wondering after having spoken about the values and the lessons learned was whether these FARC babies would eventually be 'different kind of people' than 'the civilians'. If they will live

according to the FARC ideology since many may have been raised with these. Because many FARC mothers take their babies and children to community meetings and political encounters, FARC babies and FARC children get raised in a particular political environment with certain values, Lorena [Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March], an ex-combatant with older children, argues. This makes it likely that they take specific values with them and that this also forms them in a particular way, it is kind of a natural process.

I asked Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March] how she thinks the FARC mothers will educate their children. She explained that she would like that the FARC babies generation gets a different kind of education. In fact: *"This is part of that we would like that these new generations get an education outside of the patriarchy [...]. That is why we say: hopefully those who are going to take care of our children in the kindergartens and in the schools have another education which is not traditional"* [ibid.]. She would ideally like to achieve this in the future, but it depends on the willingness of the government: if they would like to finance particular 'FARC education'. The fact that she, and potentially others as well, wish for this, could be interpreted as FARC's wish to continue having a certain control over its ex-combatants and the new generation.

Because the 'baby boom' FARC babies are still very small, it is difficult to tell at this moment whether the FARC babies will ultimately be raised according to the FARC ideology and will therefore have different values than the civilians, Luiza [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February] argues. *'But'*, she adds, *'this education that we had in the guerrilla, the civilians did not receive'* [Luiza, Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February]. It is therefore possible that the FARC babies and FARC children will be raised with different values. In this regard I agree with Luiza: I am unsure whether the aim to educate the FARC babies according to particular FARC values will continue to be of importance in the future. I also wondered whether they will be able to maintain these different values when they have completely reincorporated in post-agreement Colombia. It could be interesting to conduct a longitudinal research in order to examine this, a method which Sprenkels also applied to study the accommodations of insurgent relations.

## Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to explore the different personal experiences, emotions, beautiful moments, challenges, dreams and future plans of the recent FARC mothers. These do not solely provide insights into the recent motherhood, but they serve as an important reflection on the current reincorporation process. By doing so, I hoped to be able to give an answer to the second sub-question of this thesis: *"How do FARC women experience and give shape to their motherhood during reincorporation?"*

The theory of post-insurgency of Ralph Sprenkels is particularly applicable to this chapter as I have studied the accommodations, transformations and rearrangements that FARC mothers have made during their reincorporation in post-agreement Colombia. Hereby I have taken a look at their everyday experiences from a social and relational perspective rather than from the perspective of the international DDR policy. This has resulted in a very real and human approach towards the topic of motherhood of FARC ex-combatants followed by very honest and personal experiences and feelings.

Gender performativity was also very relevant in this chapter because it allowed us to understand how FARC mothers take up different roles at different moments in time. They previously performed the *guerrillera* role and the sometimes 'motherhood on a distance' role, while they are currently performing the more conventional mother role. This mother role is performed during reincorporation, which results in particular experiences, emotions and challenges. This chapter allowed to learn from these by approaching it from their gender performance as recent mothers. How they perform, shape and experience motherhood is particularly a result of the current reincorporation. With 'how they shape' I refer to the accommodations and adjustments that FARC mothers make as a result of finding themselves in reincorporation. Even though these are made under the reincorporation circumstances, the established relations and experiences of the guerrilla (under FARC's control of militarized femininity) also play a significant role in the shape they give to motherhood. This illustrates how the three different theories are strongly interconnected in this chapter.

Since the experiences of the FARC mothers are very personal and context specific it is hard, if not impossible, to make generalizations. FARC mothers have different backgrounds and histories, different education and they live in different settings. They have diverse activities which implies that they give



shape to their motherhood in various, personal ways: some FARC mothers work, study, have partners and take care of their babies. In general, these FARC mothers also shape their motherhood by fulfilling more than one role, something I will reflect upon in the next chapter. Their different accommodations, transformations and rearrangements can therefore result in similar as well as different experiences. However, since these women were part of the same insurgency, it is actually likely that many have similar experiences when it comes to motherhood.

‘Beautiful Motherhood’ looked into the beautiful experiences, emotions and feelings of the recent FARC mothers. The radical change from the *guerrillera* role to the more conventional mother role as a result of the peace agreement gave rise to a range of positive feelings. Most women enjoy similar things about their babies: to see how they grow and transform, to have a company and to have a change in worries, priorities, lifestyle and feelings. The FARC mothers can now enjoy all of these feelings which were impossible during conflict. In addition, the change motherhood brings along also serves as a distraction from the often challenging reincorporation process in post-agreement Colombia.

Some FARC mothers had never expected that there would come an end to the conflict or that they would survive the guerrilla. This, combined with the fact that motherhood was restricted in conflict and women were unable to enjoy their motherhood alongside their babies if they decided to stay in the guerrilla as a result of FARC’s militarized femininity, intensifies happy and positive feelings of motherhood in post-agreement Colombia. The strong control of FARC’s militarized femininity took away the possibility for female combatants to enjoy the happy feelings which they described. This chapter therefore illustrates some of the consequences of militarized femininity and the disruption of it in post-agreement Colombia.

This part was followed by the challenges of reincorporation in post-agreement Colombia, which served as a ‘window’ of the current reincorporation process because many of these challenges are also applicable to the larger FARC ex-combatant community. The location of FARC mothers (inside or outside ETCR’s) hugely determines which reincorporation challenges they are exposed to. These challenges demonstrate that while motherhood is generally a positive experience, it brings along struggles, especially in the context of reincorporation. The challenges that FARC mothers are exposed to are the lack of knowledge about motherhood, healthcare in post-agreement Colombia, stigmatization and fear and the formally unacknowledged guerrilla knowledge. The challenges of reincorporation in Bogota are the high living costs and difficult mobility and the feeling of missing FARC’s collectiveness. Reincorporation challenges in Icononzo are particularly a result of the living conditions (a decent life, lack of job and study opportunities and no kindergarten) and the current insecurity. I think these diverse challenges provide a good representation of the challenges FARC mothers, and ex-combatants in general, face in post-agreement Colombia. Despite the challenges in post-agreement Colombia, FARC mothers keep on being positive and they seem to manage to make individual as well as collective accommodations to make their lives as comfortable as possible.

The mostly interlinked challenges illustrate how reincorporation is a complex process which can be ‘easily’ written about on paper, but which is harder to successfully enforce in practice. It also demonstrates how the rather short part on ‘reincorporation’ in the peace agreement should potentially have been elaborated upon in more details, in order to have avoided some of the challenges FARC mothers, and the larger FARC community, are exposed to. It confirms the important role reincorporation (or reintegration) plays in a peace process, which is rather short in this case. Unsuccessful and frustrating reincorporation could potentially lead to a failing peace agreement if the challenges are not taken seriously and not tackled correctly. The above mentioned challenges may therefore serve as ‘a warning’ for the Colombian government and for other peace processes in the future, which could potentially avoid similar challenges to occur. Some of the challenges are also a result of the different expectations: while many FARC mothers, and the FARC leadership in general, would like to stay in the ETCR’s, this has not been the vision of the government. Obviously, these are challenges from FARC’s point of view which may be reflected upon differently by the government, but that has not been the focus of this thesis.

The last part of this chapter looked into the different dreams and future plans FARC mothers have for themselves as well as for their babies. I also spoke about the most important lessons they learned during the guerrilla and the values which they find crucial to tell their children about. FARC mothers come across as ambitious women who have a lot of dreams and goals for the future, which illustrate they aim

to perform more than 'just' the mother role. They want the best possible future for their babies and they wish to make this happen by making the necessary accommodations in post-agreement Colombia. Their recent motherhood is in that sense an important drive to not go back to conflict and to continue their reincorporation process in post-agreement Colombia. All of the FARC mothers responded very convinced that they will tell everything about their time in the guerrilla. Not only will they talk about the beautiful and positive things, but also about the 'real guerrilla' and the hard reality for a *guerrillera*. They argue this to be an important part of their identity which is crucial to teach their children about. It illustrates how the 'past insurgency', and the established relations continue during that period, continue to be of great importance in the present. Despite FARC's militarized femininity and its consequences for FARC mothers, it seems that they have embraced and internalized most of the guerrilla values. The FARC ideology remains intact while it is transmitted to the next generation. How this will eventually evolve during the next years would be interesting to study in the future.

All in all, I am convinced that this chapter achieved to answer the second sub-research question by analysing the different positive as well as negative experiences of FARC mothers during their reincorporation in post-agreement Colombia. Hereby the theory of post-insurgency was central to look at these every day experiences, in particular in terms of the accommodations, transformations and rearrangements these FARC mothers make, but also in terms of the important role that the established interpersonal relations in the guerrilla continue to play in post-agreement Colombia. Even though the FARC mothers are in the process of reincorporating in post-agreement Colombian society, this does not directly mean they will completely leave behind their 'combatant identity' and take up their new 'citizen identity'. Instead, the FARC identity and ideology remain of crucial importance in most of the lives of FARC mothers in post-agreement Colombia.

## 7. The Reconfiguration of FARC Mothers' Gender Roles in Post-Accord Colombia

*“And when the women enter the insurgency they increase their capacities. They acquire a lot of knowledge about political organization, health and chemical sciences, for example about the whole issue of making explosives. There is training, they teach them to read. In short, there is a series of capacity building in many subjects: communication, everything that implies the life of a cultural insurgent. There is a change of role in the women and they establish more equal relationships between men and women. I think that the women have told you about these relationships. These are part of the internal politics of the FARC.”*

Maria [CNR, Bogota, 24<sup>th</sup> of January]

*“Men outside are generally very ‘machista’ (macho) [...]. The woman is ‘la casa’ (the house), she is the one who cooks, she is the one who has to clean. In the guerrilla it was not like this.”*

Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February]

*“No, he helps me a lot, of course. He helps me a lot when he is not working. So well, when I get up I breastfeed the baby and I go to the kitchen. I make the breakfast and lunch in the kitchen. He gets up and changes the baby, puts her in her pushcart, he organizes the apartment, he makes the bed, he sweeps and mops the floor. If he wants to wash with the washing machine, he puts the clothes and he washes. And if we need to handwash, I handwash the clothes of the baby. So he helps me quite a lot. And if the baby is crying or she is hungry, I feed her and he is in the kitchen. Yes he does help me a lot.”*

Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February]

### Introduction

In the introductory chapter it became clear that one of the many reasons young women started to join the FARC was because they were inspired by the *guerrilleras*. The FARC offered an alternative to patriarchal Colombian society: a guerrilla where women would be fighting alongside men, where they would be able to perform the same tasks as men. The above quotes illustrate how gender roles were perceived in the guerrilla and how that was understood as a certain ‘gender equality’. The above also illustrate that, according to the FARC mothers, this particular gender roles division continues to play a role in post-accord Colombia. Maria [CNR, Bogota, 24<sup>th</sup> of January], who works for the FARC component of the National Council of Reincorporation (CNR), describes what happened when women started to participate in the guerrilla and how they gained knowledge in all kinds of fields. This eventually led to more equal relationships with their male counterparts. Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February], a FARC mother, explains that ‘civil men’ are usually very macho, in contrast to the *guerrilleros*. Elena [Bogota, 4<sup>th</sup> of February] tells that her ‘socio’ (partner) is very collaborative and helpful.

During the guerrilla it was impossible for FARC ex-combatants to perform conventional motherhood. Hence, the performance of this new role became possible once the female ex-combatants started to reincorporate in post-accord Colombia. I argue that it is interesting to study whether the recent motherhood implies a return<sup>32</sup> to the performance of more traditional gender roles for women. Hereby it is crucial to mention that I do not consider the mother role as such a traditional role, but rather the way this mother role is performed that can be traditional. This chapter serves to study how FARC mothers’ motherhood in post-accord Colombia reconfigures their gender roles in the context of reincorporation. With gender roles I refer to the roles that both male and female ex-combatants performed during the guerrilla as well as currently in post-accord Colombia. These roles are largely influenced by, and based

---

<sup>32</sup> With ‘return’ to traditional gender roles I assume that the large majority of ex-combatants comes from a rural, traditional background where they were largely exposed to traditional gender roles: where men are traditionally considered the bread winners and the women the ones at home, taking care of the household and the children. When they would be adopting these traditional gender roles in post-accord Colombia they would in that sense ‘return’ to the we roles they were previously used to.

on, social and behavioural norms which are dominant in society. And, in the case of the guerrilla, I assume that the particular roles are a result of the dominant masculinities and femininities of FARC's militarized femininity.

In order to study how gender roles are reconfigured in post-accord Colombia, it is crucial to understand how gender roles were performed, understood and shaped during the guerrilla. The first part of the chapter will therefore look into that. It is important to mention that the goal of this chapter is not to find out whether the FARC was gender equal or not. It instead aims to illustrate the tensions around this topic, which makes it very interesting to study. Hence I suggest that (more) equal gender roles could be illustrating more gender equality. In that sense, gender roles and gender equality are clearly linked to each other. More importantly, this chapter studies the reconfiguration of gender roles in post-accord Colombia through the motherhood of FARC ex-combatants. All in all, this chapter aims to answer the third, and last, sub-research question of this thesis: *How does the motherhood of FARC ex-combatants reconfigure their gender roles in post-accord Colombia?*

Gender performativity is particularly applicable to this chapter. It allows for an analysis of the different roles that genders can take up in different contexts and at different moments. Hereby I particularly refer to the shift from the combatant role to the civilian role, where the conventional mother role can be performed. Gender performativity is also useful to observe if particular roles in post-accord Colombia are being performed because of cultural and social pressure. In addition, Butler's ideas about gender transformation are very relevant. In the case of the FARC ex-combatants it is useful to study whether there has been a transformation of the more traditional gender roles. It is interesting to see if female ex-combatants' equal participation in the guerrilla has contributed to increased equality in the performance of gender roles in post-accord Colombia.

Sprenkels' post-insurgency is relevant for this chapter because I consider motherhood one of the many accommodations that female ex-combatants started to make in post-accord Colombia. This accommodation has certain implications for how gender roles are given shape, given the fact that becoming a mother traditionally implies that women assume the caretaking role. Hence there are many occasions where fathers or other relatives largely take up caretaking roles. Possibly, this accommodation can lead to the performance of it in a more traditional way, as well as to the performance of other more traditional gender roles. This would be in contrast to the roles combatants performed during conflict.

Militarized femininity is applied to analyse the reconfiguration of gender roles in post-accord Colombia. It allows to understand the gender roles performances in the guerrilla, as well as in post-accord Colombia by assuming that the militarized structure (and its controlled femininity) influences the latter. Also, how motherhood was experienced during conflict (under the control of militarized femininity) is likely to have an impact on how it is experienced and given shape in post-accord Colombia. This theory also contributes to challenging the gender equality discourse of the FARC. Women were allowed to participate in the guerrilla, but only under conditions where their femininity was controlled. However, some female ex-combatants may argue that this controlled femininity was liberating as they were empowered to fight alongside men. In that sense, it is likely that there was a tension between a feeling of control and a feeling of liberalisation, something I already stressed before.

