

The Past in the Present

**Looking Inside Collective Reincorporation of FARC-EP
Ex-Members**

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Abstract

In 2016, the Colombian government signed the peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) and aimed to reintegrate more than 13,000 ex-combatants into society based on a collective reincorporation approach. This approach promotes alternatives for social, economic and political reincorporation beyond Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) standards by valuing the ex-combatants' legacy in conflict times. This research aims to analyse under a sociological micro-perspective the meanings, transitions, dimensions and relationships around collective reincorporation. Instead of focusing on a single dimension on reintegration, I analyse how these dimensions are present and interact in FARC-EP ex-members everyday practices. I discuss the influence that former comrades, families, surrounding communities and institutions have on the configuration of ex-combatants' legacy, identity, social capital, concept of citizenship and agency. Based on a trans-local perspective, I use a multi-sited ethnography approach to make an in-depth analysis of the everyday life of FARC-EP ex-members and their commonalities beyond geographical boundaries in three territories in which they are collectively settled. I find that the building of relationships among FARC-EP ex-members and the use of their agency contribute in not just their reincorporation process, but also in the transformation of the social, political and economic dynamics of their surroundings. I conclude by saying that the social visibility of FARC-EP ex-members becomes an alternative to increase local agency, and a valuable strategy to break the divide between past and present trajectories. Therefore, collective reincorporation is an approach to social transformation in which FARC-EP ex-members through their collective initiatives, become visible agents of change in peacebuilding.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	1
Abstract	3
List of Figures	8
List of Tables	8
List of Photos	8
List of Acronyms	9
Introduction	12
Part One: Setting the Stage	29
1. Background of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR): The Colombian Case	30
1.1. Trajectory of DDR	30
1.1.1. Generations of DDR	33
1.1.2. Challenges in DDR	38
1.2. Background of DDR in Colombia	41
1.3. The Emergence and Evolution of FARC-EP	45
1.4. The End of the Conflict and the Challenges in Reincorporation Process	51
1.5. National Policy for the Social and Economic Reincorporation of Former Members of the FARC-EP	59
2. Key Concepts in Reintegration	65
2.1. Beyond the Embodiment of Evil	65
2.2. Keeping the Past to Nurture the Present in Reintegration	69
2.3. The Dilemmas of (Anti-) Social Capital in Reintegration	72
2.4. Citizens by Design?	74
2.5. Frictions and Contributions from the Surroundings	78
3. Approaches to Local Perspectives in Peacebuilding	82
3.1. Sociology in Peacebuilding	82
3.1.1. Everyday Life in Sociological Studies	83
3.1.2. Symbolic Interactionism	85
3.2. Social Worlds and the Value of Interconnections	88

3.3. Frames and Contexts: The Local Turn	90
3.3.1. Everyday Peace.....	94
3.3.2. The Hybridity in Peacebuilding	96
4. Methodology	99
4.1. Preliminary Understanding of Inquiry	99
4.1.1. Basics of Ethnography	100
4.1.2. Multi-Setting Ethnography: The “Fuzzy Field” in the Life of Ex-Combatants	101
4.2. Case Studies.....	105
4.2.1. Llano Grande	106
4.2.2. Agua Bonita	110
4.2.3. San José de León Community	112
4.3. The Participants.....	114
4.4. Analysis of Ethnographic Data	115
4.5. Ethical Concerns and Positionality.....	118
Part Two: Empirical Findings: Meanings and Practices in Reincorporation	122
5. Building Meanings in Reincorporation	123
5.1. Why to Use the Term “Reincorporation”?	126
5.2. The Meaning of Collectivity in Reincorporation	137
5.3. Meaning of Peace in Reincorporation	142
5.4. Women in Reincorporation	149
5.4.1. Meanings around Reincorporation of Women.....	149
5.4.2. Children of Peace.....	155
5.5. Conclusions.....	157
6. Out of the Mainstream: Dimensions in Collective Reincorporation	159
6.1. The Dimensions of Reincorporation under a Collective Perspective.....	159
6.2. Political Reincorporation	161
6.2.1. The Political Reincorporation Agreements and Challenges.....	161
6.2.2. Internal Divisions and Fragmentation of the Political Party	166
6.2.3. Collective Political Reincorporation: Beyond a Political Party	171
6.3. Economic Dimension	174
6.3.1. Challenges of Collective Self-Sustainability	174
6.3.2. Merging Individual and Collective Economic Initiatives in Reincorporation.....	179
6.4. Social Reincorporation.....	182

6.4.1. Community Reincorporation	184
6.4.2. Education: Beyond an Alienation?.....	188
6.4.3. Family in Reincorporation	192
6.5. Conclusions.....	196
7. The Everyday of Collective Reincorporation: Tandem Realities	200
7.1. Introduction: Why is “Everyday Peace” Important?.....	200
7.2. On the Way to Reincorporation	202
7.3. Challenges to Keeping the Legacy in Collective Reincorporation.....	207
7.4. The Fariana Family.....	212
7.5. Evoking the Past in the Present	216
7.6. Self-Identity vs Collectivity: Transition under Dispute.....	224
7.7. Conclusions.....	226
8. Social Worlds, Power(s) and Territorial Peace in Collective Reincorporation	229
8.1. Approaching Social Worlds in Collective Reincorporation	229
8.2. The Formation of Social Worlds in Collective Reincorporation	232
8.2.1. The Building of Subworlds in Collective Reincorporation.....	236
8.2.2. The Social Arena of Ex-Combatants.....	241
8.3. Intersection of Social Worlds: Ex-Combatants and Outsiders	245
8.3.1. Intersecting the Social Worlds of Ex-Combatants by the Access to Jobs.....	245
8.3.2. Role of External Agents in the Configuration of Ex-Combatants’ Social Worlds	251
8.3.3. Positive Effects of Approaching and Intersecting the (Sub-)Worlds in the Life of Ex-Combatants	257
8.3.4. A Social World between Ex-Combatants and Surrounding Communities	259
8.4. The Local World in the Creation of Territorial Peace	264
8.5. Conclusions.....	268
9. Conclusions: The Magic Bullet is in the People, not in the Politics.....	270
9.1. Recapitulating Research Findings	270
9.1.1. Diversities and Encounters as the Cornerstone of Collective Reincorporation	271
9.1.2. Visibility of Ex-Combatants in Peacebuilding.....	274
9.1.3. Outside Mainstream DDR-Reintegration Approaches.....	276
9.2. Internal and External Limitations of Collective Reincorporation	279
9.2.1. External Limitations	279
9.2.2. Internal Limitations	281
9.3. Future Research in DDR Reintegration	282
10. Final Remarks: Living with Uncertainty	285
10.1. What is the Future of the AETCRs and NARs?	285

10.2. My Academic and Personal Uncertainty	287
Appendices.....	294
Annex I: Format of Interviews.....	294
Annex II: List of Documentaries, Interviews and Films to Analyse the Role of FARC-EP ex-members and their Transition to Reincorporation	295
Annex III: People Interviewed	297
Annex IV: Categories of Analysis	300
References	305

List of Figures

Figure 1: Flow of the research and analysis process.....21
Figure 2: Generations of DDR..... 35
Figure 3: Trajectory of the ZVTN and NAR..... 55
Figure 4: Distribution of AETCRs and NARs..... 59
Figure 5: Decision-making structure in reincorporation..... 64
Figure 6: AETCRs and NAR cases studies..... 108
Figure 7: Internal organisation in the AETCRs and NARs.....208

List of Tables

Table 1: Number of interviews with FARC-EP ex-members or members and community according to area.....117
Table 2: Main characteristics of FARC-EP ex-members interviewed.....117
Table 3: Differences between reintegration and reincorporation.....128
Table 4. Public entities and organisations in which FARC-EP ex-members work.....250

List of Photos

Photo 1: Poster promoting the FARC political party.....211
Photo 2: Rubber boots.....220
Photo 3 Backpacks of the FARC-EP..... 220
Photo 4: Clothes and outfits221
Photo 5: Symbols of the FARC.....222
Photo 6: Housing and cooking area.....223
Photo 7: Symbols and decoration.....224
Photo 8: Hobbies and free time.....225

List of Acronyms

Acronym	English	Spanish
ACCU	Peasant Self-Defenders of Córdoba and Urabá	Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Uribe
ACR	High Commissioner for Reintegration	Alta Consejería para la Reintegración
AETCR	Former Territorial Training and Reincorporation Spaces	Antiguos Espacios Territoriales para la Capacitación y Reincorporación
ANSA	Armed Non-State Actors	Grupos Armados No Estatales
ARN	Agency for Reincorporation and Normalisation	Agencia para la Reincorporación y Normalización
AUC	United Self-Defences of Colombia	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia
BACRIM	Criminal Bands	Bandas Criminales
CEV	Commission for Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition	Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No repetición
CFHBD	Bilateral and Definitive Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities	Cese del fuego y de las hostilidades bilateral y definitivo
CIDDR	First International Congress of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration	Primer Congreso Internacional de Desarme, Desmovilización y Reintegración
CNMH	National Centre for Historical Memory	Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica
CNR	National Council for Reincorporation	Concejo Nacional de Reincorporación
CONPES	National Council for Economic and Social Policy	Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social
CSR	Socialist Renewal Stream	Corriente de Renovación Socialista
CSVJ	Commission for Monitoring, Promoting and Verifying Implementation of the Final Peace Agreement	Comisión para el Monitoreo y la Verificación de la Implementación del Acuerdo Final de Paz
CTR	Territorial Reincorporation Council	Concejo Territorial de Reincorporación
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism	Contra Violencia Extremista
DA	Abandonment of Arms	Abandono de las Armas
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration	Desarme, Demobilización y Reintegración
ECOMUN	Social Economies of the Common	Economías Solidarias del Comun
ELN	National Liberation Army	Ejército de Liberación Nacional
EPL	People's Liberation Army	Ejército de Liberación Popular

ETCR	Territorial Training and Reincorporation Spaces	Espacios Territoriales para la Capacitación y Reincorporación
FARC-EP	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army	Fuerzas Revolucionarias Armadas de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo
GAO	Organised Armed Groups	Grupos Armados Organizados
IDDRS	Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards	Estandares Integrados de Desarme, Desmovilización y Reintegración
IIRIRA	Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act	Ley de Reforma de la Inmigración Ilegal y Responsabilidad de los Inmigrantes
IOM	International Organisation for Migration	Organización Internacional para las Migraciones
JEP	Special Jurisdiction for Peace	Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz
LASO	Latin American Security Operation	Operación de seguridad en América Latina
LTA	Transitional Reception Places	Lugares Transitorios de Acogida
M-19	Movement-19	Movimiento M-19
MAQL	Quintin Lame Armed Movement	Movimiento Armado Quintin Lame
MCR	Model for Community Reintegration	Modelo de Reintegración Comunitaria
MFC	Model for Community Strength	Modelo de Fortalecimiento Comunitario
MVM	Monitoring and Verification Mechanism	Mecanismo de Monitoreo y Verificación
NAR	New Areas of Reincorporation	Nuevas Áreas de Reincorporación
NC	New Colombia	La Nueva Colombia
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations	Organizaciones no Gubernamentales
OACP	Presidential Advisory Office for Human Rights	Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz
PDET	Development Programmes with Territorial Focus	Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial
PNIS	Comprehensive National Programme for Substitution of Illicit Crops	Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos de Uso Ilícito
PRT	Revolutionary Workers Party	Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores
PRVC	Programme for Reincorporation into Civilian Life	Programa para la Reincorporación a la Vida Civil
PTN	Transitional Points for Normalisation	Puntos Transitorios de Normalización
RCP	Penitentiary Prison Precinct	Recintos Penitenciarios
SENA	National Service for Vocational Education	Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje
SNR	National System of Reincorporation	Sistema Nacional de Reincorporación
SSR	Security Sector Reform	Reforma del Sector de la Seguridad
UBPD	Unit for the Search of Disappeared Persons	La Comisión Nacional de Búsqueda de Desaparecidos

UN	United Nations	Naciones Unidas
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme	Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo
UNP	National Unit of Protection	Unidad Nacional de Protección
UP	Patriotic Union	Unión Patriótica
ZVTN	Local Transitional Zones for Normalisation	Zonas Veredales Transitorias de Normalización

Introduction

We all met at the house of Carla, who worked for the United Nation. From her house, we could make out the mountains of the Cerro de Paramillo located in Antioquia, near to one of the camps in which the FARC-EP ex-members were located. It was beautiful; the tranquillity of the environment and the sound of the wind livened up our evening. Around a Natilla, a traditional Christmas dessert, we made a circle on the floor and started to talk about our everyday life. I was gathered there with Tobias, Mic

hael and Ester, three FARC-EP ex-members who have leadership roles in the community. I always saw them sharing with the natives of the community and participating in the different meetings organised by the village. Tobias and Michael were born in this region (near the Cerro de Paramillo) and decided to involve in the guerrilla group due to the high levels of insecurity of this region and the lack of opportunities for youth people. Esther, a woman in her 40s was part of the guerrilla for more than 20 years and played a strong commitment with the ideology of FARC-EP.

Macias, the president of the communal board of the village Llano Grande, was also there. I always admired his nobility. During the 90s, he was forcibly displaced from his territory and two of his close relatives were killed by paramilitary groups. Carol and Mayerly were also there, two students of Antioquia University who had fallen in love with this region and the community of Llano Grande and decided to stay in this village longer than their research required. Pilar and Carla, two members of the United Nations, who developed local income generation projects with FARC-EP ex-members and surrounding communities, were there too. Carla had adopted three dogs from the community and I always saw her with them, everywhere she went. There was also Rita, a member of the ARN, the governmental agency that is in charge of the ex-combatants' reincorporation. I have never met anyone so committed to her job. She decided to move to this village together with her son and she plays a role now alongside the other members of the community.

On this night, we shared our own worldviews and life experiences in a mutual conversation that made us feel that we were all connected. While the FARC-EP ex-members shared their experience in "El Monte" during conflict times, the others replied with their misconception around them and their experiences being in the other side of the conflict.

It was the first time that I felt the meaning of the word “peace”. Peace was represented in these encounters, in which we wanted to share our life with others without expecting anything in return and without blaming each other's life story. That night, I felt nostalgia for my country and for the Colombians, who in spite of having suffered so much because of the conflict and poverty, their hearts are still intact and willing to share the little or a lot that they have.

That day was so relevant for my research. I could understand the meanings of peace for those who live in the transition to post-conflict and the importance of the past and legacies in the building of everyday peace.

* * *

This qualitative research is about the past in the present trajectories of FARC-EP ex-members in Colombia and the analysis of their everyday local practices in collective reincorporation. I focus on the men and women who were part of the FARC-EP guerrilla group, signed the peace agreement in Colombia in 2016 and decided to take part in collective reincorporation initiatives. Unlike most academic works on ex-combatants and their so-called reintegration processes that mostly study security in peacebuilding or international Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) standards, this research analyses the experiences and practices of everyday life in collective reincorporation and the new alternatives that former FARC-EP members are implementing to transform their environments as better places for peacebuilding.

The preceding vignette about my experience in Llano Grande, one of the camps where FARC-EP ex-members are located, is illustrative in this sense. First, I show how collective reincorporation is not only about the ex-combatants, but also about their relationships and modifications of the different contexts in which they interact. Secondly, I define the meanings of peace in everyday local dynamics based on the relationships of the different actors and their perception of others. Finally, this vignette shows that the life of ex-combatants is not divided in two: their past and their present, but shows an intertwining between the times of conflict and the processes of (post)conflict transformation, which directly illustrate the navigation of ex-FARC-EP members in contexts with difficult social, political and economic dynamics. This vignette made me think about the reintegration process far from the

dimensions of DDR, but as a fluid process in which meanings, dimensions, relationships and temporal dynamics interfere.

Currently, discourses around reintegration of ex-combatants are broken down into different dimensions (social, political and economic), pushing ideas of both reintegration and ex-combatants through the lens of international discourses and DDR programmes (McMullin, 2013b; Nussio, 2011). Two aspects related to the reintegration of ex-combatants: adaptation to society and the minimisation of security in times of (post-)conflict. In general, ex-combatants are seen as “recipients of ‘packages’ that primarily seek to minimise the security threat they pose” (Robins & Bhandari, 2016, p.14) and potential spoilers in times of peacebuilding, as their experience in the insurgency represents a “break with society” and a risk during (post-)conflict processes (Wiegink, 2014, p.23).

Reintegration policies deprive ex-combatants of the possibility to transform their environment into a better place to live, offering them a basic package of benefits and limited participation in social, economic and political dynamics in (post-)conflict times. In this context, ex-combatants have no choice but to return to the cycle of poverty to which they belonged before joining armed groups. In practice, DDR discourses end up offering unrealistic expectations that cannot be separated from reintegration into poverty (McMullin 2013a). This perspective undermines the "people-centred and developmental approach" that DDR standards seek to achieve, reflecting an apparent predefined and controlled participation in reintegration policies and a restriction of ex-combatants' freedom to explore the scope and meaning of development.

This research aims to explore the meaning of reintegration created from below, the diversity of interrelations between the dimensions of reintegration programmes and the fluid narratives, relationships and practices that interweave the ex-combatants' past and present realities alongside their process of reintegration.

Advances in this regard have developed their own perspective of reintegration based on the importance of contexts and the everyday experiences of ex-combatants (see for example García, 2011; Fattal, 2018; Nussio, 2011; Wiegink, 2020). Additionally, recent literature on reintegration shows the need to approach ex-combatants from another angle, as social activists (Friðriksdóttir, 2018), political-ideological veterans (Wiegink & Sprenkels, 2020) and actors who have a political, identity and legacy transition as they return home (Söderström, 2020). This literature argue that ex-combatants become key actors in the

transition to post-conflict, in which their ideologies and agency serve as an indicator of their life trajectories and their adaptation to society.

This research seeks to contribute in this regard by giving value to the collective practices exercised by the FARC-EP ex-members during their reintegration process. By doing so, I explore the local dynamics based on the everyday encounters FARC-EP have with their peers, families and surroundings. I situate FARC-EP ex-members in a “social world” dynamic, in which different groups interact and modify each other. I use the micro-sociological term “social world” as the building of relationships a group of people make to unify and coordinate their different perspectives based on communal unity (Soeffner, 1991).

In the framework of this research, I focus on critical discourses of reincorporation framed in three major dimensions. The experiences acquired during the conflict (social capital, legacy, identity); the role of the surrounding communities in reincorporation (participation and DDR-participatory approach); and the role of ex-combatants as political actors (agency and ideology). By focusing on these dimensions, I was able to define the contexts where collective reincorporation practices take place as a kind of “peace laboratories” in which it is possible to demonstrate, based on empirical evidence, the viability of previous assumptions made in reintegration studies and the current contributions of collective reincorporation to the larger DDR framework.

Collective reincorporation is a concept created as part of the peace agreement in Colombia by the members of the FARC-EP, which attempts to break the understanding of reintegration as a division between past and present, going against two recurring discourses: the break with society and the break with the past (Wiegink, 2014, p.24). While for the DDR standards, reintegration is “the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income” (United Nations, 2006, 2.10, p.5), for FARC-EP ex-members collective reincorporation:

seeks to empower ex-combatants abilities to participate actively in peace-building, reconciliation, community development and rights advocacy scenarios, in order to contribute to the development and strengthening of the autonomous exercise of their citizenship. (Presidencia de la República, 2018, p.19)

Understanding reintegration under collective practices shows that the transition to society is not the rupture of two states in life, but the configuration of legacies acquired in conflict times as tools to integrate better into society. In this regard, the notion of collectivity:

goes beyond being constituted as a group of individuals or a political party; it is a social construction that overcomes a territorial dimension, and is based on a shared identity in which its members cohere and build a sense of belonging around a series of experiences, symbols, causes, values, objectives and common interests focused on the achievement of a specific goal, to which each individual contributes through his or her effort. (Presidencia de la República, 2018, p.19)

Studying the collective reincorporation practices from a local perspective allows me to see the active role of FARC-EP ex-members in peacebuilding and the different challenges they face when interacting with a social system that attempts to make them invisible by inserting them into a society as if they were “like everyone else” (McMullin, 2013a, p.118). Collective reincorporation shows that reintegration cannot be the annulation of power acquired by ex-combatants during conflict times or their adaptation in an environment with high levels of social, economic and political fragmentation. The collective actions show how the initiatives of FARC-EP members in reincorporation attempt to transform the root causes of conflict by creating alternatives from bottom-up approaches in the territories where these collectives are settled.

Flow of the research and key concepts

In this research, I identify empirical evidence as a guide for my research and as a basis for my inductive analysis. Along of this process, I interrelate theoretical and conceptual foundations with data analysis as a way of exploring my empirical evidence from different perspectives (Wilson & Chaddha, 2009) (See Figure 1). I explore the *state of research* on reintegration from different angles. First, I analyse the traditional moral perspectives of the perpetrator as evil and the later discussions of social, economic and cultural influences in the performance of combatants. Then, I explore reintegration under the concepts of legacy, identity, citizenship, agency and social capital (as it is usually studied) but focusing on the

relationships, emotions and ideas that former combatants build with family, surrounding communities and institutions.

The building of relationships in reincorporation times implies an intersection between social structures, individual biographical experiences and the political processes in which ex-combatants develop themselves. In this vein, I accept that conflicts does not just affect structures and bodies but also trust, hope, identity, family and social ties (Pougliny, 2005). From a theoretical and epistemological approach, I focus on symbolic interactionism and social worlds. Interactionism considers knowledge as an active process, in which the everyday relationships influence the formation of social worlds, showing the inseparable and interdependent forces between individuals and society (Reynolds, et al., 1975).

In symbolic interactionism, people actively shape their social world. This means that while people interact with others, they evoke former experiences, exchange symbols and re-affirm their meanings around themselves (their self) and their surrounding objects. “The social world is taken to be a place where little can be taken for granted *ab initio*, a place not of statics but of process, where acts, objects and people have evolving and inter-twined local identities that may not be revealed at the outset or to an outsider” (Rock, 2007, p.29, emphasis added).

In this research, I consider the interlinkages of locals with other powerful national and international actors. The interaction of local and global social worlds, embedded in the everyday practices of individuals, shows the indissolubility of relations, encounters, powers and agencies between locals and outsiders. This process of hybridisation is not taken for granted. It takes place according to the interests of the actors involved in the building of social worlds and comprise the creation of meanings and the process of hybridisation when social worlds intersect and segment.

As a *crosscutting approach*, I define the *local turn* as the initial basis for my empirical discourses. Based on an interpretative paradigm, the study of “the locals” helped me reconstruct a new version of the theory, dwelling upon people’s face-to-face relationships (Rock, 2007, p.26). When observing ex-combatants’ daily encounters, I did not just focus on the relationships but also the ex-combatants encounters with social structures and surrounding communities. In this process, I considered the multiple interrelations of objects, actors and spaces in which reincorporation took place and the active role of people in shaping their surrounding world and the world of others. As Johansson argues: “The effects of

people's actions are not limited to micro-level face-to-face encounters and relationships. Instead, these effects spread outward beyond their micro-level social worlds and beyond their subjective intentions, particularly when aggregated or linked with the micro-level actions of others" (Johnson, 2008, p. 460-461).

In this research, *hybrid peace* is not seen only through the lens of International Relations studies or as an alternative to post-liberal peace, but rather as the nature of different hybrid forms of peace constructed between the locals (local-local) and between them and interveners (locals-elites). Hybridity is an alternative to gain trust, improving social coexistence and sense of belonging in the aftermath of conflict through the everyday face-to-face relationships while people build their present by valuing their past. In this regard, I do not consider just the vertical forces that control hybrid peace, but also the horizontal local-local and local-elite dynamics that influence directly the establishment of hybridisation patterns.

By approaching the *everyday peace* perspective, I explore how local representation interplays with local agency as an indicator of people's own capacity to recover from post-conflict fragmented societies (Randazzo, 2016). For the purpose of this study, the local everyday life represents an alternative to seek self-development, esteem and freedom of expression. Everyday peace helps me understand local meanings of peace away from alienated perspectives of what "peace" and "reincorporation" mean for the interveners. In the framework of my research, different local alternatives to build peace have been taken into consideration. The silence of the locals and their "passive role" are significance in my research. These forms of communication are strategically chosen or culturally sensitive ways of establishing relationships and reflect other approaches outside the agency of local actors that, to some extent, positively influence the dynamics of peacebuilding. For example, small talk between ex-combatants and surrounding communities and informal encounters have become natural processes of reconciliation and healing in the territories.

The aforementioned theoretical and conceptual foundations represent *hybrids forms of peace* in which ex-combatants together with surrounding communities create new alternatives to deal with a society in transition to post-conflict.

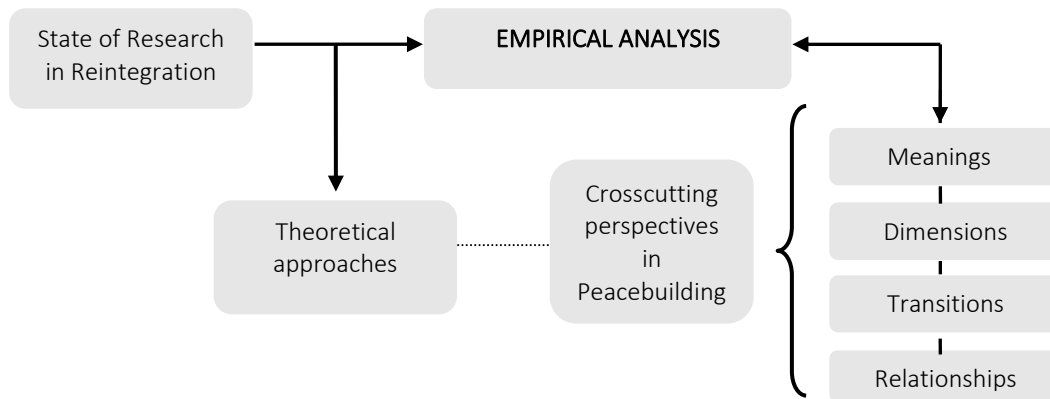


Figure 1: Flow of the research and analysis process. Own elaboration

The analysis of my research is based on four perspectives. *Meanings* as the everyday understanding of FARC-EP ex-members about themselves and their surroundings. Bräuchler argues that meaning-making “has not yet consistently adopted in peace and conflict studies” (Bräuchler, 2018). In this context, I analyse the meanings from three approaches: the *transition* from past to present in reincorporation; the *dimensions* in reintegration (economic, social and political); and the *relationships* with other local actors, family, government and international agencies. Each empirical chapter prioritises in each of these dimensions of analysis, which have direct relation with the theoretical and conceptual approaches and crosscutting perspectives explained above in this introduction.

These dimensions of analysis have two aims. First, to identify the individual and social challenges FARC-EP ex-members experience at being together in their reincorporation process and the variety of actors that intertwine in the modification or strengthening of their collective practices based on a “social world” perspective. In this regard, the everyday practices around reincorporation become the point of departure in my empirical analysis, in which I explore in-depth the interplay of relations with the dimensions of reincorporation, the past and the present of FARC-EP ex-members and the role of other actors to support or undermine their collective actions.

The second aim of this research is to situate FARC-EP ex-members as active agents in peacebuilding. Not surprising, the liberal peace perspective in DDR attempts to convert ex-combatants into obedient civilians that respond to the regulation of the market by accessing jobs as employees, or working as day labourers to benefit the biggest economic structures by enforcing dependency and loyalty towards the state (Metsola, 2006). In this research, I focus

on the multiple tensions ex-combatants experience to keep their collective initiatives alive and to resist a system that attempts to alienate their reincorporation practices.

This research is not about the diversity of actors that interplay in (post-)conflict environments or the role that the so-called “perpetrators” must play in a process of reparation or reconciliation. I explore the collective reincorporation and the human being condition of the FARC-EP ex-members away from international policies or normative standards.

The victims’ perspectives who were affected by the conflict, mainly by the actions exerted by the FARC-EP are not explored here. However, it does not mean that I devalue the violations against human rights committed by members of the FARC-EP and the emotional harm they caused to a great number of the population. I want to analyse just one part of the spectrum, which can be complemented with the extensive research on victims or about other actors who have contributed in the ongoing conflict in Colombia (paramilitaries, government, private sector, criminal bands and international actors).

In the following sections, I explore the context in which this research takes place and the methodological approach of this research. Then, I clarify some concepts and terms and provide an outline of this document.

Context

Since 2017, the Colombia government has been in charge of implementing a reincorporation process for more than 13,000 FARC-EP fighters. This process was the result of four years of negotiations in Havana, Cuba, between 2012 and 2016, where not only the disarmament of the FARC-EP was discussed but also truth, justice and reparation for the victims, a comprehensive agrarian development plan and a strategy for the sustainable substitution of illicit crops (Presidencia de la República, 2016). From these negotiations, the FARC-EP ex-members have to compromise in not only fulfilling the requirements of their reincorporation process, but also to contributing to the six points¹ agreed in Havana.

Over the last 30 years, much of the literature on DDR-reintegration has taken the form of case studies on the different demobilisation processes, providing lessons learned for countries undergoing peace processes with armed groups. Most of the studies of DDR in Colombia have focused on the reintegration process of the United Self-Defence Forces of

¹ The six points of the agreement are: comprehensive rural reform; end of the conflict; political participation; solution to the problem of illicit drugs; agreement regarding the victims of the conflict and implementation and verification mechanisms (Presidencia de la República, 2016).

Colombia (AUC) that took place between 2004 and 2006. Other studies have focused on the individual desertion of FARC-EP and the National Liberation Army (ELN) combatants as a result of the counterinsurgency strategy created by former President Alvaro Uribe Velez between 2003 and 2012. All of these studies focused on a “pre post-conflict” setting (Theidon, 2015) and based their discourses on the reintegration policy established by the former High Counselor for Reintegration (ACR)². Latter studies have analysed the collective perspective in reincorporation part of the last peace agreement with the FARC-EP and the challenges of this perspective for peacebuilding in Colombia (McFee & Rettberg, 2019; Segura & Stein, 2019; Zambrano-Quintero, 2019).

The characteristics in which the last peace agreement with the FARC-EP took place, the military trajectory of this guerrilla group and the current “conflict post-conflict” conditions place this case as unique in comparison with other DDR processes in Colombia and in the world. First, from the beginning of the peace agreement, the FARC-EP played a role as a political actor demanding a level of representation in society after more than 50 years of struggle. This demonstrates that the dialogues were not part of a military defeat but rather an effort to achieve peace with social justice (Ávila, 2019; CEDE, 2020; CSIVI-FARC, 2019b; Semana, 2017).

Second, during the negotiations, FARC-EP members proposed peacebuilding strategies that represented their ideology and political principles, in an attempt to keep their guerrilla legacy alive in the transition to post-conflict. By doing so, the concept of “collective reincorporation” takes another direction to traditional DDR approaches. Rather than seeing ex-combatants as “individual subjects”, “receivers” and “passive” actors in reintegration, they wanted to be seen as collective actors and agents of change in peacebuilding.

In the light of these statements, the FARC-EP ex-members together with the government created a new policy of reincorporation that has distinctive collective economic, social and political initiatives, as well as a new strategy to reincorporate them into society. In 2017, more than 8,000 members of the FARC-EP moved to 26 territories of Colombia to initiate their collective reincorporation. They grouped in camps called Former Territorial Training and Reincorporation Spaces (Spanish acronym AETCRs), Later others moved as a collective to new territories called New Areas of Reincorporation (Spanish acronym NARs). To

² Since 2003, this governmental entity has been in charge to design, implement and monitor the reintegration processes in Colombia attending so far more than 25,000 ex-combatants.

date, more than 3,000 FARC-EP ex-members are in 23 AETCRs and NARs. An additional 8,000 of them are part of an individual reincorporation process (ARN, 2019a).

Various reasons explain the reason why more FARC-EP ex-members are following individual rather than collective reincorporation processes. Some of them were against the collective structure of FARC-EP ex-members, others disagree with the process of laying down their weapons and their security guarantees, and there were discrepancies with the ideological perspective assumed by the political party of *Los Comunes* (current political party of FARC-EP ex-members created after the peace agreement). However, personal, family and security problems also influenced the decision of FARC-EP ex-members to detach from the collective structure.

The Research

This study includes inputs about how FARC-EP ex-members contribute in their reintegration when implementing collective everyday practices in peacebuilding. The process of collective reincorporation shows frictions and connections between ex-combatants' past and present trajectories; hybrid processes between individual and collective practices and new economic, political and social initiatives that the collective of ex-combatants starts to develop in benefit of peacebuilding.

This research seeks to go beyond the policy of reincorporation to discover the different social, personal, economic and political *vivencias*³ exerted in the local arena and the performance of these practices in the collective reincorporation of FARC-EP ex-members. This process leads to identify what local reincorporation looks like, how it works in reality, and how the collective practices shape traditional perspectives of reintegration processes. More than studying what locals *want*, I explore how they *do* in their everyday practices of reincorporation (Simons & Zanker, 2014).

This research draws on a multi-sited ethnography with the attempt to “follow people, connections, association and relationships across spaces”(Falzon, 2009, p.1), focusing on common patterns and commonalities across different local spheres (Marcus, 1995). I understand ethnography as an approach that allows me to delve deeper into the everyday

Vivencia can be roughly translated as an "inner life experience" or an "event". This concept implies a broader meaning whereby a person finds the fullness of his or her being, not only in the functioning of the inner self but with the functioning of the self with society. In this process, one learns not only with the brain but also with the heart (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991).

practices of the locals with the attempt to understand their symbols, meanings, artefacts and experiences in the different contexts they interact. A multi-sited ethnography shows how local everyday practices interact with the volatility of spaces and times, and the interference of emotional, political, economic and social dynamics. As Marcus argues (1995, p.6), “the circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities is diffuse in time-space”. In this line, the collective practices in reincorporation interlink with different contexts, times and relations, and vary according to the time-space in which FARC-EP ex-members reincorporate.