It has been complicated to get a clear idea of the performance of gender roles, and their reconfiguration, in the relatively short amount of time that I have spent in Colombia. Sociocultural transformations in society, such as differences in the performance of gender roles and, ultimately, the transformation of those, take a very long time to occur. However, everyone, particularly outside experts and higher rank FARC ex-combatants, had very clear ideas and opinions about how 'gender' gained importance in the guerrilla and how gender roles were given shape. Especially the FARC very explicitly communicated their gender discourse to me. However, during my first conversations with outside experts, it became clear that the gender discourse was only developed during the peace negotiations in Havana.

During my fieldwork I was mostly confronted with FARC mothers who are taking up the mother role while their partners are working. However, some of the FARC mothers, especially those in Bogota, told me they also have jobs and they leave their children in a kindergarten. On the other hand I saw the FARC mothers in Icononzo walking to the classes in the afternoon while carrying their babies: they studied and simultaneously took care of their babies. An observation which especially impressed me: baby girls

completely dressed in pink, with pink headbands and earrings, while baby boys were carried around in blue blankets and were put in blue push carts. This example shows how gender stereotypes are maintained, something I did not expect prior to the research because I expected a certain 'gender consciousness' for ex-combatants' participation in the guerrilla.

This chapter firstly looks into 'Gender Roles in the Guerrilla'. It does so by looking at different factors: task division, female combatants in higher ranks and sexual and reproductive health and rights. The second part of this chapter, 'FARC Mothers' Gender Roles in Post-Accord Colombia', studies how gender roles are reconfigured in postaccord Colombia. It does so by firstly contextualizing patriarchal Colombian society, particularly from FARC's viewpoint, followed by the gender roles that FARC mothers perform in postaccord Colombia and the worry of returning to the more traditional gender roles. This chapter also discovers the role of partners and fathers. The last part studies whether gender roles are transformed in postaccord Colombia. All of this is followed by a conclusion where I aim to answer the third, and last, sub-research question of this thesis.

## Gender Roles in the Guerrilla

*"That is what the guerrilla brought, that is why I tell you the process. So when the women acquire their status as combatants... The norms, the regulations... there it says that the rules are of mandatory compliance for men and women. The duties and rights are for men and women. So there was the food, the care taking, cleaning of the camp, cleaning the clothes... These were not women's jobs, every combatant fulfilled these. And the kitchen... this was performed per list [...]. Everyone was washing, these were twelve persons. Men and women washing the clothes and bathing themselves, everyone with their own tasks. The one in charge of the line: men and women. To take the food: men and women. To go to combat: initially only the men went because there is this culture that war is a question of men, so you have to protect the women. So women were nurses, they did not go to the frontline of combat. But that was changing when women were demanding to join the combat. The training was for men and women. So the women said: if we are with them in the training and we can do everything they do, we can go to combat. In some places it started earlier than in others. At the beginning there were not so many arms. They were more in the hands of men than of the women. But later the women, everyone, was armed 'until the teeth'. Rifles, pistols, grenades, knives, machetes. You saw everything: the women with the cartridge belts, carrying these... And there were women in intelligence, explosives, in combat, in communication, in nursing. There were male and female doctors, which were male and female nurses but with major knowledge which they gained during combat, taught by our doctors there. Or dentistry: men and women. Bacteriology: men and women. But this was not called gender, these things were always like that. One part that had not yet been worked on, which we started working on later, was the need to train women with a gender approach. And now we have been proposing this not only to women. But that both men and women have the gender approach in mind."*

Olga Lucía Marín

[FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January]

*'The FARC was and still is much more gender equal than Colombian society. Gender equality had to do with economic independence. Everyone received the same from the organization: uniform, soap, deodorant and so on. No-one was depending on someone else. There was also equality in terms of task division: same weight, same fights, washing your own clothes. When someone would see that a woman would be washing the clothes of a man then they would critique him why he was not doing that himself.'*

Adriana [Female ex-combatant, Bogota, 18<sup>th</sup> of January]

*"Well let's see... The equity or the equality of gender roles in the war was almost an obligation. Necessarily men or women had to take the responsibility over their clothes and over their food because if not... You were in the war, you had no other option. You would be without clothes and food, that's it. Or you would leave others without food. They put a common responsibility."*

Laura Cardoza [Advisor of Senator Victoria Sandino, Bogota, 17<sup>th</sup> of January]

The first conversation I had with Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] turned out to be crucial in order to understand how the *guerrilleras* started to receive equal access to the armed combat and to all the tasks necessary for the correct functioning of the guerrilla. The other quotes illustrate how a female ex-combatant without children, Adriana, and an outside expert describe the performance and distribution of gender roles during FARC's active time in combat. Adriana [Bogota, 18<sup>th</sup> of January] explains that men and women received the same: no one was depending on someone else, and tasks were equally distributed. Laura Cardoza [Advisor of Senator Victoria Sandino, Bogota, 17<sup>th</sup> of January] says how the equality in terms of gender roles was almost an obligation. This had to do with the war circumstances during combat.

The equal participation and opportunities in the guerrilla were vital in the conversations with the FARC mothers. There was no doubt that in their eyes, they saw themselves as equal to their male counterparts and this was crucial for me to know. Juanita Millán [OACP, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of January], who works for the OACP, said that ex-combatants' view on equality inside the FARC is that it was absolutely 100%. Actually, some FARC mothers said that it was one of the most important values of the guerrilla. They mentioned that there were no roles only performed by men nor only performed by women, in that sense gender roles were performed equally. Some referred to the internal rules of the FARC, which included equal rights for both male and female combatants. However, these rules were formulated by the same leadership that implemented forced contraceptives for its female combatants. I thought it was interesting how firmly they spoke about this 'equality' as if they wanted to convince me; as if they wanted to affirm that I knew 'their women' were treated well in the guerrilla.

In my understanding the idea 'gender equality' and the equal performance of gender roles was, by the FARC and the ex-combatants, particularly defined as the equal participation in war and the equal gender division of labour. The FARC mothers described how women and men were performing the same tasks, having to carry the same amount of weight and being able to equally participate in combat. The equal distribution of the latter is not what these women were used to in their traditional, rural background. In some cases women were able to fulfil higher positions within the guerrilla, argued Maria [CNR, Bogota, 24<sup>th</sup> of January], who works for the FARC component of the CNR. She furthermore argues that the different roles that women were able to perform could allow the transformation of gender roles to occur.

Others argued that the equal division of labour had to do with the war setting, where there was simply a need for the participation of both men and women. That this implied women would also be fighting equally alongside their male counterpart seemed a side issue. Indeed, Adriana [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of March], a higher rank ex-combatant, told me that the war imposes certain conditions where everyone is the same. There was no theory or ideology behind this but it was simply like that, it was like a practical need. She mentions that, however, there were many female combatants who were more conscious about gender and therefore decided to join the guerrilla.

In addition, in the guerrilla the idea of fighting a war together was very central. As Maria [CNR, Bogota, 24<sup>th</sup> of January] explained to me: *"It was also in the insurgency where men and women assume care taking tasks. It is not something marked by sex, but it is the collective context. There is a collective relationship with all the daily tasks of war, as well of politics, of the organization, of the survival and taking care of the other."* If the war setting and collectiveness have determined the enjoyment of equal participation and equal opportunities, I doubt whether the equal performance of gender roles has been internalized by FARC combatants. If it has been internalized because of a particular gender ideology in the FARC, it would be more likely that the equal distribution of gender roles remains to be important in post-accord Colombia. Hence, examples of other post-war and post-conflict settings in the theoretical framework have illustrated the 'gender achievements' were lost because of the different setting where ex-combatants found themselves in. This illustrates that a certain gender consciousness (about the equal distribution of gender roles) was not internalized.

### Tasks versus rights

*'Equality in terms of tasks versus equality in terms of rights. This equality was not there in the guerrilla. There were hardly any female commanders. There was not a focus on equal rights. But yes, in the guerrilla there was a more advanced role for women compared to the Colombian women in society.'*

Catherina [Specialist on Peace and Reincorporation, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of March]

It is also relevant to take a closer look at other aspects when looking at the 'equal' gender roles performances in the guerrilla, such as FARC's tasks and rights. The above quote of Catherina [Specialist on Peace and Reincorporation, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of March] challenges the dominant gender equality discourse of the FARC. She makes a distinction between equality in terms of tasks and equality in terms of rights, a distinction which I find very relevant. The FARC particularly referred to equality in terms of tasks and equal access to all of the aspects of the guerrilla. While many also refer to the equality in terms of rights in the norms of the FARC, in practice these equal rights can be questioned. The two women of the NGO ASODEMUC [Bogota, 26<sup>th</sup> of February] I spoke with in Bogota argue that: '*There is 'igualdad' (equality) but there is no 'equidad' (equity)*'. They said that we [women] have not received the same body as men so they question how there will ever be equity.

I observe clear tensions between different views about the gender roles division and equality in the FARC. Many of the outside experts are rather critical about FARC's gender discourse in practice. In contrast to that, all of the FARC mothers and the other ex-combatants I spoke with, appreciate the FARC for the equal opportunities and equal gender division of labour. The fact that there are many different ideas about the equal performance of gender roles shows that it is clearly interesting to study. In addition, I suggest that it is important to put it in perspective and to understand the background of the majority of the ex-combatants: rural, traditional Colombia. Female ex-combatants seem to realize that if they would not have joined the guerrilla that they likely would have ended up with fewer opportunities: taking care of the household and children. Lorena [Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March], a female ex-combatant with older children, argues that these women were aware that in the guerrilla they would not have to repeat these kind of traditional gender roles. The guerrilla was in that sense much more advanced than Colombian society.

#### Female Combatants in Higher Ranks

One of the aspects that certainly challenges the equal gender roles performance in the guerrilla is the amount of women on higher positions. While Maria [CNR, Bogota, 24<sup>th</sup> of January] mentioned above that female combatants also had the chance to be commanders, my impression is that in practice this did not occur a lot. Juanita Millán [OACP, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of January] told me that there were female commanders but that these were very few. Examples are Victoria Sandino, who is currently in congress for the FARC political party, and Olga Lucía Marín. The FARC was, during combat, particularly dominated by male leadership which continued to govern the FARC until the peace negotiations in Havana. Adriana [Bogota, 18<sup>th</sup> of January], an ex-combatant, argued that in the command there were mostly men. There were a lot of women in the negotiations in Havana, but only one woman was sent from the central high command.

It remained unclear to me what the reasons were for the little amount of women on higher positions despite the fact that 20-40% of the FARC's combatants was female. The small amount of female commanders suggests that FARC's equal performance of gender roles is disputable. So far it still seems a largely male dominated guerrilla where, despite the fact that female combatants had the same practical opportunities in terms of task division, mostly men were the ones deciding over the organization. I again get the impression that the entry of female combatants in the FARC was particularly a result of having to increase the total amount of combatants instead of the importance of including female combatants for the purpose of gender equality and gender consciousness.

#### Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Another relevant aspect in terms of equality and gender performances was the fact that the sexuality and reproductivity of the female ex-combatants was controlled by FARC's leadership. Earlier I extensively spoke about how FARC's militarized femininity made it impossible for female combatants to perform the conventional mother role during conflict. Women could only join the guerrilla if they would adopt a form of femininity that was beneficial for the guerrilla as a whole. Femininity was desired because there was the need for combatants, but only as long as it would not interrupt the masculine character of warfare: where you have to be tough and where pregnancy and babies were undesired. Female combatants who joined the guerrilla were forced to deal with the shape that the FARC leadership had given to its militarized femininity: being a *guerrillera* meant not being a mother unless, and only in occasions, you would be performing the 'motherhood on a distance' role with your children being raised

by others. However, here it is important to mention that in the eyes of some female combatants this control may have been liberating. It, although forced, allowed them to fulfil other roles than the conventional mother and housewife role, something many female combatants deliberately escaped from by joining the guerrilla.

All in all, the FARC leadership seemed to decide exactly what gender roles their combatants were able to perform and which they were not. In that sense they took over the agency over the bodies of the women, with all its consequences: the exposure to forced contraceptives, abortion and the inability to perform motherhood that these female combatants might have been wishing for. Also, the small amount of women inside the higher ranks of the FARC gives the impression that the equal distribution of gender roles was only enforced on the lower level of the organization. However, it is again important to mention that in comparison to traditional and patriarchal Colombia, the gender roles that female combatants could enjoy in the guerrilla were for some already an enormous achievement.

## FARC Mothers' Gender Roles in Post-Accord Colombia

*'At home everything is equal, he helps a lot. The fathers who are ex-combatants help the women a lot. They are not like the men in Colombian society who say 'you are the mother, I am the one who is in charge'. I would not accept that. We equally divide the work. The first three months the baby cried a lot because the baby was born with caesarean section. He helped me a lot in this period.'*

Elisa [Bogota, 21<sup>st</sup> of March]

*"Some yes, but the majority I have seen with their babies in the assemblies, militating in the party, they are going to the marches, they are accompanied, they take the little ones with them. For example in the camp: every time that a baby 'arrived' it was like everyone was the father, the mother, the uncle, the aunt. The guerrilleros are very affectionate with the babies [...]."*

Lorena [Female Ex-combatant, Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March]

*"In some parts no because the rules of the party are no longer there. These relationships between partners did not achieve maturity in this case. The men have wanted women to return to their traditional roles and the women do it. They do it but not because they like it. Because if you ask what their dreams are, none of them wants to be a housewife. All of them want to be someone in life, this is a guerrillero expression, which many have adopted in the guerrilla: to be someone in life. To be someone in life is not to be a model, but to have training, to be able to participate in the construction of peace, to learn and to have an education [...]. It is very rare that the women tell you 'I want to be a housewife', and when you will be in the interviews... they say that in the guerrilla they did not do those kind of things, and that they do not want to return to those roles."*

Olga Lucía Marín

[FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January]

The above quotes illustrate the ideas about the division of tasks and roles of ex-combatants during reincorporation in post-accord Colombia according to a FARC mother, a FARC ex-combatant who had children during conflict and Olga Lucía Marín, an ex-commander. Elisa [Bogota, 21<sup>st</sup> of March] emphasizes that her partner is very helpful with the baby. She compares guerrilleros with civilian men who, according to her, are not that helpful. Lorena [Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March], a female ex-combatant with older children, mentions that many FARC mothers try to combine motherhood with other activities such as assemblies, political encounters and workshops. What Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] suggests is that because FARC's rules are not in force anymore, some women have returned to the more traditional gender roles. My impression was that the political party FARC continues to actively advocate for FARC's ideology and values (for example through their *insurgent feminism* in post-accord Colombia) and that, to some extent, they wish to keep control over how their female ex-combatants give shape to their gender roles.