In this research, I did not expect to have a representative sample of the global dynamics of reincorporation; neither does it demonstrate whether collective reincorporation provides positive lessons for a universe of reintegration approaches in the world as I found it subjective and arbitrary. I wanted to analyse the diversity of experiences exerted in local spheres when FARC-EP ex-members implement collective reincorporation practices and the benefit of this approach in a specific territory, time and space.

The fieldwork of this research was developed in three territories of Colombia: Agua Bonita in Caquetá; San José de León in Uraba Antioqueño; and Llano Grande in Antioquia. In these places, I stayed for approximately seven months on two different occasions (2018 and 2019). During this time, I took part in most activities carried out in these territories, such as workshops, parties, family life, meetings, crops production and social activities. The principal methods of collection of data were participant observation (field diaries) and interviews. Additionally, I used small talk as a way to get to know the interlocutors, to achieve familiarity and to build a rapport (Jansen & Driessen, 2013).

In total, I conducted 58 interviews with FARC-EP ex-members, 14 with members of the community and 4 with representatives of the government. These interviews were supplemented by countless informal conversations and valuable small talk in the everyday encounters with the community of FARC-EP. Most of the conversations or interviews that I handled were not regulated by specific question; rather they were adapted to the conditions of the environment, the characteristics of the interviewer and his/her own interests. Participate observation was undertaking in the social activities, general meetings, community days, crop days, political discussions and everyday life.

All names used in this research are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. All those who took part in this research voluntarily approved their participation and did not request anything in return. The names of the AETCRs, NARs, villages and

institutions that I mention in this research maintain their original name.

According with the expose above, the initial questions of my research were:

- *How do FARC-EP ex-members experience the transition from guerrilla to reincorporation?*
- *How is collective reincorporation at the local level practised by FARC-EP ex-members?*
- *What are the main challenges that FARC-EP ex-members face in carrying out their political, social and economic collective reincorporation in the territories?*
- *How do the relationships built between ex-combatants and family, surrounding communities and institutions influence the configuration of collective reincorporation and the Colombian peacebuilding?*

However, during the encounter with FARC-EP ex-members and the experiences acquired during the fieldwork I defined my research question as follow:

How does the past in the present of FARC-EP ex-members influence their everyday meanings and practices of collective reincorporation during their reintegration process?

Terms and Definitions

When I mention the term *FARC-EP ex-members*, I refer to those women and men who were combatants in the FARC-EP and part of the peace agreement signed in Colombia in 2016. They are involved mainly in collective reincorporation actions and are located in the AETCRs or the NARs. Sometimes I use the term ex-combatants to refer to the discourses of reintegration handle by scholars or when I refer to the universe of ex-combatants or simply to avoid the repetition of words. During this research, I do not focus on the ex-combatants who decided to follow an individual reincorporation approach, neither do I discuss about the ex-combatants of the FARC-EP who were part of other “peace” agreements in the past (the so-called deserters, part of the counterinsurgency actions implemented by the government from 2002 to 2014)⁴.

When I refer to *farianos/as*, I denote the group of FARC-EP ex-combatants who are still acting under a collective and feel represented by their guerrilla group principles. I tried to

⁴ For more details, see “*Histórico Personas Desmovilizadas*” in http://www.reincorporacion.gov.co/es/la-reintegracion/_layouts/15/xlviewer.aspx?id=/es/lareintegracion/Cifras/Cuadro%201%20Histo%CC%81rico%20de%20Personas%20Desmovilizadas.xlsx&Source=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Ereincorporacion%2Egov%2Eco%2Fes%20Fla%2Dreintegracion%2FPaginas%2Fcifras%2Easpx

avoid using the term ex-combatants when I refer to the collective of *farianos/as*, as they consider that this term does not represent them, as it weakens the willing of former guerrillas to keep fighting for the rights of the most disadvantaged. They claim that they continue to fight but under different terms.

From now on, I will refer to *reincorporation* instead of reintegration, a term defined by the FARC-EP ex-members in the peace agreement of 2016. During the peace agreement, FARC-EP members sustained that during their fighting they were integrating into society but playing other roles. In the frame of this research, I understand reincorporation as a fluid process that does not have divisions between past and present, but represents a cycle in which different spaces, temporalities and social worlds intervene.

The term *surrounding communities or natives of communities* is a concept commonly used throughout this text and refers to the immediate social surroundings with which FARC-EP ex-members interact and on which reincorporation largely depends (McFee, 2016; Nussio, 2011). The relationship between these actors contributes to expanding the social networks of FARC-EP ex-members by improving trust and acceptance, the minimisation of stigma and prejudice, and the consolidation of communities.

I make a distinction between FARC-EP ex-members and *surrounding communities or natives of communities* just for writing matters, but it does not mean a dichotomy between “victim” and “ex-combatant” in a natural setting. I understand these *actors* as interdependent subjects that evolve in tandem in (post-)conflict environments. I follow the perspectives of different scholars who state that the politics of violence shapes the relationships built between victims and non-victims and influence their peaceful coexistence (see for example studies of Nussio, Rettberg & Ugarriza, 2015).

The term *local* encompasses the plurality and contested dynamics, networks and relationships built between different actors of a community (Mac Ginty, 2015; Hughes, Öjendalb & Schierenbeck, 2015). The term *local-local* will refer to the natural dynamics exercised between people that have similar power conditions and interact in specific contexts (Richmond, 2011). These *local-local* relationships are represented by the naturalisation of patterns exercised in people's everyday lives (Randazzo 2016) and relate to informal rules and social practices exerted by the individuals in their ordinary life (Mac Ginty, 2013). These relationships reproduce diversity of meanings and practices produced by the interaction and experiences of individuals, and represent therefore a diversity of realities and interactions

that re-create a unit of social organisation (Unruh 1980). In this research, I will consider the *local-local* as the relationships FARC-EP ex-members establish with surrounding communities and the nurturing of different expressions, feelings and knowledge emerging from these relationships.

Local practices refer to local initiatives that either persons in the process of reincorporation or surrounding communities exert to achieve their individual and social development. This process implies the recognition of local agency, empowerment and participation in local transformation.

Structure of the document

The present dissertation is divided into two large parts. Part one describes the course of the speeches, concepts and gaps in reintegration. First, in Chapter 1, I explain the trajectory of DDR with an emphasis on the Colombian case. Then, I provide a description of the origins and evolution of the FARC-EP, the end of the conflict and the current reincorporation policy.

In Chapter 2, I expand on the critical concepts introduced here by providing a complete conceptual development of the terms. I discuss how the term “evil” has been analysed beyond moral standards. Additionally, I show how the past of FARC-EP ex-members nurture their present in reintegration by analysing their legacies, ideologies and formation of social identities. I explain the role of social capital and the adverse effects that this can deliver in reintegration processes, followed by a critical perspective about the citizen concept in the reintegration approach. Finally, I define the role of surrounding communities in the reintegration of ex-combatants.

In Chapter 3, I focus on the different theoretical and conceptual perspectives in the frame of sociology and peacebuilding studies covered throughout this research. I link the concepts of everyday life in sociological studies with the theories of social interactionism and social worlds. I claim that the social interactionism and the groups in which people take part perform their meanings and practices in their everyday life. I will focus on the terms “local turn”, “everyday peace” and “hybrid peace” as concepts that provide the basis for the analysis of my empirical findings.

In Chapter 4, I describe the methodology of the research and the case studies. By using a multi-sited ethnography, I show the importance of everyday relationships among

FARC-EP ex-members and between them with other social groups. Then, I explain the case studies, the analysis of information, the ethical consideration and my positionality during this research.

Part two, “Meanings and Practices in Reincorporation”, shows in four empirical chapters the understanding of collective reincorporation based on the following perspectives: meanings; transitions; dimensions; and relationships experienced in the local everyday practices of collective reincorporation.

In Chapter 5, I explain the different meanings of collective reincorporation and the challenges and advantages of applying this kind of approach in reintegration processes. I discuss the difference between reintegration and reincorporation and the emotional, social and political aspects that these terms involve for the FARC-EP ex-members. Then, I explain how the “collective” term contributes to new perspectives on reincorporation. Subsequently, I explain how social justice, tranquility, freedom of choice, access to guarantees and security become the main aspects to define the meanings of peace for the FARC-EP ex-members. Finally, I focus on the different challenges female FARC-EP ex-members face when reincorporating in a patriarchy society.

Chapter 6, “Out of the Mainstream: Dimensions in Collective Reincorporation”, analyses three dimensions in reintegration — social, economic and political — through the lens of collective reincorporation. I discuss the internal and external challenges of the political party FARC (Common Alternative Revolutionary Force) now *Los Comunes* (The Commons) to become a solid and recognised party in Colombia. I conclude by saying that the creation of a political party is not the main achievement in the political reincorporation of FARC-EP ex-members, but the local political influence they play in the territories where they settle.

In relation to economic reincorporation, I analyse the cooperative perspective and the self-sustainability approach that the collective of FARC-EP ex-members attempts to achieve, as well as the fusion of individual and collective economic initiatives. I approach social reincorporation by valuing the ex-combatants’ visibility and recognition in society as active agents in peacebuilding processes and the strengthening of their social coexistence with surrounding communities, society in general and institutions.

Chapter 7, “The Everyday of Collective Reincorporation: Tandem Realities”, analyses the transition from past to present in the life of FARC-EP ex-members, focusing on their everyday practices in reincorporation. In this chapter, I show the influence of ideologies,

social identities and the artefacts acquired in conflict times in the transition to reincorporation. I explain how this transition creates new forms of living, thinking and identity in the FARC-EP ex-combatants, which creates an interesting fusion that combines military dynamics with social demands.

By focusing on the theory of social worlds, Chapter 8 analyses the various social interactions that FARC-EP ex-members have with other groups. I identify the different patterns of power, identity and agency embedded in the configuration of social worlds in which FARC-EP ex-members interact. This chapter contrasts the benefits in reincorporation provided by external and local actors, but also the power dynamics that influence the understanding of the role of FARC-EP ex-members in society. Finally, I discuss the importance of agency in the everyday relationship between locals-locals as a tool to build social worlds that contribute in the formation of territorial peace.

In Chapter 9, I recap on the research findings, the internal and external limitation of collective reincorporation and suggest possible avenues for further research in DDR reintegration. Subsequently, I provide a final remark explaining the uncertainty about the future of the AETCRs and NARs. In the end, I provide personal reflections on my journey while completing this research.

Part One: Setting the Stage

1. Background of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR): The Colombian Case

1.1. Trajectory of DDR

Since the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, the international community faced new security challenges regarding internal violence and state failure (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015). To address these challenges, liberal hegemonies developed strategies to support countries in post-conflict conditions based on the idea that “democratic peace” is the only way to “achieve peace” (Newman; Richmond; Paris, 2009, p.11). This idea aimed to not only achieve democratic peace negotiations or the ceasefire of armed groups, but also to ensure market-based economic development (Chandler, 2010). In this context, exercising the rule of law and the promotion of human rights provided a framework in which liberal peacebuilding was operationalised and practised (Chandler, 2010; Newman, Richmond & Paris, 2009; Richmond & Mitchell, 2011).

During the Cold War (1947–1991), post-conflict security programmes emphasised the dismantling of illegal armed forces after the provision of security to developing countries and the control of international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in peace negotiations (McMullin, 2013a, p.72; Willems & Leeuwen, 2015, p.319). By disarming non-state actors, the state could establish control over the territory by centralising its powers and showing the citizens that the state was the only organism that could protect them from any threat (Mac Ginty, 2011). To counter criticisms that questioned the extent to which peace operations promote peace (Stankovic & Torjesen, 2010, p.3) and that state security provides the conditions for peace (United Nations, 2010, p.4), international organisations (led by UN Peacekeeping Operations) developed a strategy as part of the liberal peace agenda called “Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR)” (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007).

In the 1990s, DDR was introduced⁵ to deal mostly with statutory and insurgent armies as part of the transition from war to peace during the establishment of peace agreements (Munive & Stepputat, 2015). In 2000, DDR was adopted as an integrated strategy to

⁵ The first demobilisation of troops took place in Nicaragua and Namibia in 1989 and El Salvador in 1992 (Bendaño, 1994; Segovia, 2009). The first UN DDR efforts in Central America in El Salvador and Guatemala demobilised 18,000 fighters in the early 1990s. Subsequently, 101,000 combatants demobilised in Liberia, and 260,000 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the following years (Cockayne & O’Neil, 2015).

international peacebuilding missions with a major focus on development and long-term approaches (United Nations, 2010, pp.3-4).

Since its appearance, DDR has been implemented in more than 60 countries worldwide where either their civil wars have ended with victory for one of the parties or as part of international support in peace processes (Muggah, 2014). According to the United Nations (UN), 406,029 people benefited from DDR programmes in 2016 and a total of US \$34,423,958 was invested in such programmes between 2017 and 2018 (United Nations, 2017, p.11). Approximately 300,000 ex-combatants were part of DDR programmes in 20 different operations in 2011-2012 (UNDP, 2013).

The budget of DDR programmes has varied between US\$1.2m (Solomon Islands) and US\$302.6m (Colombia) (Banholzer, 2010). In Africa alone, as of 2019, more than two-thirds of the 54 African countries had implemented DDR programmes, mostly with the UN's assistance (Ayissi, 2021, p.143). Now, DDR is perceived as one of the largest interventions of the UN's ongoing large-scale peacekeeping operations and one of the core aspects of peace, security and development (Berdal & Ucko, 2013; Muggah & O'Donnell, 2015).

DDR involves three main actions: disarmament⁶; demobilisation; and reintegration. Disarmament aims to collect, document, control and dispose of weapons, and develop responsible arms management programmes in a post-conflict context. Demobilisation seeks the formal and controlled discharging of militants from armed forces or other armed groups. Reintegration provides economic, social and political guarantees to the ex-combatants to become part of civil society (United Nations, 2006). Other approaches add reinsertion or rehabilitation as part of the DDR process, becoming DDRR. These are strategies to support the transition from conflict to peace based on emotional, social and economic support.

Reinsertion implies the immediate post-demobilisation package offered to ex-combatants before the longer-term process of reintegration begins (Isima, 2004). This process includes post-discharge orientation, food assistance, health and education support, and financial assistance (Özerdem, 2013, p.226). Rehabilitation refers mainly to the additional support in the process of reintegration provided to child-soldiers, disabled ex-combatants and ex-combatants with psychosocial problems (United Nations, 2006). Furthermore, there have

⁶ Disarmament involves a social contract in which ex-combatants release their weapons in turn for obtaining better opportunities in peaceful environments, such as amnesties or economic provisions (Knight & Özerdem, 2004).

been other approaches to DDR focused on R2D2 or RRDD (reinsertion, reintegration, demobilisation, disarmament)⁷ (CIDDR, 2009, p.16).

The disaggregation of DDR does not mean that in practice these stages are detached from one another. DDR phases are related and mutually reinforcing in a sequential approach, but not in a linear one (Berdal & Ucko, 2013; Stankovic & Torjesen, 2010). Implementing DDR programmes depends on the characteristics of the conflict and the large variation of ex-combatants. Some studies assert that turned DDR into RDD become the best strategy for armed group, security, trust and reintegration processes⁸ (Stankovic & Torjesen, 2010; Torjesen & MacFarlane, 2007). The separation of “R” from “DD”, for example, has been implemented particularly in those countries where a culture of weapons is persistent, as is the case in Afghanistan (Muggah & O’Donnell, 2015, p.7).

Since its inception, DDR has moved from a minimalistic security approach to a maximalist multi-dimensional development approach (Özerdem, 2013; Muggah, 2009, 2010), which has been implemented in unilateral, bilateral or multilateral agreements, and either in the complete cessation of a partial conflict, or just by implementing one component of DDR (Özerdem, 2013). The minimalist approach conceives DDR from a security perspective and defines ex-combatants as a threat to peace, mainly for three reasons: their propensity to use weapons; their former military ideologies; and their lack of employability skills, which makes them a risk to the population as they are susceptible to involvement in criminal activities (Özerdem, 2013). In this context, ex-combatants are perceived as the ‘lost generation’, as they are deprived of education, employment and job training in times of conflict (United Nations, 2006).

Contrary, the maximalist approach sequently, appealed more to a multi-dimensional holistic DDR development to reintegration, establishing peace agendas and implementing long-term economic, political and social processes (Munive & Stepputat, 2015), in which ex-combatants are treated as a war-affected group with a capacity to contribute to peacebuilding processes (United Nations, 2006; Stankovic & Torjesen, 2010). Under this framework, DDR attempts to incorporate a community-centred approach, in which receiving communities and families become part of reintegration programmes (Özerdem, 2013; United

⁷ The proliferation of different Rs did not have a relevant impact on the operation of DDR. It shows the complexity of the phase of reintegration in practice. Some contexts have required another approach, such as to begin with economic incentives of reintegration and only end with some form of disarmament or arms control (CIDDR, 2009).

⁸ See for example the cases of Tajikistan and Liberia (Jennings, 2007; Torjesen & MacFarlane, 2007).

Nations, 2006), as they contribute to minimising prejudices towards the ex-combatants and the isolated DDR interventions in peacebuilding processes (United Nations, 2006, 2019a).

DDR interventions have evolved over the last 30 years in tandem with characteristics of conflicts and politics over the world. This evolution has transformed the way in which international actors perceive and apply this approach, which has defined three generations of DDR.

1.1.1. Generations of DDR

DDR has incurred several challenges during its last three decades of operation. Its operative and instrumental perspectives have changed according to the new structures of violence, conflict dynamics, and the evolution and operation of armed groups⁹. The literature has framed DDR into three main generations (See Figure 2), which all together show the evolution of DDR in terms of political discourses, programming and interventions.

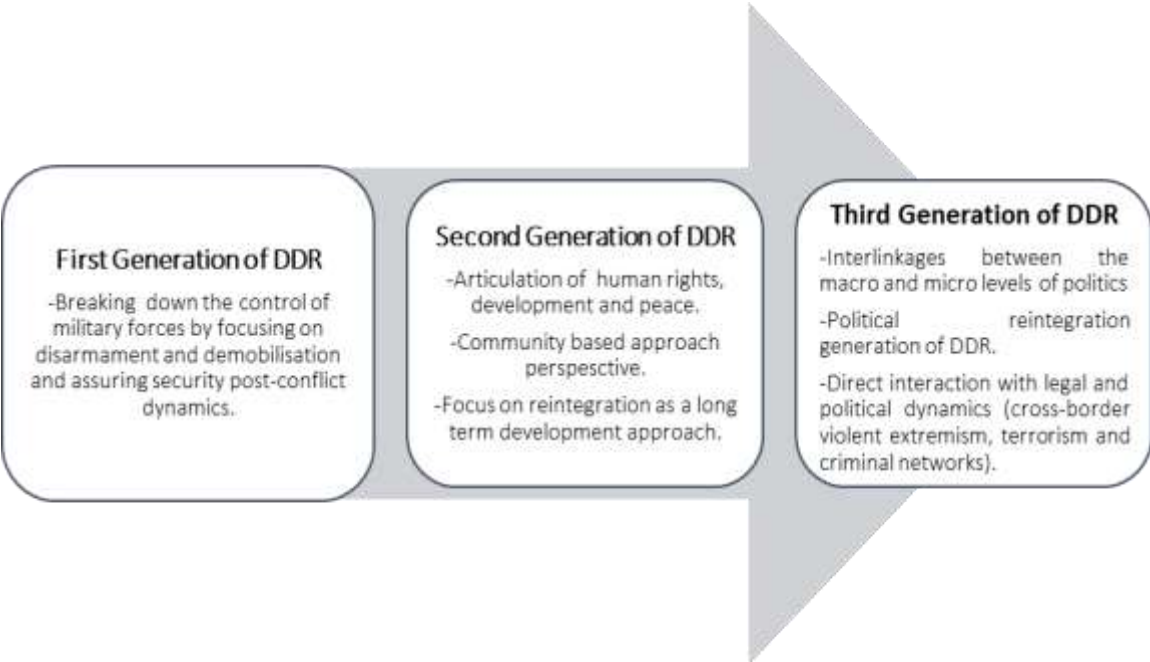


Figure 2: Generations of DDR. Own elaboration.

During the 1990s, the first generation of DDR appeared to help countries with prolonged civil wars, focusing on security issues and targeting ex-combatants (Stankovic & Torjesen, 2010). DDR involved a direct breaking down of military forces’ control from top

⁹ The design and implementation of DDR should consider the following aspects: the nature of the conflict and peace; the political will and the social characteristics of the relevant stakeholders; institutional capacity and quality of governance; economic conditions and cultural contexts (CIDDR, 2009).

ranges to rank and file soldiers and the decline of military dominance, followed by short economic reintegration assistance (Muggah & O'Donnell, 2015). This period was titled by Knight & Özerdem (2004) as "Guns, Camps and Cash"¹⁰ as it provided a limited perspective of DDR, overlooking its complex implications regarding the economic, social and political dynamics in the aftermath of conflict. The limited scope of DDR aimed just to protect the state from security risks by controlling the ex-combatants to stop them from carrying out any reprisals against the state's power, following what Mashike states: "[E]x-combatants are considered as time bombs slowly ticking away" (Mashike, 2004, p. 10).

DDR was characterised as the state-building generation, pursuing the creation of mutually reinforced strong states at the end of the colonial era (Piedmont, 2015). At that time, DDR focused exclusively on "military and security objectives, which in turn resulted in a relative isolation from the growing field of transitional justice and its concerns with historical clarification, justice, reparations and reconciliation" (Theidon, 2007, p.2). Furthermore, the objectives of DDR and transitional justice did not establish foundations for conflict transformation but tended to maintain its structures and hamper reconciliation processes (Acosta-Navas & Reyes, 2018). For instance, reintegration programmes were based on discourses of conflict, more than in reconciliation practices (Labrador & Gómez, 2007).

In this vein, DDR's first generation offered benefits to ex-combatants only to prevent their readmittance to armed forces, the return of political violence, or the emergence of criminal bands and governance issues (Piedmont, 2015; Muggah & O'Donnell, 2015). Such was, for instance, the case in Guatemala and El Salvador, in which, post-war Latin youth gang members (*maras*) were deported from the United States, under a law created by the United States after the peace agreement, called the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA). They transfer youth delinquents and members of gangs from US prisons to Central America without any kind of supervision, rehabilitation or reintegration process, which led in the end to a massive recruitment of new members for the *maras* in Guatemala and El Salvador among the local population (Hernandez, 2019; Seeike, 2014).

The best accumulated experiences, lessons learnt and best practices in DDR led to the creation in 2006 of the "Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards" (IDDRS) by the UN and the inter-agency working group (IAWG) of DDR composed of 22 United Nations entities. These standards set the foundations for the second generation

¹⁰ See for example programmes developed in Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Sudan and Nepal (Munive, 2016).

of DDR and provided an operational guide for implementing this programme. So far, the IDDRS have become the most recognised and influential approach to DDR among all UN actors by offering concrete mechanisms based on a dedicated set of principles, practices and policy guidance for the development of the DDR programme in practice (United Nations, 2006, 2019).

The second generation of DDR focused mainly on community-based perspectives and bottom-up approaches, showing flexibility in its implementation (United Nations, 2006). As Muggah (2010, p.4) remarks: “A common mantra today is that DDR must never be based on a fixed blueprint”. The implementation of DDR requires knowledge of the historical and political context in which the peace process is taking place (United Nations, 2019c, p.6).

Stankovic & Torjesen outline the characteristics of the second generation of DDR as follows:

[DDR] interventions draw explicitly on local cultural norms rather than on rigid externally defined incentives; they focus on civilians and gang members rather than former soldiers and draw on community-based leaders and associations rather than on national public institutions. (2010, p.13)

In the second generation, DDR targeted different actors and purposes. Accordingly, families and communities started being part of reintegration processes, minimising the symbolic and spatial divisions between ex-combatants and communities (Stankovic & Torjesen, 2010; United Nations, 2006). In this context, critical discourses of peace, human rights and development turned DDR into a positive peace approach, in which reintegration became a long-term multi-dimensional developmental perspective (Stankovic & Torjesen, 2010). DDR began to connect better with different political, economic and social programmes, and became part of an integrated approach in post-conflict reconstruction (Willems & Leeuwen, 2015).

Thereafter, DDR started to engage with economic development, local governance, justice and reconciliation, security system reform, differential approaches and local capacity building (United Nations, 2010). DDR served as a “bridge between near to medium term security promotion and peace building and longer term social and economic development” (CIDDR, 2009, p.16). Additionally, the second generation of DDR assumed more systematic

and better coordination with transitional justice procedures¹¹ (Muggah & O'Donnell, 2015; Waldorf, 2013). In the words of Mac Ginty, DDR is part of post-conflict reconstruction, and encompasses short-term relief and long-term development, involving both victims' life transformation and ex-combatants' new social, political and economic guarantees (Mac Ginty, 2010).

DDR embraces two objectives from this background. First, to contribute to the human security of societies in post-conflict and, second, to deliver socio-economic opportunities to ex-combatants to facilitate their reintegration process (United Nations, 2006). More than just protecting national state interests, human security emphasises the need to protect individuals from threats that could affect their dignity (Jolly & Ray, 2006). As Gasper argues (2007, p.9) "human security offers a working alliance between humanized discourses of rights, development and needs"¹².

Under such circumstances, DDR programmes must provide combatants with the needed security and confidence to disengage from their fractions and return to civilian life, while always considering deeper engagement with the political, historical and cultural dynamics of the context (Berdal & Ucko, 2013). The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (2016) states that safeguarding and sustaining the communities where ex-combatants live facilitates national capacity building and, therefore, long-term peace with security and development. Thus, reintegration programmes become the connecting points between DDR and national development plans, and both contribute in the consolidation of peace and economic recovery in the short and long term (Buxton, 2008).

Whereas disarmament and demobilisation are usually related to security and stabilisation, reintegration is considered a long-term grassroots process with the wide involvement of communities as agents of development (De Vries & Wiegink, 2011). DDR contributes to development from two perspectives: first, to include a disarmament process to minimise the cost of military spending increase the investment in human development,

¹¹ A considerable amount of literature has shown the frictions between justice and peace and the reasons why DDR and transitional justice are still working on parallel tracks. However, different efforts have been made showing how both perspectives meet in discourse, benefiting a sustainable peace with justice (See for example Sriram & Herman, 2009,; Waldorf, 2013; Jaramillo et al., 2009; Theidon, 2007)

¹² The discourses of human security in DDR interlink with security sector reform (SSR). The connection between DDR and SSR has raised the attention of different scholars and policies (See for example Colletta, 2012; Colletta & Muggah, 2009; Mcfate, 2010; United Nations, 2019b; von Dyck, 2016; Wilén, 2012). The United Nations defines SSR as a "a process of assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities that has as its goal the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the state and its peoples without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law" (United Nations, 2008, p.6).

benefiting, therefore, the economic and social stability, and the welfare of the territories (UNDP, 2016). Second, after successful disarmament and demobilisation, long-term human development reintegration has to be implemented to provide opportunities to ex-combatants inside civilian life that are different to the ones they relied upon during the conflict (UNDP, 2016). In this context, reintegration processes restore the role of former combatants into societies through the accessibility to human rights and the enhancement of human capabilities and resources, necessary in achieving development (Casas & Guzmán, 2010).

Lastly, the third generation of DDR appears to demonstrate the interplay between the macro and micro levels of politics in the design, planning and implementation of DDR. This wave acknowledges that apart from the local dynamics that merge with the DDR approach, the macro policies of peace, peace negotiations, peace operations apparatus, state-building, justice and security sector reform interact with DDR operations (Muggah, 2014).

Now, peace agreements are having to deal not only with radicalisation and violent extremism but also the emergence of Armed Non-State Actors (ANSA) and the permanence of terrorism, enacting hybrid forms of violence that connect countries and transcend national ideologies (Munive & Stepputat, 2015; Piedmont, 2015)¹³. In this context, DDR programmes must be aware that criminal actors work alongside and in concert with rebel armed groups across borders (Cockayne & O’Neil, 2015, p.7). Today, DDR faces the challenge of disengaging combatants from armed structures who see their armed groups not just as political means but also as an existential struggle (e.g., Al-Shabaab in Somalia) or as a way to enlarge criminal proceeds (e.g., gang members in Haiti)¹⁴ (Cockayne & O’Neil, 2015).

The variety of conflicts and armed actors has led to the third generation of DDR being implemented in the middle of ongoing conflicts and with a partial disbandment of armed groups, as occurred in Afghanistan and Colombia, or in the middle of military tactics, as happened in Somalia (Piedmont, 2015). In the latest review of the IDDRS, it was argued: “National-level Peace Agreements will not always put an end to local-level conflicts. Local agendas – at the level of the individual, family, clan, municipality, community, district or ethnic group – can at least partly drive the continuation of violence” (United Nations, 2019, p.10). The local and national level dynamics show that the cross-border/transnational conflict

¹³ Lastly, former fighters engage in the monetisation market across international borders by rejoining armed groups as mercenaries. This has been the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central Africa Republic (CAR) (Piedmont, 2015, p.4).

¹⁴ Now, the ANSAs’ financial resources are coming more from illicit markets and less from surrounding civilians, increasing the targeting of civilians and, therefore, the number of victims (Cockayne & O’Neil, 2015).

in some countries include international and regional economic dynamics, as well as war and political interests that support and link criminal networks (United Nations, 2019c). Therefore, DDR relates to not only counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations but also efforts to recruit anti-insurgent militias (Cockayne & O'Neil, 2015).

At present, the emphasis of DDR with politics engage with weak state structures in countries with a strong absence of the rule of law in ongoing conflicts (Piedmont, 2015). Additionally, it pays more attention to the role of ex-combatants as political leaders or veterans. This process prioritises the political aspirations of armed groups and encourages their members to become a political party that represents their ideals, with the aim of both running for election and achieving political participation at all levels (central, regional and local) (United Nations, 2019c). Furthermore, the political process of DDR involves interaction and agreements with terrorist groups, as they influence post-conflict legal and political dynamics, and therefore the implementation of DDR programmes (Piedmont, 2015).

The third generation of DDR calls for more flexibility and the adjustment of politics that work in parallel with the needs of the state, particularly in countries in which the fragility of the state intensifies the level of conflict. Now, DDR faces the challenge of integrating countering violent extremism (CVE) policies and terrorism rehabilitation (Cockayne & O'Neil, 2015).

In sum, the new peace agendas have made various efforts to integrate DDR into their policies by creating educational, social and productive programmes that meet ex-combatants' needs and interests. However, these efforts will not be enough until DDR transforms its political and security approach into a holistic perspective that comprises social, economic and political expectations in the aftermath of conflict, converting the local interests and needs in reintegration as core aspects in the design and implementation of DDR programmes.

1.1.2. Challenges in DDR

The great challenges of DDR is to develop methodologies at the local level that adjust to the needs of the populations. One of the reasons for this difficulty is the lack of clarity about what social reintegration means. Ex-combatants are still perceived as a threat to control in post-conflict contexts and not as active actors in development (Özerdem, 2012; Bowd & Özerdem, 2013). The existence of "isolated" and "standalone" reintegration programmes that disarticulate in practice the security from development has led to

minimising the engagement of these programmes with the political, historical and cultural settings in the aftermath of conflict and, therefore, their contributions to development (Buxton, 2008; Berdal & Ucko, 2013). There is still insufficient evidence on how DDR programmes contribute to peacebuilding processes (Muggah, 2010) and little empirical evidence on whether, or when, DDR has an impact on the restoration of peace (Cockayne & O’Neil, 2015). In 2009, the *Escola de Cultura de Pau* (The School of Culture of Peace) in Barcelona, Spain, said in its DDR’s yearbook: “No DDR process in the last few years has produced optimal results” (Caramés & Sanz, 2009, p.10).

One of the reasons for disregarding the contributions of DDR in peacebuilding is the lack of clarity about DDR’s objectives and the operative dynamics to achieve its goals. The ambiguous framework of DDR indicators and outputs shows unclear results and insufficient evidence of their contribution to the larger framework of peacebuilding (Stankovic & Torjesen, 2010). Clear examples are the strategies used to achieve a successful social and economic reintegration, which are not aligned with the needs and interests of ex-combatants and receiving communities¹⁵ (McMullin, 2013a; Bowd & Özerdem, 2013).

The above is linked to the lack of clarity on how to measure the success of DDR. Generally, short-term results are just measured by the number of demobilised ex-combatants, the handing over of weapons and ammunition, or the number of ex-combatants belonging to reintegration programmes. However, they do not measure the success of the DDR programme against other peacebuilding and state-building interventions (Stankovic & Torjesen, 2010). So far, there is no practical measure that replaces or works alongside traditional DDR and covers the integrated development approach (United Nations, 2010).

In addition, the lack of clarity on the scope of DDR and the limitations on peacebuilding have led to misunderstanding the role of governments and international actors in DDR interventions. Now, DDR programmes are turning to governmental activity that identifies the ex-combatants as:

The key object of regulation [who] draws on a body of experts and authorities (UN and national bureaucrats) who are in charge of the surveillance tasks and of monitoring the behaviour of the objects and not least of producing knowledge about

¹⁵ The term “receiving communities” refers to the natives of the regions where ex-combatants decide to initiate their reintegration into society.

these objects to feed into effective strategies of control, national stabilization and individual progress. (Munive & Jakobsen, 2012, p.377)

This scheme shows a disconnection between international assumptions, local practices and DDR processes, as well as an unbalanced relationship between states with high levels of fragility and ambitious powerful international actors (De Vries & Wiegink, 2011; Munive & Jakobsen, 2012).

In this regard, DDR is still relying on hegemonic discourses of liberal peacebuilding. The stronger emphasis of DDR on security matters and economic development pushes aside the integration of social, psychosocial and political dynamics that emerge in the territories where ex-combatants return (Berdal & Ucko, 2013; Özerdem, 2012; Bowd & Özerdem, 2013). Local ownership¹⁶ and consultation with local stakeholders are not conceived as the main strategies in DDR peace operations; instead, the priority is still on key donors, who only partially recognise the needs and interests of local actors and governments (Richmond & Mitchell, 2011).

The third generation of DDR has shown the lack of clarity on keeping peace in DDR times, placing DDR programmes behind ongoing military operations, which usually do not involve the groups that DDR is aiming to engage (Cockayne & O'Neil, 2015). The implementation of DDR in the absence of peace in contexts of ongoing military and counter-terrorism operations makes it more difficult to achieve the goals of the DDR, such as job opportunities, security guarantees and political involvement, showing at the end marginal contributions in conflict transformation and peacebuilding (Felbab-Brown, 2015).

One of the alternatives to overcome DDR challenges is to focus on a context-sensitivity approach. The history of the conflict, the socio-economic conditions of local actors and the local institutional capacities should play a part in the DDR programme. Under this approach, DDR should understand ex-combatants as active agents in post-conflict reconstruction and not as simply security threats (Jennings, 2008).

In the following sections, the development of DDR in Colombia will be examined, exploring the peace agreement with FARC-EP and the emergence and evolution of the term “collective reincorporation”.

¹⁶ Local ownership refers to the “degree of control that domestic actors wield over domestic political processes” (Donais, 2012, p.1).

1.2. Background of DDR in Colombia

The first peace agreement in Colombia took place in 1957 after the bipartisan violence between conservatives and liberals in a period called “*La Violencia*” (The Violence), culminated with a coalition that agreed on parity in the bureaucratic division, called *El Frente Nacional*¹⁷ (The National Front) (CNMH, 2013; Koth 2005¹⁸). After this agreement, the presidency of Belisario Betancur created the Law 35 of 1982¹⁹ to set the basis for new demobilisation processes (CNRR, 2010). This law served to establish truces with some leftist insurgent groups. Unfortunately, this did not result in a successful agreement between all parties²⁰.

Law 77 of 1989 brought about truces with various other guerrilla groups²¹, mainly from members of M-19²², with subsequent demobilisation processes (Giraldo Gómez & Giraldo, 2010)²³. Then, Decree 1385 of 1994 was created to provide amnesty and reintegration for FARC, the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional - ELN) and other minor insurgent armed groups that demobilised individually and were not part of any peace agreement. The individual demobilisations were aimed at weakening the guerrillas’ structures by giving economic benefits to ex-combatants depending on their collaboration with the justice and public forces (Villarraga, 2013; CNMH, 2016).

¹⁷ The National Front took place between 1958 and 1974 (CNMH, 2013)

¹⁸ Koth (2005) mentions that the first demobilisation process of the so-called “self-defence” groups was not successful. A large portion of the combatants did not hand over their arms, which ended with the murder of many demobilised people.

¹⁹ With this law, more than 2,000 ex-combatants were benefited by an amnesty (CNMH, 2013).

²⁰ During the 1980s, fighters from the ELN were part of the demobilisation process of M-19 between 1998 and 2002, parallel to the peace negotiations with the FARC under the Presidency of Andres Pastrana Arango. During these negotiations, a cease-fire was signed between the FARC and the government, which was called the “Agreements of La Uribe, Municipio de Meta”. The result of this process led to the creation of the political party UP (Unión Patriótica), which failed because of the massive number of murders of members of this party (around 3,000) by paramilitaries groups, affecting the success of peace negotiations (Koth, 2005).

²¹ Such as the Quintin Lame Armed Movement (Movimiento Armado Quintin Lame - MAQL), the Workers Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores-PTR), the Freedom Popular Army (Ejército De Liberación Nacional - EPL), the Movement 19 of April (M-19) and different local militias from Medellín (CNMH, 2017).

²² This process of demobilisation was established under Law 77 of 1989, which constituted the legal framework of the peace agreement during the presidency of Virgilio Barco Vargas with the guerrilla group M-19. Subsequently, this law was applied during the presidency of César Gaviria in the peace agreement with the EPL (Ejército de Liberación Popular), and with other groups such as the Socialist Renewal Current (Corriente de Renovación Socialista - CSR), Revolutionary Workers Party (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores - PRT) and Land local militias (Giraldo Gómez & Giraldo, 2010).

²³ The programme of demobilisation involved three phases: normalisation, rehabilitation and reconciliation (Plazas Niño, 2006).

In 2002, a policy of reintegration was established under Decree 200 of 2003, an amendment to former Decree 1385 of 1994²⁴, in the framework of the Security Democracy Policy (*Política de Seguridad Democrática*)²⁵, which was set up by former President Alvaro Uribe Velez (Giraldo Gómez & Giraldo, 2010). Uribe's administration argued that "a stronger state with greater territorial presence would also lead to more security for the Colombian people" (Derks et al., 2011, p.12). A number of individual demobilisations increased drastically²⁶ during Uribe's mandate (2002-2010), causing the weakening of the guerrilla structure by the withdrawal of combatants from insurgent groups (Derks, Rouw and Briscoe, 2011).

Between 2002 and 2005, the demobilisation of the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia - AUC) was under the mandate of Uribe²⁷. A total of 31,700²⁸ paramilitaries received guarantees under the Justice and Peace Law (*Ley de Justicia y Paz*)²⁹ in exchange for truth-telling and the return of stolen property to victims (Derks et al., 2011). However, this peace process with paramilitary groups received significant criticism. One of the largest criticisms was the lack of a clear legal framework that protected the rights of victims affected by paramilitary groups (Cabrales Salazar, 2014; González Chavarría, 2010). There was also massive criticism of the impunity given to paramilitaries, especially those who had committed massacres and human right violations (see for example the accusations made by the *Colectivo de Abogados "Jose Alvear Restrepo"*, 2006).

²⁴ This decree aimed to resolve the immediate needs of the ex-combatants who demobilised individually, but without providing a complete reintegration package (Giraldo Gómez & Giraldo, 2010).

²⁵ The Security Democracy Policy aimed to improve security by adopting a multi-faceted approach, addressing its historical inability to execute authority on its territory. To tackle this situation, the government increased the size of the country's armed forces and created a network of informants that spanned the whole country that served as informants for the army (Koth, 2005, p.18).

²⁶ 54,163 members of armed groups demobilised during Uribe's presidency (2002-2010) (ARN, 2019a).

²⁷ The government created the Justice and Peace Law 975 of 2007, which allowed the prosecution and sentencing of members of illegal armed groups who had benefited from demobilisation processes. This law showed an apparent failure in terms of commitment of the paramilitaries with regard to the reparation of the victims (CNMH, 2017).

²⁸ The number of paramilitaries registered in the peace agreement was controversial. After the paramilitary demobilisation, only 1,200 ex-combatants were confirmed as part of the peace process, but this number doubled when economic incentives were introduced (Mejía, 2008). Research has highlighted that during Uribe's presidency, many politicians from his coalition, close advisors and public officers engaged in alliances with paramilitaries and drug-traffickers to establish state institutions (Carranza-Franco, 2014, p.252).

²⁹ The Justice and Peace Law 975 of 2005 was aligned with the transitional justice legislation in Colombia by giving partial amnesties to paramilitaries in exchange for truth-telling (Presidencia de la República, 2005). However, the extradition of ex-paramilitary leaders affected the truth and reparation of victims (CNMH, 2013).

Extrajudicial disappearances and what was colloquially called “false positives”³⁰ (*Falsos Positivos*), the non-compliance of preconditions for a demobilisation process and the alleged false demobilisations of ex-combatants³¹, were other factors that affected the consistency of DDR paramilitary processes (Koth, 2005). In general, the DDR process with paramilitary groups was far from what was expected of the DDR approach (Koth, 2005).

The massive number of demobilisations during Uribe’s presidency led to the creation of the Programme for Reincorporation into Civilian Life (*Programa para la Reincorporación a la Vida Civil* - PRVC) in 2006. This programme provided basic needs for ex-combatants in terms of education, healthcare and income generation projects for both deserters of FARC-EP³² and paramilitary demobilisations (ARN, 2017). However, this programme did not fulfil the conditions of a complete DDR package; rather it was seen as desertion with benefits (Fattal, 2019).

The high number³³ of demobilisations³⁴ of FARC-EP members was in response to a marketing strategy led by the government, which sought to manipulate guerrilla members by using love³⁵ as a way to encourage their desertion. This approach was made even stronger during Juan Manuel Santos’ presidency (2010-2018) and served as a way to implement tailor-made military strategies to get access to knowledge and information from deserters of the FARC-EP (Fattal, 2018). The intense military pressure and the neutralisation of the FARC-EP during Uribe’s tenure led to the decline of the military structure of this organisation and triggered a sense of instability inside the FARC-EP troops (Zambrano-Quintero, 2019).

Despite the large number of demobilisations between 2002 and 2007, the government failed to tackle the emergence of insurgent and illegal military groups. On the

³⁰ The “falsos positivos” involve the force disappearance of socially marginalised youth who were executed extrajudicially by members of the national army. Later, they were presented as guerrilla combatants killed in combat, as a strategy to gain military rank and benefits from the military forces (CNMH, 2013, p. 64).

³¹ At the beginning, the estimated number of those demobilised from the AUC was in the range of 11,000 to 20,000. However, in actuality, there were more than 30,000. This number included supporters and collaborators, such as providers, drivers and informants, and the community in general (Derks et al., 2011; CNMH, 2017). The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (2007) assures that the increase in the number of demobilised ex-combatants was aimed at protecting drug traffickers legally or as means to guarantee more subsidies from the government. Such was the case for the “demobilisation” of the Nutibara group in 2003, which recruited young people in Medellín for the unique purpose of enrolling them in the demobilisation process (Kohn, 2005).

³² This process was part of the counterinsurgency strategy of former President Alvaro Uribe Velez, in which approximately 5,000 ex-combatants were demobilised (Derks, Rouw, and Briscoe 2011; Fattal, 2019).

³³ A total of 19,930 FARC-EP members deserted during the presidencies of Alvaro Uribe Velez and Juan Manuel Santos (2002-2018) (ARN, 2020a).

³⁴ “Where the government sees demobilized combatants, the FARC sees deserters” (Fattal, 2019, p.555).

³⁵ Some of these strategies of intimacy and love in counterinsurgency marketing was, for example, placing posters near where FARC-EP guerrilla groups operated that said “Before being a guerrilla you are my child” (*Antes de ser Guerrillero tu eres mi hijo*) (Fattal, 2019).

contrary, these processes of demobilisation resulted in the proliferation of criminal networks and organised crime gangs, so-called “*Bandas Criminales*” - BACRIM (CNMH, 2017; CNRR, 2010). These groups were based on structures commanded by paramilitary groups, distinguished by being the forefront of illicit economies and violence against civilians (Derks et al., 2011). The violence associated with these groups included forced displacement (particularly in the coastal regions of Córdoba and Nariño), massacres and targeted homicides (Derks et al., 2011). On top of that, the emergence of BACRIM increased the number of assassinations of ex-combatants. According to ARN (2020b), from 2003 to 2006, 2,830 ex-combatants were assassinated, representing 5 percent of the total number of demobilised people.

Despite the peace failures with paramilitary groups, the reintegration policy apparently achieved theoretically all that was expected in DDR approaches. In 2006, the reintegration process had achieved all goals associated with reinsertion, reincorporation and social and economic stability of former child soldiers and the voluntary individual and collective demobilisation of adults (ARN, 2017). However, in practice, there were a lot of inconsistencies that affected the socio-economic stability of ex-combatants, such as security issues, drug trafficking, recidivism and poverty (Mejia, 2008).

Between 2002 and 2009, the number of ex-combatants exceeded the operative capacities of the reintegration policies³⁶, which led the Colombian government to increase the structure of the policy and adapt the internal and operative dynamics of the programme. In 2013, the High Council for Reintegration became the Colombian Agency for Reintegration (*Agencia Colombiana para la Reintegración* - ACR) through Decree 4138 of 2013. The ACR’s aim was to guarantee the continuity and improvement of the reintegration policy by strengthening the administrative, financial, budget autonomy and organisational structure of this entity (ARN, 2018).

By that time, the reintegration policy had been adapted, moving from a reinsertion³⁷ to a reintegration approach. This implied a reintegration route that gave benefits in terms of psychosocial, educative and economic support and income generation projects to ex-combatants in their transition to civilian life (CONPES, 2018). By 2012, the Colombian reintegration policy was adapted to the international standards of DDR, following amnesty

³⁶ Most ex-combatants were located in Bogotá and Medellín, the two largest cities in Colombia (Prieto, 2012).

³⁷ Reinsertion was short-term assistance, in which people return to their home town and communities and receive humanitarian assistance and support in their reintegration into civilian life (Lozano, 2005).

standards, humanitarian treaties and the fundamental principles of human rights. This policy was instigated under the country's autonomy and without the intervention or control of any external actor³⁸ (CIDDD, 2009; CNMH, 2017). One of the particularities of DDR in Colombia was its emphasis on strengthening the ex-combatants' social bonds through the promotion of social relations and educational competencies, which attempted to improve their socio-economic difficulties and their lack of social capital (Carranza-Franco, 2016).

During Juan Manuel Santos' presidency, advances were made in DDR processes by reducing the guerrilla armed forces³⁹ and the government's belligerency, attempting to establish new relationships between the FARC-EP and the Colombian government (Rios, 2015). Between 2012 and 2016, the Colombian government-initiated peace dialogues with the FARC-EP, which ended with the "Final agreement to end the armed conflict and build a stable and lasting peace", signed on November 24, 2016⁴⁰. As part of this agreement, the ACR was turned into the Reincorporation and Normalization Agency (ARN) under Decree 897 of 2017⁴¹. Since then, this entity has been responsible for leading the reincorporation⁴² process of more than 13,000 ex-combatants from the FARC-EP.

The following section describes the evolution of the FARC-EP and the final agreement with the government that ended a conflict that lasted more than 50 years in Colombia.

1.3. The Emergence and Evolution of FARC-EP

The FARC-EP began its guerrilla militancy in Colombia in 1964 after the agrarian fighting in the 1930s and the period called "*La Violencia*" in the 1950s (CNMH, 2014). The FARC-EP was a revolutionary and political-military organisation that fought for the rights of those oppressed by a capitalist system, who suffered from socio-economic exclusion and the

³⁸ The main aspects that distinguish DDR in Colombia from other DDR processes in the world are: the partiality, diversity of actors and forms, the development in the midst of bellicose resistance, the differing regional contexts, a DDR in the middle of partial existence of peace, the efforts in terms of budget, and partial support of international cooperation (Nussio, 2010; Villarraga, 2013). These characteristics make the process of DDR in Colombia a unique and a special case to explore.

³⁹ There was a significant reduction in the number of armed forces of the FARC-EP, from 17,000 combatants in 2000 to 8,000 in 2010.

⁴⁰ The current peace agreement was modified after the defeat of a plebiscite held in October 2016 that put in the hands of Colombians the decision to approve the peace agreement between the government and the FARC.

⁴¹ This decree sought to design, implement, coordinate and evaluate the policy, plans, programmes and projects embedded in the reincorporation of FARC-EP ex-members, according to the final agreement signed between the National Government and the FARC-EP on November 24, 2016.

lack of spaces to exercise people's political freedom. FARC-EP members supported its fighting by saying: "Since the conquest, Colombia's history has been distinguished as a violence by the oppressors and resistance by the oppressed" (FARC, 2019, p.1).

The guerrillas arose after the assassination of socialist politician Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948, during the bipartisan conflict between liberals and conservatives. This period triggered the massive fighting of social movements, unions and liberal supporters, which resulted in the creation of approximately 36 guerrilla fronts based on a liberal perspective. The first confrontation between guerrillas and the military happened in 1964 in the "Marquetalia" operation⁴³ (FARC, 2019). Those who survived this confrontation decided to plan a strategy to organise themselves militarily. The first guerrilla meeting was called "*El bloque Sur*" (Bloc South) and involved 48 farmers (from here, *Campesinos*) who had communist and liberal ideologies. They set the basis of the first operational guidelines of the FARC (El Tiempo, 2016; FARC, 2019). At the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party, they approved disciplinary norms and military strategies for their operation as guerrillas, which ended in the formal creation of the FARC in January 1966 (CNMH, 2014).

Between 1965 and 1973, after the emergence of the FARC, new revolutionary guerrillas began to appear, such as the People's Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Popular* - EPL), ELN, M-19, MAQL, Workers' Self-Defence Movement (*Movimiento de Autodefensas Obreras*- ADO) and the Revolutionary Workers Party (*El Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* - PRT). They all had similar socio-economic and political ideologies but used different operational and military strategies⁴⁴ (FARC, 2019). It can be said that the period between 1958 and 1982 marked a transition in Colombia from bipartisanism to subversive violence (CNMH, 2013).

The ideological perspective of the FARC-EP was influenced by the Cuban revolution, the confrontation of China and the Soviet Union, and mainly the Marxist models that draw the strategies to enact a revolution. In 1974, Manuel Marulanda, one of the guerrilla FARC-EP founders, argued his loyalty to the Leninist-Marxist principles in their fight against the system that burdened Colombian reality, which in the end moulded the ideological principles of the FARC (CNMH, 2014). This guerrilla group was also inspired by the revolutionary thinking of the

⁴³ Some 16,000 soldiers and 36 guerrillas partook in this operation called LASO (Latin American Security Operation).

⁴⁴ The FARC-EP carried out more kidnappings, the paramilitaries caused more displacements and massacres and the ELN exploited the energy source infrastructures as a means of control in the territories (Ávila, 2019).

liberator Simón Bolívar, who based his discourses on anti-imperialism, Latin America unity, equality and towns' welfare (FARC-EP, 2007). This was aligned with the FARC-EP's interest in aiding the *Campesinos'* circumstances and protecting the most vulnerable (CNMH, 2014).

Since 1965, the FARC expanded throughout Colombia, using the organisation of the masses through strategic actions in the territory, allowing them to gain mobility and recognition in the country (Daly, 2016). These military strategies increased the number of rural sympathisers, who helped the FARC (voluntarily or by fear) by protecting guerrilla members from opponents and/or providing necessary resources such as shelter, food or animals⁴⁵.

During the first ten years of conflict, the FARC did not achieve the recognition and alliances they were expecting. The tensions with the Communist political party, the scarcity of resources and the lack of recognition at the national level reduced their military activity and their active presence in rural mobilisations (*movilizaciones campesinas*) (CNMH, 2014). However, from 1974, the guerrillas of the FARC started to expand drastically across the Colombian territory. At that moment, they had four fronts and were about to create the fifth and sixth front in Antioquia and Valle del Cauca and Cauca respectively (CNMH, 2014). By 1976, there were 20 fronts, 1,000 combatants and 120 commanders. Thereafter, they decided to refine their political and organisational strategy by opening a clandestine political party, which became the political head of the FARC.

In parallel, they started to accelerate the recruitment of new combatants by creating alliances with other guerrilla groups, such as the ELN (Verdad Abierta, 2012). During this period, the FARC moved from being a rural guerrilla group to a national guerrilla group in Colombia (CNMH, 2014). In 1982, at the Seventh Guerrilla Conference, the FARC added the word EP, "people's army", to their name and, since then, they have been known as the FARC-EP (FARC, 2019).

In 1984, under Belisario Betancur's presidency, the FARC-EP signed up to Uribe's agreement with a ceasefire⁴⁶. However, this peace agreement failed in 1987 due to various violations of the agreement by both parties (El Tiempo, 2016). In the meantime, as part of the peace agreement, in 1985, the FARC-EP co-founded a political party called Patriotic Union (*La*

⁴⁵ Information collected in my fieldwork in 2018-2019.

⁴⁶Jacobo Arenas argues that this peace process began on January 30, 1983 with the signing of a Joint Declaration by the Peace Commission chair and the Secretariat of the FARC-EP in the first months of the Belisario Betancur government (Arenas, n.d.).

Unión Patriótica - UP). However, this did not last for long. In 1988, between 200 and 500 UP leaders were assassinated, followed by the murders of between 4,000 and 6,000 UP members from 1988 to 1992⁴⁷ (Colombia Reports, 2014). After this political genocide, offensives from the FARC-EP against the Colombian military escalated (CNMH, 2013, 2014).

During this period, the support that the FARC-EP received from communities decreased drastically due to the emergence of paramilitary groups who threatened the rural population that helped guerrilla groups. Furthermore, the fall of the Berlin wall and the crisis that had befallen communism triggered a transformation in the FARC-EP's operational structure⁴⁸.

In the 1990s, as a funding strategy, the FARC-EP started to get involved with the business of illicit drugs, the interchange with criminal bands and clientelism as a way to obtain money from local governmental administrations (CNMH, 2014). Avila sustains that guerrilla had a social base with the cocaine farmers (*cocaleros*), poor settlers and farmers in general, and in some cities, the radical marginal left-wing sectors (Avila, 2019). In the meantime, the FARC-EP moved from controlling drug production in some territories to becoming fully dedicated to trafficking, serving as a strategy to enhance their military capacity (Cook, 2011). Under these conditions, the FARC-EP started to get involved more deeply with the mafia in the Colombian borders, including illegal mining, kidnapping and extortion, known as "*vacunas*" (vaccines) or "*impuestos de guerra*" (war taxes)⁴⁹ (Insight Crime, 2019). This transition showed that the FARC-EP was "transformed from a traditional guerrilla group into a full-fledged insurgency" (Cook, 2011, p.19).

The changes in the FARC-EP's financing did not affect the functioning of this guerrilla group, but they did lead to a more hierarchical structure and new forms of organisation (CNMH, 2014). For example, they increased the number of militias in the towns close to where they operated as a strategy to control their financial market for drugs and extortion⁵⁰.

The FARC-EP operated under the structure of a major state, composed of five principal members and four substitutes. They met every three months to plan their military and political operations. These meetings followed the agreement in the national conferences of

⁴⁷This period was called "*la guerra sucia*" (the dirty war), which led to the extermination of political alternative movements. This period was in the hands of traditional political parties that had a nexus with paramilitary and drug trafficking structures (Ávila, 2019).

⁴⁸ FARC-EP counted on the economic and operative support of socialist countries (CNMH, 2014).

⁴⁹They charged this "war tax" to large companies, cattle ranchers, traders, miners, drug traffickers and even beer transporters (Verdad Abierta, 2016).

⁵⁰ Information obtained during my fieldwork in 2018-2019.

guerrillas, celebrated ten times between 1966 and 2016. In these conferences, the FARC-EP claimed that they used a revolutionary and proletarian democracy, in which they discussed the current social, political and economic problems that were affecting Colombian society. On this basis, they planned their military and operational strategy ruled by their regulations and statutes, and by the guidelines of the strategic plan approved by the conferences (FARC, 2019).

The organisation of FARC-EP members was based on cooperative and collective strategies. Every comrade followed different roles that were distributed and exchanged between them according to the commander's requirements. Among the roles were "*ranchar*" (the ones who were in charge of the food), "*guardia*" (composed of different roles and levels of protection), the "*economo*" (people who were in charge of the distribution and control of the food provisions) and "*comunicaciones and radistas*" (people who were in charge of the portable radio and the radio station of the FARC-EP). Some could leave the encampments temporarily for explorations, social activities or extortions, while others were in charge of land mines, arms caches and bomb exploration. All of them were trained in military strategies and ideological competences⁵¹.

The expansion and military strength that the FARC-EP gained during the 1980s and 1990s led the government of Andrés Pastrana Arango to attempt a peace agreement with the guerrilla group, which failed after four years of negotiations. This process took place between 1998 and 2002 and resulted in a 42,000km² demilitarised zone (*zona de distención*) controlled by the FARC-EP and civic police, and known as El Caguán (CNMH, 2014). The peace process in El Caguán was full of improvisations and governmental inconsistencies. There were several incidents of military structures, rights violations, pressure from administrative authorities, failure of the substitution of illicit crops, and repeated suspensions of the process, which resulted in scarce support from international and national political organisations (Villarraga & Castellós, 2008). This peace process faded away due to the non-compliance of both parties, coming to an end in 2002 without any major contribution to peace in Colombia (Ávila, 2019; Koth, 2005).

The worst consequence of the failed peace process was the media and social distraction produced during this period. While the FARC-EP and the government were centred

⁵¹ This information was collected during the fieldwork developed during 2018-2019.

in the demilitarised zone, paramilitary groups expanded in Colombia and committed a large number of massacres, murders, threats and displacements (Ávila, 2019).

After the failure of this peace agreement, military confrontations increased drastically. The FARC-EP responded with heavy weapons attacks and troops mobilisation, creating mobile structures that added a new strategy to their military offences (Ávila, 2019). These actions increased the presence of the FARC-EP in different territories of Colombia, creating regions where the state was not in control and with the imposition of norms and regulations from the guerrillas to the inhabitants (CNMH, 2014).

Between 1991 and 2008, the FARC-EP increased its territorial expansion and the number of combatants, reaching 18,000 in 2007. However, this number reduced subsequently with the counterinsurgency strategy established by the presidency of Alvaro Uribe Velez (2002-2010) and the Patriotic Plan (*Plan Patriota*)⁵², which lasted until 2015 (CNMH, 2014). Despite Uribe's efforts to defeat the FARC-EP during his tenure, the offensives of the FARC-EP on military forces and civilians increased in an attempt to resist against the counterinsurgency efforts of Uribe's government. According to Avila (2019), there were 1,000 massacres between 1995 and 2005 of both paramilitary groups and guerrillas. Some 60 percent of the total number of victims in Colombia corresponds to this decade.

The Democratic Security and the counterinsurgency strategy led by Alvaro Uribe and Juan Manuel Santos' presidencies destabilised operatively the FARC-EP, producing a redistribution of the guerrilla organisation in some territories and their eviction from central regions of Colombia (Ávila, 2019). One of the major offensives from these governments was the assassination of three of the most representative leaders of this guerrilla group: Manuel Marulanda and Raul Reyes in 2008, and Alfonso Cano in 2011 (FARC, 2019).

In 2012, during the presidency of Juan Manuel Santos, the peace agreement with the FARC-EP started (Herbolzheimer, 2016). The peace negotiations took place in Havana, Cuba. During four years of negotiation, members of the government and the FARC-EP, and representatives of women, victims and indigenous communities, held meetings to develop an agenda to achieve a final agreement, launched in November 2016 as the "General Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Long-lasting Peace" (OACP, 2017b)

⁵² This was a military strategy proposed by the government of Colombia with the United States' support to annihilate the guerrilla groups. It consisted of a "deep operation" that aimed to attack the guerrilla groups inside the places where they operated or lived (Ávila, 2019). The Plan Patriota was a continuation of Plan Colombia initiated during the Pastrana administration in 1999.

During the period of negotiation, the Colombian government and the FARC-EP faced discrepancies concerning the points included in the peace accord, such as the legal standards that protected the peace agreement, the FARC-EP political benefits and the amnesties for ex-combatants (Reyes, 2013). However, the confidentiality of the talks, the de-escalation of the number of homicides committed by the FARC-EP and a clear political will of both parties to find a political solution allowed the continuation of this process (Planta, 2017).

Since then, the situation changed drastically due to the unilateral ceasefire and the evident advances in the peace agreement (Ávila, 2019). Negotiators announced a final agreement to end the conflict in November 2016 after overcoming various obstacles, such as resistance from some political parties to the agreement and the rejection to the final peace agreement of more than 50 percent of the voters in the 2016 Colombian referendum (Basset, 2018)

Five years after the signing of the peace agreement, Colombia has showed notable achievements in terms of peace⁵³, but also a diversity of emerging conflicts and opposed political interests that have affected the success of the agreement's implementation⁵⁴. The following section describes point number three of the peace agreement, which lays out the end of the conflict and the characteristics of the reincorporation process of FARC-EP ex-members.

1.4. The End of the Conflict and the Challenges in Reincorporation Process

According to Herbolzheimer, the last peace agreement in Colombia innovative aspects with regard to “positioning the rights of the victims at the centre of the talks; addressing the structural problem of rural development; creating a gender sub-commission; and planning for implementation long before the agreement” (2016, p.1). The KROC Institute assures that the Colombia peace agreement is the most complete and integrated of the 34 peace agreements that have been signed around the world in the last 30 years (Prater & Hiller, 2019, p.35).

⁵³ By June 2019, 25 percent of the Havana agreement points were fully implemented, 15 percent were halfway to being completely implemented, 36 percent were in the initial stage of implementation and the remaining 24 percent of the commitments had not yet been started (KROC, 2020).

⁵⁴ This information was obtained from reports and evaluations that have monitored the peace agreement, mainly the KROC Institute, UN verification, and Mission and Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO).

From the outset, this peace process was framed around five core aspects: a) rural development; b) political participation; c) illicit crops, victims⁵⁵ d) conflict termination; and e) a procedural issue dealing with the implementation of the eventual peace agreement. Considering the purpose of this research, point three of the peace agreements (“End of the Conflict”) is explained in detail in this section.

Point three of the final peace agreement with the FARC-EP provided for the termination of the offensive actions between the military forces and the FARC-EP (by the elimination of hostilities), especially the ones committed against civil society (Presidencia de la República, 2016, p.51). The parties agreed the “Bilateral and Definitive Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities” (CFHBD) and the “Abandonment of the Arms” (DA) of the ex-members of the FARC-EP (Presidencia de la República, 2016, p.51). These processes comprised a technical, transparent and verifiable procedure carried out by the UN, followed by the preparation of the economic, social and political reincorporation of FARC-EP combatants into civilian life (ARN, 2018).

To begin the reincorporation of the FARC-EP ex-members, the Colombian government created 20 Local Transitional Zones for Normalisation (*Zonas Veredales Transitorias de Normalización* - ZVTN) and 6 Transitional Points for Normalisation (*Puntos Transitorios de Normalización* - PTN)⁵⁶. These zones were located in 14 departments and 26 municipalities of the country. At the beginning, the ZVTNs and the PNTs were the places chosen to guarantee the:

Ceasefire agreement and the preparations for the economic, political and social reintegration of FARC-EP units into civilian life in accordance to the interests of the ex-combatants, as established in item 3, sub-section 2, of the General Agreement and their transition to legal status. (Presidencia de la República, 2016, p.62)

In August 2017, the ZVTNs were turned into Territorial Training and Reincorporation Spaces (*Espacios Territoriales para La Capacitación y la Reincorporación*-ETCR). The ETCRs served to train FARC-EP ex-members in their reincorporation into civilian life, preparing

⁵⁵ The most complex aspects of the agreement were the parts dealing with victims and justice. These talks lasted 15 months and involved strong pressure from public opinion, which rejected the impunity of crimes committed by both the government and the FARC-EP (Herbolzheimer, 2016).

⁵⁶ This process was called the D+180 and defined the time the government had together with the United Nations for monitoring, collecting and destructing the FARC-EP weapons (Presidencia de la República, 2016).

productive projects and meeting the technical training needs of the surrounding communities in a community reincorporation model based on Decree 1274 of 2017 and Decree 2026 of 2017 (Presidencia de la República, 2017).

Since 2017, the ETCRs have been designated as places for ex-combatants and their families to live and to receive educational levelling and job training, while strengthening the design of income-generating projects (see figure 3) (ARN, 2017).



Figure 3: Trajectory of the ZVTN and NAR. Own elaboration

By September 2017, *La Defensoría del Pueblo* (Ombudsman Office) identified several issues with the ETCRs. Only five of them were completely built and six were in precarious conditions, which affected the fulfilment of ex-combatants’ basic needs. Additionally, there was no differential approach to cover the needs of women, elderly people, children and people with disabilities (Defensoría del Pueblo de Colombia, 2017; KROC Institute, 2017). To face these difficulties, in March 2018, the government sent 263 professionals from the ARN to 26 ETCRs to carry out institutional articulation and assist with development programmes (PARES & Fundación Paz y Reconciliación, 2018).

Additionally, the places where the former ETCRs were located did not ease the process of reincorporation. Choosing remote areas made the development of economic enterprises difficult due to the absence of roads and essential services such as water and electricity

(Segura & Stein, 2018). Furthermore, the structures of the former ETCRs and their locations far away from social, political and economic opportunities diffculted the access to benefit from what the hosting region could offer. This then made the process more complex when ex-combatants returned to “a partially ‘reinvented’ community space – as the pre-existing space has been turned upside down by years of war, repression and forced displacement – may also resemble a retreat into a more intensified identity owing to ill-treatment” (Pouliny, 2005, p.499). This process of integration was more difficult in those territories where there was no adequate “pedagogy of peace” with the receiving communities before the arrival of ex-combatants, which caused rejection from the side of communities and in some cases resistance towards the reincorporation process (See for example the case of the Cauca).