For them it is of importance to avoid that ‘their women’ return to the traditional roles ascribed to them: the ‘partner role’, ‘housewife role’ and ‘mother role’. I will further elaborate on this observation below.

Because of FARC’s militarized femininity the performance of conventional motherhood was impossible in the guerrilla. It is interesting to study how this conventional motherhood currently performed in post-accord reconfigures gender roles. Hereby I depart from Butler’s theory by arguing that genders can perform different gender roles in different moments in time and by assuming that these roles are influenced by social and cultural norms. Questions that come up are: is motherhood the only role that these women perform? If they have a partner, is he collaborative? Are gender roles transformed because of the equal division of tasks and roles in the guerrilla?

This part of the chapter aims to provide answers to the latter. It is important to mention that no generalizations can be made for the reason that each ex-combatant makes his or her own accommodations in post-accord Colombia. It starts with a brief analysis of ‘Patriarchal Colombian Society’ because this is, mostly according to the FARC community, the society ex-combatants have returned to since the start of the reincorporation. In ‘Motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia’ I touch upon the roles that FARC mothers perform in post-accord Colombia in relation to their motherhood and the generated worries for returning to traditional gender roles. Then I speak about ‘Partners and Fatherhood’. The last section on ‘Transformed Gender Roles’ analyses the possible transformation of gender roles because of participation in the guerrilla.

### Patriarchal Colombian Society

*“I think we are a deeply macho society, deeply patriarchal and aggressive towards the women in many aspects. Let’s say that the relation with motherhood continues to be very strong. But also the relation of possession of the women [...]. Colombia is a society that continues to be, or that continues to have the idea that women are male property. But very strong, in a very strong manner.”*

Laura Cardoza [Advisor of Senator Victoria Sandino, Bogota, 17<sup>th</sup> of January]

*“This is a very patriarchal society, and rural society even much more [...]. Many of the ‘muchachas’ (girls) who are there [Icononzo] had a rural life. In the rural life girls become women very soon because of the hard environment [...]. They do not study, there are no opportunities for them because their role is to be with the family, the caretaking, to be wives very early. And if they are in a ‘finca’ (farm) they have to take care of the children but they also have to cook for the workers of the ‘finca’. That is the destiny of our women since a very young age.”*

Lorena [Female Ex-combatant, Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March]

*“Historically, the patriarchal society has generated roles for women as well as for men. And which are the roles for men? That the man is the one who brings the money home, the man is strong, the man works. And we as women in the patriarchal societies, we have dedicated ourselves to being housewives, to be submissive, that we cannot talk, that we do not have voice nor vote. Men in general are the ones who rule the public policy of the countries. They are the ones who take the decisions, including taking decisions which do not correspond to them but only to women.”*

Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January]

The above quotes of the Advisor of Senator Victoria Sandino, a female ex-combatant with older children and a FARC mother, illustrate their perception of Colombian society: a traditional, patriarchal society, which exposes women, as well as men, to the traditionally assigned gender roles. Laura Cardoza [Advisor of Senator Victoria Sandino, Bogota, 17<sup>th</sup> of January] explains how she observes the domination of patriarchy, inequality and machismo in Colombian society. Lorena [Female Ex-combatant, Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March] says that rural society is even more patriarchal. Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January] explains her perception of the traditional gender roles in Colombian society. In addition to the above quotes, Elisa [Bogota, 21<sup>st</sup> of March] said that since children are small, they get infiltrated how a woman should be. The traditional idea is that the woman is the one at home and the man is the one who works.

During my fieldwork it became clear that according to the FARC, its ex-combatants and some of the outside experts, Colombian society is a society with traditional gender roles and where the gender division of labour is strongly unequal. Especially FARC ex-combatants have this very clearly in mind: they have been, and still are, against the patriarchy and gender inequality in Colombian society. They strongly argue that life for women in Colombian society is very opposite from life for female combatants in the guerrilla. The guerrilla allowed roles for women that these women find difficult, if not impossible, to imagine in traditional, especially rural, Colombian society. Some argue that, in comparison with Colombian society, the situation for women inside the guerrilla was much better. As Lorena [Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March], a female ex-combatant with older children, argued: *“There are things that incredible enough were more advanced for the women in the FARC than in our own society.”*

I got the impression that it may be especially confronting and difficult for these ex-combatants to reincorporate into a society which is, in their eyes, (almost) as patriarchal and traditional as it was before they entered the FARC. Olga Lucía Marín [FARC’s National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] answered the following when I asked her if she has observed changes in Colombian society after the many years she spent in the guerrilla: *“Yes, I think a lot has changed. Women have come a long way but patriarchy continues to exist. And I think that there has been some changes above all for women of the middle and upper class but that in the popular sectors the work for women is terrible. And that the conditions for women has not changed a lot, not in terms of economics, nor politics nor social.”* She emphasizes that the situation for women, especially for rural women and women from popular areas, has not really become more equal during the past years.

### Motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia

*‘We are not turning in our weapons to go back to the kitchen!’*

Adriana [Female Ex-combatant, Bogota, 18<sup>th</sup> of January]

What Adriana [Bogota, 18<sup>th</sup> of January], an ex-combatant without children, describes above is what many FARC mothers inexplicitly told me as well: the fact that they are no longer in armed combat and that they are currently reincorporating in a strongly patriarchal and traditional society, does not imply that they have the ambition to become full time mothers and housewives. This contrast makes it especially interesting to look at the different gender performances.

FARC mothers, as well as the FARC political party and higher rank FARC ex-combatants, have very clear in mind that returning to traditional gender roles is not what should occur after so many years of fighting together with their male counterparts. Since the peace negotiations and the peace agreement female ex-combatants have been able to adopt the conventional mother role after the *guerrillera* role. However, these women did not reconfigure their gender roles in post-accord Colombia by only being a mother and being limited to being a housewife, they instead reconfigure their role as a combatant in the guerrilla to various roles in post-accord Colombia.

The large majority of the FARC mothers I spoke with in Icononzo was studying when I was talking with them. I saw them going to classes five days a week in the afternoon from 2 till 4 pm. Most of them were studying for their high school diploma, others were taking classes to finish primary school. These FARC mothers were bringing their babies to the classes where they were able, although not always very productively, to combine studying with motherhood. Also, the majority of the FARC mothers I spoke with in Bogota was either studying, politically active, working in one of FARC’s collectives (‘productive projects’) or working in an organization outside the FARC. Even though the collective accommodation of becoming a mother, as soon as the opportunity was there, occurred on a very large scale, there are many accommodations that these FARC mothers individually make in post-accord Colombia.

Of course there are exceptions: one FARC mother I spoke with in Bogota was mainly taking care of her baby and of the household since she had not started to look for a job yet. But, she had been bringing her one year old baby to a kindergarten since that week, which implied she had more time for herself. Also, one FARC mother in Icononzo was mainly taking care of her baby since she is a single mother and had, up till then, been unable to work inside the ETCR. For me this worked out positively as I was able to spend a lot of time with her and she provided me with a lot of other contacts. The fact that I got to know

FARC mothers through her may have influenced the type of mothers I have met, something I will come back to at the end of this thesis.

I strongly got the impression that in terms of gender roles and the gender division of labour FARC mothers are the ones in charge of the baby and the household, despite the many different roles which FARC mothers perform in post-accord Colombia. One of the reasons is that the FARC mothers mostly have young babies who still need to be breastfed. Many FARC mothers' partners have jobs, often outside the ETCR's or as guards of higher rank FARC ex-combatants, which implies a lot of travelling. In that sense, these FARC mothers therefore do not seem to enjoy the same equal gender roles performance and the equal gender division of labour as they did during the guerrilla. In addition, a few FARC mothers I spoke with are single mothers, which often implies that they are automatically the ones in charge of the children as well as of the household. These mothers have little to no contact with the fathers of their babies and told me that their ex-partners are hardly involved with the caretaking of their children.

#### Traditional Gender Roles

Most outside experts and higher rank FARC ex-combatants told me that they had been observing a return to traditional gender roles very rapidly after the peace agreement. Laura Cardoza [Advisor of Senator Victoria Sandino, Bogota, 17<sup>th</sup> of January] said that: *"I think that there are many women and men who still have these ideas maybe about the break with traditional gender roles which today they fight for and they are implementing in their lives. But there are many [female ex-combatants] that returned very rapidly to the traditional gender roles, which are all of them of the baby boom and so."* She clearly makes a direct link between FARC mothers' motherhood and traditional gender roles. In relation to this, Yolvi Padilla Sepúlveda [Geneva Call, Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of February] said something similar: *"Because of course, this idea of motherhood is very interesting but this ties women a lot. It does not do the same with men. Men can be very good fathers but he would always be outside more."* In that sense, the outsiders suggest that FARC mothers who started to perform motherhood so rapidly after the peace agreement, easier return to traditional gender roles, especially in comparison to other female ex-combatants.

However, the majority of the FARC mothers themselves did not mention the performance of more traditional roles, they instead mostly emphasize how collaborative their partners are. Also from Enloe's (1993, 257-259) viewpoint it makes sense as she argues that there is hardly any information about the choices that ex-combatants make during demilitarization. It seemed that they either do not experience more traditional gender roles or that they do not consider it as something problematic. In their eyes their performance of many roles, as they are studying, working and politically active, is, compared to traditional women in Colombian society, already an advancement. Also, I think that this sociocultural behaviour is harder to reflect upon 'from inside' and it is easier to observe from an outside perspective.

Laura Cardoza [Advisor of Senator Victoria Sandino, Bogota, 17<sup>th</sup> of January] continued by stating that: *"I think it is impossible to generalize and to say that every ex-combatant returned to traditional gender roles. But we can neither say that everyone kept the practices of equity the same as in the war."* Lorena [Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March], a female ex-combatant with older children, argues that she observes fellow female ex-combatants who are just taking care of the children, who wait for the basic rent to arrive, who do not work in other projects. Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January], a FARC mother who is very political active, also says that there are women 'who are mothers'. When she told me this it became clear that she meant other FARC mothers who are 'only' mothers: those who only take care of the children, cook and clean the house. These FARC mothers have reconfigured their active combatant role to a rather traditional, passive mother and housewife role. According to Juanita Millán [OACP, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of January], the return to traditional gender roles has been very challenging:

*"This part has been very complicated because they [ex-combatants] value the equality in the interior of the organization [the FARC] a lot. As soon as the implementation of the theme of the ceasefire, the construction of the zones, the houses, the training... They have been rapidly adapting to the traditional roles for women and men. And this has been a job we have been doing for a year now: to try to reverse this so that they do not fall back to the traditional roles unless they want to. And there is an issue because they say: 'I am a mother, I want to be a mother and be at home'... the whole traditional theme. But many others say: 'I have been fighting in the guerrilla for 15 or 20 years why do they put me in a kitchen*

*to cook and to change diapers? I did not join the organization because of that, nor does the peace accord say so.' But the coexistence in the areas let that quickly happen. So it is impressive how they quickly return to traditional roles even though they do not want to."*

Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January] told me that it is not necessarily pity or disappointment that they [politically active ex-combatants] feel for the female ex-combatants who return to traditional gender roles, but that it generates worries. These worries were not only pointed out by FARC (higher rank) ex-combatants: also Yolvi Padilla Sepúlveda [Geneva Call, Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of February] stressed that the return to traditional gender roles as such would not be a problem if this is what the women themselves wish for. But there is a problem when it means that there is no other opportunity than fulfilling the traditional role of being at home.

To avoid that from happening, Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] told me the following: *"So we in the gender commission help to train these women and men that this does not happen, so that women participate in everything. So for example, we still lack the achievement of creating kindergartens in the territorial spaces so the children can be there. And then the women can link themselves with the productive process which they are developing in the ETCR."* In addition, FARC mother Sara [Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] said that conditions should be created so what is learned in the war is not lost. Also Lorena [Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March], a female ex-combatant with older children, argues that women who fall back into traditional roles do not have clear projects in mind, nor do they have the politics and the fight of the FARC present. They do not have the right vision and training. To avoid that 'women get lost' and that they return to traditional gender roles she, together with others, has the wish to create an association of female ex-combatants. Lorena [Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March] adds the following:

*"So the woman inside the house, doing everything for the household because she has a son and a daughter. We want that these women... and for the women it will be more difficult because it is difficult to combine motherhood and politics, but it is not impossible. We do not want that our women forget, that they give up what has been their compromise, their fight, for putting themselves inside the house to be a housewife and the caretaker. And it is not easy, it is not easy because this also... it comes with the return to a society that is very patriarchal [...]. Here we have to do a lot of political work to keep what we had, because if not... it would be losing what we advanced during combat."*

I think that it is very interesting what the above (higher rank) ex-combatants explained: they argue that FARC mothers, and female ex-combatants in particular, have been returning to traditional gender roles. They have undoubtedly in mind that a return is not something the women want or should be wanting because of the gains they made during the guerrilla (in terms of equal gender roles). This could also be concluded from what Lorena [Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March] mentions above: *"We do not want that our women forget..."*. This is something that should be avoided through their political effort. By pointing out this worry they seem to legitimize their political effort and the above mentioned ('gender') interventions based on FARC's idea of *insurgent feminism*.

In that regard, it seems that there is a certain expectation of how the gender performativity in post-accord Colombia should be after the disruption of militarized femininity. There is a kind of space in which female ex-combatants shape their gender roles, which was previously conditionalized by militarized femininity, but which is currently not conditionalized in a similar way. It is therefore less clear which exact roles female ex-combatants, and FARC mothers in specific, should be performing. Hence, the politically active ex-combatants seem to continue to control and conditionalize the femininity of the female ex-combatants and the shape they give to their gender roles. It demonstrates how FARC's militarized femininity continues to be of importance even though the FARC is finding itself in reincorporation in post-accord Colombia. Again, from Enloe's (1993) viewpoint it makes sense that militarized femininity continues to play a role in post-accord Colombia, as she says: *"[...] the ending to a particular war cannot undo decades of deeper militarization"* (p.3). In that regard, it could be that through FARC's *insurgent feminism*, femininity in a way continuous to be controlled after the disruption of FARC's militarized femininity.

On the one hand it can be considered positive that the FARC is worried about its female ex-combatants, on the other hand it seems that it wishes to control the lives of the women and their gender

performativity. It gives the impression that female ex-combatants are not free to perform their gender the way they wish to: it seems like a controlled gender performativity. I do not consider this necessarily positive because it is fair to argue that every female ex-combatant, currently finding herself in reincorporation, can have her agency over her life and the gender roles that come along with it. If she wishes to be a full time mother and be a housewife, this should be respected. Instead, if she does not wish to do so but instead she feels she should do so because of societal pressure or because of the lack of opportunities, FARC's worry and help would be legitimized.