The Colombian government commissioned in 2017 the National University of Colombia to develop a census to identify the main characteristics of FARC-EP members and obtain information to design the new reincorporation policy⁵⁷. According to this census, by July 2017, there were 8,185⁵⁸ ex-combatants in the ZVTNs, 34 were in the *Lugares Transitorios de Acogida* (Transitional Reception Places - LTA)⁵⁹, 1,614 in the *Recintos Penitenciarios Carcelarios* (Penitentiary Prison Precincts - RCPs)⁶⁰ and 182 in the *Mecanismo de Monitoreo y Verificación* (Monitoring and Verification Mechanism - MMV)⁶¹, with a total of 10,015⁶² ex-combatants. 77 percent of ex-combatants were men, and 23 percent were women; 66 percent came from rural areas, 19 percent from urban areas and 15 percent from urban-rural areas. 18 percent were indigenous and 12 percent Afro. In terms of education,

⁵⁷ The National Council for Reincorporation (*Concejo Nacional de Reincorporación* - CNR) was in charge of designing the new reincorporation policy. This council includes two members of the government and two FARC-EP ex-members. They had the duty of defining the activities and establishing the reincorporation programme and monitoring the reincorporation process under the Colombian government’s mandate.

⁵⁸ The OACP reported only 6,804 people of the total population in the reincorporation process arrived to the ZVTN and PTN (OACP, 2017a, paragraph 1).

⁵⁹ The LTAs were places especially for girls and boys under 18 years of age who were part of the FARC-EP. They received further treatment in their reincorporation in society for being considered victims of the conflict. By December 31, 2017, only 135 children had disengaged from the FARC-EP (75 girls and 60 boys). The OACP received information on the informal disengagement of children prior to the formal process at least in Cauca, Caquetá and Meta (OHCHR, 2018, p.6).

⁶⁰ “FARC-EP members who, by virtue of the Amnesty Law, have benefited from release from prison, will be integrated, if they so wish, in these zones to continue the process of reincorporation into civilian life” (Presidencia de la República, 2016, p.63). By 2020, there were still 185 people deprived of their liberty, despite being accredited as former members of the FARC-EP (Rueda, 2020, p.34).

⁶¹ The MM&V was a tripartite technical mechanism composed of representatives from the National Government (Colombian State Armed Forces, which include both the Military Forces and the National Police), the FARC-EP, and international organisations (Presidencia de la República, 2016, p.61).

⁶² The number of ex-combatants estimated in 2012 was between 8,000 and 10,000 (Nussio & Howe, 2012).

just 21 percent had finished their secondary school education and 57 percent had finished their primary education (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2017).

In the first 24 months of reincorporation, ex-combatants received a monthly basic income equivalent to 90 percent of the Minimum Monthly Legal Wage (*Salario Mínimo Mensual Legal Vigente*). Additionally, they received a one-off normalisation allowance of 2m Colombian⁶³ pesos at the beginning of their reincorporation process (Presidencia de la República, 2016). The government argued that after two years of reincorporation, the ex-combatants could achieve an integral and sustainable approach with the capacity to sustain themselves⁶⁴ (Arnault, 2017).

As part of the economic reincorporation, the ex-combatants created the Social Economies of the Common - ECOMÚN (*Economías Sociales del Común*), which served as a platform to integrate different collective economic initiatives of the ex-combatants. Until 2018, more than 4,900⁶⁵ ex-combatants were part of these initiatives. Besides identifying ECOMÚN as a productive alternative, FARC-EP ex-members wanted to contribute to the reduction of inequality, poverty and negative environmental effects (ECOMUN, 2018; Presidencia de la República, 2016).

The economic initiatives received a “seed capital” from the government of 8m Colombian pesos⁶⁶ per ex-combatant, which could be used to develop individual and collective income generation projects (Presidencia de la República, 2016). Until 2019, 38 collective initiatives were approved, in which 2,290 FARC-EP ex-member took part and 360 individual projects were established, benefitting 410 ex-combatants (Rueda, 2020, p.40).

The number of individual economic projects has increase due to the facility of access to resources (Rueda, 2020). This added to the abandonment of the ETCRs by a large part of the ex-combatants. In November 2017, a representative of the UN Colombia stated that more than 55 percent⁶⁷ of the members of the FARC-EP had already left the ETCRs, due to “their interest in re-uniting with their families, getting involved in politics or carrying out

⁶³ Approximately 500 euros.

⁶⁴ The UNDP, the Swedish Embassy, the FARC collective, the OACP (High Commissioner for Peace) and SENA (The Colombian National Service for Vocational Education) created a strategy for self-sufficiency, which consisted of support for self-consumption initiatives and other needs in the 26 ETCR.

⁶⁵ ECOMÚN had gathered 135 associative forms, with 3,509 men and 1,412 women registered (Rueda, 2020).

⁶⁶ Approximately €1,800.

⁶⁷ There were around 4,082 ex-combatants in the ETCRs by June 2018 (Redacción Paz, 2018).

reincorporation by their own. However, one of the most important reasons was the loss of trust towards the guarantees offered to the territorial spaces”⁶⁸ (Arnault, 2017).

For the KROC Institute, the abandonment of ex-combatants from the ETCRs affected the implementation of reincorporation programmes, as it made it more difficult to approach the ex-combatants and monitor their reincorporation processes. Furthermore, being detached from the collective structure of ex-FARC-EP increased the risks of recidivism, the violation of ex-combatants’ rights, distrust toward the government and lack of participation of all members of society in reconciliation and non-repetition actions (KROC, 2017). However, Joshua Mitroti, the director of the ARN, mentioned that since August 2017 all ex-combatants had fulfilled the conditions and received documents that entitle them to become citizens, which means that they have the right to go from the ETCRs to any place of their convenience in Colombia to continue their individual reintegration process (Bolaños, 2017).

By 2018, the government had removed two ETCR, one in Vigía del Fuerte, Antioquia, and another in Tierralta, Córdoba, under Decree 982 of 2018. The Interior minister argued: “In these two spaces the reincorporation process was successful and the former combatants are already reincorporated. Therefore, there are no reasons to keep these ETCRs open” (Rivera, 2018). However, FARC-EP ex-members argued that the government had closed these ETCRs because only a few people remained in them. Most of them had left the ETCRs because of the government’s non-compliance of the agreement⁶⁹. A year later, an additional ETCR was closed in Santa Lucia Ituango, Antioquia, due to security problems.

By 2019, 73 New Areas of Reincorporation (*Nuevas Areas of Reincorporation* - NARs)⁷⁰ had been identified across Colombia, in which 1,832 ex-combatants continued to implement their collective reincorporation process but without the same security and economic support that the AETCRs received from the government⁷¹ (See Figure 3) (Rueda, 2020, p.51). From August 2019, the ETCRs changed their legal form to be part of the municipalities or townships and are now called the former ETCRs (AETCRs). 11 of the 24 AETCRs must be relocated

68 PARTES & la Fundación Paz y Recociliación (2018) showed that the lack of articulation of the different government entities, the lack of willingness to guarantee land to ex-combatants, the absence of a different programme for ex-combatants, the failures in political aspects and amnesties, and the increase in homicides in the areas where ex-combatants lived are some of the reasons for ex-combatants to distrust the government and make the decision to abandon the ETCRs and NARs.

⁶⁹ According to reports carried out by ex-members of these ETCRs who are now living in the ETCR Llano Grande and San José de León (Fieldwork October-December 2018)

⁷⁰ 61 NARs are in rural areas and 12 in urban areas (Rueda, 2020, p.23).

⁷¹ The NARs do not receive the military protection offered by the government neither do the monthly remittances.

because of lands property rights and others are in a reserve zone or in ethnic territories (Sierra, 2019).

As of 2020, 2,689 ex-combatants were in the AETCRs and 9,049 were outside these spaces in 430 municipalities in Colombia. From these numbers, 655 ex-combatants were in Bogotá and 202 in Medellín (Ramirez, 2020).

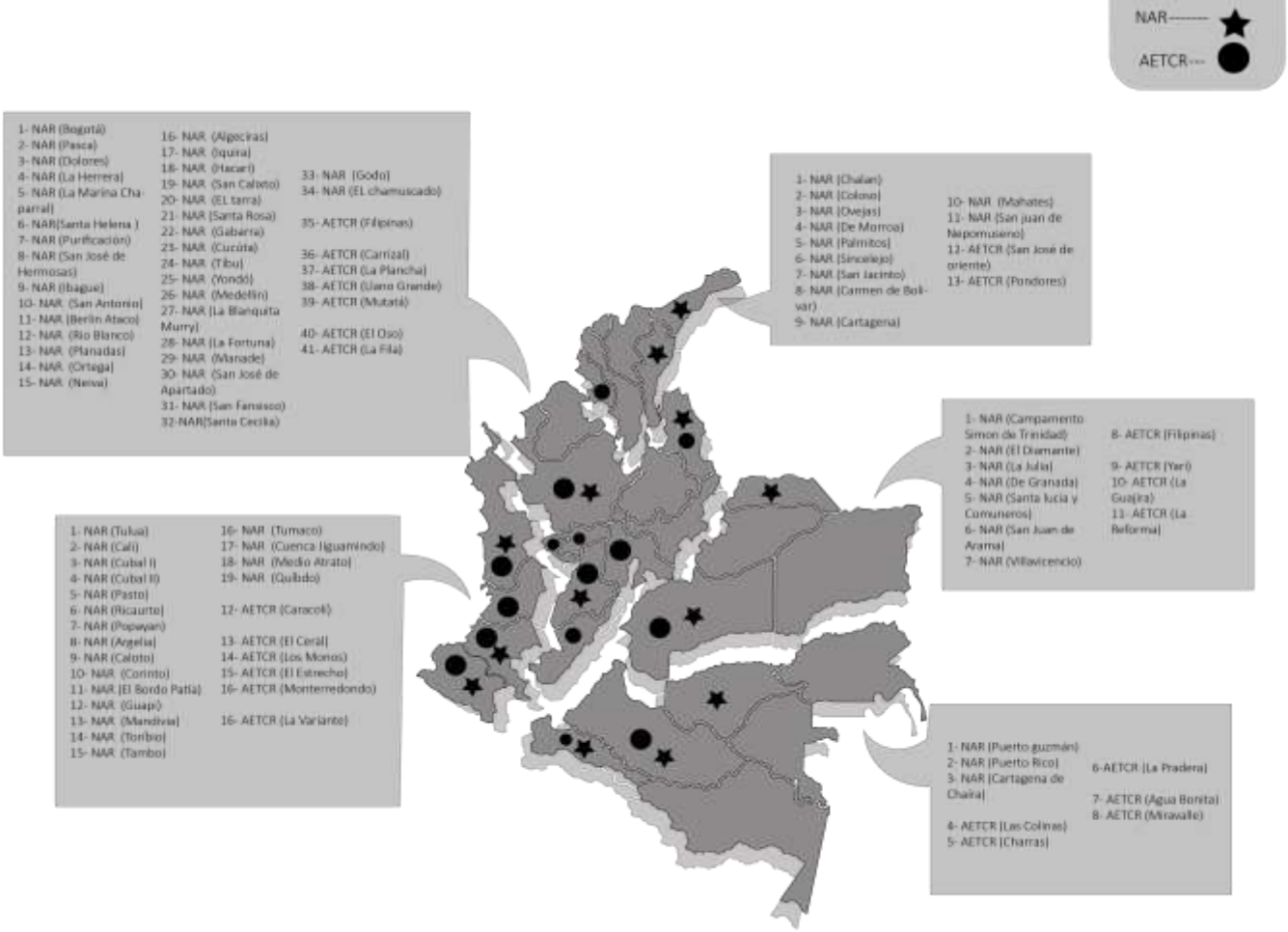


Figure 4: Distribution of AETCRs and NARs. Own elaboration.

Security conditions have been one of the most challenging aspects of the reincorporation process. From the signing of the peace agreement in 2016 until May 2021, 268 ex-combatants and 1,090 social leaders had been assassinated (IDEPAZ, 2021). Most of the AETCRs are surrounded by paramilitary dissident groups or the so-called BACRIM⁷². Ten of the AETCRs are in high security risk areas, four are in middle security risk areas and 12 are the

⁷² According to La Defensoría del Pueblo de Colombia (2017), there are 11 ETCRs with the presence of the ELN guerrilla group. (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*), 11 with the presence of GAO (Organized Armed Groups), 18 with the presence of AGC (*Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia*) and seven with the presence of dissidence of the FARC-EP. Twenty of the territorial spaces have illegal mining and eight with illicit crops.

ones least at risk from security problems⁷³ (Defensoría del Pueblo de Colombia, 2017). After the peace agreement, dissident and deserter groups from the FARC-EP and former paramilitary groups took control of the territories in which the FARC-EP operated. The appearance of new criminal groups led to the re-accommodation of territorial power, which has resulted in increased confrontation between armed groups, and thus increased victimisation (Fajardo-Heyward, 2018).

To date, 28 groups are part of the FARC-EP dissidences (Ávila, 2020b). Between 500 and 1,000⁷⁴, ex-combatants of the FARC-EP have joined different rebel groups in Colombia. Most of the dissidents are from the *Guerrillas Unidas de Sur* (Southern United Guerrillas) or *Frente Oliver Sinisterra* (Front Oliver Sinisterra) with around 450 to 500 dissidents, and front 7, led by Miguel Botache Santillána, with 400 to 450 dissidents (FIP, 2018). According to the *Fundación Paz y Reconciliación* (2018), these dissident and deserter⁷⁵ groups show criminal intentions without any political ideology. There are three groups that conform the dissidence of FARC-EP: the structure of Gentil Duarte and Iván Mordisco who call themselves the real FARC-EP, the Second Marquetalia, which is led by Iván Márquez and Jesus Santrich and the disperse structures, which are disarticulated and work with criminal organisations⁷⁶ (Ávila, 2020b).

The security conditions, the emergence of new armed groups and the legal uncertainty of the permanence of the AETCRs have destabilised the economic, political and social programmes of FARC-EP ex-members, and therefore their collective reincorporation.

The following section describes the characteristics of the reincorporation policy launched in 2018 as an agreement between the government and FARC-EP ex-members. This policy attempts to fulfil the institutional compromises in terms of reincorporation as part of the peace agreement for the following eight years.

⁷³ The division of the ETCRs into these levels of security are linked with 40 criteria established by the Colombian government, among them are risk, demography, geography and access, among others.

⁷⁴ For Semana (2018), there is a total 1,463 dissidents from the FARC-EP plus the militias. However, the same source states that external research mentions 4,000 dissidents.

⁷⁵ Dissidents are the ones who were not part of the peace agreement and the deserters were the ones who decided to leave the ZVTN, now called ETCRs, where the process of reincorporation is taking place.

⁷⁶ Considering the big number of dissidents and deserters of armed groups, the Colombian government created Decree 965 of 2020 to establish measures for individual submission to justice of members of organised armed groups (GAO) and organised criminal groups (GDO) and economic incentives to return to legality (Presidencia de la República, 2020).

1.5. National Policy for the Social and Economic Reincorporation of Former Members of the FARC-EP

On June 22, 2018, the government and the FARC-EP ex-members approved the new national policy for social and economic reincorporation, which were established in the CONPES 3931 of 2018. This policy seeks to guarantee the integral reincorporation of ex-combatants and their families to civilian life according to their interests and needs by considering the decades of ARN experience in implementing reintegration processes (CONPES, 2018).

One of the differing characteristics of the new reincorporation policy is the collective perspective, which implies the grouping of the FARC-EP ex-members in different territories of Colombia, the development of collective income generation projects and a robust community approach (Presidencia de la República, 2018). The reincorporation policy has four main objectives: strengthening the articulation between entities who work on the reincorporation of FARC-EP ex-combatants; promoting spaces for reconciliation within communities; facilitating access to economic opportunities for ex-combatants and their families; and guaranteeing that FARC-EP ex-members have access to education, health services and social security (Redacción Paz, 2018). These objectives emphasise a collective reincorporation and participatory approach between the government and the FARC-EP ex-members, with considerable emphasis on a territorial, gender, rights and ethnic approach, as well as highlighting vast compromise with regard to reparation and reconciliation for the victims (Presidencia de la República, 2018).

According to the state in point 3.2 of the peace agreement:

The reincorporation process shall be a comprehensive, sustainable process of an exceptional and transitory nature which takes into account the interests of the community of the FARC-EP, its members and their families, aimed at strengthening the social fabric across the country's territories as well as coexistence and reconciliation among the inhabitants; furthermore, it is aimed at developing and deploying socially productive activities and local democracy. The reincorporation of the FARC-EP is based on the recognition of individual freedoms and free exercise of the individual rights of

all those who are currently members of the FARC-EP and in the process of reincorporation (Presidencia de la República, 2016, p.68-69)

The reincorporation policy is based on the human development approach stated by Amartya Sen, who points out the capabilities and the different functionalities that people can exert individually or collectively in the strengthening of their social and economic conditions⁷⁷ (CONPES, 2018).

The capability approach is the theoretical framework of human development, which determines freedom as a core element of development. It goes beyond the idea that by increasing gross national product, industrialisation, technology, modernisation or personal income, human welfare will be achieved. It considers people to be at the centre of development and economic values as a means to expand the freedoms enjoyed by members of society (Sen, 2001). In essence, human development is all about freedom; freedom to recognise the full potential of every human life and freedom to pursue and enjoy the free choices of individuals. Hence, human development is the development of people by building their human capabilities (UNDP, 2016).

Human capabilities involve people's individual initiatives to have social functions when they take part in the life of communities and when they have an active role in social and economic arrangements (Sen, 2001). This process implies public reasoning, which opens the door to scrutiny and involves all people in society through their active role in the development of freedom (Frediani, 2010).

In line with this, the reincorporation process aims to promote the capabilities of FARC-EP ex-members by enhancing their sense of belonging in society. This process entails a notion of collectivity that goes beyond the grouping of individuals or the creation of a political party. It includes a collective identity and the creation of cohesive groups that share common experiences around symbols, causes, values, objectives and interests (CONPES, 2018).

In this regard, collective economic projects help FARC-EP ex-members to maintain their cohesiveness in times of reincorporation. As Segura & Stein (2018, p.22) mention: "FARC leadership had hoped that organizing productive projects in the areas where their soldiers

⁷⁷ This process seeks to provide tools to ex-combatants in favour of inclusion and interaction between communities and institutional actors, which in the near future would facilitate the development and integration into civilian life of FARC-EP ex-members.

were concentrated as part of the DDR process would allow them to maintain affiliations and guarantee the continuation of the organization, now as a political force”.

As part of the adaptation of the new policy of reincorporation, the Colombian government created the National Council for Reincorporation (*Consejo Nacional de Reincorporación* - CNR), which is in charge of designing together with members of the government, the reincorporation policy. This process suggests a participatory approach that brings together members of the government, representatives of the ex-FARC, victims and military forces. Additionally, the government created the Territorial Reincorporation Council (*Consejos Territoriales para la Reincorporación* - CTR) with the purpose of bringing together public and private actors at national and territorial level, and to develop activities to benefit peace and reconciliation processes based on long-term actions.

To reach these goals, the National System of Reincorporation (*Sistema Nacional de Reincorporación* - SNR) was created as part of the reincorporation process to strengthen the planning and articulation involved in the reincorporation of ex-combatants and their families. Additionally, the SNR delegated the Commission for Monitoring, Promoting and Verifying the Implementation of the Final Peace Agreement (*La Comisión de Seguimiento, Impulso y Verificación a la Implementación del Acuerdo De Paz* - CSIVI)⁷⁸ as the entity that would follow-up and assert the agreed upon policy in the peace accord (See Figure 5) (Presidencia de la República, 2018).

⁷⁸ The main objective of the CSIVI is to resolve differences; follow up on the components of the agreement and verify compliance; promote and follow up on the legislative implementation of the agreement; follow up on implementation reports; and receive input from the bodies in charge of implementation (Presidencia de la República, 2016).

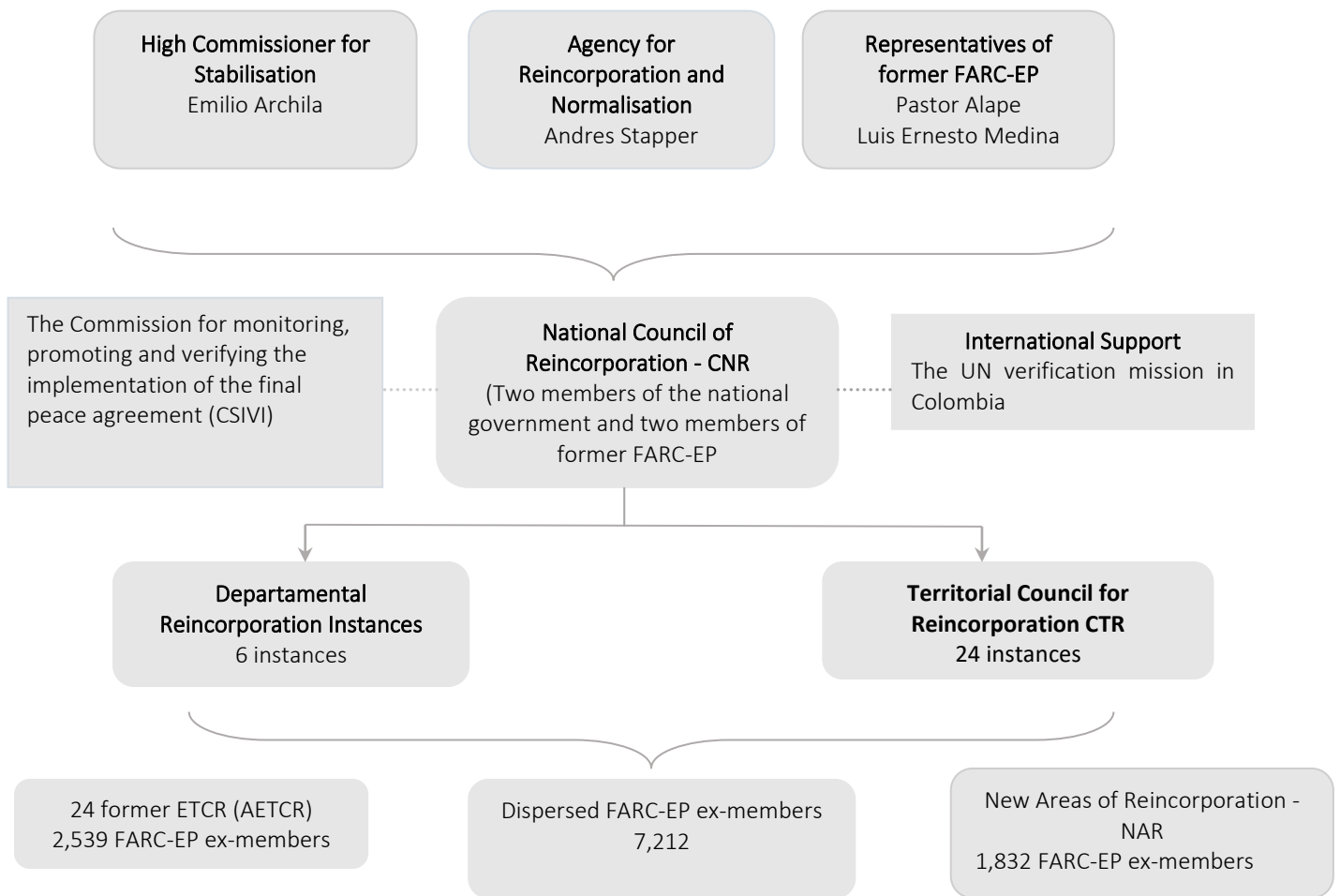


Figure 5: Decision-making structure in reincorporation. Own elaboration.

The territorial approach is the core aspect in the implementation of the reincorporation policy. It recognises the economic, social and cultural particularities of the territories, as well as acknowledges their needs and capacities (CONPES, 2018). This approach values the active participation of victims and ex-combatants in the conflict transformation, representing a more inclusive policy that integrates not only FARC-EP ex-members but also their families, surrounding communities and victims (Acosta-Navas & Reyes, 2018). In doing so, the policy emphasises the differing needs of women and men and their inclusive rights and ethnic approaches during the reincorporation process (Presidencia de la República, 2018).

With regard to the reparation of victims, the reincorporation policy seeks to strengthen the active participation of ex-combatants and the surrounding communities in

peacebuilding, reconciliation, community development and rights demand⁷⁹. This process aims to promote autonomous citizenship in which the strengthening of social networks ease coping capacities that benefit the reincorporation process (CONPES, 2018). Additionally, the structure, cohesion and collective identity of the former FARC-EP can be the starting point to develop a perspective of reincorporation, attempting to minimise the typical dispersion and atomisation of ex-combatants in DDR processes (ICG, 2014).

Under this perspective, the implementation of a reincorporation process with this perspective gives rise to many challenges, especially in a context where the conflict is still active. The emergence of new insurgent groups, the FARC-EP dissidents and the ELN's presence in some territories of Colombia make the reincorporation of ex-combatants challenging for both the government and the ex-combatants. However, as explained by Björkdahl & Kappler (2017), peace and war often co-exist. The term "conflict-affected" societies or "post-conflict" societies exemplify a period after a conflict with the permanence of violence in different forms and a conflict with other meanings.

Currently, the reincorporation process has passed through numerous changes since incumbent President Ivan Duque Márquez took office in 2018. The adaptation of the peace agreement within the discourse of "peace with legality" and the lack of institutional articulation, are affecting the applicability of the narratives established in the agreement (Martínez & Lefebvre, 2019; Rueda, 2020). Now, the implementation of the peace agreement is focused primarily on events but not on long-term actions, weakening the agreements in the process and, therefore, the sustainability of collective reincorporation (CSIVI-FARC, 2019a).

On top of that, the long-lasting conflict has produced great ruptures in the social fabric and the trust of the government from members of mainly rural communities, victims and FARC-EP ex-members. The lack of institutional supply and the lack of cohesion of entities in the territories affect the socio-economic guarantees for the population most affected by the conflict, presenting hurdles to the implementation of the peace agreement. Besides that, giving more benefits to FARC-EP ex-members in the reincorporation process may trigger

⁷⁹ As part of the reconciliation and reparation process, the FARC-EP ex-members have been working on infrastructure reconstruction, cleaning and decontamination of anti-personnel mines, participating in illegal crop substitution programmes and rural development projects. Additionally, they are contributing to the search, location, identification and recovery of remains of persons killed or missing in connection with the conflict, and supporting reforestation programmes and other environmental projects (Presidencia de la República, 2016, p.184).

other problems in the territories, such as greater stigmatisation, local co-existence problems and a misunderstanding of justice in peacebuilding (CONPES, 2018).

Having made clear the Colombian case study, the evolution of reintegration processes and the current reincorporation dimension, the next section describes the main theoretical and conceptual discussions around reintegration of FARC-EP ex-members, and the general approaches in peacebuilding and sociology that will support further my empirical analysis.

2. Key Concepts in Reintegration

The previous chapter provided an overview of the DDR standards and the evolution of this approach, mainly considering the trajectory of DDR in Colombia and the emergence of the collective reincorporation approach, part of the peace agreement held with the FARC-EP in 2016. This background allows me now to go deeper into the academic discourses around reincorporation processes.

In this chapter, I present the various studies that have emerged in parallel with the development of peacebuilding inquiries. Rather than provide a number of definitions or concepts around DDR, I want to engage with a discussion highly contested in the field of ex-combatants and reintegration, pointing out the academic debates and the current perspectives of reintegration in practice. Beyond analysing the political, security or international discourses that usually guide the reintegration approaches, I place the individual as the core of my analysis and main guide of my study.

The following literature review provides the starting point of the theoretical insights of this research and the guiding discourse of my empirical analysis. However, the concepts and theories explored below are not considered in my research as deductive categories that frame or restrict the exploration of my empirical data. Here, I attempt to show the critical discourses of reintegration as a guide for my analytical interpretation when the data is not able to cover the whole context of analysis or when I want to complement my findings (Wilson & Chaddha, 2009).

The present chapter is divided into five subsections that are interlinked in relation to the critical discourses of reintegration but are based on different theories and angles of analysis. First, I will discuss the perpetrator as an evil concept. Then, I will split the legacy of ex-combatants into two main categories: the (anti-)social capital and the social and ideological patterns of the armed groups. Subsequently, I will analyse the friction between communities and ex-combatants and the contribution of the surrounding communities in achieving reintegration.

2.1. Beyond the Embodiment of Evil

Social divisions are the consequences of civil wars and represent both the changes produced in the social, cultural and political dynamics and the transformation of beliefs,

norms, laws, structures and goals (Hazen, 2005). This divisions catalogue the victimizers as the out-group and the source of evil and the victimized as part of the in-group collective victims (Millar, 2012). This creates polarisations between different groups of society and social dichotomies, such as “victims and victimizers”, “subversive and civilians”, “displaced and demobilised” and “citizens and non-citizens”, which in turn increase rivalries and ruptures in the social ties among the members of society (Hazen, 2005; Smithey, 2009). In post-conflict, these dichotomies trigger social fragmentations between the combatants and non-combatants and high polarisation and stigmatisation of the rebels, creating a potential threat to fragile peace and a problem that needs to be resolved (Friðriksdóttir, 2018).

The simplistic categories of “victim” and “perpetrator” have a moral value in the field of peacebuilding. Victims are frequently associated with the words “pure” and “innocent”, and perpetrators with “evil” and “guilt” (Baines, 2009, p.177). This follows the idea that the victim is an actor with high moral standards, vulnerable and harmed by a vicious perpetrator who undermines the victim’s innocence and morality (Jankowitz, 2018). The broad sense of evil is based on the moral religious principles of good and bad, in which the guilty or perpetrator is a person with an internal desire or motivation to be evil (Calder, 2020).

Further literature has expanded the study of evil beyond nature, instinct or moral approaches by analysing the multiple social, political and cultural aspects that interplay directly in the causal patterns of evil behaviours. Bandura asserts that moral resistance is directly linked to the free exercise of agency. People’s agency “refrain from behaving inhumanely and the proactive power to behave humanely” (Bandura, 2002, p.101). The disengagement of morality produces the so-called intrinsic willingness of people to be evil, which interlinks directly with psychosocial perspectives related to cognitive, social and affective influences⁸⁰ (Bandura, 2002).

The “Banality of Evil” stated by Arendt shows the character of evil disenchantments comes from religious legacy (Burdon, 2015). The term “evil” is mediated by complacency and cliché and not just by the desire to become the “bad guy”. As such, the perpetrators act in a certain way just to benefit the simple motives of satisfying their superiors (Arendt, 1999).

⁸⁰ Bandura supported the disengagement of morality acting under seven main patterns: moral justification, euphemistic language, advantageous comparison, displacement and diffusion of responsibility, distortion of consequences and dehumanisation. These patterns minimise the dehumanisation of the actions and remove extensively victimizers’ disengagement of self-censure (Bandura, 2002).

Similarly, the experiments on obedience and behaviour developed by Milgram⁸¹ (1972) state that authoritative figures play an important role in the obedience to authority, which directly relates with the tendency to be evil. He argues that the perpetrator acts according to their duties as a subject, rather than from any particularly aggressive tendencies. Additionally, Asch (1951) argues that the vertical structures of obedience are complemented by horizontal influence pressures that in-group members have towards their peers.

There are macro-social, micro-social and socio-psychological aspects that play a part at different levels in the attitudes and the behaviours of individuals to become evil (Williams & Pfeiffer, 2017). The intersection between the personal (emotions and ideology), the social (obedience, peer pressure and coercion) and structural characteristics (patterns of social relations) where people interact defines their reasons and causes the “evil” to act in a dehumanised way (Williams, 2014). The level of judgement of others towards the perpetrator and the social and political environment in which the perpetrator interacts are also influencing factors on the evil condition (Williams & Pfeiffer, 2017).

Perpetrators can be vulnerable to changes in the customs and social norms of their societies, which are established in law and copied by society (Perlstadt, 2017). Therefore, the humanisation of the perpetrators may be possible by transforming the social world in which they live by creating new social dynamics that attempt to turn the behaviour of the “evil” person into a humanised actor (Reicher et al., 2014).

Different scholars focus specifically on combatants and their perpetrator role. The critical discourses of “Militarised Minds” (Maringira, 2015), “Disarming Ex-Combatants’ Minds” (Baez et al., 2019) or “Wartime Ties and the Social Logic of Crime” (Daly et al., 2017), just to name some⁸², show the perpetrator as a subject who cannot be judged at first glance. Together, these studies show the variety of factors that interlink with the reasons these people decided to act on the side of evil. A variety of socio-psychological, cultural, political, biological and neurocognitive perspectives interact with perpetrators before, during and after the war (Baez et al., 2019).

⁸¹ Despite the significant criticism of his research for the high levels of non-ethical considerations in the experiments and the emotional negative effects of the participants, the contributions of obedience to authority are until now an important contribution in the analysis of perpetrators (see ethical concerns of Milgram research in Perlstadt, 2017).

⁸² The evil condition has been extensively studied in the cases of the Nazi holocaust, Cambodian, Armenian and Rwandan genocide (See for example Kimura, 2003; Staub, 1989), but not exclusively in Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs).

Under this framework, the economic and social factors have a strong relationship with criminal behaviours. “Unemployment, low legal sector wages, and low levels of human capital can all increase the relative attractiveness of crime on this basis” (Daly et al., 2017, p.5). Poverty and the impotence to transform this condition may increase the tendency to be evil. “Where there is a combination of hunger and anger, the gun remains an alternative avenue for rebuilding a life in a highly unequal society” (Maringira, 2015, p.73).

Furthermore, peer ties can encourage people to play the role of evil in conflict situations (McDoom, 2014). These aspects are directly related to the recidivism of ex-combatants, as their relations with their peers in wartime may strengthen their criminal capacities, and therefore help them to build their sense of identity and belonging (Daly et al., 2017; Muggah & O’Donnell, 2015; Maringira, 2015). Social dynamics in conflict times maintain the role of evil. Williams & Pfeiffer (2017) uses the metaphor of *The Tiger Zone* stated from a Khmer Rouge cadre in Cambodia. They argue that people have to behave like a tiger to be part of the conflict by internalising norms and values when they enter the conflict zones.

On top of that, the role of the perpetrator relates to status and recognition in their surrounding communities (Maringira, 2015). Carrying a weapon makes them adopt a particular role inside their communities, to represent power and status. Likewise, this becomes a way to recover from the social exclusion and marginalisation suffered by living below the poverty line (Carranza-Franco, 2019; Kaplan & Nussio, 2016; Robins & Bhandari, 2016; McMullin, 2013a; Jennings, 2008).

The challenge now is going beyond the dichotomy of victim-perpetrator to achieve a new category of analysis (see for example studies of Hourmat, 2016; Jankowitz, 2018). This analysis entails the acknowledgement of the everyday relationship of victim-perpetrator before, during and after the conflict, which cannot be minimised into the simple isolation of victim and perpetrator (Firchow, 2018). This approach enables an understanding of peace by carrying out analysis based on commonalities rather than differences, which usually focus on the role victims and perpetrators occupied during the armed conflict and post-conflict (Muggah, 2005). One of the challenges for peacebuilding is finding proper “bridges” between ex-combatants, victims and community, and boosting those relations to achieve peace sustainable environments (Pouligny, 2005).

On top of that, the labels in peacebuilding are not just represented in the distinction between the actors who interplay during conflict times, but in the dichotomy of temporalities

in which the events take place. Peace studies tend to isolate peace from conflict, highlighting a temporary fragmentation and disruption between the past and the present, especially when referring to the transition of people from conflict times to peace times. By contrast, in the following, I analyse the importance of ex-combatants' past as a way to nurture their present in post-conflict environments.

2.2. Keeping the Past to Nurture the Present in Reintegration

The reintegration of ex-combatants in a new social network away from the one shaped during conflict is not easy to achieve. For the ex-combatants, being part of another social network de-legitimises the power they acquired during the conflict, going against the idea that the "war family" was stronger than other networks (Leff, 2016).

The idea that ex-combatants should "restart a new life" (United Nations, 2006) by "breaking with the past" (Rodríguez López et al., 2015) or by changing ex-combatants' "mentality from war to civilian life" (Denissen, 2010) has provoked many discussions in literature. Different perspectives argue that connecting ex-combatants' past with their present may deliver benefits in their process of reintegration. These perspectives are related to the return of ex-combatants to their places of origin, their need to keep their ideology and emotional legacy in times of reintegration, and the maintenance of their group structure as a tool to keep alive their social capital and their identity. In the following, I discuss each of these angles in detail.

Kaplan & Nussio (2015) found that the participation of ex-combatants increases when they return to their hometown and renew contact with extended families and social networks. This increases their motivation to be away from the armed groups, due to their high desire to see and support their family, and their interest to have their own life away from former military dynamics (Carranza-Franco, 2016; Leeuwen, 2018). However, settling down in a place different from their former hometown might increase the level of distrust towards ex-combatants, minimising their active participation and visibility in society and increase their levels of stigmatisation (McFee, 2016; McMullin, 2013a). This situation can also hinder the modification of stereotypes acquired in times of conflict, as well as increasing security risks (McMullin, 2013a).

However, returning to their hometown is not always the best option for ex-combatants. It varies depending on the role they exercised in their communities before and

during the conflict and the post-conflict security conditions of their hometowns (Torjesen, 2013). For instance, in ongoing conflicts, most ex-combatants prefer to move away from their places of origin to eschew possible reprisals (De Vries & Wiegink, 2011). In some cases, combatants never left their places of origin while exercising their role as militias. They maintained a close relationship with the communities and, in some cases, with their families (Torjesen, 2013).

By separating the places where ex-combatants acted in the past and the current places in which they are settled shows a dichotomy of realities that underestimate the physical presence combatants played during conflict times. This perspective expects former combatants to be considered as people “without a history” (McMullin, 2013a). The disregard of their history leads to thinking that the “unmaking” of combatant identities and their “remake” as civilians is the ultimate goal of reintegration (Munive & Jakobsen, 2012).

Reintegration should use the knowledge acquired by ex-combatants during wartime rather than focusing on how to dissolve the armed organisation or fraction (De Vries & Wiegink, 2011). For instance, Sprenkels (2014) argues the importance of substituting the word “reintegration” for “reconversion”. Reconversion is “the process by which former insurgent groups seek a collective and individual adjustment to the emerging peace circumstances by using different types of capital acquired over the years (political, military, socio-economic) to new ways with the purpose of harnessing socio-political accumulation” (Sprenkels, 2014, p.8).

Under this framework, the biggest challenge of reintegration is to know how to use the war-based relations during peace times and the veteran ideologies as an instrument to reinforce the relations among communities and ex-combatants (Friðriksdóttir, 2018; Munive & Jakobsen, 2012). The recognition of ex-combatants’ past allows them to exercise their social activism in the territories by playing an active role in the transformation of surroundings (Friðriksdóttir, 2018). For instance, Bowd & Özerdem (2013) mention that by maintaining their ideologies, ex-combatants are part of power decisions and play an active role in public dynamics without being marginalised⁸³. The acknowledgement of ex-combatants’ political ideology enables them to create a political party while they reintegrate,

⁸³ The success of reintegration depends on how much the armed groups are considered active actors in ideological and political interests, beyond labelling them as just the protagonists of crimes (Palou & Mendez, 2010).

which not only contributes to their reintegration process but also shapes post-war politics and livelihoods (Wiegink & Sprenkels, 2020).

Contrary to these perspectives, Ugarriza & Craig (2013) find that ideology enhances the motivation to fight and exert a role in armed groups, as it enhances the ex-combatants' interest to keep combating based on a specific purpose. However, the war-based ideology might change in accordance to the social incentives, ideological agency and ruptures of path-dependencies that emerge in the aftermath of the conflict (Leader Maynard, 2019). It means that the post-conflict ideologies of former armed groups vary according to the level of recognition given to these ideologies by the state and society and the freedom of agency that former combatants have to rethink the meaning of their ideology in post-conflict times. (Leader Maynard, 2019).

So far, some articles emphasise the importance of valuing the agency of ex-combatants in decision-making and their capacity to plan their life after demobilisation based on their own expectations (See for example McEvoy & Shirlow, 2009; Munive & Jakobsen, 2012). This capacity converts ex-combatants into active agents and even leaders in conflict transformation. Examples provided in Burundi and Colombia explain that ex-combatants' legacy can trigger positive effects in social activism and leadership in society (Friðriksdóttir, 2018; Kaplan & Nussio, 2016).

On the other hand, breaking the ties between combatants and their factions is not associated with a more successful reintegration or the better access to a productive, social or political life (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007). The good experiences that ex-combatants' had while they were part of the war structures may be relatively constructive for their socio-economic recovery, and essential in post-conflict environments (De Vries & Wiegink, 2011; CIDDR, 2009; Daly et al., 2017). The "contact among ex-combatants does not automatically hamper reintegration efforts if they mutually reinforce each other to stay on the civilian path" (Leeuwen 2018, p.39). Therefore, the good use of horizontal contact during war times can influence the permanence of ex-combatants in legality (Daly et al., 2017).

For instance, Themnér (2011) found that ex-fighters and their ex-commanders nurture a strong social relationship during conflict times that put them in a special social group labelled "ex-combatants' community". This community shares similar experiences from

conflict times, as well as common meanings of peace, which are stronger during the post-conflict social interaction than during conflict times⁸⁴.

On top of that, maintaining strong social ties among ex-combatants during post-conflict periods contributes to the process of reintegration (De Vries & Wiegink, 2011; Sprenkels, 2018; Wiegink, 2015; Nussio, 2012). The high levels of stigmatisation and the lack of knowledge to access to jobs and interact with the structures of society make it more difficult for ex-combatants to access social and economic opportunities. Being together benefits their access to basic needs, and a feeling of protection when surrounded by security risks (De Vries & Wiegink, 2011; McFee, 2016). When conflict is still occurring, sticking together produces a feeling of security among ex-combatants (De Vries & Wiegink, 2011; Kaplan & Nussio, 2016), and demonstrates the strong sense of protection that group identity produces (Lyons, 2005). The same happens with the social, economic and political dimension, which is easier to develop when ex-combatants do not break out of the command (Buxton, 2008; Sally, 2018; De Vries & Wiegink, 2011).

In sum, the maintenance of strong social relationships during reintegration processes can provide ex-combatants with greater social protection, economic opportunities, a reconstruction of their identity and a sense of belonging, which strengthen their social competences, benefiting their participation in social spheres and decreasing recidivism levels (Kaplan and Nussio, 2015, p. 2016). However, the social, political and economic conditions of the communities to which ex-combatants return and their willingness to reintegrate influence the use they make of their social capital in times of peace, which can become a bridge to peacebuilding or a tool to destroy it.

2.3. The Dilemmas of (Anti-) Social Capital in Reintegration

One can say that social capital contributes to both the causes of violent conflicts and the restoration of peace (Bowd, 2008). Some studies show that the maintenance of loyalty and ideological legacy between former non-state armed actors after a conflict may increase violence, recidivism and produce a kind of anti-social capital (Cheng 2018; Daly et al. 2017; Nussio & Oppenheim, 2014). Other studies demonstrate the importance of social capital in

⁸⁴ Social interactions are reinforced when particular groups interact with other groups with different characteristics (Themnér, 2011).

the transition of ex-combatants to reintegration as a catalyst to promote peace (Colletta & Cullen, 2000; Kilroy & Basini, 2018; Leff, 2016)

The term “anti-social capital” is used to describe the negative effects that the virtues of social capital may deliver to those who have been trained to kill (Cheng, 2018, p.55). For Nussio & Oppenheim (2014) anti-social capital is defined as “ingroup bonding used to foster trust and cohesion within an illicit organization and distance toward outgroups”. This capacity shows the extreme cohesion the ex-armed groups have and their ability to replicate the negative effects of social capital many years after the group has disappeared (Nussio & Oppenheim, 2014). The ones who acquire anti-social capital or “conflict capital” tend to be more attracted towards their former practices of leadership, to take control over their territories and to manage financial resources (Cheng, 2018). This triggers, in consequence, organisational legacies of war (Daly, 2012) that produce weaker relationships with political institutions and civil society (Nussio & Oppenheim, 2014, p.999).

Social capital might also influence the willingness of people to enrol in criminal activities (Daly, 2012) as the skills they gained in fighting and the social bonds built during conflict times tempt the ex-combatants to enrol to criminal activities (Peña & Dorussen, 2021). A strong social network eases the access to information and social influence and creates behavioural manipulation, which facilitates participation in collective violence⁸⁵ (McDoom, 2014).

During post-conflict times, the proximity combatants had with ordinary people while they were in arms might minimise their anti-social capital when they detach from the group (Nussio & Oppenheim, 2014). However, anti-social capital does not last forever, but can disappear as people take advantage of new opportunities and relationships in the aftermath of conflict, turning their experiences of war into positive peacebuilding effects (Daly, 2016). For instance, the loyalty of past times among ex-combatants has a positive effect when their leaders have a willingness to contribute to peace negotiations (Daly, 2016), as “going through highly stressful times together and risking life in the pursuit of the same goals (ideological or material) creates a particular connection between combatants” (De Vries & Wiegink, 2011, p.42). Mac Ginty (2010) points out that military experience substitutes the conventional social ties people have established in family, employment, and community. As such, the structures

⁸⁵ McDoom illustrates that one of the main reasons for Hutu men to mobilise and commit intimate acts of violence were the particular interpersonal networks in which individuals were embedded (McDoom, 2014, p.866).

of the groups become the point of reference for redefining ex-combatants' identity, turning into a way to boost self-esteem by comparing themselves with other groups (Jones & Christie, 2016).

The group attachment, the social networks and the high level of in-group trust among ex-combatants can ease their reintegration (Kilroy & Basini, 2018). The positive effects of social capital obtained during the conflict may help to transform the vertical power that emerged during wartimes into horizontal dynamics that contribute to the creation of environments suitable for peacebuilding (Colletta & Cullen, 2000; Leff, 2016). By using the social capital, ex-combatants enforce horizontal relations that strengthen social cohesion, values, norms and relations among fighters in the aftermath of conflict (Colletta & Cullen, 2000; Leff, 2016; Kilroy & Basini, 2018, p.349).

Moreover, the social capital gained by ex-combatants helps to rebuild the social structure framed during the conflict by transforming the norms and beliefs that were imposed during wartime, and therefore benefiting the social, economic and political structures affected during the conflict (Hazen, 2005). Accordingly, social capital does not only benefit the social reintegration of ex-combatants but also the community as a whole, as the use of social capital satisfies the social needs of people by improving their access to economic structures through the generation of social networks, produced by the sympathy and acceptance of members of society (Putnam, 2000). Therefore, social capital becomes the bridge between ex-combatants, social reintegration and reconciliation (Bowd, 2008, p. i).

Gaining social capital is likely to foster civic responsibility in the reintegration of ex-combatants, and therefore in the development of social cohesion and citizen values (Özerdem, 2012). In the following, I discuss the meaning of citizenship in the reintegration process and the frictions and responsibilities of the state and the ex-combatants at assuring the citizen status in reintegration.

2.4. Citizens by Design?

It is not clear when ex-combatants acquire their right to be citizens (Denissen, 2010). Apparently, their laying down of weapons might show the initial stage of their transit towards civilian life. At this stage, ex-combatants show their willingness to articulate their ideological perspectives with the political standards mandated by the state but without renouncing their

rights of freedom or social order. They only designate the authorities of the state as the agents in charge to protect their rights (Carranza-Franco, 2019; United Nations, 2006).

In counterpart, the state guarantees the socio-economic conditions and the active role of ex-combatants in scenarios in which they can exercise their citizenship (Carranza-Franco, 2019). However, the detachment of ex-combatants from their armed structure brings different tensions and friction at defining the citizenship concept, as well as the varying responsibilities of all parties of the conflict (Söderström, 2019). This process implies the negotiation of citizenship and freedom of mostly all marginalised people in transition to peace (Carranza-Franco, 2019).

This process of negotiation requires seeing ex-combatants as active actors in society (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013; Wiegink & Sprenkels, 2020) and with their freedom of agency of being independent individuals with the right to make their own decisions away from military structures (Rodríguez López et al., 2015). Additionally, that requires the reduction of stigmatisation towards this group (Rodríguez López et al., 2015). “If society rejects them [the ex-combatants] no matter what they do, the incentive to transition into a law-abiding citizen role is correspondingly reduced” (Uggen et al., 2013, p.281).

Social relations are the initial phase of citizen making. Throughout this process, the “agency, social responsibility and mutual recognition” interrelate when ex-combatants encounter other actors (Rodríguez López et al., 2015, p.185). In this setting, citizenship is about being recognised as an “ordinary person” who is actively part of the social and political dynamics of a society (Rodríguez López et al., 2015). For ex-combatants to acquire the label of “real citizen” requires going beyond the political discourses and dominant structures embedded in the social representations framed by the state (McFee, 2016). This implies a bottom-up understanding of the citizen concept beyond a rhetoric and discourse analysis (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013).

However, the discourses on reintegration still ignore the right of ex-combatants to defend a political body and to become active in the social dynamics of their country by making use of their identity as political veterans (Söderström, 2019; Wiegink & Sprenkels, 2020). This is due to two reasons: the limitations of the politics of reintegration; and the “ex-combatants’ risk being open about their identity, due to stigmas, security reasons social exclusion and lack of opportunities” (Söderström, 2019, p.173). When they see these

conditions and few places to act as a “real citizen”, they have no choice but to fit into the doctrine of liberalism exerted in reintegration process (Carranza-Franco, 2016).

DDR approaches enforce this perspective. Governments and international organisations seek to provide a set package to ex-combatants to become “productive citizens” providing “citizenship training” that is complemented with social and political resources, legal documentation and training (United Nations, 2006). This process implies a social subject that must be aligned with the political norms incorporated in the peace agreement, where the title of citizen is only granted when ex-combatants recognise the harm caused during the conflict, specially to victims (McFee, 2016).

The political standards shape people’s ideology and a definition of citizenship based on the state purposes (Carranza-Franco, 2016; Özerdem, 2009). The same happens when the state defines the non-citizen condition. This is framed under the regulations and the dominant discourses of the modern state, primarily based on national security and the protection of communities (McMullin, 2013a).

Thus, the state shows how people must interact with others in order to achieve citizenship status. The supposed “active role” of citizens is shaped by state-imposed definitions of lobbying, protesting, applying for benefits, etc. If people exceed these regulations, they are considered as non-citizens, as their “active role” goes beyond the parameters imposed by the state (McMullin, 2013a). Considering the state as the only entity able to guarantee the citizen status of ex-combatants devalues the role of the homecoming experience, the relationship of ex-combatants’ with politics and society, and with other veterans (Uggen & Manza, 2004; Söderström, 2019).

Against this backdrop, it seems that “[r]eintegration programmes aim to shape citizens, by design” (Oppenheim & Söderström, 2018, p.144). The programmes established by the government define the different aspects that comprise a “good citizen”. The state shows that the reintegration programmes are the best way to rebuild the relationship between citizens and the state (Oppenheim & Söderström, 2018), which relates to gaining the necessary life skills to attach easily to the society (Özerdem, 2012).

The state overlooks the idea that in military structures people can exercise their civilian status in different spaces and times alongside their military experience (Carranza-Franco, 2019). Such is the case of militias or collaborators of armed groups, who continue to

fulfil their role as citizens but at the same time contributing to the maintenance of the non-stated armed groups.

A citizen can be a soldier insofar as he or she defends the sovereignty of the state, but cannot be a citizen when he or she acts against the principles that guide the state. Under this condition, his or her title of citizen is banned by the state but not his or her right to be a civilian (Carranza-Franco, 2019). In this regard, civilian status relates to non-military experience, while citizenship is linked to a person's political agency in relation to the state (Carranza-Franco, 2019 p.7).

This process shows dominant modes of representation shaped by the production of post-conflict subjectivities that frame only one meaning of citizen (McFee, 2016). On this basis, the state forgets the role of veterans' political ideology in defining their citizen condition. "By excluding the ex-combatants from the category of veterans, but including them in that of civilians, the DDR literature overlooks the political conditions needed for their reintegration, namely, the creation of democratic institutions that are both accessible and relatable" (Carranza-Franco, 2016, p.55).

To guarantee the citizen condition for ex-combatants, the government must transform the dominant discourses and practices that caused the maintenance of the conflict (McFee, 2016). Earning citizenship implies going beyond the parameters of the state and contributing to transformation (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013) by reframing the former meaning of legal order (United Nations, 2006). In this light, ex-combatants cannot be portrayed "as inherently and naturally threatening to post-conflict peace", but rather as social actors that can contribute to the transition from war to peace while recovering the trust, social relations and the memory of a country (McMullin, 2013b, p.386).

In other words, ex-combatants obtain their status as citizens through the achievement of two features: the modification of the socio-political root causes of the conflict, such as the reduction of poverty, corruption and the improvement of education; as well as their active role in supporting this transformation (McFee, 2016). Lastly, the peace process should acknowledge the everyday social representation and practices embedded in the institutional order and the ones exerted by people, as both define the "good citizen" (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013, p.366).

Giving an active voice to ex-combatants in their building of citizenship enhances their participation and decision-making at the institutional level, in the political structure and with

the community (Özerdem, 2012). By playing an active role in society, ex-combatants enhance their social cohesion and civil responsibility, which directly contribute to the development of citizen values (Özerdem, 2012). This process produces empathic post-conflict subjects with a high sense of responsibility towards themselves and in their relationships with others (Mcfee, 2016).

In sum, citizenship in reintegration implies a recognition of the veteran ideologies in their process of reintegration, their acceptance by the society and the provision of socio-economic and political guarantees from the state. By doing so, ex-combatants may play an active participation in the transformation of social structures that perpetuated during the conflict, as well as new definitions and practices around citizenship conditions through the experiences gained in their everyday bottom-up practices with their surrounding communities.

In the following, I will explain the frictions and contributions of communities in reintegration, considering the positive and negative effects of giving additional socio-economic support to the ex-combatants.

2.5. Frictions and Contributions from the Surroundings

At first glance, many fears appear in the communities at being close to ex-combatants. They are considered the focus of insurgency and the potential target of violent attacks (Prieto, 2012). Weinstein & Humphreys (2004, p.39) mention that ex-combatants are a source of insecurity as they have “the military know-how, experience, the tools and often the will to turn again to violent means of achieving change”. This situation can cause fear among the community and rejection towards ex-combatants, which increases when communities see the additional benefits ex-combatants receive during their process of reintegration (Kaplan & Nussio, 2015; McMullin, 2013b).

These benefits are perceived as a reward for the perpetrators of the violence more than an investment of peace and security (Gear, 2002; Kaplan & Nussio, 2016; Nussio et al., 2015; Willems & Leeuwen, 2015). By receiving long-term benefits, ex-combatants are exposed to more stigmas, jealousies, frustration and resistance from the side of victims (Kaplan & Nussio, 2016; Willems & Leeuwen, 2015). These benefits extend the threat they

have in terms of security, exacerbating community resentment towards them (McMullin, 2013b).

The unbalance of benefits in times of post-conflict increases polarisation, and in some cases re-enforces the traditional forms of power exercised during wartime, which in turn tends to justify and perpetuate the impunity (Lemasle, 2009). It shows an apparent idea that ex-combatants “deserve” more attention than the other actors who were part of the conflict (Jennings, 2008).

However, the fact that ex-combatants return “empty-handed” to their hometown can deliver other problems, as acceptance increases when they actively contribute to their surroundings while they are part of the reintegration programme (Knight & Özerdem, 2004). It seems that ex-combatants are more accepted when they are part of reintegration programmes, compared with those who decide to do their process of reintegration by themselves (Pugel, 2007).

Willibald (2006) found that the utility of cash rewards in reintegration processes has to be sensitive to factors such as the use of cash, the location of payment, eligibility criteria and targeting. These benefits should be based more on long-term development approaches than on assistentialist perspectives (Carranza-Franco, 2016). It means that programmes must align with other development projects rather than creating a specific infrastructure just for the community of ex-combatants (Jennings, 2008; Leff, 2008).

Moving from being ex-combatants to being citizens leads them to “play a double role” in society (McFee, 2016). On the one hand, they have to keep the “label” of ex-combatants to receive the benefits from the government, but on the other hand, they have to hide their past when they interact with communities to avoid stigmatisation and to prevent them from having security problems (Carranza-Franco, 2016; Leff, 2016). This “double role” makes their social inclusion more difficult and reinforces their isolation and the stigmatisation that the governmental programmes are seeking to minimise (Leff, 2008).

In the phase of social reintegration, the lack of trust and confidence between ex-combatants and the receiving communities affects the success of the programmes, even more so when the community rejects them and creates patterns of discrimination and stigmatisation. These aspects affect the inclusion of ex-combatants in activities from which they could improve their socio-economic conditions (Bowd & Özerdem, 2013). Peña and Dorussen (2021) found that the less marginalisation of ex-combatants within communities,

the less dependence they have on their former ties and the less likely they are to resort to crime.

Since 2016, the United Nations includes the sensitisation of communities as part of reintegration process to contribute to a culture of reconciliation and to reduce the levels of stigmatisation and prejudice (Willems & Leeuwen, 2015). This process involves an individual healing of ex-combatants and receiving communities and a broader processes of identity transformation, justice and communal reconciliation (CIDDR, 2009). As such, reintegration goes beyond the acceptance of ex-combatants in the communities, but also their active participation in these communities by taking part of process of reconciliation, reparation and truth telling (Kaplan & Nussio, 2015; Sriram & Herman, 2009). In this regard, ex-combatants may become an active part in the peace process while contributing to the transformation of conflict (Donati, 2009; Daly, 2018).

By considering this, the process of reintegration must move away from the idea that receiving communities are monolithic units without diversity (Rapport & Amit, 2002). Each reintegration process has different types of obstacles and it should include an analysis of the social spheres into which ex-combatants return (De Vries & Wiegink, 2011). Therefore, an analysis of receiving communities has to involve their perceptions toward the ex-combatants (Bowd & Özerdem, 2013), the historical and political dynamics of the conflict, the former relations communities have with the ex-combatants and the current conditions in which reintegration takes place (McMullin, 2013a).

Instead of seeing communities just as an accessory to achieve the reduction of armed groups, and the levels of violence, they should be seen as the centre of social reintegration intervention (Derks et al., 2011). For instance, the former reintegration process in Colombia sought to develop community activities to connect ex-combatants with receiving communities through workshops, training, small-scale projects and other activities. Many of these initiatives were led by civil society groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and grassroots organisations (Presidencia de la República, 2018).

Under this framework, community reintegration should contribute to a more positive experience for both ex-combatants who have been largely stigmatised and for communities who have complained about an exaggerated focus on demobilised people (Nussio, 2012a),

which to a large extent facilitate processes of reconciliation, reconstruction and community development (Caramés Boada & Sanz Pascual, 2009)

In view of that, community reintegration or community based-DDR⁸⁶ is a direct sub-category of social reintegration (Rhin, 2019). This process requires a bottom-up empowerment and inclusiveness as a requirement in the success of reintegration (Bowd & Özerdem, 2013). Kilroy (2014) found that having participatory reintegration programmes produce better outcomes in terms of efficacy and impact, as well as increase the empowerment of ex-combatants and communities by giving them a voice and control inside the programmes implemented in the phase of reintegration (Oppenheim & Söderström, 2018).

In sum, the role of communities in reintegration goes beyond the idea of being simple passive receiving actors. They should play an interactive role with ex-combatants to facilitate their reintegration into socio-economic and cultural dynamics. This interaction enables the recognition of their civil identity based on agency, social responsibility and mutual recognition (Rodríguez López et al., 2015) which directly benefit the improvement of local empowerment and bottom-up socio-economic initiatives.

⁸⁶ A term used in the discourses of the United Nations and international agencies (See for example United Nations, 2006)

3. Approaches to Local Perspectives in Peacebuilding

3.1. Sociology in Peacebuilding

The sociological subfields of social movements, sociology of religion and education, sociology of everyday and social psychology have contributed widely to peacebuilding studies by analysing patterns of human behaviour, community studies and society in large. By giving more value to social interaction than political processes, sociology has become a discipline that broadens the traditional approaches of political science in peace and conflict studies.

One of the most significant sociology contributions in peace studies is the term “positive peace” developed by sociologist Johan Galtung, which means the achievement of peace, not just with regard to the absence of war but also access to social justice (Galtung, 1969). Additionally, the contributions of John Paul Lederach and his approach to conflict transformation and mediation (see for example Lederach, 1999) and the studies of Brewer (together with other scholars) in the sociology of everyday life peacebuilding in divided societies (Brewer et al., 2018) have marked the evolution of peace studies. Other contributions have focused on the role of social movements in peacebuilding (see for example Hunt and Benford, 1994), as well as religious, reconciliation, transitional justice and memory (Brewer, 2013, p.3). On top of that, sociology has contributed to the critical studies of peace through grounding the underexplored social dynamics⁸⁷ and social forces in liberal peace (Trimikliniotis, 2016).

Brewer argues that sociology contributes to peace studies from three different angles: “the substantive, conceptual and analytical foci” (Brewer, 2013, p.4). The *substantive angle* provides important terminology in peace agreements and post-conflict transition, such as gender, civil society, social capital, truth, citizenship, victimhood and globalisation, and the influence of these concepts in political dynamics. *The conceptual angle* refers to the interpersonal social aspects that interfere in the good governance and state-building expected after a peace agreement has been established, such as racism, ethnicity, social identity and structural inequality, and the different tensions that such concept causes in

⁸⁷ The sociology contribution in peace studies claims the need to analyse liberal peace under the dynamics of society, power, conflict, social class and other social divisions (Trimikliniotis, 2016).

conflict transformation. Finally, the *analytical foci* enhance peace processes from different typologies, showing the spectrum of peace processes outside the borders of political processes (Brewer, 2013, p.4-13).

Under this framework, sociology articulates local social patterns and economic, political and cultural universal dynamics, placing the study of individuals and social relations as the guiding principle of their discourses. Sociological discourses contributed to my research in various ways. They guided my understanding of social meanings and relationships in the field and were the point of departure to justify my research's relevance. The micro-sociological perspective was the approach taken in my study design and analysis. This guided my understanding of ex-combatants' everyday collective reincorporation and their exercise of agency in their face-to-face relationships.

In the following sections, I describe the everyday in the peace process as the conceptual support of micro-sociology and I will define the terms "symbolic interactionism" and "social worlds", as the guiding theories of my study. The first as the perspective to analyse meaning and relationships, and the second as an approach to help me to connect individuals' experience of everyday reality with macro-level dynamics (Ghisleni, 2017, p.533). By integrating external and local dynamics, I was able during my research to discover the multiple intersections and segmentations produced between social structures, objects and actors.

Subsequently, I will explain the emergence of the "local turn" in peacebuilding and the different concepts that support this approach. Finally, I provide an alternative to understand and interlink the previous discourses in my empirical discussion.

3.1.1. Everyday Life in Sociological Studies

Everyday life studies is a sphere of social relations analysed by different disciplines and approaches in social science. This term caught the attention of sociology between the 1960s and 1990s, providing a critical reaction to the intellectual hegemony of normative structuralism by giving relevance to people's "day-to-day life experience" (Ghisleni, 2017, p.527). The everyday life in sociology focuses on ordinary people's lives and people's wit to create inter-subjectivity common-sense relationships (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). It emphasizes in the "dailyness" of a reality that is continually changing (Ghisleni, 2017, p.533). For the sociologies of everyday life routines play a twofold role: they reduce the psychological

costs of choices and the complexity of social reality, converting it into a familiar and predictable universe of meanings (Ghisleni, 2017, p.532).

With Herbert Blumer and his symbolic interactionism approach, the studies of people identities and interactions became another way to explore sociological studies away from institutions and social systems (Blumer, 1969). For Sztompka, sociology moved from a “first sociology” of social organisms and systems to a “second sociology” of behaviours and actions and then to a “third sociology”, which embraces the side-by-side human actions in collective contexts and their interaction with agential and structural dynamics (Sztompka, 2008, p.1).

More than a theoretical perspective, the everyday has become a “research program” (Ghisleni, 2017, p.526), and a new perspective or angle of vision (Sztompka, 2008) that defines spaces and relations by studying different routines and patterns (Adler et al., 1987). Norbert Elias, Erving Goffman, Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, Henri Lefebvre and Michel De Certeau⁸⁸ are some scholars who have been the pioneers in analysing the ordinary day-to-day of social life.

It is important to note that everyday life in sociology does not attempt to overlook the influence of social structure on micro-dynamics or isolate social and collective relations from macro-perspectives. The everyday life moves between society structures and the individuals’ freedom to develop their own forms of living (Sztompka, 2008). The sense of togetherness among people shows that neither societies nor individuals can be separate or isolated entities. Both become a social network that defines the individual-social reality (Sztompka, 2008).

Therefore, the significance of everyday life is to understand the heterogeneity of interrelations between social dynamics and social systems under a relational approach. This approach attempts to move from the homogeneous shaped institutional idea of societies to multiform dynamics that enable the discovery of innumerable social relationships (Ghisleni, 2017).

The everyday life does not emphasise the places but the routines that occur in different contexts (Brewer et al., 2018). Brewer points out that “everyday life is a social space where ordinariness, normality and routine are performed, existing in places but transcending all physical spaces at the same time. It is thus both in places but simultaneously spans all

⁸⁸ The French Lefebvre and Certeau analysed the everyday life based on Marxist theory. Lefebvre focused on the everyday victimisation of people through capitalist domination. Certeau focused on people’s agency, and their freedom to achieve their own outcomes (Bremen et al., 2018).

spaces” (Brewer et al., 2018, p.16). This means that everyday life experiences occur under an intersubjective world that goes beyond one place and integrates multi-dimensional views and complex contradictory social worlds (Adler et al., 1987).

In the last two decades, different scholars have studied peacebuilding by focusing on the ordinary and the taken for granted practices of people and societies who have endured conflict situations (Brewer et al., 2018). Sociology contributes to this approach by being “embedded in everyday reasoning processes that reproduce peace as everyday practice”. In particular, everyday peace in sociology acknowledges the integration of positive peace and social transformation in the discourses of everyday peacebuilding⁸⁹ (Brewer et al., 2018, p.212).

In sum, the studies of everyday life have proven that the ordinary life plays an important role in understanding different social, economic, political and cultural transitions, events, relations and dynamics that happen in society. The patterns, routines and ordinariness represent social relation’s meanings and the grounding of conflicts and social constrains that are represented in the everyday symbolic interactions exerted among people.

3.1.2. Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a micro-level theoretical perspective in sociology and social psychology that studies how people create and maintain society through face-to-face relationships (Blumer, 1969). These relationships produce meanings and symbols that make sense to people’s social worlds (Blumer, 1969; Casino & Thien, 2009).