Based on the conversations with outside experts and FARC higher rank ex-combatants two main reasons for the observed return to traditional gender roles were identified. Firstly, the societal pressure of traditional and patriarchal Colombia where women are still dominantly expected to be a housewife and to be inferior to their partners. Secondly, the un-accomplishment of the peace agreement which comes hand in hand with limited opportunities for (female) ex-combatants. This facilitates an easier and more rapid return to traditional gender roles, especially for those who are recent mothers.

#### *Patriarchal Colombian Society*

With regards to the first point, Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March] said that it is not an easy situation: even though combatants learned the differences between the roles, when they left the guerrilla they were exposed to the traditional roles. This has caused some to return to those roles even though they do not want to. According to her, FARC mothers, and female ex-combatants in general, adopt these traditional gender roles because of tradition, custom or because their partners ask them to do so. This argument is in line with Enloe (1993, 257-259) who emphasizes that after war it may be possible that men and women adopt the identities that they are expected to adopt.

Sara [Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January], a FARC mother, mentioned that even though every process is different, the patriarchal system (Colombian society) is stronger, which therefore pushes female ex-combatants in a certain direction. When I asked Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March] who pushes them in these traditional roles, she told me that these are the partners and society in particular. With the return to 'normality', to society, every person takes up his or her own role, the role that is in society. Even though they do not want to, they do it, she argues. Olga Lucía Marín also says that patriarchy is a difficult cultural concept which is hard to examine and also hard to change. Even in the guerrilla there were a lot of men and women who think that these traditional roles are natural. Yolvi Padilla Sepúlveda [Geneva Call, Bogota, 22<sup>nd</sup> of February] also stressed that despite the fact that these FARC mothers have the revolutionary principles from life in the guerrilla present, 'we' are still in a patriarchal system that defines the roles.

For this point (similar to the point of 'natural motherhood'), it is again particularly relevant to apply Butler (1988), who argues that "performing your gender wrong" implies cultural punishment or marginalization (p.526). According to her we [individuals] work within the cultural norms and the performance of our gender is compelled by those norms which are not chosen by anyone. The performance of gender is therefore not depending solely on your individual preference of performing it a particular way, but it is largely influenced by society which may put an external pressure on these women to perform certain roles. Now that these women are mothers after many years of being combatants, they may feel the pressure to perform this role as traditional as possible in order to enhance their reincorporation. According to my understanding this is how the higher rank ex-combatants and experts think that society illustrates 'performing your gender right' in patriarchal post-accord Colombian society. Hence, it did not become clear to me if this is also how the FARC mothers themselves consider 'performing your gender right' because I did not directly talk with them about this. Since it is a rather new role for them I suggest that they are still moving within this space where they are finding their own ways (through their own personal accommodations) of how to perform this mother role. It is therefore not static and it is a process that is still subject to change.

However, in relation to this there is an important point which makes me question to what extent this external pressure really plays a role. Previously I also stressed that the ex-combatants have been living relatively isolated from Colombian society in the ETCR's. In the spaces outside ETCR's they are usually still strongly connected to the FARC. They therefore continue to be largely exposed to the collective

FARC ideology with its particular ideas on how to perform your gender. I therefore question to what degree this outside pressure really serves as an explanation for the observed return to traditional gender roles. It seems that there may be other factors which are of greater importance to clarify this observed rapid return to traditional gender roles.

#### *Un-accomplishment of the Peace Agreement*

With regards to the second reason, FARC mother Martina [Bogota, 6<sup>th</sup> of February] told me: “*Well the reality of reincorporation is complicated [...]. There are no productive projects, there is no educational offer, there are no kindergartens in the territorial spaces. So eh, women have had to assume the role of the kitchen, to take care of the children, to be at home. So I feel that this has been a step backwards in this context.*” She also argues that because there are no caretaking facilities they cannot study, they cannot work, they are unable to participate in all of the activities that they learned and developed in the guerrilla. Adriana [Bogota, 18<sup>th</sup> of January], a female ex-combatant without children, told me that there are female ex-combatants who combine motherhood with a career but she argues that motherhood has not had a positive effect on the opportunities for women and that it is especially hard for women in a lower level of society. Also, Lorena [Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March], a female ex-combatant with older children, told me in this regard that this return is a consequence of the new reality of reincorporation where ex-combatants find themselves in. She argues that the current moment is not easy: there is a lack of alternatives which should avoid the traditional role of women as housewives. Olga Lucía Marín [FARC’s National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] said that the first part of reincorporation has been especially very difficult for FARC mothers: “*Because after all, the children are the woman’s responsibility*”.

With regards to the reincorporation and the un-accomplishment of the peace agreement, Maria [CNR, Bogota, 24<sup>th</sup> of January], told me that was the reason the CONPES 3931 (which comes with seventeen ‘gender actions’) was developed: to avoid that the transition from the FARC to civil life would generate disadvantages in the lives of women or the loss of gains from the guerrilla. She followed by saying: “*But nevertheless, there has been a process of implementation and un-accomplishment with the actions that have to do with reincorporation and up until now there has for example not been developed any action by the state for women in particular.*” She argues that because of the un-accomplishment, no conditions have been created which would allow women to keep the equality they lived in the guerrilla. This means that they are, again, exposed, to the same conditions which rural women in Colombia are exposed to. An example she gives, just as many others, is the lack of kindergartens.

#### *Bogota versus Icononzo*

While the above paragraphs clearly demonstrate how a return to traditional gender roles has been observed by the persons I have spoken with, I suggest that the degree of it would also certainly depend on the location where FARC mothers are finding themselves (inside or outside ETCR’s). The FARC mothers in Bogota are generally more political active, have higher education and have access to a kindergarten. This last point is of crucial importance when it comes to returning to traditional gender roles because FARC mothers who lack this access are usually in charge of the caretaking. This was one of my main observations in Icononzo: because of the lack of a functioning kindergarten, FARC mothers were forced to take their babies everywhere. One FARC mother told me that she was not working currently because there is no kindergarten. This confirms how outside circumstances are putting FARC mothers in a more vulnerable position, where they are exposed to the risk of returning to the traditional role of motherhood without their wish to do so.

In addition to the lack of kindergartens in ETCR’s, there are generally very few job opportunities in these zones. Therefore, the lack of alternatives could be a cause for women to easily return to the more traditional roles. The lack of opportunities also implies that their partners, if they have one, are mostly working outside the ETCR’s or as security guards. They therefore have very little time to spend with their babies. This was clearly something the FARC mothers in Icononzo mentioned to me, even though they did not link it to having returned to traditional roles. In fact, again, in the majority of the cases they emphasized how collaborative their partners are.

I also question the level of exposure to traditional gender roles since FARC mothers are particularly finding themselves in ‘FARC spheres’ where FARC’s understanding of gender performances continues

to be dominant. So far it seems that while the traditional roles in society could play a role, the limited opportunities that FARC mothers have, particularly in ETCR's, seem to be of greater importance when it comes to traditional gender roles. In that case it is not the wish to perform traditional gender roles but rather the lack of alternatives. This assumption is similar to my observations for the reason that most FARC mothers I spoke with have clear ambitions and dreams for the future, which exclude becoming housewives or full time mothers.

### Partners & Fatherhood

*'He helps a lot, that is the good thing about a partner who is an ex-combatant. They work equally. A civil partner does not share. The ex-combatants wash and cook. I get up and he is washing the clothes. I make the breakfast and mop the floor. What you see in society is that it is very 'machista'. But the ex-combatants are not like that, which is because of the education that they have received in the guerrilla. It is harder to find a civil partner who is like that and especially when you were in the guerrilla for so many years. In the guerrilla everything was distributed equally and you could not discriminate.'*

Melisa [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February]

One of the questions I asked the FARC mothers about motherhood was if their partner (if they have one) is collaborating with the caretaking of the baby and the household in general. The large majority of the FARC mothers told me very convinced what Melisa [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February] mentions above: her partner helps a lot and tasks are equally divided between them. They immediately made clear that they do so because they are guerrilleros and not civil men. By pointing this out they clearly distinguish the differences in gender roles performances between guerrillero fathers and civil fathers. However, while Gabriela [Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February] also confirmed that her partner is very collaborative, she argues that not all the FARC fathers are helping the FARC mothers. This is, according to her, because the main responsibility of caretaking still lies with women. I observed that the FARC mothers are the ones mostly in charge of the babies, carrying them around everywhere they go. But, when the FARC fathers are available, they are very collaborative and they really enjoy spending time with their babies. Again, no generalizations can be made because not every FARC father assumes his father role equally.

### Guerrillero Fathers

While I was speaking with the FARC mothers it became evident that I had to understand the differences between 'Guerrillero Fathers' and 'Civil Fathers', something I did not expect to be so important. The large majority of the FARC mothers explained with a lot of enthusiasm how collaborative their partners are. Gabriela [Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February] told the following: *'My partner is very dedicated to the baby. He helps with the clothes, with everything, he is not 'machista'. He is very dedicated to the household, when I was pregnant as well.'* Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February] said that her partner is very responsible and always tells her 'what is best for the baby' is what they should give her. The other FARC mothers told me very similar stories: they are very collaborative, they do not mind to take care of the baby, to stay up late or to clean the house. Rosa [Bogota, 31<sup>st</sup> of January] also said something alike:

*"Yes of course, he is very committed to his children. He is a person who is not lazy to cook, to change the diaper. Yes he accomplishes the role of a father. For him it is not a duty, the duty of a father. It is to take on paternity. He is a very extra-ordinary men in that sense. We help each other out a lot [...]. He is extra-ordinary in the sense that well let's say he is not like the typical fathers that we know in society. The ones that are discharged from raising the children, that it is specifically for the women, because that is the role that is made. The father is for taking the money home. But contrary, he is a person who contributes and who is also very aware of his daughter. He does not wait until he gets told to change the diaper. The contrary, he feels that the baby is his. Let's say, he is unique.. not even one in ten thousand men dedicates himself to this. Men consider the raising of children only as a matter of the mother. They do not assume it as such, like it is also their responsibility."*

When I asked Melisa [Icononzo, 16<sup>th</sup> of February] why FARC fathers are so collaborative she said, just as the large majority of FARC mothers, that they are used to the equally divided tasks and roles in the guerrilla. Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 7<sup>th</sup> of March] says that male ex-combatants have lived another reality, that they have seen that we

[women] are capable of many things. Those men are less ‘machista’ than the men ‘outside’. She again refers to the equal task division between male and female combatants: *“Because they [male ex-combatants] were cooking there [the guerrilla], they know how to cook. And when they know how to cook they know how tiring it is. They were also washing, they know how to wash clothes. So they have a different consideration, they look at it differently. The men outside are used that everything is done for them.”* Guerrilleros know how to take care of themselves and of the household because they have lived a different reality in the FARC.

Milena Peralta [OACP, Bogota, 14<sup>th</sup> of January], who works for the OACP, says that FARC fathers are very committed to their babies: *“What we can see in the FARC is that the fathers were always very involved in the process of the child”*, which is very beautiful to see. What she mentioned coincides with my observations in Icononzo: even though I did not see the FARC fathers around a lot, when they were there they were also very happily taking care of their babies. There was one FARC father who especially made an impression on me: he seemed mainly responsible for the caretaking of their daughter since he was not working at the moment. He took his daughter even to the meetings that he wanted to attend. Furthermore, when I was inside the houses of the families I also saw the fathers actively taking up caretaking tasks and arranging the household. At the birthday party I attended there were also some FARC fathers who did not only look after their own children, but also after the other children. In general, my impression was that the FARC fathers take up caretaking tasks when they are around and that they do so with a lot of joy.

Something which became clear from the conversations, as well as from my observations, is that most FARC fathers are not around a lot. Silvia [Icononzo, 14<sup>th</sup> of February] said that her partner is a very good partner, he is very attentive: *“When he is there he is not ‘machista’, he sweeps the floor, he organizes, he does everything. If he would be in one of the cooperatives [inside the ETCR] and he would be here [Icononzo] he would be more at home.”* Her partner is working as one of the drivers of the higher rank ex-combatants and is away from home a lot. This was the case with many FARC fathers: they often have jobs outside the ETCR’s which implies they are not often at home. This does however not mean that they are not willing to be more collaborative. Instead, the circumstances they live in make it difficult for them to do so.

It seems that the amount of collaboration of FARC fathers in terms of caretaking is most likely a result of the equal gender roles performance in the guerrilla. I doubt whether the, in their eyes, equal division of tasks they are referring to are a result of an internalized understanding of the equal performance of gender roles. In addition, the signing of the peace agreement is a relatively short time ago and FARC’s ideology and values are still very present, particularly in the ETCR’s. I therefore think that it would be interesting to study whether the equal division these women experience in terms of the caretaking over the babies and the household, continues to exist in the future. This question is based on the assumption that, while the years pass by, ex-combatants will likely be more reincorporated in (traditional) Colombian society and may therefore be easier tempted to (unconsciously) return to the more traditional gender roles. This again may also be caused by the societal pressure, which eventually may turn out to be stronger than the FARC values they have taken from their time in the guerrilla.

#### Civil Fathers

Since the FARC mothers are so convinced that their partners are collaborating because they have been guerrilleros, I found it very interesting to further explore the differences they stressed between ex-combatants and ‘civilians’. I spoke with two FARC mothers who are not together with an ex-combatant. One mother I just had an informal talk with told me that her partner was a ‘militia’ in the FARC, which means that he was not fighting in ‘the mountains’ like the guerrilleros. That is why he is not used to the equal task division between men and women like the male ex-combatants. According to her he is very macho and does not help a lot with the baby, neither with the household. Another FARC mother told me the following: *‘My partner is ‘civil’. And while in the guerrilla we were used that we were all doing the same, with a ‘civil’ it is not the same. He wants me to do everything. He drops his clothes, he baths himself but I have to go after his clothes. They [civil men] do not wash, do not cook, they have never done so. They do not make the lunch. With a guerrillero it is not the same, they cook, they wash, that is what they learned in the guerrilla’* [Ramona, Icononzo, 15<sup>th</sup> of February].



Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] also argues that because some women cannot easily find someone who is like the majority of the guerrilleros, they prefer to live alone. The average civilian, especially the one with a rural background, is used to the traditional gender roles and the unequal division of labour between men and women. He has not lived the equal division the FARC mothers have lived. Sofia [Bogota, 1<sup>st</sup> of February], a FARC mother who is together with a guerrillero, did not have a partner in the guerrilla and she actually expected she would stay alone: "*Because with a man like those outside the guerrilla, no... Those are very 'machista'.*" For that reason she cannot imagine herself with a man 'from outside'. I found it interesting to see how firmly the FARC mothers spoke about what it would imply if they would be together with a 'civilian' instead of with a guerrillero. I got the impression that all of them formed a strong idea and discourse about 'those men' while they were in the guerrilla.