Interactionism considers knowledge as an active process rather than a state entity, in which vivid relations constantly interfere in the formation of social systems (Rock, 1979). Rather than showing static rationality, symbolic interactionism engages with the understanding of the inseparable and interdependent forces between individuals and society as the best perspective to approach social worlds (Reynolds et al., 1975). In such a process, both the subjective experience and social structures are closely intertwined in defining social systems’ patterns (Lauer & Handel, 1977).

Three main premises define symbolic interactionism: 1. human beings act towards things based on the meanings that the things have for them; 2. these meanings are a product

⁸⁹ See subsection 3.2. on everyday peace.

of social interaction in human society; and 3. these meanings are modified and handled through an interpretative process that is used by each individual in dealing with the signs she/he encounters (Blumer, 1969, p.2-6).

Four aspects interrelate in these premises: the symbols (communication); the interactions; the meanings; and the social system. The symbols produce the meanings of objects through the interaction between individuals and the experiences obtained with such objects. In these relationships, people define the meanings of social milieu, which are sensitive to change according to the social worlds, times and symbols attached to that person and his/her surroundings (Lauer & Handel, 1977). Here, people influence both the response of others towards the objects and the formation of the social system structures.

In this context, the relationship between individuals and social systems merges as an individual component (Reynolds et al., 1975). A complete understanding of one depends on the complete understanding of the other, creating an interdependent relationship and a close intertwining with structural forces (Reynolds et al., 1975). The formation of the latter emerges from the mutual acceptance and recognition of these meanings between people and the formation of fixed terms over time (Lauer & Handel, 1977).

For symbolic interactionism, the meaning of an action exerted by an individual does not represent an act emitted by the individuals; instead, it is the reaction of this action in others' behaviour (Crawford & Novak, 2014, p.74). Therefore, the interaction we have with others builds societies and creates different interpretations of the concepts, showing how distinctive meanings are adapted and interpreted through social practice (Casino & Thien, 2009).

Blumer argues that this process is not static. The meanings and interpretation of the realities vary according to face-to-face relations, time and the social setting in which people interact. This process entails the active role of people while constructing their reality and their capacity to follow mindful actions by using their agency at integrating symbols and realities, and giving meaning to them (Blumer, 1969). In such a process, people create meaningful interaction through the exercise of their agency and symbols, which help them to shape and reshape their roles and meanings in society. This process is only achieved using their agency and less so their structural-functionalism perspectives (Carter & Fuller, 2012).

Although social structures alter and modify meanings built through social interaction, people are sensitive to modifying them according to their experiences, relationships and root

images. In this vein, the assignment of social positions, status demands, social roles, cultural prescriptions, norms and values are susceptible to interpretation (Blumer, 1969). This process shows the immediate connection between individuals and society and the inseparability between society and the self when personality interacts with the social systems (Billson, 1994). In this regard “We simply cannot understand the individual outside the context of his or her social environment” (Billson, 1994, p.125).

This process leads to understanding human society as a continuous active process, which relies on a process of negotiation between individuals (Billson, 1994). It encompasses two stages: the culture and the social structures. The first defines what people do and the latter determines the relations derived from how people interact with others (Blumer, 1969).

The interaction process created with others goes through different stages. First, individuals create an interaction with the objects and then provide meaning to such an object. By creating personal meanings, human beings can confront the world by an interpretative interaction between their past and the predefined meanings and experiences bonded in their “root images” (Blumer, 1969). This process goes in tandem with the formation of social identity and the conception people have about themselves. During this process of interaction, past experiences of people shape their emotions and profile their attitude toward the self. Likewise, this dynamic embeds the construction of the self with others when they are part of social situations (Carter & Fuller, 2012).

“Having a self, gives people the capacity to observe, respond to and direct one’s own behaviour” (Lauer & Handel, 1977, p.66). In the process of the self’s recognition, subjects may change their attitudes according to their process of interaction. These attitudes will define the shared social milieu and the symbolic environment in which subjects interact, following community expectation and control of the social systems (Lauer & Handel, 1977). In this regard, the self emerges out of people. People shape the self of others and others constitute the self of people. In such a process, “individual act and react, creating and not merely being formed or controlled” (Lauer & Handel, 1977, p.41). In other words, humans are both determined and determiners (Reynolds et al., 1975).

In short, symbolic interactionism assumes that social actors have the agency to build meanings from their surroundings and shape others by using former experiences. This is not a static process or isolated from other concepts, instead it represents the volatile and fluid experience of everyday realities, encounters, root images and social structures. In the

following section, I analyse the social world as a theory that shows the multiple interconnections and intersections embedded in human reality.

3.2. Social Worlds and the Value of Interconnections

The term “social worlds” is a perspective from micro-sociological studies that aims to understand the interconnection of social actors from different angles and perspectives, in which structural and agency dynamics intertwine, comprising powers and time hegemonies. Social worlds are not static, nor are they isolated from each other, but are continually interacting and acting on different levels and scales that interplay in a mutual response and under similar cultural dynamics (Strauss, 1978).

Social worlds specifically refer to the permanent efforts a group of people make to unify their different perspectives into a coordinated action, based on communal unity. This way to coordination ensures “relatively permanent ‘institutionalised’ spaces of perception and action, secure by relatively stable routines and a division of labour” (Soeffner, 1991, p.363), which shows a “universe of regularised mutual response” (Shibutani, 1955, p. 566). In such response, groups set the basis of commitments, relationships, values, ideas, perception and experiences shared by people in a specific social world (Unruh, 1979, p.115). This provides a model to follow and giving stability, order and predictability to social worlds (Shibutani, 1955).

Nevertheless, social worlds go beyond a typical way of identification. It relates to diffuse and permeable dynamics in which people can freely move between worlds in the pursuit of a unity that shares their similar practices, procedures and perspectives (Strauss, 1978). In everyday life, people inhabit not just one world, but a series of overlapping worlds that collide and conflict, or threaten one another (Mitchell, 2012, p.3). Therefore, social worlds do not depend on formal boundaries, membership lists or spatial territory (Unruh, 1979, p.115), nor are they subject to a territory (Strauss, 1978). Their boundaries depend on effective communication (Shibutani, 1955).

Space, time, territorial, formal or membership boundaries are essential to understanding the performance of such worlds (Unruh, 1980). Space and time in social worlds are ways of expressing a motion (Soeffner, 1991). In this context, social worlds are several places in one. Multiple interests and realities interact in these worlds, showing the diversity of (sub)worlds and people that intersect in each social reality (Strauss, 1978). By locating oneself

inside the fluidity of the space of action means acknowledging how the timeframes and the world moves inside a “social game” by following a “sequential order”. In this setting, time represents the process of acting, experiencing and perceiving the surroundings (Soeffner, 1991, p.365).

As a result, social worlds become volatile in times of continuous transformation and action that influence the identifiable patterns and worldviews that people produce while partaking in different segments of reality. Social worlds interact with the knowledge produced by the people and the interpretation of their realities (Soeffner, 1991; Soeffner & Zifonun, 2008). These dynamics vary depending on the relationship between the actors, the diversity of the social worlds in which they interact, their experiences and their personal coping strategies (Soeffner & Zifonun, 2008).

For Blumer (1978), the primary activity of each world and subworld is the core aspect of distinguishing one world over the others. In the exercise of this primary activity, converge different relations of powers displayed in a world in action. These powers are also visible when social worlds intersect with other worlds, as people borrow knowledge or skills to achieve collective actions (Strauss, 1978). The higher level of knowledge and belonging people have in a certain world, the more commitment and loyalty they have towards the collective actions of such a world (Soeffner, 1991).

The intersection of knowledge sets the basis for the formation of social arenas, which vary according to the level of communication and interests of the worlds involved (Clarke & Star, 2008). A large arena comprises the variety of social worlds and sub-worlds that integrate the collective actions that are represented not only in the form of an organisation, but in ideologies, social movements, social worlds and technologies (Clarke, 1991; Strauss, 1978). This arena shows the connection between time, space and action of such social worlds (Soeffner, 1991).

Different links are formed in each social worlds based on different interests, needs and objectives. This simultaneously represents power struggles, decision-making and negotiation between these worlds (Soeffner, 1991). In general terms, social worlds open a window to analyse the variety of interrelations and intersections that form a social system. In this social system, people establish collective interests through their active interaction in particular segments or arenas. In sum, social worlds can be seen as a category that defines the multiple

powers and negotiation processes people have to deal with to achieve their goals as a collective entity.

3.3. Frames and Contexts: The Local Turn

Two major events provide the basics for the emergence of the term “local turn”. The first originated at the beginning of the 1990s after the end of the Cold War, with the UN entering as the primary contributor of peacebuilding agendas (Paffenholz, 2015). The second appears as a response to critics of the conventional peacebuilding approaches attached to the discourses of liberal peace (Öjendal, Leonardsson and Lundqvist, 2017) and as a resistance against the dominant discourse and interventions of international peacebuilding programmes (Richmond, 2012).

The failure of UN interventions in countries such as Somalia, the Balkans and Rwanda triggered a crisis with regard to state-building and the emergence of the first local turn (Paffenholz, 2015; Pouligny, 2005), called “the crisis of liberal peacebuilding” (Donais, 2012; Richmond, 2010). During this period, scholars and practitioners identified the need for empowering locals as the potential agents of peacebuilding, focusing on better approaches to developing peacebuilding interventions and reconciliation that fostered the rebuilding of human capital (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015; Millar, 2014; Paffenholz, 2015).

The second shift focused on the discourses of local agency as a form of resistance to the hegemonic control of international liberal perspectives (Lederach, 1999; Paffenholz 2015). This shift was opposed to (post-)colonial rationality and peacebuilding knowledge production (Jabri, 2013) and was more connected with the communitarian approach, or peace from below and from “within” (Lederach, 1999). In this context, the local approach focused on a specific perspective of political order, justice and ethics built by the traditions, habits, time and places in which the local practices took place (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015), providing the perfect setting for “the locals” to make their own choices away from the imposition of state or international standards (Donais, 2009). Factoring in local knowledge offered a new way of thinking about power, agency and freedom, and the best alternative to integrating people’s voices and local discourses across class, territory and community barriers (Hughes, Öjendal, and Schierenbeck, 2015).

The agency in the local perspective embraces people’s capacity to go against liberal peacebuilding by developing their own local initiatives for peace as a means to achieve

environments more suitable for civil society (Paffenholz 2015; Richmond, 2009b). This process involves the public action of “the locals” in political environments. In this setting, they defend their rights and create strategies to transform institutional priorities (Richmond, 2011; Schierenbeck, 2015).

Under a technocratic understanding, “the locals” are just grateful recipients, who are presumed to not have the maturity to exercise a political authority or control over their life (Donais, 2009). The technocracy restricts the natural power of “the locals” by showing their apparent incapability to develop by themselves without external direction, due to their misconception of “local incivility” (Richmond, 2009). As Öjendal, et al., (2017, p.38) argue: “Local actors are seen as an obstacle to peacebuilding efforts, becoming a kind of regressive force in peacebuilding initiatives”. This assertion leaves aside the agency of “the locals” and their customs and culture as a source of sustenance, resilience, stability and peace (Richmond, 2009). This perspective, prioritise rights over needs, and state over communities (Richmond, 2009, p.153) and disregard the role of “the locals” in the design and implementation of international peace agendas (Galvanek, 2013; Schaefer, 2010).

Different scholars have shown that the term “local” has been under-analysed with regard to the boundaries of “good” and “bad” idealised in the critical discourses of liberal peace or essentialised in the discourses of peacebuilding (Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017; Carranza-Franco, 2014; Hirblinger and Simons, 2015; Paffenholz, 2015). By assuming “the locals” as “the good” dimension of peacebuilding, we ignore the prevalence of local elites that generally oversimplify the operation of power and resistance within post-conflict contexts (Paffenholz, 2015). Most of the studies show “the locals” to be the opposite pole of liberal peace discourses, creating a binary between “the locals” and the international actors (Kappler, 2015; Paffenholz, 2015). This divide illustrates the absence of conceptualisation of both dimensions and the diversity of ways that they overlap in practice (Paffenholz 2015; Höglund and Orjuela, 2012).

The term “local” is not a short-term perspective, neither does a structure that comprises material and social boundaries and interests (Richmond, 2018). It is “a multiple, messy assemblage of hybrid networks, where the identification of clear-cut identities and agendas is discouraged” (Randazzo, 2016, p.1359). “The locals” are heterogeneous entities in terms of thinking and cultural practices (Schaefer 2010), and they are as diverse as the interests and conflicts present in the territories (Simons & Zanker, 2014).

Individuals or groups may also use the local agency to retain and (mis-)use their power, often at others' expenses (Galvanek, 2013). Others use liberal peace as a benefit for their local elite (Schierenbeck, 2015). The diversity of local dynamics shows that some locals are not compatible with working towards less violent societies, but rather may operate against the objective of building an equal and non-violent society (Schaefer, 2010; Mac Ginty, 2015). Schierenbeck (2015) highlights that many international organisations in East Timor face an ongoing conflict among multiple subalterns. Similarly, local agendas can be a source of violent conflict before the emergence of national conflict and after the signature of peace agreements (Autesserre, 2014).

On the other hand, discourses in peacebuilding romanticise the locals "as falling to hold to universal liberal principles" (Millar, 2017, p.295). Generally, "the locals" are characterised as the saviour of international efforts and are the ones that can enhance the sustainability of peace and development initiatives away from liberal peace practices (Mac Ginty, 2011). Seeing "the locals" wholly detached or against liberal peace disregards the multiple local opinions and discrepancies about democracy and its supremacy (Simons & Zanker, 2014). Mitchell & Richmond (2012, p.13) argue that civil society has a western normative veneer, which overlooks the local practices and customs and accepts the often anti-democratic, patronage, neopatrimonial, corrupt, inefficient and often patriarchal, non-secular practices.

There is also the pitfall of romanticising the local by labelling it under the concept of "localism", where the local is seen as an immobile entity that equates to the meaning of territory, but not with the mobility and fluid characteristics of the term "local", where different activities, networks and relationships interplay (Mac Ginty, 2015). Localism is also referenced to legitimise illiberal practices at the expense of "the locals" (Öjendal et al., 2017). The perspectives that put "the locals" as a lifeless entity are only used to legitimise actions implemented by outsiders⁹⁰.

Escobar states that an alternative to approaching the dichotomy of local and global is through the concept of networking and glocality, which refers to "cultural and spatial configurations that connect places with each other to create regional spaces and regional worlds" (Escobar, 2001, p.166). The intersection of locals with social structures shows "the locals" as a category that cannot be analysed within a bounded entity or geographical point

⁹⁰ By outsiders, I refer to any actor or organisation that intervenes in different forms in the local dynamics and has an influence on the building of the meanings and practices of the local realities.

(Hickey and Mohan 2004; Mac Ginty, 2015). “The locals” are placed in a post-territorial dimension that is in continuous movement together with the deeds, actions, capabilities, networks and relationships among the subjectivities contained in the local community (Mac Ginty, 2015). This framework identifies the continuous “de-localisation” and “re-localisation”⁹¹ of locals (Kappler, 2015), producing a volatility of norms, values and culture in which the locals interact, as well as the external and internal forces that guide local subjectivities (Mac Ginty, 2014).

In this light, the term “local” goes beyond the boundaries of space or territory (Schierenbeck, 2015). It is neither an empty space (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013), nor an atomised or disconnected entity from other structures (Öjendal et al., 2017). “Locals” redefine spaces through agency and ideas produced in conjunction with other local actors, who continually produce new experiences that shape the spaces they inhabit (Öjendal, Leonardsson and Lundqvist, 2017). Therefore, “the locals” emerge not just from the flow of norms, cultures and belonging attached to them, but also from the overlapping and intersection of time, structures and space (Schierenbeck, 2015). In other words, the local is “a standpoint based in a particular locality but not bounded by it” (Shaw, p.6).

Different forces attempt to manipulate the locals’ formation of meanings and practices. Media sources, scholars’ perspectives, policymakers, national elites, military discourses and humanitarian spokespeople manipulate the knowledge situated in “the locals” (Mac Ginty, 2015; Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016). This process directly influences the people’s own reality and the understanding of social and political dynamics in the local everyday narratives (Mac Ginty and Firchow 2016). Influential narratives ignore the continual accommodation of the complex political, economic and social structures in which locals are situated, disrupting their meanings and practices (Carranza-Franco 2014).

Schierenbeck (2015) claims that researchers have to be more aware of the uneven powers exerted by the people, their colonial pasts and the historical patterns as a means to analyse and reflect on the grounding of people’s narratives. The dominant narratives that influence “the locals” relate to the positionality and asymmetric power relationship between

⁹¹ Delocalising aims to increase the degree of credibility to avoid accusations of bias, and to facilitate integration into political agendas and national discourses. Re-localisation is a way to strengthen people’s identity and local networks as a way to promote peace (Kappler, 2015).

insiders and outsiders, showing traditional ways of emancipation and global inequality that yet permeate meanings around peace and conflict (Richmond et al., 2015).

It seems that studying the everyday life of “the locals” becomes the best way to avoid overgeneralisations, romanticisms and essentialisms in the local turn. Exploring the term “local” within the meaning and practices of local actors is a way to overcome the manipulation or generalisation of this term in academic discourses and the “fuzzy” characteristic of this concept (Richmond, 2009). The “local turn” uses the concept of everyday as a parameter to determine the meanings of peace given by the local actors, going beyond a rigid, institutional, top-down logic to a local bottom-up approach as the centre of all practices of peacebuilding (Mitchell, 2011). The following section explores everyday peace as one of the alternative approaches to addressing the multiple relationships, meanings and practices embedded in “the locals”.

3.3.1. Everyday Peace

Everyday peace has been studied from various approaches. Autesserre (2014) and Mitchell (2011) focus on the everyday intervention of politics and international actors in post-conflict environments, providing a panorama on the effects of outsiders in peacebuilding processes. While for Richmond everyday peace is a critical model to advance liberal peacebuilding (Richmond, 2009, 2010, 2012) for Mamdani (2018), it is as a way to avoid colonial perspectives imposed on people; and for Visoka (2020) links everyday peace with nationalism and peacebuilding processes.

The most well-known perspective of everyday peace studies is the one that supports the local turn approach from the perspectives of agency and hybrid forms of peacebuilding⁹² (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013; Mac Ginty, 2010, 2014; Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016; Randazzo, 2016). This perspective considers everyday peace as an approach that links directly with the local agency and the varieties of hybridisation between local and external forces.

In general, everyday life is the reproduction of day-to-day habits and routines and the understanding of people’s ordinary social interaction (Brewer et al., 2018, p.201). By being part of everyday life, people create a social contract that produces social bonds, relationships and belongings, laying the foundation for personal development (Certeau, 1984; Mitchell & Richmond, 2012; Sztompka, 2008). This social contract produces a cycle of care, trust,

⁹² Everyday peace evolves as an indicator of peace programme interventions using bottom-up categories to analyse peacebuilding (Firchow, 2018; Firchow & Mac Ginty, 2017; Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2014).

transformation and collaboration among people, establishing the formation of empathy and respect for differences (Richmond, 2009a; Vaittinen et al., 2019). Although the everyday in local practices often looks insignificant, episodic or mundane, in practice it plays a significant role in shaping and maintaining peace through the coexistence of different social groups (Lee, 2020).

The study of bottom-up perspectives in peace studies identifies the contribution of everyday life in peacebuilding by valuing the voices and social relationships of multiple actors and networks in the transition to post-conflict. As such, the everyday becomes the immediate, non-alienated life of each individual and group (Mitchell & Richmond, 2012) and a transformative practice in peacebuilding by defining identities under the basis of local agency (Randazzo, 2016). For Mac Ginty, everyday peace is a form of local agency that influences the relationships and contexts in which actors interact while using their agency to seize opportunities for their own benefit (Mac Ginty, 2014).

The local agency serves as resistance towards the social dynamics that perpetuate the conflict and propose narratives away from liberal peace discourses (Mac Ginty, 2014). This process implies going beyond the governmental interest, who attempt to have social control over peacebuilding dynamics (Randazzo & Torrent, 2020). When locals engage with politicisation and resistance, everyday peace becomes a form of reputation represented in different locals workplaces and networks of recognition (Mac Ginty, 2015, p.850).

During the process of political representativeness, the locals transit from de-politicisation to self-government and then to self-determination (Richmond, 2009, p.571), producing a context of mutual legitimacy and local confidence built away from predefined social structures (Hobbis, 2017; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013; Richmond, 2011). Exclusively, the process of self-governance sets the basis to build peace-promoting agents (Randazzo, 2016), who may contribute to the transformation of deeply divided societies by minimising conflict and awkward situations at both inter-and intra-group levels (Mac Ginty, 2014, p.553).

However, studying everyday peace based on local agency has been highly contested, as in most (post-)conflict environments local agency cannot be freely exercised (Simons & Zanker, 2014). Lefebvre explains how the practices of everyday life become a form of alienation from the liberal economic based on the logic of production and consumption, in which people are restricted to freely develop themselves (Lefebvre, 1971). Simons & Zanker (2014) assert that locals are highly fragmented and powerless to fight against higher politics,

affecting their active exercise of everyday peace in (post-)conflict contexts and their recognition in everyday peace practices.

In contrast, different experiences have shown how locals in their everyday peace practices have transformed their surroundings in peace environments by confronting armed groups, governments and even other communities. The creation of zones of peace are examples of everyday resistance at the local level. In North Ireland, El Salvador, Colombia and the Philippines, to name just a few, “the locals” have prioritised their interests and needs over the demands of interveners (Hancock, 2016).

The interrelations between the peace agendas designed by interveners and the contested agency of people to influence and adapt to this framework of operation creates an interwoven of power, personal interests and international demands (Autesserre 2014; Hobbis, 2017). The tensions and articulations between interveners and locals are called by the literature in peacebuilding the local-liberal hybridity approach (Richmond, 2011). This approach describes locals as “various forms of power, resistance, and agency, many of which overlap and even conflict. Within the context of peacebuilding, the local is inseparable from the notion of hybridity” (Mitchell & Richmond, 2012, p.11).

In the following section, I analyse the hybrid forms of peace as an alternative to balance the power of outsiders over the locals’ freedom to exercise their agency during the post-conflict transition.

3.3.2. The Hybridity in Peacebuilding

Hybridity is a term used by different disciplines to explain the complexity of economic, social and political dynamics, and not exclusively to study post-liberal peacebuilding studies. Hybridity in peacebuilding shows the interplay of everyday non-elite local actors’ discourses with liberal hegemonic structures (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012; Richmond, 2011). The local “hybridise” the “blueprint” of liberal peacebuilding discourses by making use of their agency as a means to alter norms, practices and institutions through verbal interaction, organisation and visibilisation of day-to-day conflict (Mitchell & Richmond, 2012, p.1).

Hybridity comprises the intersections with people, cultures and ideas (Mac Ginty, 2010). It is not the connection of two pure entities, but the intertwining of different practices, norms and thoughts that emerge between the international community, local elites and the marginalised population (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012; Newman & Richmond, 2009;

Richmond, 2012). This approach is not about how external actors introduce new ideas to a static society, but how a cycle of action and reaction takes the form of norms and practices constructed from top-down and bottom-up perspectives (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012).

Hybrid peace emerged as a critical response to international relations to explain the diversity of powers and interests between external and local actors in (post-)conflict dynamics. It shows new forms of governance when top-down institution-building projects intersect with the micro-politics of local or bottom-up actors (Krause, 2018). Mostly, hybrid peace relates to discourses of state-building, justice reform and security, turned into a concept of “hybrid political orders” that shows the dilemmas of both local and international actors in a political sphere (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012, p.6).

According to Mac Ginty (2010, p.391), four elements can define the hybridisation of peace: the compliance powers of liberal peace agents; networks and structures; the local actors’ ability to resist; and the creation of new networks and structures to present and maintain alternative forms of peacemaking. This process gives place to new forms of power, resistance and agency between external forces and local internal dynamics, producing hybrid forms of peace (Richmond & Mitchell, 2011) through the intersection of local and international actors and the detachment from conventional peacebuilding understandings (Donais, 2015).

However, hybrid peace fails to meet the power exerted by the actors engaged in peacebuilding and the diversity of forces that interfere in the relationships between locals and outsiders. Forsyth et al., (2017, p.410) argue that hybrid peace may become a mask to underlying injustices and power between international and local actors. For instance, the international power is visible when the locals are (in-)voluntarily forced to transform their collective interests or priorities just to receive the benefits given from donors (Autesserre, 2014).

Lee (2020, p.9) found that when local actors held public discourse in Cambodia, they carefully selected the narratives that contributed to the government’s political legitimacy, just to gain acceptance and benefits. The representation of hybridity in these examples shows a “practical hybridity” (Millar, 2014) in which international actors have the power to incentivise some practices and devalue others (Mac Ginty, 2011, p.80).

International actors plan and administer hybridity to foster predictable social experiences in post-conflict environments (Millar, 2014, p.501). They deliberately and

strategically use political categories and indicators of peacebuilding to legitimise themselves in social spheres, displaying an apparent “naturalness” to hybrid peace (Forsyth et al., 2017, p.412). Millar argues that one of the main concerns of hybrid peace studies is the prescriptive deployment of hybridity by international actors rather than its descriptive quality. Although descriptive hybridity attempts to describe what hybrid is, how it has come about and its meanings, prescriptive hybridity is based on international planning and administration in societies. The latter integrates the hybrid peace discourse as an instrument to increase the legitimacy and cooperation among external forces (Millar, 2014).

Under a prescriptive hybridity, international actors are “romanticising and homogenising the ‘local’ and downplaying significant power differentials in specific local contexts based on gender, age, ethnic, religious, or other divisions” (Forsyth et al., 2017, p.410). Moreover, the prescriptive idea of hybridity envisages a local homogenous entity, undermining the variety of powers and interests present at the local level (Mitchell & Richmond, 2012). The different “hybrid arrangements” between locals and internationals vary according to context, and the dominant structures and networks that may not leave room for the exercise of local agency (Mac Ginty, 2010, p.402).

In sum, hybrid peace is more than a category where liberal and illiberal norms coexist (Mac Ginty, 2011). The economic and political already granted by international actors influence the political perspective of the locals and their relationships, social identity and social cohesiveness, showing a power that interferes at different levels and dimensions. It interlinks with a variety of powers, spaces and temporalities that configure the encounters between the locals and international actors (Forsyth et al., 2017).

In the following chapter, I describe in detail the methodology of my research, a description of the case studies and my ethical concerns and positionality throughout my research study.

4. Methodology

4.1. Preliminary Understanding of Inquiry

This research points out the importance of analysing how FARC-EP ex-members and the surrounding communities implement actions to benefit collective reincorporation. By focusing on the everyday local practices from different approaches, I wanted to analyse how people build their world collectively, and their constructive effort to integrate local practices in the transition towards post-conflict (Brinkman, 2012).

The analysis of data did not rely on previous studies or on predefined hypothesis, rather it focused on an initial question that guided my empirical data collection and my general research interest on this topic (Nussio 2011, p. 67). The research method, especially my empirical data analysis, was not a servant of theory. On the contrary, the method grounded the theory (Jenks, 1995, p.12).

In this regard, I was not interested in finding causal meanings to define the ex-combatants' reintegration nor in evaluating the success or failure of this process, but rather in understanding the collective meanings and practices built around reincorporation through a descriptive qualitative research (Brinkman, 2012). This has allowed me to gain an understanding of the diversity of subjectivities embedded in the lives of participants and their life histories and everyday behaviours (Silverman, 2000). This framework has also enabled me to approach a complex production of knowledge in which feelings, emotions and thoughts are interwoven in defining reincorporation practices (Strauss & Corbin, 2012).

This approach required engagement and direct contact with the research subjects and physical involvement in the setting where the fieldwork took place. Throughout this process, I drew a holistic picture of a unique situation based upon an inductive perspective (Ospina, 2004).

In this study, I used ethnography as an approach suitable to analyse in detail local collective reincorporation practices, relational peace and the social patterns embedded in these relationships. By analysing these aspects, I could identify the (post-)conflict sociological and cognitive continuities and discontinuities embedded in ex-combatants' lives in their transition to reintegration (Duclos, 2012). This approach was "neither linear nor circular but rather a turbulent falling into place of various pieces" (Goetze, 2017b,

p.34). Research at the micro-level allowed me to identify both combatants' and non-combatants' individual and collective experiences in their transitions to (post-)conflict and the impacts on the transformation of political and social identities (Kalivas, 2012). I approached the studies of microsociology by given value from face-to-face social interactions of FARC-EP ex-members and their surrounding communities in three different territories in Colombia where spatio-temporal characteristics interconnect. Therefore, I define my research methodology as a multi-site ethnography.

4.1.1. Basics of Ethnography

Ethnography is a qualitative approach that emerged in the 19th century from western anthropology. It involves the active participation of the researcher in the social dynamics of the study of inquiry. Based on a naturalistic approach, ethnography requires the active participation of the researcher in the contexts of study and their ability to determine the main everyday life dynamics of a community, specifically the ones with regard to meanings, values, norms and artefacts embedded in collective interactions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

Ethnography moves from the conventional single-site location — contextualised by macro-constructions of a larger social order, such as the capitalist world system — to multiple sites of observation and participation that cross-cut dichotomies, such as the “local” and the “global”, the “lifeworld” and the “system” (Marcus, 1995, p.95). It opens the possibilities to explore the social reality away from structures and systems attached to the society under bottom-up perspectives. As Richmond argues: “[Ethnography] rescue peacebuilding from neoliberal epistemological frameworks” (2018, p.221).

For ethnography, people play an active role in constructing their reality (Carter & Fuller, 2012). Through meaningful interaction, communication and symbols, people shape and re-shape the meanings and ways to act in society, providing more value to their agency and less to their structural-functionalism perspectives (Carter & Fuller, 2012).

In this study, contextualising the knowledge in a specific setting has helped me understand and interpret the local dynamics and its interlinkages with collective reincorporation practices. The local is analysed beyond a territorialised perspective, as a category that needs to be situated and contextualised (Schierenbeck, 2015) through a

constant delocalisation and relocalisation⁹³ (Kappler, 2015). By studying closely the social and cultural dynamics in territories where ex-combatants settled, I could provide a more accurate assessment of the local impacts of peacebuilding interventions and the different meanings that emerged from the bottom up when people refer to conflict, justice, security, development, empowerment, dignity, opportunities and peace (Geroid, 2014).

The research design varied according to the collection and analysis of information, my professional life experiences and the research's goals and questions (Maxwell, 2004). During the process of inquiry, I was aware of my footprint, and the potential threats of my previous experiences working with ex-combatants. The process of identifying "who is who" in the field helped me to reduce the social frictions and the stigmatisation towards the subjects of my research through trust-building and self-reflexivity (Hennings, 2018).

Furthermore, I was aware of the gap between "home" and "field"⁹⁴ and the different challenges that this implied in collecting and analysing the data. In the following section, I define multi-setting ethnography as the framework for my research and the "fuzzy field" in which FARC-EP ex-members are located.

4.1.2. Multi-Setting Ethnography: The "Fuzzy Field" in the Life of Ex-Combatants

The term "multi-site" or "multi-local" ethnography emerged in 1980s with the purpose of analysing the interlinkages of spaces and commonalities that overcome space limits (Falzon, 2009). However, it does not attempt to develop a theoretical comprehension of the spaces, but rather an understanding of the complexity of social spaces and localities as mobile entities (Halbmayer, 2018).

The multi-sited research implies a kind of spatial de-centeredness, in which the site does not always relate to location or place, but also to different social perspectives (Falzon, 2009). The space by itself does not exist if it would have not be created by people and their interrelations (Lefebvre, 1991). "Accordingly, spaces are not limited to a biophysical framework, but are social spaces, socially created and produced by communities" (Halbmayer, 2018, p.29).

⁹³ The notion of local is not static. It is a process of continuous movement of localisation, delocalisation and relocalisation. This fluctuation determines people's identity and their position towards peacebuilding (Kappler, 2015).

⁹⁴ Thaler shows the research gap between the field setting in which the research takes place and the academic home in which the researcher is settled by saying that "The researcher themselves becomes a bridge between these two social spaces, having to adapt to divergences between the professional ideas and standards of home and the lived realities of the field" (Thaler, 2019, p.13).

Multi-sited ethnography defines that the object of study is intrinsically fragmented and multiply situated (Nadai & Maeder, 2005). Rather than a holistic representation of a whole phenomenon, the multi-sited ethnography analyses a mapping terrain that serves as the basis to create an ethnographic portrayal of different social worlds, in which common patterns and similar realities become the key categories of analysis (Marcus, 1995).

Sociological ethnography cannot be depicted as a cultural island isolated from the surrounding world. The aim of sociology in ethnography is to study the world systems by following ideas, perspectives and customs of people, but without detaching from the social worlds that interlink with these localised approaches (Marcus, 1995). In other words, the field site is always intrinsically multi-site (Candea, 2012).

The process of approaching to the contexts in which FARC-EP ex-members are located show a “fuzzy field” without clear boundaries but with multiple dimensions (Nadai & Maeder, 2005). In this research, I considered the field as an interrelation of an indefinite number of social worlds, in which a set of actors focus on common concerns (Nadai & Maeder, 2005, p.1). The ex-combatants have blurry physical borders that turn into a conglomerate of dimensions articulated under common interests and concerns around the reincorporation process. In this regard, I define the “fuzzy field” beyond a field-site delimitation or “arbitrary locations” (Candea, 2012, p.167).