### Transformed Gender Roles

The idea of Butler (1988) that gender is not a "seamless identity" (p. 520) is particularly relevant for studying the gender roles of male and female ex-combatants. When she refers to gender transformation, she talks about the repetition of acts which are different from the dominant acts that identify that particular gender. I think that the conventional performance of motherhood is a good example for studying whether gender transformation has occurred. It allows me to understand how the mother role is performed and if it comes hand in hand with traditional gender roles ascribed to women in patriarchal Colombian society. If gender roles would be transformed through participation in the guerrilla, we would expect that there would be hardly to no performance of traditional gender roles and that there would not be an unequal division of labour and tasks related to the babies and the household in post-accord Colombia.

During the guerrilla female ex-combatants transgressed traditional gender roles because they were allowed equal participation in the FARC and they were exposed to an equal gender division of labour. They certainly broke with the traditional idea of a woman: a mother and a housewife who certainly cannot be a fighter. The roles they were performing were significantly different from the roles they were used to perform in rural, traditional Colombia. And even though most FARC mothers are convinced that they continue to enjoy this equality to a certain extent (that their partners are very collaborative), outsiders suggest that FARC mothers are (unconsciously) adopting the traditional gender roles, precisely because of their motherhood. I could tell that they are very active being mothers while studying and working, but when it comes to the gender roles between them and their partners, they are mostly the ones responsible for the babies and the household. In that sense, it gives the impression that gender roles are no longer transgressed and transformed during FARC mothers' reincorporation. Here it is crucial to say that there are of course many exceptions and no strong generalizations should be made.

Earlier I aimed to provide explanations for the relatively rapid return to traditional roles which many persons I have spoken with suggested to be occurring. I identified two reasons based on the many conversations: 'patriarchal Colombian society' and 'un-accomplishment of the peace agreement'. Another argument that I find important to mention, which is strongly linked to the transformation of gender roles in the guerrilla, is the fact that the equal division of tasks and the equal performance of gender roles were maybe never (completely) internalized by the combatants in the guerrilla. With this I refer to the fact that it is likely that the war circumstances have caused the equal participation and the equal gender division of labour. Therefore, as soon as these war circumstances disappeared during reincorporation, there was in that sense no more need for such an equal division of labour as there was in the guerrilla. Olga Lucía Marín [FARC's National Commission of Women, Gender and Diversity, Bogota, 28<sup>th</sup> of January] told me in this regard that this happened in other guerrillas (such as in El Salvador) as well: during active combat men were used to women who did the same as them, but when they arrive at the construction of peace, the traditional roles start again. If this would be the case, gender roles would have only been transformed to a certain extent and do not continue to be transformed in post-accord Colombia. This would then serve as one of the explanations why especially FARC mothers seem to have reconfigured their gender roles into more traditional gender roles, despite the fact that they are very active mothers and they are not only limited to the caretaking tasks.

However, this argument cannot be completely justified for the reason that FARC mothers, as well as outside experts, argue that FARC fathers are very collaborative because of what they have learned in the guerrilla. It seems that ex-combatants continue to have some of the important values of the guerrilla present. However, to what extent these can be labelled as 'gender consciousness' and internalized should become clear during the coming years of further reincorporation in post-accord Colombia. So far, I have gotten the impression that those norms and values have not led to a real gender transformation of the FARC generation, but instead have only led to changes in terms of gender equality on a more superficial level.

## Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to explore how FARC mothers' motherhood in post-accord Colombia reconfigures their gender roles in the context of reincorporation. With the reconfiguration of gender roles I referred to the roles which ex-combatants perform in post-accord Colombia in comparison to the roles they performed during combat. I therefore firstly looked at how gender was performed, understood and shaped during the guerrilla. The second part of this chapter looked into the gender roles in post-accord Colombia. By doing so I hoped to be able to give an answer to the third, and last, sub-question of this thesis: *How does the motherhood of FARC ex-combatants reconfigure their gender roles in post-accord Colombia?*

Gender performativity has been particularly relevant for this chapter since it supposes that genders can take up different gender roles in different settings and on different moments in time. Gender roles are therefore not static. This was certainly the case for the female ex-combatants who were used to perform other, mostly less traditional, gender roles during their time in the guerrilla. I also used Butler's ideas to see whether the observed adoption of more traditional gender roles is being caused by societal pressure. And lastly, her concept of gender transformation was especially relevant to see whether traditional gender roles have been transgressed and transformed because of ex-combatants' participation in the guerrilla. There they enjoyed equal participation and the equal division of roles and labour to a certain extent.

In addition, post-insurgency has served to look at motherhood as one of the many accommodations which FARC mothers are making in post-accord Colombia. This accommodation has resulted in the performance of, particularly, more traditional gender roles for FARC mothers during their reincorporation, contrasting the roles they performed during conflict. Militarized femininity was also of great importance as it allowed to understand the performance of the different gender roles and the distribution of those during the guerrilla, as well as in post-accord Colombia. It also served to challenge the gender equality discourse of the FARC by analysing the task division, female combatants in higher ranks and the sexual and reproductive health and rights. This theory helped clarifying how the FARC aims to keep control over the gender roles of its ex-combatants, in a way through its *insurgent feminism*. In that sense, militarized femininity served as a complementation to gender performativity.

The chapter started with 'Gender Roles in the Guerrilla' where I spoke about how gender roles, according to the persons I have spoken to, were equally divided during combat. However, this was not due to an ideological commitment to gender equality. It became clear that during the FARC, female ex-combatants did not have to repeat traditional gender roles which they were used to. I observe a clear tension with regards to the equality in the guerrilla. On the one hand, the FARC is said to have distributed tasks equally among male and female combatants. On the other hand, the lack of female combatants in higher ranks and the strong control over the femininity and reproductivity of female combatants challenge this equality discourse. I therefore suggest that the equal gender roles performance and equal rights in the guerrilla may have been rather superficial, which could serve as an explanation why it has not been completely internalized by its combatants as turned out later in this chapter. However, compared to how life looked like for female combatants in, according to the FARC, highly traditional and patriarchal Colombia, FARC's 'equality' could be said to be a considerable achievement.

The second part of this chapter, 'FARC mothers' Gender Roles in Post-Accord Colombia', looked into the gender roles which FARC mothers perform during reincorporation and how their recent motherhood has reconfigured those. I did so by firstly illustrating, mostly from FARC's viewpoint, the patriarchal and traditional Colombian society which they are currently reincorporating into. This society is what

they have been fighting against for decades through the class and patriarchal struggle. I then turned to 'Motherhood in Post-Accord Colombia', where it became clear that the conventional mother role is a new role for these women since this role was impossible during conflict. Because it is a recent role I suggest that they are still finding their own, personal, ways of how to perform this role. It is also crucial to point out that the mother role is not the only role these women are performing in post-accord Colombia. These FARC mothers are mostly active women who study, work or are engaged in politics. They therefore reconfigure their gender through performing diverse and multiple gender roles.

However, what is particularly interesting are the frictions between how the FARC mothers themselves consider their gender roles and how FARC higher rank ex-combatants and outside experts interpret those. While FARC mothers themselves admitted that their partners are away a lot, they did not stress the fact that they are mostly in charge of the caretaking and the household as a return to traditional gender roles. I have observed that while FARC fathers are very collaborative and helpful when they are there, I think that FARC higher rank combatants and outside experts make a valid point by stating that they observe a rather rapid return to traditional gender roles. In that regard I observe a kind of tension where, once these female ex-combatants were liberated from the control of FARC's militarized femininity, there was a certain trap of the traditional gender roles of Colombian society.

In addition, I tried to provide explanations why this suggested rapid return to traditional gender roles would have occurred. According to the majority of persons I spoke with, it particularly has to do with patriarchal Colombian society where ex-combatants are largely exposed to these traditional gender roles. Here Butler's explanation of cultural and societal norms and pressure turned out to be relevant to make sense of this argument: because of possible 'punishment' for performing your gender incorrectly, it would be rather logical that women, as well as men, adopt the more dominant, traditional, gender roles in society. This is also in line with Enloe's argument who says that men and women are likely to adopt the identities that they are expected to adopt. However, the argument of the exposure to traditional gender roles in Colombian society can be challenged for the reason that FARC mothers, inside as well as outside ETCR's, still largely find themselves in the 'FARC spheres'.

A second provided explanation is the un-accomplishment of the peace agreement, which has caused a lack of opportunities for women and a lack of alternatives to the traditional mother role and housewife role. An important factor is the lack of caretaking facilities in ETCR's, which has a disproportionate effect on FARC mothers because it limits their agency. In my opinion this reason confirms the impression that FARC mothers do not necessarily have the ambition to return to traditional gender roles but rather seem forced to because of the lack of opportunities and alternatives.

The FARC actively aims to avoid the return to traditional gender roles through all kinds of measures based on their ideology of *insurgent feminism* during reincorporation in post-accord Colombia. It wants to avoid that the gains from combat get lost and the FARC therefore aims to control how FARC mothers, and ex-combatants in general, shape their gender roles. In a way, I could be that their *insurgent feminism* serves as a political tool through which they can make up for the loss of control as a consequence of the disruption with militarized femininity. Their militarized femininity in this sense remains in force, which can be beneficial if FARC mothers indeed do not want to return to traditional roles, but if they do want to I think this could be considered as an undesired control. It demonstrates how FARC's ideology, values and insurgent relations continue to dominate life in post-accord Colombia. This makes sense as, based on Enloe's argumentation, the end of the Colombian conflict does not immediately undo decades of militarization.

The last part of this chapter served to study whether participation in the FARC has led to the transformation of gender roles. In the guerrilla female combatants were able to transgress gender roles through their participation as women in armed conflict, something which is not considered to be a traditional role assigned to women. According to the many persons I have spoken with as well as according to my own observations, FARC mothers' motherhood is likely contributing to the return to traditional gender roles for female and male ex-combatants. This therefore suggests that gender has not been completely transformed by participation in the guerrilla. I got the impression that the war circumstances have contributed to consciousness about the equal gender division of labour, but that equal gender performativity has likely not been internalized completely. This could then be serving as

a third reason for the observed return to traditional roles. It is furthermore likely that there are other factors that play important roles as well. Lastly, I also suggest that the place where ex-combatants are reincorporating hugely determines which reasons would play a more evident role in this suggested rapid return.

It is crucial to mention that this chapter did not aim to find out how gender equal the guerrilla was, neither did it aim to argue for a rapid return to traditional gender roles, nor to find out the reasons for that observed rapid return. Instead, it aimed to study the reconfiguration of gender roles in postaccord Colombia, by listening to the different stories of FARC mothers, FARC higher rank ex-combatants and outside experts. By comparing the past to the present and by using the interesting and unique construction of the three theories central in this thesis, I think this chapter has been able to successfully answer the third sub-research question.

## 8. Conclusion

Ultimately this thesis aimed to answer the main research question of this thesis: *How do FARC ex-combatants experience and give shape to their motherhood during the reincorporation process and how does this reconfigure their gender roles in post-agreement Colombia?*

The introductory chapter of this thesis provided a contextualization of the FARC mothers. It did so by elaborating on the FARC and on the role of women during the armed conflict, the peace process and the peace agreement. It furthermore explained the current situation of the reincorporation process<sup>33</sup> in post-agreement Colombia, including some of its challenges. This introductory chapter was of crucial importance for understanding the experiences of FARC mothers' motherhood and the reconfiguration of their gender roles in post-agreement Colombia, which the empirical chapters of this thesis touched upon.

The main research question was answered through three research sub-questions that were formulated for this thesis. The first empirical chapter of this thesis answered the first sub-research question: *What were the reasons for FARC ex-combatants to become mothers in post-agreement Colombia?* Since the baby boom was such an unexpected phenomenon, it is very relevant to understand the reasons for it. Here I emphasized first of all that, for the large majority of the FARC mothers I have spoken with, the pregnancies were a common decision of the FARC mothers and their (ex-)partners. Hence the focus of this thesis was on motherhood from a more individual point of view: that of the FARC mothers.

This question was tackled by studying how motherhood was shaped in the guerrilla and how it was experienced. I found out why and how motherhood was prohibited by FARC's leadership. FARC's militarized femininity resulted in the strict control of the sexual and reproductive health of female combatants through the exposure to all kinds of forced contraceptives and abortions. This controlled femininity made it impossible for women to perform motherhood in a conventional way. Despite this strongly militarized femininity during conflict, motherhood was sometimes possible in an unconventional and 'illogical' way, where motherhood was forcefully performed 'on a distance'. It is important to mention that FARC's militarized femininity likely served for some women as a kind of liberation: it allowed them to stay in the armed struggle instead of having to perform certain (more traditional) gender roles they did not wish to perform.

FARC's control over the reproductivity of its combatants played an important role in the reasons for the many (unplanned) pregnancies which started to occur during the peace process and after the peace agreement. It became clear that the radical switch between life in the guerrilla to life in post-agreement Colombia opened up the possibility to move from the *guerrillera* role, and the sometimes 'motherhood on a distance' role, to the conventional mother role. This is in line with gender performativity, which argues that genders can perform different roles at different moments in time. This switch implied that the femininity of the female combatants was no longer militarized in terms of their sexual and reproductive health. It meant that female ex-combatants, and their (ex-)partners, could take their own personal decisions about parenthood under the different conditions of reincorporation. Another reason that turned out to be of crucial importance was the fact that many female ex-combatants were reaching the end of their healthy reproductive age and they therefore wanted to benefit from the possibility of becoming a mother before it would be too late. This illustrates how, for a significant amount of women, the wish of becoming a mother in life either persisted during combat, was developed during the guerrilla or only awakened until after the peace agreement. Many outsiders also spoke about motherhood as if it is a logical next step after decades of conflict (something 'natural') based on societal pressure. However, I question the legitimacy of this argument because FARC ex-combatants predominately find themselves inside 'FARC spheres'.

In addition, the unplanned pregnancies are mostly a consequence of the fact that the FARC can no longer militarize the femininity of its ex-combatants in a similar way as it did during combat. The many years of control have impacted the lives of the ex-combatants and the disruption of this control results in new responsibilities over their own sexual and reproductive health. FARC's disrupted militarized femininity

---

<sup>33</sup> During the writing of this thesis it turned out that the reincorporation period was extended until December 2019.

has therefore not solely resulted in the opening of possibilities to think about babies and the formation of families, but also in the many unplanned pregnancies because of the lack of accessibility of and knowledge about contraceptives. This chapter therefore demonstrates how militarized femininity is not only relevant for studying the control in the past, but also what the different shape of this control implies for the present. In that sense militarized femininity serves as an important tool to understand the reasons for FARC ex-combatants to become mothers in post-accord Colombia.

The second empirical chapter of this thesis answered the second sub-research question: *How do FARC women experience and give shape to their motherhood during reincorporation?* I followed Sprenkels' theory of post-insurgency as I studied the recent motherhood from a social and relational perspective rather than from the perspective of the international DDR policy. Hereby I used the gendered perspective (militarized femininity combined with gender performativity) on these lived experiences: gender roles are not static and genders can take up different roles at different moments in time. I consider the conventional mother role a new role, which was impossible to be performed similarly as a result of FARC's militarized femininity. This role is very different from the *guerrillera* role and the sometimes 'motherhood on a distance' role during conflict. It has resulted into many accommodations, transformations and rearrangements in post-accord Colombia. How FARC mothers perform, shape and experience this new role is particularly influenced by their current reincorporation. However, the established relations and experiences of the guerrilla (under FARC's control of militarized femininity) influence the shape they give to their current mother role. This chapter explored the different personal experiences, emotions, beautiful moments, challenges, dreams and future plans of the recent FARC mothers. These do not only provide insights into the lives and experiences of FARC mothers, but they serve as a reflection of the broader current reincorporation process.

The chapter started with the positive emotions and experiences related to this recent motherhood. These illustrated that despite the fact that every mother fulfils her role in her own personal way, there are many similarities in terms of positive experiences. Generally, FARC mothers perform multiple roles in post-accord Colombia. The radical change from the *guerrillera* role to the conventional mother role as a result of the peace agreement, gave rise to a range of positive feelings: seeing the babies grow and transform, having their company and having different worries and priorities. These were impossible to experience in a similar way during conflict as a consequence of FARC's militarized femininity. They are therefore particularly a result of the different circumstances and conditions during reincorporation. Actually, these positive feelings of motherhood often form a certain distraction of the sometimes challenging reincorporation process. Additionally, some mothers had never expected they would experience motherhood as they did not think that they would survive the guerrilla or that the conflict would come to an end.

This chapter also stressed the different dreams and future plans FARC mothers have in mind for themselves as well as for their babies. They certainly do not have the ambition to go back to war, precisely because of their recent motherhood. This illustrates how their motherhood is an important drive to continue their reincorporation process. Most have many dreams and ambitions, which illustrates their wish of performing more than 'just' the mother role. It also turned out that they are very convinced of telling their children about the guerrilla. This shows us how the 'past insurgency', and the established relations during that period, continue to be of great importance in the present. The fact that they are reincorporating in post-accord Colombian society therefore does not imply that they are completely leaving behind their 'combatant identity' by taking up the new 'citizen identity'. It therefore seems that the FARC mothers have internalized many of the guerrilla values.

Another important part of this chapter was dedicated to the challenges that FARC mothers face during reincorporation in post-accord Colombia. These serve as a 'window' of the current reincorporation process which the entire FARC ex-combatant community is going through. The location where FARC mothers are reincorporating (inside versus outside ETCR's) hugely determines which challenges they are exposed to. The very diverse challenges range from the lack of knowledge about motherhood, healthcare in post-accord Colombia, stigmatization and fear and the formally unacknowledged guerrilla knowledge to practical issues of high costs, difficult mobility and the feeling of missing FARC's collectiveness in Bogota. The reincorporation challenges in Icononzo are particularly linked to the living conditions and the current insecurity. However, since ETCR's were meant to be temporary

reincorporation spaces, the mentioned challenges seem to be quite logical. Furthermore, the mostly interlinked challenges show us how a reincorporation can be a complex and challenging experience for ex-combatants in general. While it is rather easy to write about reincorporation on paper, the reality is, particularly in this case of the FARC mothers, often more complicated.

The third, and last, empirical chapter of this thesis answered the third sub-research question: *How does the motherhood of FARC ex-combatants reconfigure their gender roles in post-accord Colombia?* I departed from the idea that different genders can take up different gender roles on different moments in time. The first part of this chapter focused on the gender roles during conflict: how those were understood, performed and shaped. By doing so, I was able to observe how gender roles are being reconfigured in post-accord Colombia. It became clear that in the FARC female ex-combatants did not have to repeat the more traditional gender roles which they were used to in rural Colombia. However, I observed clear frictions between different ideas about FARC's gender equality discourse. While on the one hand the FARC seemed to distribute the tasks equally among its combatants, there were very few female combatants in higher ranks position and the control of militarized femininity over the women's bodies and their reproductivity was very strong. In that sense I suggest that FARC's equal performance of gender roles and their 'gender equality' may have been rather superficial, which would serve as an explanation why it is not completely internalized.

In this chapter I particularly aimed to illustrate how the recent motherhood reconfigures gender roles in post-accord Colombia. I did so by looking into the roles FARC mothers perform during reincorporation. Because the conventional mother role is a rather new role for these women, they are still finding out their own personal ways of how to perform it during reincorporation. It is also certainly not the only role which they perform: they are active mothers who study, work and try to re-organize their lives as civilians. This illustrates how they reconfigure their gender by performing multiple roles during reincorporation. Furthermore, in this part I illustrated clear frictions between FARC mothers' point of view and that of FARC higher rank ex-combatants and outside experts. The outsiders argue that FARC women seem to be rapidly returning to the traditional roles assigned to women. The FARC mothers themselves do not reflect upon this in a similar way, they instead stress the collaboration of their partners. While I also observed this collaboration, I think that the outsiders make a valid point. I observe a kind of tension where, after being liberated from the control of FARC's militarized femininity, female ex-combatants are exposed to a kind of trap of the more traditional roles of Colombian society. Two potential causes for this observed rapid return were identified. Firstly, patriarchal Colombian society, with its pressure to adopt the dominant (more traditional) gender roles. Secondly, the lack of alternatives to the performance of the traditional mother role and housewife role as a consequence of the 'un-accomplishment' of the peace agreement. I question the first explanation for the reason that FARC ex-combatants are still largely finding themselves inside the 'FARC spheres'.

In addition, it was interesting to observe how the current politically active FARC ex-combatants aim to prevent a return to traditional gender roles. They wish to avoid that the gains from combat get lost. In that sense they aim to control how FARC mothers, and the larger ex-combatant community, shape their gender roles. This illustrates how the disrupted militarized femininity continues to remain in force during reincorporation. Their *insurgent feminism* seems to function as a political tool through which the FARC can possibly make up for their loss of control through the disruption with their militarized femininity. Also, this demonstrates how FARC's ideology, values and insurgent relations continue to dominate ex-combatants' lives in post-accord Colombia. This seems rather logical based on Enloe's argumentation that an end to a conflict does not immediately undo decades of deep militarization.

In this chapter I furthermore aimed to study whether participation in the FARC has led to the transformation of gender roles. In the guerrilla, women transgressed the traditional gender roles by equally participating in the armed fight. The outsiders, as well as my own observations, suggest that FARC mothers' motherhood likely contributes to a return to more traditional gender roles. Here it is crucial to mention that the performance of the mother role as such is not necessarily a traditional role, but rather the way in which it is performed that can be traditional. This observed return suggests that gender has not been completely transformed by participation in the guerrilla. It seems that the war circumstances have contributed to an equal performance of gender roles, but that this 'equality' has not

been internalized completely. This could consequently serve as a third reason for the observed return to traditional gender roles.

In this thesis I used a theoretical construction of three theories: post-insurgency, militarized femininity and gender performativity. This thesis departed from post-insurgency, which allowed for an analysis of the recent motherhood from a social and relational point of view. Militarized femininity and gender performativity together formed the gendered perspective on the lived experiences that post-insurgency studies. This gendered approach was crucial because the recent motherhood is a highly gendered phenomenon. Militarized femininity helped to understand FARC mothers' femininity during the insurgency. How motherhood was shaped during conflict has a significant impact on how it is experienced and given shape during reincorporation. Gender performativity assumes that different genders can take up different roles in different settings. It studied the performance of the gender roles during reincorporation by understanding those roles in the insurgency. Both gender theories also complement each other: I assume that FARC's control in the insurgency allows to make sense of how gender roles were performed in the past as well as in the present. In each of the empirical chapters another theory was dominant: the first empirical chapter mainly used militarized femininity to understand the reasons for motherhood, the second empirical chapter reflected upon the experiences and shape given to motherhood from the viewpoint of post-insurgency, while the third empirical chapter studied the reconfiguration of gender roles by departing from gender performativity.

By studying motherhood I illustrated how the past insurgency continues to be of importance in the lives of ex-combatants in post-accord Colombia. Firstly, it allows to understand the reasons for the large amount of babies during the peace negotiations and right after the peace agreement. Secondly, it illustrates how the guerrilla plays a vital role in the daily lives of the FARC mothers because of their specific (positive as well as negative) experiences of motherhood. Also, FARC mothers' continuous commitment to the FARC, missing FARC's collectiveness and the importance of the FARC values for their futures and that of their babies, illustrates how taking up the 'civilian identity' does not result in totally giving up on elements of the 'guerrilla identity'. The established relations between combatants and the common past of the insurgency therefore continue to dominate life in post-insurgency. Thirdly, how gender roles were experienced and performed during the guerrilla (under FARC's militarized femininity) has impacted how they are being shaped, experienced and reconfigured during reincorporation. However, this does not necessarily mean that the way these gender roles were performed during decades of militarization has been internalized by the FARC mothers.

All in all, to come back to the main question of this thesis, it is not an easy task to provide a simple answer. First of all, FARC mothers are not a homogeneous group: every mother has a different background, different education, different experiences, different dreams and different future plans. Therefore, no strong generalizations can be made when aiming to answer this question. Secondly, the current moment is very insecure and therefore hugely determines the experiences and the shape given to motherhood during reincorporation in post-accord Colombia. During the fieldwork, ex-combatants were reaching the end of the scheduled two years of reincorporation. They will likely have to go through a lot of changes in terms of where they will be living, what daily activities they will have and to what extent they will be exposed to 'real' civilian life. However, despite this insecurity, FARC mothers are actively shaping their lives through accommodations, adjustments and re-arrangements that they envision of importance during reincorporation. Particularly because of their recent motherhood, they aim to make the best out of this process, their new civilian life and they keep a clear eye on the future. In that sense, their babies are an important drive for reaching the peace the FARC and the Colombian government agreed upon almost three years ago. The recent motherhood of FARC mothers shows us how such a social process becomes an important and crucial accommodation, as well as a distraction, during a sometimes challenging reincorporation process. In that sense, I think that these FARC mothers could be called 'mothers of peace': female ex-combatants who have given birth to babies who will be growing up in another time: that of peace.



## 9. Discussion

This thesis has been taking a look at how and in which way, after more than fifty years of conflict, the transition from the *guerrillera* role to the civilian role opened up the possibility for conventional motherhood to occur, something which was impossible during the armed conflict. This motherhood performance became a phenomenon as the amount of pregnant women and babies being born increased very rapidly. I reflected upon this phenomenon, the recent motherhood and the experiences of those almost three years after the peace agreement by formulating the main research question of this thesis. I divided this question into three sub-research questions, which I have answered throughout the three empirical chapters. Through the use of the different theories and their interconnections, I was allowed to formulate answers to the questions I posed. I found out the most important reasons for the recent motherhood, the many different positive and negative experiences of this motherhood during reincorporation and how this phenomenon has reconfigured gender roles. Below I will elaborate on some of the questions that remain unanswered. This chapter furthermore includes the most important messages and the broader relevance of this thesis, implications for (Colombian) policy, a reflection on the theory and ideas for future research.

By posing the main research question of this thesis, I aimed to contribute to the understanding of the gendered experiences of reincorporation through the eyes of the recent FARC mothers. I have studied their motherhood from a very human, relational and social point of view. I argue that this is a relatively new approach to how we could be studying the reintegration of ex-combatants in society. Because little is known about what it means to give life and to take care of life after decades where taking life was not uncommon, this thesis aimed to expose new ideas and understandings of how FARC mothers are experiencing the caretaking of life. It was particularly relevant to take this approach for the reason that the large majority of research on female ex-combatants has focused on sexual violence and (forced) abortions within the FARC or has been ignoring the active roles women can perform during conflict. Therefore, studying the recent motherhood has offered a distinct approach on gendered experiences during reincorporation. I convincingly say that other similar approaches would also contribute to the knowledge on gendered experiences of (female) ex-combatants in reincorporation. This knowledge can ultimately lead to more accurate and more inclusive reintegration policies.

The challenges FARC mothers are experiencing as a result of their current reincorporation in post-accord Colombia have served as a reflection on the broader reincorporation process which the larger FARC ex-combatant community is going through. This thesis has achieved to reflect upon a significant amount of these challenges, of which most are context specific. I encountered a few main issues which were not reflected upon prior to the start of the reincorporation process in August 2017, but which can potentially be taken into account in the future.

Firstly, ‘reincorporation’ has received relatively little attention in the peace agreement, while it is likely to be the most challenging component of the DDR policy for ex-combatants, as well as for Colombian society. It is ‘easily’ written about on paper, but in practice it brings along a lot of challenges that have a disproportional effect on female ex-combatants who are recent FARC mothers. In addition, I think that the two years reincorporation period is a rather short amount of time for a reincorporation process after a decades long conflict. Many FARC mothers, as well as ex-combatants in general, have been part of the FARC for years, sometimes decades, since mostly a very young age. They have been excluded from ‘normal Colombian society’ for a significant amount of time and in my opinion two years is not sufficient to ensure the complete reincorporation of ex-combatants. I also base this argument on the many challenges that FARC mothers pointed out to me: challenging living conditions, the unacknowledgement of guerrilla knowledge and insecurity, among others. I would therefore recommend to extend the reincorporation period in post-accord Colombia after its finalization in December 2019. For other similar post-conflict or post-war settings, I would recommend to set a longer period of time for reintegration. The example of the FARC mothers illustrates how two years are not sufficient to ensure a complete and satisfying reincorporation.

Secondly, I think that stigmatization and fear play a major obstacle in the reincorporation of (female) ex-combatants in post-accord Colombia. I was surprised by the fact that the people I got to know in

Bogota outside my research were very uninformed about the reincorporation of FARC ex-combatants. There is a lack of knowledge which, in my opinion, contributes to the stigmatization that FARC ex-combatants are exposed to. The many killings of FARC ex-combatants and social leaders which are currently occurring in Colombia, further illustrate the worrying discrimination and stigmatization. I also mentioned that while FARC ex-combatants are expected to reincorporate, reincorporation is a mutual process and larger Colombian society is also expected to accept these former combatants. In my opinion there has been insufficient attention to the latter, which therefore serves as an obstacle to the successful reincorporation of thousands of ex-combatants.