In my fieldwork, collective reincorporation involved a trans-local level perspective that did not represent a single place in Colombia, rather multiple settings with similar characteristics (Hannerz, 2003). Therefore, the “cases” of study were not seen as a grouping of isolated local unities, rather the trans-local interlinkages and relationships built in settings where actors exercise agency, symbols and everyday routines (Marcus, 1995).

With this in mind, I wanted to examine the circulation of meanings, objects and identities in a diffuse time-space beyond bounded spatial entities (Kappler and Bjorkdahl, 2017). This reflexive approach recognises that, although knowledge is context-bound, the cases “speak to each other” and go beyond the particularities of each context, focusing on commonalities as well as theoretical insights that emerge through this local interaction (Gingrich & Fox, 2002).

In this research, the term “bifocality” is used to understand the life of the locality attached to a global interconnectedness world, shaping community identities that gather together in a feeling of “we”. The “we” involves different nuances that contemplates the

influence of external factors and defines who is included or excluded from this “we” (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992). In the case of this research, the places where FARC-EP are located provide a strong reflection of this “we”. This “we” overcomes geographic spaces and shows a disperse locality that complies with similar needs and concerns around the reincorporation process.

Against this background, the importance of multi-sited ethnography relies on discovering peacebuilding narratives in specific localities. I follow what Kappler and Bjorkdahl (2017, p.8) argue: “places are not neutral locations, but rather artefacts of meaning which are under constant contestation”. Approaching three different places where the FARC-EP ex-members locate helped me find commonalities in terms of meanings and discourses and their different concerns and interests of being part of collective reincorporation. I demonstrated that the diversity of places is not a restriction to finding a unified understanding about meanings of reincorporation.

The feelings built between the researcher and participants are an effective instrument to discover new concepts. As was argued by Fals-Borda (2008), the researcher should follow a “*sentipensante* practice” in which the person can think feeling and feel thinking. The awareness of oneself leads to the recognition of people’s empowerment and their ways to find alternatives to improve social, economic and physical environments (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991). The acknowledgement of empowerment and human potential create better explanations about people’s social reality (Belancazar et al., 2006). This knowledge turns into a social praxis, carrying out a transformative action that involves a holistic process of feeling, thinking and acting, which is not acquired from outside knowledge, rather from local practices (Bergold & Thomas, 2012).

The FARC-EP's experiences and *vivencias*⁹⁵ in reincorporation were analysed in situ, not only by conducting interviews, but also through observation and participatory observation of the everyday practices of FARC-EP ex-members. In the data collection process, I assessed uncertainty (without the need to determine whether answers are right or wrong) (Borg et al., 2012). By doing so, I did not search for theory validation or overgeneralisations of a phenomenon. I consider that these generalisations usually reinforce the typical romanticised idea of seeing the locals as a homogenous entity without power dynamics (Paffenholz, 2014).

Consequently, this study does not provide a unique history or narrative about the reincorporation process. The variety of people’s histories enriched the data collected and

⁹⁵ A term that implies more than what is merely experienced, but what is lived.

proved that diversity can be used as a potential tool to promote peace. Therefore, I attempted not to follow traditional patterns of the “good or bad ex-combatants” in peacebuilding, empowering some and disempowering others (Hirblinger & Simons, 2015). Rather, I saw them as human beings who face day-to-day personal, social and cultural shocks that are not easy to handle when living in environments worn down by a culture of war and polarisation.

This study does not consider the voices of policymakers, politicians or international agents as a core actors; instead, it is based on the experiences and knowledge of local non-elites, those who rarely have power and opportunities (Geroid, 2014). By engaging with everyday local practices, I participated informally in various meetings, conversations, daily job routines and short talks as means to understand the everyday life in reincorporation.

In the following, I explain briefly the main techniques used in the collection of data:

- *Qualitative interviews*: In this research, the interviews provide narrative and experiences about diversity of social worlds that create meanings through social interaction. In this approach, the production of meanings takes place between the responder and the interviewer, establishing a discourse about the social worlds in which both take part (Miller & Glassner, 2004) (See Annex 1).
- *Participatory observations*: It involved the immersion in activities, events and meetings with communities and external stakeholders (Harding, 2019). This technique helped me to identify the interconnection between meanings, practices and relationships in the everyday life of FARC-EP ex-members.
- *Small talk*: I used this technique in my first encounters to establish rapport with the interlocutors as a way of promoting trust and empathy, which facilitated my subsequent conversations with participants (Jansen, 2013). By interacting in the everyday life of ex-combatants, I could grasp the different meanings and feelings the FARC-EP ex-members have towards their family and surrounding communities.
- *Secondary information*: Written material found in papers, archives, newspapers and reports kept me on track with the process of reincorporation and the

different challenges that government and FARC-EP ex-members have in the implementation of the peace agreement. Additionally, access to a significant number of documentaries, short films and interviews carried out with ex-combatants helped me to analyse different perspectives regarding their practices, opinions and challenges in their transition to post-conflict (See Annex 2).

4.2. Case Studies

The High Commissioner of Peace accredited as part of the peace agreement more than 13,000⁹⁶ FARC-EP ex-combatants. As part of reincorporation, the government created the ZVTN, now called the AETCR (before the ETCR) to initiate the reinsertion and transition to civilian life of FARC-EP ex-members. Now, approximately 2,593 ex-combatants are part of the AETCRs, others are located in more than 73 NARs and the rest have decided to follow an individual reincorporation approach (Rueda, 2020). In this research, I exclusively focus on collective reincorporation, which means the FARC-EP ex-members who are still grouped to develop collective reincorporation initiatives in the NARs and AETCRs.

After an exhaustive study about the places where FARC-EP ex-members were grouping and the security conditions of the territories, I chose one NAR and two AETCRs as the cases of my research. The following aspects influenced the selection of these three territories: a) the willingness of the community to accept and support my research; b) my previous work experience and contacts gained in these territories; c) the number of FARC-EP ex-members who were still living in the territories on a collective basis; and d) the social and economic collective initiatives.

Additionally, I considered the information provided in reports and evaluations about the current security conditions of the AETCRs and NARs, the relationship the FARC-EP had in former times with surrounding communities, and the presence of dissident and criminal bands in these territories⁹⁷. Accordingly, I chose two AETCRs — Llano Grande and Agua Bonita — and one NAR — San José de León (See Figure 6). I

⁹⁶ According to the report released by the ARN in 2020 on the webpage

<http://www.reincorporacion.gov.co/es/reincorporacion/Paginas/La-Reincorporaci%C3%B3n-en-cifras.aspx>

⁹⁷ While in the north of Colombia the dominant groups were the paramilitaries, in the south the guerrillas of FARC-EP controlled these zones for ages (Ávila, 2019).

identified three common characteristics of the selected spaces: a) a stable security condition and accessibility; b) a collective interest in reincorporation; and c) the willingness of surrounding communities to contribute in the collective reincorporation process.

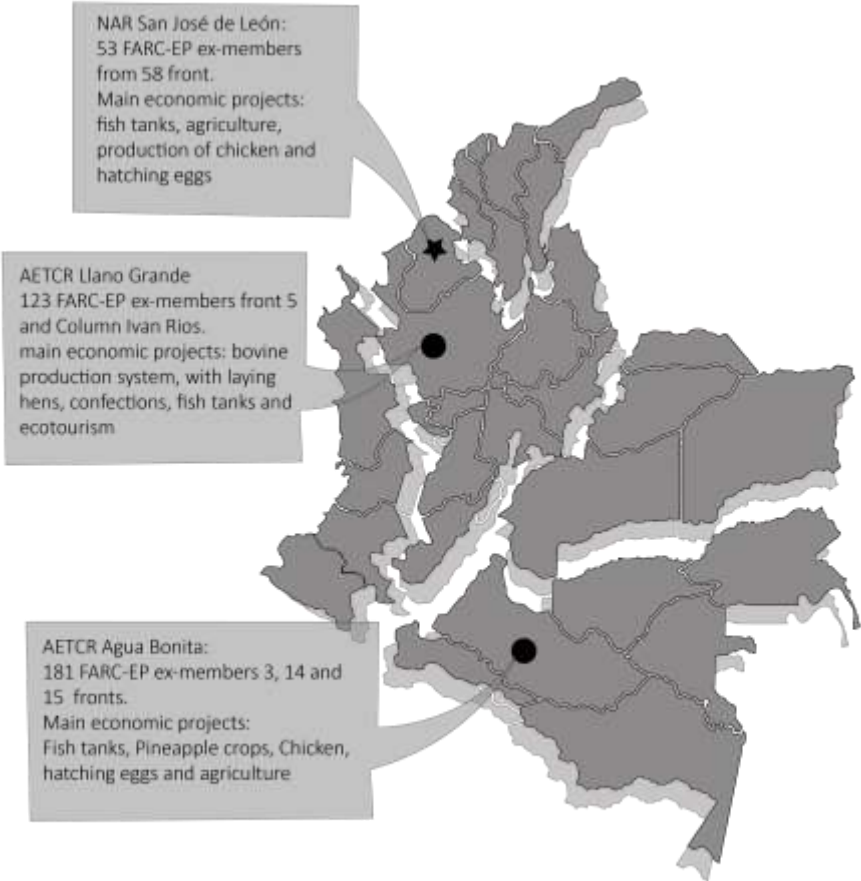


Figure 6: AETCRs and NAR case studies. Own elaboration

The following section describes each of the territories where I did my fieldwork. First, I provide a brief description of each case, considering the social and economic characteristics of the locals and the former conflict dynamics in each territory, with reference to some narratives of community members.

4.2.1. Llano Grande

The AETCR Llano Grande, or Jacobo Arango, in honour of one of the FARC-EP commanders, is located 40km to the north of Dabeiba, one of the biggest municipalities on the west side of the Antioquia department. This town is connected to the Uraba Antioqueño

and the departments of Chocó and Córdoba. Reaching the AETCR Llano Grande takes more than an hour by jeep or motorcycle-taxi from Dabeiba. The route is full of twists and turns with an abyss on the right, in which one can find the canyon of Chimiado, with the Paramillo Hill as a backdrop, in which rural and jungle ecosystems combine.

The central location of this area, its connection with some of the main cities of Colombia and the mountainous terrain of this region turned it into a point of interest to paramilitaries and guerrilla groups in the 1990s, becoming a centre of marginalisation and people displacement for more than a decade. During this period, Llano Grande was a corridor for paramilitaries and FARC-EP groups. The natives of the region were caught in the middle of confrontations, suffering manipulation and threats from both groups and with particularly high levels of victimisation from paramilitary groups, who committed massive abuses in relation to the population's belongings and resources.

One of the community leaders who was forcibly displaced during the 1990s by paramilitary groups argues that between 1997 and 2000, members of Llano Grande lived the worst period of conflict:

[W]e had here the war alive in our heads [...]. When a helicopter came round that hill, we knew that the attacks would begin with bombs and bullets [...]. At that time, I had a little girl. When the helicopter came, she started to cry. That caused a lump in my throat [...] I did not know what to do. (Yason, member of the Llano Grande community, November 2018)

Carmen, one of the founders of this village and now the owner of the biggest supermarket in Llano Grande, describes the relationship the natives of the region had with paramilitary and guerrilla groups:

The ones who were not attacked for the 'paracos' were killed by the guerrillas and the ones who supported the guerrillas were killed by the 'paracos'. The ones who suffered the most were the ones in the middle [...]. In 2000, we lived the strongest displacement here, which took us six years to come back from. (Carmen, member of the Llano Grande community, November 2018)

One of the most tragic events that Dabeiba municipality experienced was between November 23 and 27, 1997, when 80 members of the former paramilitary groups⁹⁸ entered La Balsita⁹⁹ and treated all the members of the community as guerrilla allies. This event represented one of the highest episodes of conflict in this region, claiming the lives of more than 15 people and causing a massive displacement of 300 inhabitants to the centre of Dabeiba.

The threats, disappearance and tortures against the entire municipality of Dabeiba increased drastically between 1997 and 1999, including 143 assassinations and hundreds of forced displacements. Two years later in 2000, fronts 5, 34 and 58 of the FARC-EP left the population of Dabeiba in ruins after 11 hours of attacks with the paramilitary groups, claiming the lives of many natives of the region in the midst of the combat¹⁰⁰ (Gómez 1997; Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz, 2019).

After these events, the community of Llano Grande started to reunify little by little. Around 5,000 people, 1,500 of them children, returned to their lands and decided to start their life over in their hometown (Misión de la ONU, 2017). Now, most of them are back in this territory, except for some of the youth generation who remained in Medellín or nearby bigger towns. Most of the natives of the region depend on agriculture for survival, producing coffee and beans, and to a lesser extent fruit and vegetables; others are engaged in milk production and animals. Most of them complain about the price depression of their products due to the control of intermediaries in the region and the influence of international companies.

By 2016, Llano Grande had 173 inhabitants and 30 households, not counting the indigenous *cabildos of emberas*¹⁰¹. Since 2017, the number of inhabitants in the village has increased with the arrival of more than 300 FARC-EP ex-members from front 5 and Column Ivan Rios, and the large number of members of police, armed forces, international actors and floating population that mostly want to visit this AETCR. Members of the community have said that they have never seen such a big number of international and national entities in their

⁹⁸ Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá (ACCU).

⁹⁹ La Balsita is one of the “corregimientos” (boroughs) in the municipality of Dabeiba.

¹⁰⁰ In 2019, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (*La Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz-JEP*) discovered in the cemetery of Dabeiba the first mass grave of “*Falsos positivos*” (innocent people who were killed by military groups and presented them to authorities as guerrilleros killed in battle with the aim to inflate body counts and receive promotions or other benefits), in which there were more than 71 people assassinated by members of military forces (Romero, 2020).

¹⁰¹ Approximately 42,000 indigenous emberas are in Colombia.

village. They argue that they were an abandoned community that was never a priority for the local government.

So far, the presence of national and international agencies have contributed in the investment of new economic projects and infrastructures, such as improving the road from Dabeiba to Llano Grande, the creation of a small industry of *arepas*¹⁰² for women and the renovation of the municipal soccer field. Additionally, the community has received educational training programmes on subjects such as income generation, community development and gender.

Amparo, one of the leaders of the industry of *Arepas*, argues that since they have had a police station and a military battalion to protect the ex-combatants, the natives of Llano Grande have had better security conditions. However, some reports sustain that the Clan del Golfo¹⁰³ is operating 12km away from Llano Grande, as well as some dissident groups from the FARC-EP. To date, one member of this AETCR has been killed while working as a facilitator of the peace pedagogic in the region. Now, the FARC-EP ex-members of Llano Grande account for four bodyguards that protect seven of their leaders¹⁰⁴.

By 2019, the number of ex-combatants living in this AETCR had reduced by more than a half, with a total of 121 and 49 children¹⁰⁵, but they continue to implement their collective reincorporation process as usual. In November 2019, 240 hectares of land, two hours from Llano Grande, was adjudicated to them¹⁰⁶ to develop agriculture projects and biodiversity protection. They have not yet got a piece of land for housing; however, this process is under review and possible further adjudication.

In terms of economic projects, FARC-EP ex-members participate in a bovine production system, with laying hens, confections, fish tanks and ecotourism. Most of these projects are in their initial production phase and have not reached a level of self-sustainability. Now, 35 FARC-EP ex-members out of the 121 are enrolling in the labour market (ARN, 2020).

¹⁰² A typical traditional food of Colombia made of corn flour.

¹⁰³ They referred to themselves as paramilitaries Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia.

¹⁰⁴ Information obtained in a security meeting in Llano Grande 2019.

¹⁰⁵ Data given by one of the government staff who worked in the AETCR Llano Grande.

¹⁰⁶ This land was donated from Proantioquia, Postobón, Grupo Sura, Grupo Nutresa, Bancolombia, Grupo Argos, Corbeta y la Fundación Fraternidad Medellín. Information obtained at <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/medellin/en-antioquia-excombatientes-tendran-270-hectareas-para-proyectos-productivos-432486>

4.2.2. Agua Bonita

Around 300 ex-combatants from fronts 3, 14 and 15 of the FARC-EP arrived to the village of Agua Bonita, in the municipality of La Montañita, on February 20, 2017. FARC-EP ex-members named this zone AETCR Hector Ramirez in honour of one of the commanders who led the guerrilla movement in the south of Colombia. In the last 4 years, this AETCR has been recognised as the first socialist town in Colombia¹⁰⁷.

Agua Bonita is located 36km south-west from Florencia, the capital of the Caquetá department. This region has a forest ecosystem and a variety of agricultural alternatives. Reaching Agua Bonita is possible by motorbike-taxi or car. The first 24km is made up of a paved motorway that connects Florencia with Montañita, follow by 12km of dirt road in bad condition. In between, one can see *la Cordillera de los Andes* that combines the forest of Amazonas with a landscape of various mountains, creeks and rivers.

The AECTR Agua Bonita is now called *Centro Poblado*¹⁰⁸ Agua Bonita II. In 2017, the collective of ex-combatants¹⁰⁹ bought the 53 hectares in which this AETCR was located. Until 2020, there were approximately 169 ex-combatants, 48 children and more than 80 civil population members (relatives or partners of the ex-combatants)¹¹⁰. In the village of Agua Bonita I live the natives of the region. This community is formed of 23 families who live mostly from agriculture, livestock and poultry.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the department of Caquetá was the central region where FARC-EP guerrillas operated and consolidated their expansion throughout Colombia. They created the *Bloque Sur* (South Bloc) in this territory and chose this region as the place to host the FARC-EP secretariat. From the 1980s onwards, drug trafficking began to finance the FARC-EP, expanding abruptly in the Caquetá region. During 1998 and 2002, most of the natives of the region had some kind of physical proximity with FARC-EP combatants and others played a role as allies or militias, influencing local communities and the social and political dynamic of the region (Daly, 2016).

One of the factors that most affected the inhabitants of this region was the number of assassinations and displacements resulting mainly from the confrontations between military

¹⁰⁷ See for example <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/proceso-de-paz/asi-es-el-primer-pueblo-socialista-del-pais-creado-por-exguerrilleros-143534>; <https://anamdrosania.wixsite.com/etcr>.

¹⁰⁸ Similar to borough.

¹⁰⁹ Each ex-combatant gave 2,000,000 Colombian pesos to buy the land (approximately €600).

¹¹⁰ Information obtained in 2019 by members of ARN.

forces and the FARC-EP. In 2013, 271 people were assassinated and 4,137 were displaced from this region (Rocha, 2014). During the 1990s and 2000s, the conflict conditions of the region affected its economy, social stability and the trust between communities. Jeronimo, one of the leaders and founders of Agua Bonita, states that people got used to seeing and interacting with combatants from the guerrilla group. For him, now things remain nearly the same: “Well, everything was conflict, we were used to it [...]. Now, the social dynamics, the surroundings and the economy remain the same, except for the coca cultivation that now is less” (Jeronimo, member of Agua Bonita community, October 2018).

However, for other members of the community, the arrival of FARC-EP ex-members to this municipality brought new security dynamics and social relationships. The affluence of a number of national and international organisations and public forces has increased drastically the finances of the area, improved the security conditions of the territory and the number of income generation projects. The community is running projects involving fish tanks, poultry, pineapple crops, hatching egg production, pulp fruit production, and even a cobbler’s workshop. Additionally, they have a bakery, a shop, a supermarket, a restaurant, a fast-food restaurant, a hotel and a bar. All of the incomes serve to strengthen the collective cooperative and the ex-combatants’ economic improvement.

Additionally, Agua Bonita II is involved in the humanitarian demining project called “*Humanicemos DH*”. This organisation expects to train and provide jobs as operators in humanitarian demining to 146 ex-combatants from different parts of Colombia. This project contributes to both the reparation process of ex-combatants and their access to job opportunities¹¹¹. So far, there are 40 people from this *Centro Poblado* who work in this initiative.

As of 2020, there were no records of the assassination of any FARC-EP ex-members who is part of this *Centro Poblado*. However, the presence of FARC-EP dissidence from the front 1 commanded by Gentil Duarte and Rodrigo Cadete is operating in municipalities near to Agua Bonita, which puts at risk the security of the ex-combatants (PARES, 2018). Now, 16 bodyguards protect eight FARC-EP ex-members who were commanders and have received some kind of threat since the peace agreement was signed.

¹¹¹ Information obtained from the webpage <https://www.humanicemosdh.org>.

4.2.3. San José de León Community

In 2017, more than 100 ex-combatants that were part of front 58 moved to El Gallo, a village two hours away by boat and road from the municipality of Tierra Alta in Córdoba. After six months of being in El Gallo, 60 ex-combatants that were part of this former ZVTN decided to move together to another territory in search of new economic and social reincorporation opportunities. According to them, the process of reincorporation in El Gallo was in a “vacuum”. These ex-combatants faced several problems: the access to this territory was too difficult, there were no clear productive alternatives for self-sustainability, and there was no social infrastructure to support their reincorporation process.

In October 2017, the FARC-EP ex-members from front 58 decided to leave El Gallo without a clear course of where to go. During this process, they counted on the support of international organisations and the protection of military forces and police. After one month of searching for a place to stay, in December 2017, they bought 25 hectares of land in the village of San José de León, in the municipality of Mutata, with contributions from all members of this collective.

San José de León is a small village with 55 families and 200 inhabitants, most of whom derive income from agriculture. Mainly, they have cacao crops, poultry, timber species and farmers’ food crops. Arriving to this village takes one hour from Chigorodó on a paved road. This village is located in the so-called *eje bananero*¹¹² of Uraba Antioqueño, a region affected drastically in the 1970s by paramilitaries and guerrilla groups.

At the end of the 1970s, front 5 of the FARC-EP arrived to Mutata to gain recognition in the region and to gain financial support for their fighting by extortion and kidnapping. However, the control of the FARC-EP over the territory was affected in the 1990s by the arrival of the paramilitary group *Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Uribe* (Peasants Self-Defences of Córdoba y Uribe - ACCU)¹¹³. Between 1996 and 2006, the paramilitaries committed a vast number of land dispositions and displacements, together with the weakening of FARC-EP allies and the assassination of representatives of the UP, which ended in a massive number of confrontations with the FARC-EP¹¹⁴ (Flórez & Restrepo, 2014). The great number of paramilitaries and the formation of their war and financial strategy in this

¹¹² Banana sector.

¹¹³ Later grouping as the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia.

¹¹⁴ Members of demobilised EPL who created *El Movimiento Esperanza Paz y Libertad* (Hope, Peace and Freedom Movement) fought during this period against the FARC-EP and the communist party (OCHA, 2004)

region turned the Uraba Antioqueño into a powerful corridor for drug trafficking (Rutas del Conflicto, 2019).

By that time, members of San José de León-Mutata were subject to threats and extortion. However, they were not in the middle of any confrontation between guerrillas and paramilitaries groups, as happened in other villages in El Uraba Antioqueño¹¹⁵. Monica, one of the community leaders in San José de León, argues that when members of this community started to see the number of assassinations rising near to their village, they decided to leave their land and move to another region. She states that most people returned to the village after 2006 when the conflict ended and the socio-economic conditions improved in the region.

In November 2017, the appearance of a group of 53 ex-combatants in the village of San José de León caused varying opinions in its inhabitants. Although some natives of this region wanted to help them and provide support, others were sceptical about receiving them, as this could affect their security conditions. However, with time, they created a compact and unique community that has become the village of San José de León.

Since the arrival of FARC-EP ex-members, the natives of this community have benefited from various projects. Now, a paved road connects to the National Route 62, which has eased the transport of groceries and the mobilisation of forest and agricultural products. Additionally, a primary school was opened as part of the agreement with the local government, which has benefited the children of the community and relatives of FARC-EP ex-members.

The main collective economic project is fish farming, which aims to benefit the future economic stability of neighbouring communities. They currently have nine collective fish tanks that are managed by a cooperative of former FARC-EP members. Three large fish tanks, a cold store and a fish cleaning area are also being built with government support. Other projects include vegetable crops and the production of chickens and eggs for hatching, run by women from this collective.

FARC-EP ex-members who live in San José de León do not receive food remittance from the government, nor do they receive protection from military forces or the police as they do in the AETCRs. Moving from the initial place destined for their reincorporation process affected their agreement with the government, and therefore the reversal of some

¹¹⁵ Such as Pueblo Bello and San José de Apartadó (Information collected in conversation with the natives of the village of San José de León).

benefits. However, they are still receiving their monthly allowance, and technical and social support from the United Nations Mission, the ARN and different public and private organisations. In 2018, the village welcomed six families of FARC-EP ex-members who were displaced from dissident groups. Three of them are still living there. Additionally, in 2020, 74 FARC-EP ex-members from the AETCR Santa Lucia in Ituango Antioquia were relocated to Mutata near to San José de León as a result of a number of threats and the assassination of eight of their members (ARN, 2020c; FARC, 2020).

4.3. The Participants

The participants of this research are ex-combatants (women and men) from the guerrilla group FARC-EP who signed the peace agreement in 2016 with the Colombian government. In the wide universe of ex-combatants were militiamen, guerrilla troops, commanders and guerrillas deprived of liberty¹¹⁶. In this research, I considered the guerrilla or militiamen who decided to register in the process of reincorporation¹¹⁷, agreed to follow the collective reincorporation process, and are now located in either the AECTRs or the NARs.

I conducted interviews with 58 FARC-EP ex-members (See Annex 3): 19 women and 39 men; six were part of the militiamen, two commanders in the national structure of the FARC-EP, and the rest were part of the troops of the guerrilla military structure (See Table 1). To date, 16 have a leadership role in the territories and the remaining 42 are part of the collective. They ranged from 21 to 72 years old and were in different ranges of time in the guerrilla group. Some spent only three years in the group, while others had more than 30 years in arms, which illustrated a varying degree of appropriation and knowledge of the FARC-EP discourses and different levels of attachment to this guerrilla group (See table 2).

Additionally, I held 12 interviews with members of the community that lived around these territories and 4 with members of the government. To gain more contextualisation about the policy of reincorporation and the administrative and operative structure of the reincorporation programme, I interviewed four members of the ARN.

¹¹⁶ 55 percent of the universe of FARC-EP ex-members were part of the FARC-EP troops. The remaining 45 percent referred to commanders, men and women with a higher rank than the troop combatants, with the power to decide and assign activities to the FARC-EP members. Another group were the militiamen, who in the urban and rural areas were at the service of the organisation; the majority carried out non-military logistics and intelligence work. Finally, the detainees, the ones who are still in jail. These four groups are mentioned without distinction under the expression FARC ex-members (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2017).

¹¹⁷ According to the ARN, 673 ex-combatants are not registered in the reincorporation programmes (ARN, 2020b).

As part of my ethnography, I participated in different meetings, social events, political debates, cultivation activities and workshops run by ex-combatants, government and international agencies.

Location	Interviewers	First Fieldwork (2018)	Second Fieldwork (2019)	Total
Agua Bonita	Community	3	1	4
	FARC-EP ex-members	16	10	26
Llano Grande	Community	5	0	5
	FARC-EP ex-members	13	4	17
San José de León	Community	2	3	5
	FARC-EP ex-members	4	11	15
Members of the government		3	1	4

Table 1: Number of interviews with FARC-EP ex-members or members of the community according to area.

Role in the FARC-EP	No. of participants
Commander (Low and medium level of commander)	18
Militia	5
Troops	35
Age in the Interview	No. of participants
Under 30	5
Between 30-40	20
Between 40-50	25
Between 50-60	5
Over 60	3
Time as Guerrilla (in years)	No. of participants
Under 5	2
Between 5-10	1
Between 10-20	28
Between 20-30	23
Over 30	4

Table 2: Main characteristics of FARC-EP ex-members interviewed.

4.4. Analysis of Ethnographic Data

Data analysis is one of the most significant features of ethnography, as it requires critical and creative thinking to synthesise and evaluate the information (Fetterman, 2010). Generally, it begins in the pre-field work phase during the formulation of the problem and

continues into the drafting process, in establishing the design and data collection (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.158).

I initiated the analysis of data during my fieldwork. While designing and collecting the information, I adapted the methods and strategies to approach the FARC-EP ex-members, following the demands of the contexts and my personal interests. The sources that provided me with data and concepts were patterns of thought, behaviours and relationships that emerged from the everyday life of reincorporation. I gave relevance to the key events, meetings and celebrations that FARC-EP ex-members and the surrounding communities carried out, as a way to identify social interactions and collective patterns (Fetterman, 2010).

The information was organised in a system of open codes that helped me to discover grounded theories while I grouped, organised, synthesised and prioritised the information. The global codes became the categories of my analysis. They involved a set of sub-codes that provided detailed information on each open code. In this process, I created patterns of concepts from the repetition of argumentation, practices and discussions. The coding process involved “not only the identification of concrete things, but also ideas and meanings” (LeCompte & Schensul, 2013, p.112). Each code engaged with specific coding that provided detailed information based on major domains and subdomains (LeCompte & Schensul, 2013).

The foundation of the analysis was the transcription of the interviews carried out with 58 FARC-EP ex-members, 12 members of surrounding communities and 4 members of the government. Additionally, I transcribed 106 field diaries in which I described all the impressions gained from short talks, participation in activities, trainings, workshops, meetings, social events and political discussions. During my first fieldwork between October and December 2018, I approached the participants with general questions as a means to elaborate and define the aim of my research. In my second fieldwork between October 2019 and January 2021, my observations and interviews were more focalised and pointed to the specific interests of inquiry. I also analysed some audiovisual information such as photos, interviews and documentaries about the reincorporation of the FARC-EP.

All the information mentioned above was added and organised in the software MAXQDA. First, I distributed the information in open codes, where I labelled groups of information and selected specific categories for a grouping of codes. Subsequently, I identified the patterns of association with the main category, and then I related categories and sub-categories, what is called axial categorisation (following Strauss & Corbin techniques

and procedures, 1990). In total, I created 11 categories and 55 sub-categories that grouped the codes identified in my data collection (See Annex 4). The definition of categories guided the structure of my research, the creation of the research's chapters and the prioritisation of some topics over others. I designed the sub-chapter of my research by considering the sub-categories and connections among them, which helped me to determine the relevance given to each topic.

The evolution of reincorporation processes between 2017 and 2020 and the different experiences gained from FARC-EP ex-members and surrounding communities gave me a bigger perspective of my research. Here, my aim was to identify special features that transcend groups of people, places and times (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Unfortunately, the time limitation in the field¹¹⁸ did not allow me to explore in depth the evolving process of social, political and economic dynamics of collective reincorporation, nor the permanent social intersections that play a part in the collectivity of FARC-EP ex-members in reincorporation.

Additionally, the saturation of outsiders¹¹⁹ (international organisations, universities, researchers, members of the government) who go to these territories to obtain information on the reincorporation process affected the quality of my data collection and the general acceptance of my research. Ex-combatant leaders were overwhelmed with interviews, meetings and large numbers of requests from national and international researchers who were interested in knowing about their reincorporation process. I could say that the ex-combatant leaders already knew by heart the adequate political answers to all questions.

Under these conditions, my interviews did not take more than 40 minutes and were held mostly with those who do not play the role as leaders. I also used the information collected from my participation in different activities in which FARC-EP ex-members were involved, such as communal meetings, training, workshops, political assemblies and parties. Furthermore, once a week, I worked with a group of FARC-EP ex-members in the crops and, during social events, I helped in the kitchen. I can say that participant observation was the perfect technique to finding out information about the life in collective reincorporation and

¹¹⁸ I could not finish my fieldwork due to COVID-19. However, I continued to be in contact with some of the members of the three territories in 2020 holding informal online interviews.

¹¹⁹ "Outsiders are widely seen as individuals or agencies who choose to become involved in a conflict. Though they may feel a great sense of engagement and attachment, they have little to lose personally. They may live in the setting for extended periods of time, but they can leave and work elsewhere" (Interpeace, 2010, p.1).

the best complement to the interviews. The following section analyses the different ethical considerations I took into account before, during and after my data collection.

4.5. Ethical Concerns and Positionality

One of the things that I disliked the most when I worked with victims and ex-combatants in Colombia was the role of foreigners and national researchers who stayed in my workshops, community activities and meetings, doing what they called “participatory observation”. Some of them were more involved in the activities and spent time with us, but others just collected information and then disappeared. I always noticed the supremacy of outsiders over insiders (in this context I saw myself as an insider¹²⁰) in terms of economic conditions, security guarantees and knowledge. I had the feeling that social research was in a parallel bubble with other codes and meanings.

Doing my PhD abroad allowed me to establish a new discourse on the role and compromise of “external” researchers in countries like Colombia and it made me notice, by playing the role of researcher, the different personal and academic ethical concerns “outsiders” have to deal with when approaching the participants of research. In the following, I want to address the importance of building a learning cycle by understanding horizontal relationships in the field, and the influence of our historical background, priorities and interests when building relationships with research participants.

In a conversation that I had with Jeronimo, while he was sacrificing a cow together with other FARC-EP ex-members, he made me realise the gap between them and me. When he noticed my surprise at seeing them kill a cow, he said to me:

It would be nice to be a researcher, you go to these poor countries, have fun doing things that you have not experienced in your life and then go back to your luxury reality, and we remain here in this poverty (Jeronimo, November 2019, Agua Bonita).

In another opportunity, other groups of ex-combatants mentioned that the best thing about being “outsiders” is that everything surprises them. On another occasion, one ex-combatant said: “People who come here look at us as if they were going to a zoo” (Urbano

¹²⁰ Usually when I interacted with foreigners, I considered myself an “insider”, but when I worked with communities, I saw myself as an “outsider”.

Llano Grande, November 2018). Apparently, he wanted to say that people look at them differently to ordinary people.