Thirdly, there has been no attention at all to parenthood, and motherhood in particular, in the peace negotiations nor in the peace agreement. During my research it became clear that the 'baby boom' phenomenon was completely unexpected by the government as well as by FARC's leadership. The lack of attention has resulted in inadequate responses and the need for emergency responses, having a negative effect on the ex-combatants and the FARC mothers in particular. However, with such a 'young guerrilla' starting its reincorporation, I think that the 'baby boom' could have been predicted after so many years of strongly controlling female combatants' femininity. This thesis therefore shows us that we should not ignore female ex-combatants' reproductivity and the wish to form families together with their partners when they start reintegration. While they have been unable to experience motherhood in a conventional way during conflict, this does not mean that there is no wish to do so after conflict. Once the war is over (and the militarized femininity is disrupted), many other processes get the chance to occur, such as motherhood and parenthood in general.

Lastly, while the main purpose of this thesis is to study the recent motherhood of FARC mothers during their reincorporation in post-accord Colombia, I started to wonder more and more to what extent ex-combatants are really 'reincorporating'. I mention this for the reason that ex-combatants are largely finding themselves inside the 'FARC spheres', something which I have reflected upon various times in this thesis. I therefore got the impression that the 'real reincorporation' is yet to come after the official reincorporation finishes. The idea of ZVTN's, later converting into ETCR's, is very accurate but it dissociates the FARC ex-combatant community from Colombian society. And while the majority of the ex-combatants is no longer finding itself in these spaces, ex-combatants are mainly connected to each other through for example the cooperatives or the political party. This does not solely seem to be a result of FARC's wish to keep their collectiveness, but it is also a result of the lack of alternatives, for example in terms of labour. In my opinion, the fact that ex-combatants are particularly reincorporating 'inside FARC spheres' does not benefit the broader societal acceptance of these FARC ex-combatants.

Furthermore, the insights from this thesis are not solely contributing to the knowledge about reincorporation in post-accord Colombia, but they are also relevant for other post-conflict and post-war settings, particularly for those with high amounts of female combatants inside its ranks. Many of the experiences and challenges of FARC mothers can therefore serve as an inspiration for similar policies in other conflict areas or countries.

While the historical inclusion of 'gender' into the peace agreement was a considerable achievement for global reintegration policies, the good intentions of gender inclusiveness have in practice been limited. This can be illustrated by the lack of practical gender actions in terms of reincorporation, which resulted in the formulation of CONPES 3931. This strategy was designed to, among others, stress upon the specific needs of female ex-combatants. Overlooking motherhood, and parenthood in general, and the lack of attention to the reproductivity of female ex-combatants, show us that while there are serious 'gender intentions', we are not there yet. Future peace processes and peace agreements should therefore include a more complete gender approach in their policies.

In addition, something which this thesis illustrated is the fact that the inclusion of female combatants in the ranks of the FARC, does not necessarily lead to a gender transformation after conflict. Even though earlier literature in other post-conflict and post-war countries in the theoretical framework already pointed this out, I find it very interesting that the case of the FARC mothers shows a similar process. I think this is relevant as we may tend to assume that the inclusion of women in armed ranks leads to greater enjoyment of gender equality in conflict as well as after conflict. The example of the FARC mothers however illustrates how 'FARC's equality' was rather superficial and has therefore not led to

real gender transformation in post-accord Colombia. The lack of the internalization of equality and equal gender roles can easier result in the adoption of more traditional roles assigned to women in post-conflict or post-war. I predict similar processes to occur in other post-conflict and post-war settings with many women inside its ranks.

Additionally, in the previous chapter I have extensively reflected upon the relevance and use of the theories throughout this thesis. I explained the importance of post-insurgency to understand and to make sense of the 'baby boom' phenomenon and the experiences of the recent mothers. The case of the FARC mothers demonstrates how the past continues to play a crucial role in the present and how we can make sense of it by using different theories. It has become clear that the relations that insurgents have established in the insurgency play an inevitable role during post-insurgency, despite the fact that they are reintegrating in post-accord Colombia. This thesis contributed to Sprenkels' theory by applying it to a different setting: post-accord Colombia, where I identified similar processes, relations and accommodations as in El Salvador. Other post-conflict and post-war settings could also make more sense of occurring processes in post-insurgency by using this theory.

Studying the FARC mothers and their experiences of motherhood by using a gendered approach allowed me to contribute to the theory of militarized femininity. I illustrated the role and consequences of militarized femininity in the lives of female (ex-)combatants during the insurgency and its crucial implications in post-insurgency. While the conventional motherhood of the FARC mothers breaks with FARC's militarized femininity, it is being experienced and given shape under conditions that are a consequence of militarized femininity in the past. We should therefore not underestimate the impact that a militarized femininity has during a war or conflict and during post-war and post-conflict. I illustrated how a strongly militarized femininity during a conflict does not easily disappear, but is rather disrupted while it takes another form once the conflict is over. The fact that militarized femininity plays a big role in the reasons for the recent motherhood, as well as how gender roles are reconfigured in post-accord Colombia, illustrates its important implications in post-accord Colombia. In that sense, a peace agreement cannot undo decades of deeper militarization.

This thesis also contributed to the theory of gender performativity by studying the reconfiguration of the gender roles in post-accord Colombia. I did so by taking a look at the gender roles during insurgency and in post-insurgency. The case of the FARC mothers has shown that gender roles are indeed subject to time (insurgency versus post-insurgency) and circumstances (guerrilla versus Colombian society) in which they are being performed. While FARC mothers are active women, just as they were during combat, they seem to be 'resigning to tradition' as a consequence of reincorporating in a rather patriarchal and traditional society, as well as because of a lack of internalization of equal gender performances. In that sense, the FARC mothers show us how gender roles are subject to change, as well as the important role that dominant societal values (about gender) play in the particular performance of those roles. In addition, it showed us how decades of deeper militarization of femininity during the guerrilla did not really lead to a gender transformation in post-accord Colombia. I expect it to be likely that similar processes occur in other post-conflict and post-war countries.

What has been particularly interesting for this thesis is the inclusion of the many different views of FARC mothers, FARC higher rank ex-combatants and outside experts on the recent motherhood of FARC female ex-combatants. Besides avoiding a certain bias on this topic, the many frictions between different ideas also offered interesting insights into this particular phenomenon. It shows how every person involved in this phenomenon in different ways with different interests, has a certain idea and opinion about the guerrilla and the reincorporation process. This topic therefore reaches way broader than the FARC mothers themselves. In fact, these tensions tell a lot about how motherhood was experienced and given shape to during the guerrilla, what the reasons were for it in post-accord Colombia and how gender roles are being reconfigured. The frictions illustrate how unambiguous and complex this phenomenon is: there are no clear cut answers to the questions I posed in this research. There is not one truth and the frictions confirm that the goal is not to find 'the truth'. The transition from conflict to post-accord Colombia allowed for a space in which motherhood is being performed. This space cannot be filled up unambiguously, it is still in transition as the recent motherhood is being lived and experienced at the moment. This results in many different ideas and views as it is currently occurring and evolving simultaneously.

To continue, even though the research group was rather small, the findings are very valuable and I consider these to be a good representation of FARC mothers in particular and the larger FARC ex-combatant community in general. However, with regards to the multiple roles that FARC mothers perform in post-accord Colombia, it is important to mention that the women I got to know in Icononzo and Bogota were particularly reached through the snowball effect. This may imply that I particularly spoke with mothers who are indeed performing more roles (being a student, being an employee) for the fact that they know each other through the classes, political party or job. I keep in mind that there may be many mothers who are more committed to solely the mother role or housewife role. But, this has not been an obvious observation I have been able to make, neither did it result from the conversations. Generally, all of the FARC mothers have activities, ambitions and very personal dreams for themselves as well as for their babies. They wish to 'become someone in life'.

As I mentioned above, I have not been able to find answers to all the questions I had. An example of this is that I would have liked to gain some more knowledge about FARC's policy on leaving the FARC voluntarily as a pregnant combatant. My impression is that female combatants had to flee the FARC instead of that they were able to leave the FARC voluntarily, but this did not become clear from the many conversations I had. I would therefore have liked to speak again with some of the higher rank FARC ex-combatants I spoke with during the research, but this has unfortunately been impossible.

Furthermore, during the research I found out that it would have been very interesting to explore the perspective of the FARC fathers who are the partners or ex-partners of the FARC mothers I have spoken with. Their views on the reasons for parenthood and the reconfiguration of gender roles would have been particularly interesting. Also, since there has been a lot of attention going to the FARC mothers and female ex-combatants in general, the focus on FARC fathers could have offered an alternative perspective. However, I also think that including their perspective would have taken away the focus of this thesis and should therefore rather be included in another research.

In addition, if I would have had more time to conduct this research and if I would not have been limited by the security measures, I would have liked to conduct part of the research in other ETCR's. This could potentially have been beneficial since other ETCR's receive less visitors and researchers. Also, it is likely that it would allow me to gain different and additional perspectives on the recent motherhood.

Prior to the start of the fieldwork I was convinced that I could be studying motherhood in general in post-accord Colombia. With this I refer to female ex-combatants who became mothers in post-accord Colombia and to the female ex-combatants who were reunited with their children after many years of being in conflict. It turned out that it was not possible to study both as I would lose focus. Both types of motherhood are likely to imply very different experiences. It could therefore be interesting to conduct another research which focuses on the experiences of those FARC mothers who are reunited with their children and did not have children after conflict.

Something which I also found very fascinating to observe is the fact that FARC's ideology continues to be of great importance in the current lives of the FARC mothers. I think it is particularly interesting to see what they would like to teach their children about their time in the guerrilla. It could be interesting to conduct a longitudinal research to examine whether FARC babies and FARC children are raised according to the FARC values and if they therefore will have different values than the average civilian. It would allow to gain insights into how the relations and experiences of the insurgency continue to play a role in the long-term future.

Lastly, and coming back to a previous point I made, I propose that it would be interesting to study whether the current equal division FARC mothers experience in terms of the caretaking over the babies and the household, continues to exist in the future. This question is based on the assumption that while the years pass by, ex-combatants will likely be more reincorporated in (traditional) Colombian society and may therefore be easier tempted to return (unconsciously) to the more traditional gender roles. This again may be caused by the societal pressure which eventually may turn out to be stronger than the FARC values they have taken from their time in the guerrilla.

# References

- Acuerdo Final (2016). Acuerdo Final para la Terminación del Conflicto y la Construcción de una Paz Estable y Duradera. *Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz (OACP)*. 24-08-2016.
- Al Jazeera (2017). Children of the FARC: Baby Boom in Colombia's Jungles. *Al Jazeera*. 01-10-2017. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/witness/2017/10/children-farc-baby-boom-colombias-jungles-171001072833890.html>
- Angarita, J.R. (2019). Líder Social Asesinado En Tuluá Era Víctima De Desplazamiento Forzado. *RCN Radio*, RCN Radio, 27-06-2019, Available at: [www.rcnradio.com/judicial/lider-social-asesinado-en-tuluá-era-victima-de-desplazamiento-forzado](http://www.rcnradio.com/judicial/lider-social-asesinado-en-tuluá-era-victima-de-desplazamiento-forzado)
- ARN (2018a). La Reintegración en Colombia; “una oportunidad la cambia todo”. *Agencia de la Reincorporación y Normalización (ARN)*. Gobierno de Colombia. March 2018. 1-2.
- ARN (2018b). Una Oportunidad lo Cambia Todo Anuario 2018. *Agencia para la reincorporación y la normalización (ARN)* / Bogotá D.C., Colombia. ISBN: 978-958-57276-3-2.
- ARN (2019). Así avanza la Reincorporación. *ARN en Cifras*. Agencia para la Reincorporación y Normalización (ARN). 22-02-2019. 1-6.
- Arnault, J. (2017). Palabras Jean Arnault, en el foro de El Espectador “La Reincorporación y Reconciliación, Dimensiones de la Construcción de Paz”. *Misión de Verificación de la ONU en Colombia*. 21-11-2017. Available at: <https://colombia.unmissions.org/palabras-jean-arnault-en-el-foro-de-el-espectador-%E2%80%99Cla-reincorporaci%C3%B3n-y-reconciliaci%C3%B3n-dimensiones>
- Arostegui, J. (2013). Gender, conflict, and peace-building: how conflict can catalyse positive change for women. *Gender & Development*, 21(3), 533-549.
- Avoine, P. A., & Tillman, R. (2015). Demobilized Women in Colombia: Embodiment, Performativity and Social Reconciliation. In *Female Combatants in Conflict and Peace*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. 216-231.
- Bargent, J. (2017). The FARC 1964-2002: From Ragged Rebellion to Military Machine. *InSight Crime*, 5-10-2017, Available at: [www.insightcrime.org/investigations/the-farc-1964-2002-from-ragged-rebellion-to-military-machine/](http://www.insightcrime.org/investigations/the-farc-1964-2002-from-ragged-rebellion-to-military-machine/)
- Barth, E. F. (2002). Peace as Disappointment: The Reintegration of Female Soldiers in Post Conflict Societies. A Comparative Study from Africa, PRIO Report 3/2002. *International Peace Research Institute, Oslo*.
- Bourdieu, P. (1985). The social space and the genesis of groups. *Information (International Social Science Council)*, 24(2), 195-220.
- BBC (2016). Colombia's Farc Rebels - 50 Years of Conflict. *BBC News*, BBC, 6-10-2016, Available at: [www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-36606568](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-36606568)
- BBC (2017). Colombia's Farc concludes weapons disarmament. *BBC*. 16-08-2017. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-40944329>
- Butler, J. (1988). Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory. *Theatre journal*, 40(4), 519-531.
- Butler, J. (1990). Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of gender. *New York and Abingdon: Routledge*.
- Camargo, R. (2019). Former FARC Combatants Face Their Pasts. *NACLA*. The North American Congress on Latin America. 12-04-2019. Available at: <https://nacla.org/news/2019/04/12/former-farc-combatants-face-their-pasts>

- Casey, N. & Rios Escobar, F. El regreso a las armas de los exguerrilleros de las Farc. *The New York Times*, América Latina | Colombia. 18-09-2018. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/es/2018/09/18/farc-acuerdos-de-paz-rearme/>
- Céspedes-Báez, L. M., & Jaramillo, F. (2018). 'Peace without women does not go!' Women's struggle for inclusion in Colombia's peace process with the FARC. *Colombia Internacional*, (94), 83-109.
- CNN Español (2019a). ¿Pone en peligro Duque la paz de Colombia con su objeción a la JEP? *CNN*, Cable News Network, 11-03-2019. Available at: <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2019/03/11/pone-en-peligro-duque-la-paz-de-colombia-con-su-objecion-a-la-jep/>
- CNN Español (2019b). Entrevista a Timochenko: El Líder De La FARC Pide Perdón y Habla De La Muerte De Exguerrilleros. *CNN*, Cable News Network, 26-06-2019. Available at: [www.cnnespanol.cnn.com/2019/06/24/entrevista-a-timochenko-el-lider-de-la-farc-pide-perdon-y-habla-de-la-muerte-de-exguerrilleros/](http://www.cnnespanol.cnn.com/2019/06/24/entrevista-a-timochenko-el-lider-de-la-farc-pide-perdon-y-habla-de-la-muerte-de-exguerrilleros/)
- CONPES 3931 (2018). Política Nacional para la Reincorporación Social y Económica de Exintegrantes de Las FARC-EP. *Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social, República de Colombia, Departamento Nacional De Planeación*. Bogotá, D.C., 22-06-2018. 1-87.
- Consejo de Seguridad (2018a). Informe Trimestral del Secretario General sobre la Misión de Verificación en Colombia. 02/Abril/2018. S/2018/279. *Consejo de Seguridad, Naciones Unidas*. 19-04-2018.
- Consejo de Seguridad (2018b). Declaraciones miembros del Consejo de Seguridad sobre Colombia. 10/Oct/2018. S/PV.8368. *Consejo de Seguridad, Naciones Unidas*. 16-10-2018.
- Cook, T. R. (2011). The financial arm of the FARC: A threat finance perspective. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 4(1), 19-36.
- Cosoy, N. (2017). "Baby boom": la ola de embarazos en la guerrilla de las FARC en Colombia. *BBC*. 24-02-2017. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-39011290>
- Di Salvo, M. (2019). FARC Dissident Groups Grown to Have 2300 Guerrillas since 2016 Peace Deal: Report. *Colombia News | Colombia Reports*, 6-06-2019. Available at: [www.colombiareports.com/farc-dissident-groups-grown-to-have-2300-rebels-during-peace-process-report/](http://www.colombiareports.com/farc-dissident-groups-grown-to-have-2300-rebels-during-peace-process-report/)
- Díaz, O. H., Herrera, A. L. R., & Hernández, N. J. B. (2017). De mujer combatiente a mujer constructora de paz. Inclusión de la voz femenina en el escenario del posacuerdo. *Revista Ratio Juris*, 12(25), 43-67.
- El País (2019). Así Hemos Contado El Minuto a Minuto Del Atentado Del ELN En Bogotá . *EL PAÍS*, Ediciones EL PAÍS S.L., 19-01-2019, Available at: [www.elpais.com/internacional/2019/01/17/colombia/1547750638\\_864637.html](http://www.elpais.com/internacional/2019/01/17/colombia/1547750638_864637.html)
- El Tiempo (2016). Uribe Dice Que Nada Justifica Participación De Las Farc En Política. *El Tiempo*, El Tiempo, 26-08-2016, Available at: [www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16683533](http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16683533)
- El Tiempo (2018). En su debut, Farc obtuvo poco más de 85.000. *Redacción de Paz, El Tiempo*. 12-03-2018. Available at: <https://www.eltiempo.com/elecciones-colombia-2018/congreso/resultados-de-la-farc-en-elecciones-al-congreso-del-11-de-marzo-de-2018-192746>
- Enloe, C. (1993). *The morning after: Sexual politics at the end of the Cold War*. Univ of California Press.
- Enloe, C. (2000). *Maneuvers: The international politics of militarizing women's lives*. Univ of California Press.
- Enloe, C. (2016). *Globalization and militarism: Feminists make the link*. Rowman & Littlefield.

- Farr, V. (2003). The importance of a gender perspective to successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. In *Disarmament Forum* (No. 4), pp. 25-35.
- Gjelsvik, I. M. (2010). *Women, war and empowerment: a case study of female ex-combatants in Colombia* (Master's thesis, Universitetet i Tromsø).
- González, D. (2019). "Presidente De Colombia Anuncia Medidas De Protección Ante Ola De Asesinatos Contra Ex-FARC." *France 24*, 27-06-2019, Available at: [www.france24.com/es/20190628-colombia-medidas-proteccion-asesinatos-farc](http://www.france24.com/es/20190628-colombia-medidas-proteccion-asesinatos-farc)
- Herrera, N., & Porch, D. (2008). 'Like going to a fiesta'—the role of female fighters in Colombia's FARC EP. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 19(4), 609-634.
- Kaplan, O., & Nussio, E. (2018). Explaining recidivism of ex-combatants in Colombia. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 62(1), 64-93.
- Labrousse, A. (2005). The FARC and the Taliban's Connection to Drugs. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 35(1), 169-184.
- LIMPAL Colombia & FARC (2018). Lucha por una reincorporación con dignidad para las mujeres: Informe de seguimiento a la Resolución 1325 con recomendaciones para procesos de reincorporación. *Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad (LIMPAL) & FARC*.
- Lloyd, M. (1999). Performativity, parody, politics. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 16(2), 195-213.
- Madden, R. (2017). *Being ethnographic: A guide to the theory and practice of ethnography*. Sage.
- Meertens, D. (2016). Justicia de género y tierras en Colombia: Desafíos para la era del 'pos-acuerdo'. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies/Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe*, 89-100.
- Méndez, A. (2012). *Militarized Gender Performativity: Women and Demobilization in Colombia's FARC and AUC* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Molano, A. (2007). The Evolution of the FARC: A Guerrilla Group's Long History. *NACLA*, 25-09 2007, Available at: [www.nacla.org/article/evolution-farc-guerrilla-group%27s-long-history](http://www.nacla.org/article/evolution-farc-guerrilla-group%27s-long-history)
- Moreno, J. (2017). El 'baby boom' de las Farc. *El Espectador*. 08-02-2017. Available at: <https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/territorio/el-baby-boom-de-las-farc>
- Muggah, R. (2005). No magic bullet: A critical perspective on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and weapons reduction in post-conflict contexts. *The Round Table*, 94(379), 239-252.
- Muggah, R. (2008). *Security and post-conflict reconstruction: dealing with fighters in the aftermath of war*. Routledge.
- Muggah, R., & O'Donnell, C. (2015). Next generation disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 4(1).
- Olson, G. A., & Worsham, L. (2000). Changing the subject: Judith Butler's politics of radical resignification. *JAC*, 727-765.
- OSAGI (n.d.). Landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security. *Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)*.
- Ospina, C. A., Marks, T. A., & Ucko, D. H. (2016). Colombia and the war-to-peace transition: Cautionary lessons from other cases. *Military Review*, 96(4), 40.
- Otis, J. (2017). After Peace Agreement, A Baby Boom Among Colombia's FARC Guerrillas. *NPR*. 03 05-2017. Available at: <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/05/03/526690242/after-peace-agreement-a-baby-boom-among-colombias-farc-guerrillas?t=1543589062905>

- Pardo, S. R., Franco, C., Villegas, G., Hoyos, R. R. A., Wood, A. W. B., Beaulieu, M., ... & Vivanco, J. M. (2005). The peace process in Colombia with the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia AUC.
- Parkin Daniels, J (2019). Former Farc Commanders Say They Are Returning to War despite 2016 Peace Deal. *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media. 29-08-2019. Available at: [www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/29/ex-farc-rebels-announce-offensive-despite-peace-deal-colombia-video](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/29/ex-farc-rebels-announce-offensive-despite-peace-deal-colombia-video)
- Peoples Dispatch (2019). Iván Duque Objections to the JEP Put Colombia's Peace Process in Jeopardy. *Peoples Dispatch*, 13-03-2019. Available at: [www.peoplesdispatch.org/2019/03/12/ivan-duque-objectiFons-to-the-jep-put-colombias-peace-process-in-jeopardy/](http://www.peoplesdispatch.org/2019/03/12/ivan-duque-objectiFons-to-the-jep-put-colombias-peace-process-in-jeopardy/)
- Phelan, A. (2017). Insurgent Feminism and Colombia's New Peace. *Australian Institute of International Affairs*. 26-07-2017. Available at: <http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/insurgent-feminism-colombias-new-peace/>
- Portafolio (2017). 8.376.463: Las Víctimas Del Conflicto Armado En Colombia. *Portafolio.co*, 9-04-2017. Available at: <https://m.portafolio.co/economia/gobierno/el-numero-de-victimas-del-conflicto-armado-en-colombia-504833>
- Presidencia de la República (2016). Summary of Colombia's Agreement to End Conflict and Build Peace. *Presidencia de la República*.
- Ramos, F. (2019). Partido FARC Denuncia Asesinatos De Exguerrilleros. *CNN*, Cable News Network, 20-06-2019, Available at: [www.cnnspanol.cnn.com/video/asesinatos-exguerrilleros-farc-acuerdo-paz-amenazas-colombia-ivan-duque-pkg-fernando-ramos/](http://www.cnnspanol.cnn.com/video/asesinatos-exguerrilleros-farc-acuerdo-paz-amenazas-colombia-ivan-duque-pkg-fernando-ramos/)
- RCN Radio (2019). Nos Están Matando Pero Avanzan Los Acuerdos De Paz: Rodrigo Londoño. *RCN Radio*, RCN Radio, 28-06-2019, Available at: [www.rcnradio.com/colombia/nos-están-matando-pero-avanzan-los-acuerdos-de-paz-rodriigo-londono](http://www.rcnradio.com/colombia/nos-están-matando-pero-avanzan-los-acuerdos-de-paz-rodriigo-londono)
- Reuters (2019). Thousands of Colombian FARC Rebels Return to Arms despite Peace Accord Military Intelligence Report. *News.trust.org*, 5-06-2019, Available at: [www.news.trust.org/item/20190605200432-i122n/](http://www.news.trust.org/item/20190605200432-i122n/)
- Saab, B. Y., & Taylor, A. W. (2009). Criminality and armed groups: A comparative study of FARC and paramilitary groups in Colombia. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 32(6), 455-475.
- Sandino Palmera V. (2016). El Feminismo en las FARC-EP. *Farianas*. 02-08-2016. Available at: <https://www.mujerfariana.org/vision/663-el-feminismo-en-las-farc-ep.html>
- Saskiewicz, P. E. (2005). *The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP): Marxist-Leninist Insurgency or Criminal Enterprise*. Naval Postgraduate School Monterey Ca.
- Smet, S. (2009). A window of opportunity—Improving gender relations in post-conflict societies: The Sierra Leonean experience. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 18(2), 147-163.
- Spencer, D. (2001). *Colombia's paramilitaries: criminals or political force?*. Army War Coll Strategic Studies Inst Carlisle Barracks Pa.
- Sprenkels, R. (2014). Revolution and accommodation: post-insurgency in El Salvador (Doctoral dissertation, Universiteit Utrecht).
- Stanski, K. (2006). Terrorism, gender, and ideology: A case study of women who join the revolutionary armed forces of Colombia (FARC). *The making of a terrorist: Recruitment, training, and root causes*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 136-150.
- Telesur (2017). Al menos 300 niños nacerán en zonas veredales de las FARC-EP. *Telesur*. 19-02-2017. Available at: <https://www.telesurtv.net/news/Al-menos-300-ninos-naceran-en-zonas-veredales-de-las-FARC-EP-20170219-0053.html>



- The Economist Intelligence Unit (2018). Colombia. *ELN Launches Violent Offensive*, 12-01-2018.  
Available at:  
[www.country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=236308007&Country=Colombia&topic=Politics&subtopic=Forecast&subsubtopic=Political%2Bstability](http://www.country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=236308007&Country=Colombia&topic=Politics&subtopic=Forecast&subsubtopic=Political%2Bstability)
- Theidon, K. (2007). Transitional subjects: The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants in Colombia. *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 1(1), 66-90.
- Theidon, K. (2009). Reconstructing masculinities: The disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants in Colombia. *Hum. Rts. Q.*, 31, 1.
- UN (2010). Second generation disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) practices in peace operations. *United Nations Department of Peacekeeping operations*.
- UN Mission in Colombia (2017). United Nations Mission receives the balance of individual arms from the FARC-EP in accordance with the 29 May Road Map. *UN Mission in Colombia*. 26-06-2017. Available at: <https://unmc.unmissions.org/en/united-nations-mission-receives-balance-individual-arms-farc-ep-accordance-29-may-road-map>
- UN Peacekeeping (n.d.). Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. *United Nations Peacekeeping*. Available at: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration>
- Universidad Nacional de Colombia (2017). Caracterización comunidad FARC-EP, Resultados Generales. *Universidad Nacional de Colombia*. 06-07-2017.
- Wright, E. (2017). The end of FARC's 50-year pregnancy ban leads to a baby boom. *PRI*. 20-07-2017. Available at: <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-07-20/end-farcs-50-year-pregnancy-ban-leads-baby-boom>
- Wüstner, I. (2017). *From militants to mothers? A feminist inquiry into the implications of gender aware disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in the case of female FARC combatants in Colombia* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Young, R. A., & Collin, A. (2004). Introduction: Constructivism and social constructionism in the career field. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 64(3), 373-388.
- Zelizer, V. A. (2007). Pasts and futures of economic sociology. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 50(8), 1056-1069.

# Appendix

## ETCR's in Colombia

**ETCR** (Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación)



### 1 ANTIOQUIA

- Dabeiba ..... Llano Grande
- Remedios ..... Carrizal
- Vigía del Fuerte ..... Vidri
- Ituango ..... Santa Lucía
- Anorí ..... La Planeta

### 2 ARAUCA

- Arauquita ..... Filipinas

### 3 CAQUETÁ

- Montañita ..... Agua Bonita
- San Vicente ..... Mira Valle

### 4 CAUCA

- Buenos Aires ..... La Elvira
- Calidón I y II ..... Los Monos/Santa Rosa
- Miranda ..... Monterredondo
- Patía ..... Bordo

### 5 CESAR

- La paz ..... Tierra Grata/  
San José De Oriente

### 6 CHOCÓ

- Río Suizo ..... Las Brisas Tamarindo

### 7 CÓRDOBA

- Tierraalta ..... Gallo

### 8 GUAVIARE

- San José del Guaviare ..... Colinas
- San José del Guaviare ..... Charrao

### 9 LA GUAJIRA

- Fonseca ..... Ponedores

### 10 META

- La Macarena ..... Playa Rica La Ye
- Mesetas I y II ..... La Guajira/Buena Vista
- Vista Hermosa ..... La Cooperativa

### 11 NARIÑO

- Tumaco ..... La Playa-La Variante

### 12 NORTE DE SANTANDER

- Tibú ..... Caño El Indio

### 13 PUTUMAYO

- Puerto Asís ..... La Pradera  
Corregimiento La Carmelita

### 14 TOLIMA

- Planadas ..... El Oso
- Leonorzo ..... La Fila

Source: ARN (n.d.)<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.reincorporacion.gov.co/en/reincorporation/Pages/ETCR.aspx>