These examples highlight the power imbalances in social research studies. Understanding fieldwork as a field of knowledge produces an asymmetrical relationship between the knower and the “objects”, showing an idea that the social realities are something that have to be discovered by outsiders (Finlay, 2002). This perspective disregards the power of those who are in the field and denotes backwardness by enforcing ideas and power from western perspectives, reproducing post-colonial approaches and homogeneous discourses¹²¹.

Before I went to the field, I wanted to pursue the ethical parameters that most researchers follow when they do research abroad. They provide an environment of equal conditions and rights in the development of the research such as creating a code of consent, contact with stakeholders and a deep study of the socio-political conditions of the region where they plan to go (Ryen, 2016). I even read different articles about ethics in fieldwork and discourses around positionality and reflexivity. Later, I discovered that feelings, coherence and social sensitivity aligned with the parameters and requirements discussed in academic studies. I realised that “informed consent” (but not related to a formal signature letter or something alike) involved horizontal trust building between me as the researcher and the participants, and a process of a verbal agreement on the research procedure, the confidentiality of the information and its exclusive use for research purposes.

I decided to go to these territories following the personal ethical consideration that I used to have when I worked in Colombia, but now placing myself in the position of an “outsider” and following my assumption about “Colombia” that I had formed in my mind. Autesserre points out that “assumptions make the choice of certain strategies seem natural, appropriate, and effective, while others appear inappropriate, illegitimate, or even unthinkable” (2017, p.122).

For instance, I had the assumption that being Colombian would make the fieldwork easier for me and would aid in developing my research. However, being a Colombian, living abroad had pros and cons throughout my research. During my fieldwork, I could see how locals and governmental entities accepted more foreigners than people from their own

¹²¹ The World Bank launched the “Parliamentarians in the Field” programme, demonstrating that the regions associated with the field are Asia, Balkans, Latin America and the Middle East (World Bank, 2004). Those regions showed a colonial perspective and a “backwardness” (Richmond, Kappler, & Björkdahl, 2015).

country¹²². I remember that three foreigners usually captured more of the attention of the FARC-EP ex-members and local government in the territories where I did my fieldwork.

On the other hand, being Colombian and having wide experience working with ex-combatants helped me discover different nuances in reincorporation. The experience of working in the field and my own experience as a Colombian allowed me to explore in detail the interwoven of social, economic and political dynamics with the practices of FARC-EP ex-members and surrounding communities. I can say that my analysis was permeated by my personal and work experiences in Colombia and my subjective ideas as a Colombian.

In my research, I considered my subjectivity to be an opportunity for the enrichment of the data. I was aware of my motivations, assumptions and interests and the different forces that guided the direction of my study (Finlay, 2002). My challenge was to be aware of the influence that my experience as a Colombian woman from Bogotá, who has worked as a peace practitioner, had on the analysis and interpretation of the results. Bryman argues that social researchers should be “reflective about the implications of their methods, values, biases, and decisions for the knowledge of the social world they generate” (Bryman, 2012, p.383). Under this framework, the solution is not to eliminate the researcher’s subjectivity, but to recognise it (Finlay, 2002).

Most of the social scientific studies, especially ethnography approaches, follow disciplinary norms of reflexivity and positionality (Thaler, 2019). Reflexivity analyses how the researcher’s biographies intersect with the interpretation of field experiences, showing the highly subjectivist accounts of fieldwork (Finlay, 2002). The positionality includes a reflection of the researchers’ position and the interactive, intersubjective nature of data collection (Thaler, 2019). While reflexivity recognises the influence of researchers' personal experiences on data collection and analysis, positionality requires an awareness of and reflection on this influential relationship.

These approaches show that the information obtained in the field is not only shaped by the rapport that is built between the researchers and the participants of the research, but also by the social similarities and distance between both actors (Silverman, 2016). For instance, the researcher’s positionality can influence the collection and interpretation of qualitative data. In this case, the social similarities and differences between the researcher and the participants might shape the exchange of information, creating some biases in the

¹²² Autosserre (2014) mentions that people give foreigners more credibility than people from their own country.

research process. This situation requires a self-reflexivity of the researcher that allows a proper interpretation of meanings around the social world (Miller & Glassner, 2004).

Finlay notes that “the research participants also have the capacity to be reflexive beings: They can be co-opted into the research as co-researchers” (2002, p.218). By valuing the nature of power discourses of local actors and their capacity to be the co-researchers of their own reality, the research settings have to be turned from places of “intervention” into fields of interaction in which agency, knowledge and mobilisation are present (Richmond, Kappler, & Björkdahl, 2015, p.37).

Within this framework, I positioned myself in this research as a co-research subject that greatly influenced the collection and analysis of data. The results of this research clearly interact with my biography, my academic studies, my work experience and my role as a Colombian.

Part Two: Empirical Findings: Meanings and Practices in Reincorporation

“This is the Marquetalia of the 21st century. The collective is a symbolic exercise of resistance, in which we exchange ideas and carry out debates. Making resistance from collective action is not returning to arms. We have already left this form of insurgency, but now our insurgency is with our words, our role model and the commitment we have with Colombia”
(Christin, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

5. Building Meanings in Reincorporation

The first time that I interacted with ex-combatants was in 2008. I met first hand *campesinos*, people who had experienced the conflict and suffered from exclusion and poverty in Colombia. The most shocking thing about this encounter was when I asked some ex-combatants to sign an attendance list, some of them could not do it, as they were illiterate. However, they did have experience in carrying a weapon and manoeuvre during the conflict for several years. Now, they are back to their former realities, the realities they had tried to escape when they became members of the FARC-EP. A current reality that comprises poverty, exclusion and vulnerability.

This chapter will analyse the meanings of collective reincorporation from the ex-combatants’ voices and the different challenges they and the surrounding communities have faced in this transition. In the following, I explore the variety of alternative approaches to reintegration that have not yet been explored, such as the difference between reintegration and reincorporation, the collective meanings in reincorporation and the challenges of women in reincorporation. I explore the meaning around collective reincorporation and the diverse political, social and economic perspectives of FARC-EP ex-members in the transition to post-conflict.

Understanding these concepts from the perspective and experiences of the locals led me to consider the diversity of ex-combatants, realities, needs and characteristics of (post-) conflict societies in which reintegration is taking place. The life of FARC-EP ex-members has passed through three different stages: the one before they decided to join the guerrilla groups; another while they were within the guerrilla group; and then their current reincorporation process. These three phases complement each other and produce a clear understanding of what collective reincorporation means for them. Beyond a simple “temptation to reinvent the wheel” (ICG, 2014, p.11), collective reincorporation embeds a

new understanding of the role of FARC-EP ex-members in society and new alternatives to achieve an adequate social, political and economic reintegration.

The concept of collective reincorporation in reintegration requires a bottom-up analysis, not from what is stated in the peace agreement or exposed in the reincorporation policy, but from the voices of the FARC-EP ex-members who are dealing with this concept in their everyday life. They are building the meaning of collective reincorporation, considering a myriad of memories, feelings and experiences gained before being part of the guerrilla group, while living as guerrillas and now as ex-combatants.

Although the concept of collectivity is not new in the FARC-EP ex-combatants' discourse, its articulation with reincorporation has transformed its meanings in practice. At present, the term "collectivity" has been altered by the interests, relationships and priorities that FARC-EP ex-members now have as "civilians"¹²³. Living under other political, social and economic dynamics in reincorporation leads them to interpret and value the collective concept beyond the traditional ideas they had in wartime. They adapt their collective meanings to their needs in times of reincorporation, giving it another value and purpose.

Meanings are highly studied in symbolic interactionism. This theory claims that the production of meanings relates to root images, attached to the experiences people encounter throughout their lives. Meanings from this perspective change according to the interaction that a person has with other fellows and are sensitive to interpretation in relation to the subjects, objects, institutions, friends, guiding pattern and activities with which people interact (Blumer, 1969).

In their current circumstances, one can say that ex-combatants are in a transitional process that implies a change of their surroundings. This transition leads to the acquisition of new roles, interests and responsibilities, producing a gradual change of the former meanings about themselves and their surroundings. Sociologists associate the building of meanings with "social positions, status demands, social roles, cultural prescriptions, norms and values, social pressure and group affiliation" (Blumer, 1969, p.3). Furthermore, it relates to the feelings, emotions, memories and experiences people attribute to certain objects (Blumer, 1969).

During their encounters with the objects, people select, check, avoid, regroup and transform the meanings according to the experiences gathered with such objects (Blumer, 1969). The emergence of new meanings around reincorporation influences the ex-

¹²³ I put civilians in quotation marks as FARC-EP ex-members believe that to acquire this designation they must first live in an environment of social justice.

combatants' self-concept and their future behaviour when interacting with diverse social categories (Carter & Fuller, 2012). In the building of the self, people define their specific profile according to the roles they currently have in society, which in turn produce the re-signification of their new identity and the re-framing of meanings (Kalkhoff, 2012).

In the transition from conflict to reincorporation, FARC-EP ex-members re-define their meanings around the concept of collectivity attached to conflict times. The meanings given to collective reincorporation vary according to the role they played during the conflict, their reasons for being part of the guerrilla group, the current conditions in their process of reincorporation and their new socio-economic and political interests.

Understanding collectivity emerges from the ex-combatants' capacity to react and change predetermined meanings with regard to interaction with new objects and the relations with new experiences (Adler, et al., 1977). The building of meanings based on an interactionism perspective identifies the subjects as capable of having agency and autonomy to create their own social world (Carter & Fuller, 2012).

The experiences shared by FARC-EP ex-members leads to a common ground in the definition of collective reincorporation. Two reasons explain this assertion. First, the fact that they have experienced collective actions during the conflict and under similar conditions makes them understand this concept in a similar way. Second, life in poverty in rural areas before joining the guerrillas means they share similar frustrations and hopes. Conversely, other aspects could contribute to different meanings around collective reincorporation, such as the reasons to be part of the guerrilla group. The hierarchical role that FARC-EP ex-members played in the armed group, their relationships with their former commanders and their current conditions of reincorporation.

In this context, the recognition of the meanings around collective reincorporation could trigger new perspectives of doing reintegration by acknowledging the past and present lives of ex-combatants and their current interactions with new experiences, people, institutions, places and spaces. I can say that connecting the past and present lives of FARC-EP ex-members becomes a way to understand the everyday realities of each ex-combatant.

The following section analyses separately the meanings of reincorporation and the meaning of collectivity in reincorporation. Although the idea of collectivity is embedded in the guerrillas' everyday relations, the concept of reincorporation appears during the peace agreement in 2016. The former represents an integration of ex-combatants' past and present

meanings, and the latter is based more on political discourses that emerged during the peace agreement. Together, they re-create a new perspective of reintegration, which acknowledges collective reincorporation as a process performed in ex-combatants’ everyday life.

5.1. Why to Use the Term “Reincorporation”?

Generally, the denotation in the literature around the concept of reintegration is associated more with normative standards rather than with the everyday practices of ex-combatants. Reintegration represents the access to some economic benefits, legal documents and amenities. However, little value is given to the everyday social, political and economic challenges ex-combatants face when transitioning to a reintegration process.

In a natural setting, ex-combatants use different words to refer to reincorporation. Reintegration, reinsertion, demobilisation, transition, civility¹²⁴ are used indistinctly for FARC-EP ex-members in their everyday lives. However, when they delve deeper into the stated in the peace agreement, they clearly explain that reincorporation was a specific term only for the guerrillas who decided to lay down their weapons in the last peace agreement, not for those who deserted in former DDR processes.

Reincorporation involves all the FARC-EP ex-members that voluntarily took part in the 2016 peace agreement with the Colombian government. The FARC-EP clearly argue that these dialogues were not part of the guerillas’ military defeat (Ávila, 2019; CEDE, 2020; CSIVI-FARC, 2019b; Semana, 2017). Contrary, they believe they are part of a reincorporation process, which means using their past to build their present (See Table 3 explaining the differences between reintegration and reincorporation).

Dimension	Reintegration	Reincorporation
DDR policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ex-combatants follow the international DDR standards. -Government leads all reintegration programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ex-combatants play an active role in the design, implementation and modification of the policy by being part of a tripartite mechanism (formed by members of the United Nations, Colombian government and FARC-EP ex-members). -They create the National

¹²⁴ In spanish *reintegración, reinsertión, desmobilización, transición, civilidad.*

		Council for Reincorporation (CNR) and the Territorial Council for Reincorporation (CTR).
Disarmament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -There is a condition of inequality between both parties of the conflict. -Disarmament is seen as defeat. -There is a handing over of the weapons. -“The term ‘Disarmament’ can include connotations of surrender or of having weapons taken away by a more powerful actor and its use can prevent warring parties from moving forward to negotiation” (United Nations, 2019c, p.16). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Equal condition between both parties of the conflict, in which no one was defeated. -The laying down of weapons represents the first step given by FARC-EP ex-members in their active contribution to peacebuilding and the agreement of both parties (government and ex-FARC-EP) to have the power of conflict transformation.
Relation with ex-combatants’ ideology and legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Most of the ex-combatants their ideology or rejected it for fear of discrimination. -They are called “the deserters” of the guerrilla group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -They consider their legacy and memories from the conflict as part of their social, economic and political reincorporation process.
Place in which they reintegrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All of them return individually to their hometown or mainly to the big cities of Colombia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -They are in the AETCRs, NARs, or they return individually to their hometown of other regions of Colombia.
Relation with surrounding communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Most of them play an invisible role inside the communities. -They take part in symbolic and community actions demanded by the reintegration programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -They play an active role in different community activities by using their role as FARC-EP ex-members. -The term reintegration may be perceived as inappropriate, particularly if the members of armed groups never left their communities (United Nations, 2019c, p.16).
Economic reintegration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Access to short-term employment programmes offered by the government or international agencies. -Individual income generation projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Looking for self-sustainable collective economic projects for ex-combatants and surrounding communities as a way to overcome the economic inequalities in Colombia.

		-Access to individual income generation projects. -Finding jobs as employees.
Political reintegration	-No formal structure for political reintegration of the FARC-EP.	-A political party called <i>Los Comunes</i> , which acts in the Congress and Chamber of Representatives in the national sphere.
Contributions to Peace	-Ex-combatants participate in community reintegration actions imposed by the reintegration programmes, called social services. -Served as government informants in a counterinsurgency strategy.	-FARC-EP ex-members are part of different peacebuilding actions and contributed in different programmes created during the peace agreement, such as PDETs, PNIS;CNR; Humanicemos, JEP, The Truth Commission, UBPD, among others.

Table 3: Differences between reintegration and reincorporation. Own elaboration.

Although the word “reintegration” is part of DDR standards and is followed by most countries that have established peace agreements with insurgent groups, the word “reincorporation” was determined by the FARC-EP ex-members as part of the peace agreement signed with the Colombia government, and therefore encompasses another discursive and practical approach. However, this discourse has faded on this practice due to the variety of external and internal issues that both government and FARC-EP ex-members have faced since the beginning of the peace agreement. All these aspects will be explained later in this chapter.

Pastor Alape¹²⁵ mentions that the former reintegration programmes were based on a governmental counterinsurgency strategy that used the guerrilla deserters as informants for the government to weaken the structure of the FARC-EP. The government's objective was to maintain the war machinery of the state and to help gain benefits and power on its side. In contrast, the 2016 peace agreement with the FARC-EP and their laid down of their weapons was a mutual consent between the guerrillas and the government to move towards peace.

For FARC-EP ex-members, the difference between reintegration and reincorporation resides in the causes and purposes of the laying down of arms between those who signed the

¹²⁵ Ex-combatant from the FARC-EP who is a representative of the National Council of Reincorporation (CNR). Interview carried out by Revista Semana in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9jBw6YUWN9o&t=593s>.

peace agreement and the so-called deserters¹²⁶. The deserters of guerrilla and ex-paramilitaries groups had to opt for concealing their former identities to prevent reprisals against them or to avoid discrimination from receiving communities. Whereas the FARC-EP ex-members who were part of the last peace agreement tackle other challenges, such as territorial and political dilemmas and other kinds of reprisals and discrimination¹²⁷.

Despite the changes made on paper to the meanings and practices of reincorporation, FARC-EP ex-members argue that the Colombian government only changed the word reincorporation in its discourses and policies; however, its *modus operandi* remains the same. The discourses of government officials continue to focus more on an individual approach to reincorporation than a collective perspective.

In spite of this, the FARC-EP ex-members continually insist on being treated as ex-guerrillas and active agents in the peacebuilding process, but the government still sees them as passive askers of society rather than doers of peacebuilding. For instance, the government thinks that by simply giving some economic benefits to ex-combatants or quantifying the number of them actively participating in their programmes, they are fulfilling the commitments of the peace agreement. However, they do not commit to long-term projects that would benefit the plans of FARC-EP ex-members as a collective.

Bolten argues that governments “sensitised” ex-combatants as part of reintegration processes to take them away from their “ordinary” practices exercised during the war (Bolten, 2012). In doing so, the government is de-naturalising the collective reincorporation process, resorting to traditional DDR, and therefore neglecting the main purpose of the final peace agreement, which was intended to be an instrument of democratising reformism (Zuluaga, 2019).

From the perspective of FARC-EP ex-members, reincorporation does not mean that they get to start over their lives, but it implies using their legacy as a way to promote a model of an ideal society. José, one of the ex-combatants leaders of Agua Bonita, argues that reincorporation is not just to “insert” a group of people without a past into society, but rather it is to make known their lives as guerrilla fighters. “Being part of the reincorporation also means making the society aware about our way of living as a community and the coexistence we engender among us” (José, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018).

¹²⁶ Aspects such as pregnancy, illness, disability, blackmail, among others, were some of the reasons the ex-combatants decided to leave the FARC-EP before the signing of the peace agreement.

¹²⁷ Each of these challenges will be explored in detail in the following chapters.

Therefore, reintegration does not just mean the “dismantling of the machinery of war” (Theidon, 2009b, p.67), but the contribution of the intangible, relational and emotional memories behind the war experiences, represented in the emotional legacy of ex-combatants (Nussio, 2012). This process entails a bi-directional relationship between past and present, in which ideology becomes both a motivation to initiate a conflict and a peaceful strategy to achieve positive changes (Friðriksdóttir, 2018).

Three main aspects define the concept of reincorporation: the maintenance of ex-combatants’ legacy; the citizenship condition of ex-combatants; and their relationships with surrounding communities. Legacy refers to the emotional and ideological connection between the past and present of ex-combatants. While the emotional legacy emerges from the remembered past of ex-combatants (Nussio, 2012), the ideological legacy means the maintenance of ex-combatants’ thoughts around “political beliefs that promote a particular way of understanding the world” (Ugarriza & Craig, 2013, p.450). Both kinds of legacy intersect and configure the thoughts and actions of ex-combatants’ reintegration.

Keeping ex-combatants’ legacy alive is restricted by numerous factors. Marcela, who was a member of the FARC-EP for more than 20 years and is now a leader in the region of Antioquia, argues the importance of ex-combatants to keep “fighting”, but now with more disadvantages:

The laying down of the weapons does not mean the end of the revolution. It means to keep fighting, but now with many disadvantages. We have just our words, but instead they [the government] continue to fight with their traditional discourses, with the media on their behalf, with weapons, military forces and all the war machinery they have. (Marcela, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018)

Jovial, a FARC-EP, ex-member in charge of the security of ex-combatants in Llano Grande, argues that there is a great imbalance of the power in the relationship they have with the government. Metaphorically speaking, “this is a tiger fighting with a donkey on a leash and we are the donkey” (Jovial, member of the Llano Grande community, November 2018).

Whereas the government aims to avoid reviving the past of ex-combatants, FARC-EP ex-members use the memory and knowledge to build new ways of living and thinking in collective reincorporation. Nevertheless, these discourses are far from being accepted by the

current government (Rueda, 2020; Zambrano-Quintero, 2019), as they are at odds with its liberal perspectives of peace.

“Peace with legality”¹²⁸ promulgated by current President Ivan Duque is propelling the understanding and practice of reincorporation under former meanings of reintegration (CSIVI-FARC, 2019a). This perspective leads to a polarised position that does not contribute to a conflict transformation approach, nor to the re-creation of new meanings that may contribute to peacebuilding approaches (Lederach, 2003).

The policy of “Peace with legality” wants to protect the sovereignty of the state using the national military forces with the support of international alliances (in this case United States). The strategy therefore is to eliminate dissident and criminal groups, and illicit drug cultivation based on a centralist perspective (top-down). This approach is opposite to the territorial peace perspective stated in the peace agreement, which aims to promote the local participative development and inclusion of the most affected by the conflict (CSIVI-FARC, 2019a; Valencia & Chaverra, 2020).

In doing so, the Duque government has ignored the spaces for participation and community convergence created in the agreement, ignoring the former dialogues carried out with the communities and the prevalence of some territories. The government has created new priority zones called “zonas del future”¹²⁹ that have not related to the initial zones of prioritisation developed by the PNIS and PDETs¹³⁰, neither has it implemented the actions agreed in these territories during the peace process (Valencia & Chaverra, 2020). In short, there are two post-conflict models in Colombia. One which was agreed during the peace process and tested by the communities where the armed conflict was stronger; the other model was unilaterally imposed by the Duque government, which seeks to encourage militarisation and establish security as a means to achieve development and peace in the country (Valencia & Chaverra, 2020).

Despite the frictions caused as a result of non-compliance with the peace agreement, FARC-EP ex-members are aware that their reincorporation process goes hand in hand with

¹²⁸ The name given to the current national political plan of President Ivan Duque.

¹²⁹ “Future Zones” involve 44 municipalities and not the 170 established in the peace agreement, which comprise only 2.4 percent of the national territory (the Pacific of Nariño, Catatumbo, Lower Cauca and southern Córdoba, Arauca, Chiribiquete and surrounding National Natural Parks) (Valencia & Chaverra, 2020).

¹³⁰ The PDETs are the programmes of development with territorial approach, established in 170 municipalities highly affected by the conflict. The PNIS is the Comprehensive National Programme for the Substitution of Illicitly Used Crops, which is stated in the point 1 of the peace agreement “Comprehensive Rural Reform” (Valencia, 2020).

following the government's rules and laws. When I spoke to Jovial about the difficulties of keeping the ex-combatants' ideologies alive, he also acknowledged that this ideology is now shaped by legal regulation. "Well, I will say that reincorporation is coming back to the civilian life, as well as adherence to the normatives and laws of Colombian standards" (Jovial, member of AETCR Llano Grande, November 2019). However, he believes that the Colombian laws and regulations are far apart from the revolutionary thinking ideas of the guerillas.

FARC-EP ex-members assume that being on the side of "legality" represents a social contract in which they commit themselves to not to return to war and not carry a weapon again. However, as Jovial points out, reincorporation is returning to legality but not being alive again. "Reincorporation is looking at things differently, it is a compromise of not returning to war, but it is not as others say, 'going back to life'. We were alive, but in another reality" (Jovial, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018).

This "new" reality means following certain standards and norms agreed in the social contract that FARC-EP ex-members signed with the government in the peace agreement, which provides material resources to respond to the requirements of being democratic (Newman; Richmond; Paris, 2009). The so-called "new" reality is not far away from the reality FARC-EP ex-members had in times of conflict. Gilberto, a FARC-EP ex-member who militated for more than 20 years and who now has a disability caused by the fighting, mentioned that his life now is harder than in conflict times (Gilberto member of AETCR Agua Bonita, November 2019). As part of the reintegration process, he has to find out his own way of living, to deal with security issues and with social stigmas.

Some FARC-EP ex-members even feel that they are part of the poverty and exclusion conditions that they aimed to tackle when they were guerillas. In an informal discussion with Norberto, when he arrived from his work as a labourer, he said: "Look at me, now I am part of the system of oppression" (Norberto, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018).

McMullin (2013, p.9) mentions that DDR end up by being in a "reintegration into poverty", showing the lack of effectiveness and unrealistic promises of reintegration programmes. Similarly, Bowd & Özerdem (2013) mention that including ex-combatants' ideologies in making decisions helps individuals to escape from the margins of poverty and may pre-empt any return to criminal activities.

On the other hand, FARC-EP ex-members believe that reincorporation implies receiving guarantees from the state. They claim that by being part of this peace process, they

have a right to get access to education, housing, land property, security, jobs and the freedom to act according to the constitution's mandate. However, For Gerardo, a FARC-EP ex-member from front 58, reintegration is more than receiving money to survive:

Reintegration means having decent housing, land to work on, health and productive projects. Once we have all this, then we can be civilians, as they want to call us. Reintegration is not about receiving 700,000 pesos a month; it is about having a dignified life with benefits as the law says. (Gerardo, member of the NAR San José de León, November 2019)

Yet, the idea of understanding reintegration as the allocation of benefits leads to the assumption that the more benefits ex-combatants receive, the better the results, which is often not the case (Anderson et al., 2012). Metsola (2006, p.1127) argues that involving ex-combatants in the social and economic mainstream becomes a long-term task of “conducting their conduct”. The way in which basic needs are provided (based on an “asistencialismo” logic¹³¹) leads to a diminishing of ex-combatants’ active role and local agency in the society and their right of freedom to build their own citizen condition. Additionally, labelling reincorporation under the category of “programme” rather than “process” leads to a misunderstanding about the long-term goal of reincorporation, which embraces the political, social and economic progress of society (Torjesen, 2013).

The reincorporation dynamic compels FARC-EP ex-members to be part of a structure that allegedly is unable to modify. The civilians have to be part of this structure even though they resist it. This reality still sees the ex-combatants as part of a reintegration process, which implies the belonging of patriarchal dynamics between the state and the ex-combatants (Hoyos, 2011), in which the state still profiles citizens by design (Oppenheim & Söderström, 2018). This process starts with the registration of ex-combatants as “*Los firmantes de la Paz*” (peace signatories), and their obligation to follow all the legal and administrative procedures. This provides a transition between inclusion and exclusion, showing the controllers

¹³¹ Freire mentions that that social assistance provided to vulnerable people is often seen as an “agent of change” in its own right, where the role of the human being as an object of action is underestimated. “Asistencialismo” does not see people as active agents of development capable of interacting freely with social assistance, which denies their responsibility as human beings (Freire, 1999).

(government) on the one hand and the obedient (ex-combatants) on the other (Metsola, 2006).

Under this framework, the condition of citizen is not fully fulfilled. Citizenship demands the active role of people in society by acknowledging their status, roles and participation to renegotiate their role inside society, which means defending their “active citizenship” while undertaking a role as active change agents (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013, p.377). Andres, one of the youngest ex-combatants that I interviewed, who was part of the militia in the FARC-EP, highlights the difficulty in practicing the ideologies of the guerillas while adhering to the conditions imposed by the state:

Here, we have to integrate ourselves into the system. We have to go inside and play with the mandate by the state [...]. As long as there is a revolutionary; the war will always be there, there will be always discontent. (Andres, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

As Andres believes, the ex-combatants’ insurgency role is not easy to maintain in times of reincorporation and more in those who were troops. The foot soldiers are more sensitive to the new experiences and demands given by their surroundings. This is because they are used to following orders without complaining about them (Torres, 2019). Their conditions of living under a military mandate make them more fragile to indoctrination (Daly, 2016). This leads the ex-combatants to easily forget the reason for their fighting, making them easy targets for the system. Rocio, a sociologist, who was in the FARC-EP for more than 20 years, shows her discontent about the difficulties FARC-EP ex-members have faced to stay together. “It is like getting into a system that sucks you in. We as leaders make every effort to prevent this from happening” (Rocio, member of the National Party, Bogotá, December 2019).

During a conversation I held with some FARC-EP ex-members, they sustained that now, as part of their reincorporation process, they have to follow both the regulations and norms given by the state and adapt to the demands of their surroundings. For them, reincorporation involves a two-fold requirement: one to respond to the cultural dynamics and social relations developed in the communities; and the other to articulate these dynamics with the government’s requirements. In the Colombian case, both aspects can collide.

Living in a (post-)conflict environment lead FARC-EP ex-members to manage the tensions between living in conditions of illegality, criminality and corruption and follow the idea of legality imposed in the reintegration discourses. In the end, both can be condensed into a way of survival and social acceptance (Fattal, 2018). These dynamics create a liminal space that leads to an incomplete transformation from “conflictual spaces to peaceful ones” (Mitchell & Kelly, 2011, p.321). The same liminal condition define the figure of ex-combatants. They are perceived as ambiguous actors that moved between war and peace, in which their former experience in the conflict condenses the perception that society has of them as supporters of the peacebuilding, or as mere inherently violent actors (Söderström, 2020, p.7).

On the other hand, being visible in the communities allows FARC-EP ex-members to exercise their reincorporation following an everyday natural interaction with their surroundings and outside interveners. Having a close relationship with some communities does not mean that ex-combatants are playing the same role as they did in times of conflict. When they were a guerrilla, they had an insurgent position in society, represented with power, respect and fear (Derks et al., 2011). Now, they share the similar fears and needs of their neighbouring communities, as they are constantly at risk of being victims to dissident groups, criminal bands or other insurgent groups.

Rigo, the FARC-EP ex-member with whom I lived during my stay in San José de León, told me that he was always prepared in case of attack. He had two big rocks that he kept at the front of his house to use if he needed to protect his family's life: “If the armed groups come here we know now where to hide” (Rigo member of NAR San José de León, November 2019).

Apart from that, FARC-EP ex-members link reincorporation with a change of space, place, context and time. They claim that they now enact their ideology in new spaces that are normatively established, such as community committees, political parties or regional councils, leading them to play their role within the confines of other conditions and regulations. Andres argues that reincorporation is: “being in the middle of the population, in the middle of the masses, what changes here is the place, the context, that is what changes” (Andres member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018).

The repetitive discourses of *cuando estaba en el monte* (when I was over there in the jungle) or the discourses of *allá hacíamos esto y acá hacemos esto* (over there we did that and here we do this) break down the FARC-EP ex-members life into two separate parts, in

terms of time and place. “These spatial terms locate violent actions else-where, and that distance in turn marks differences in time, self and *conciencia* [conscious]. In other words, many attempts to ‘cordon off’ certain actions and facets of their violent pasts by locating them in another space, time and self. However, this division does not implies a detachment of their principles” (Theidon, 2009a p.11, the word conscious added for emphasis).

In this vein, it is essential to understand the idea of reincorporation outside physical or situational boundaries. The ideology, principles and sense of belonging among the ex-combatants breaks down the invisible barriers that space and time tend to define. The attachment FARC-EP ex-members have with their history helps to shape their identity and to recognise the responsibility with their past. This responsibility implies the acknowledgement of the damage caused in times of conflict and its contribution to the process of reparation to the surrounding communities. Both aspects are intertwined. First, ex-combatants have to transform themselves through the recognition of their legacy, which means reincorporating from within, and then they can share their memories with surrounding communities to contribute to the truth, reparation and reconciliation in the transition to post-conflict.

These reflections point out what was stressed by Oettler & Rettberg (2019, p.344) at arguing the importance of a micro level approaches to reconciliation, in which should be considered the “critical reflection of one’s own position, the change of attitudes and conduct, and the overcoming of black-and-white thinking”. For instance, FARC-EP ex-members are not just providing memories of their past, they are also serving as informants about the injustices committed during conflict times by military forces, the private sector and politicians, and the effects of it in the escalation of the conflict. Mariela, one of the representatives of the FARC-EP ex-members in the PNIS, states: “The reincorporation is that our comrades, our children and society in general know the truth about the conflict and not only what we did. The government, the militaries, the companies were also involved in this” (Mariela member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, November 2019).

In sum, the mobilisation from *El Monte* to the territories in which FARC-EP ex-members are settled becomes the perfect place to transform, define and re-define constantly the meanings they give to their memories. The more experiences and relationships that FARC-EP ex-members establish during the reincorporation process, the more they are challenged to re-define their identity shaped in times of conflict.

Reincorporation, therefore, implies a constant adaptation and readaptation to new places, times and spaces and a hybrid between the past and the present of ex-combatants. The new ways of living, thinking and interacting of FARC-EP ex-members become their own contributions to peacebuilding.

5.2. The Meaning of Collectivity in Reincorporation

In the everyday of FARC-EP ex-members, the term “collectivity” goes beyond a single illustration or the denomination of a specific formal event. Collectivity means the intangible actions, feelings and behaviours attached to the self of an ex-combatant and therefore represent part of their emotional legacy¹³². Collectivity has become a source of transformation of the spaces into harmonious encounter and a unity based on diversity and solidarity; thus, a model of peace in post-conflict societies.

As I stated before, the term collectivity is not a novel perspective adopted by FARC-EP ex-members. They argue that collectivism was the key aspect that enabled the FARC-EP to exist for so many years. Now, they are adopting this concept in the definition and practice of reincorporation, based on a socialist perspective. Tiberio, a former combatant who left the guerrilla group because of his subsequent disability after losing a leg to a landmine, and who is now part of the community of San José de León, argues that collectivity is not limited to a specific action or activity, but is a way of life. “I understand collectivity as a whole. The collectivity is all things that we have in the community, our values, belongings and decisions we make” (Tiberio, member of the San José de León community, December 2019).

For FARC-EP ex-members, collective reincorporation implies a process of political action in which their social and ideological legacy plays a relevant role in the transformation of their surroundings. These roles benefit the economic and social stability among ex-combatants and build a sense of security, emotional attachment and comradeship developed during conflict times. Being together for a long time allows the FARC-EP ex-members to accumulate under a collective basis experiences, fears, symbols and memories, which in turn define their social identity, represented in a form local power in the territories where they are settling down (Segura & Stein, 2019). The value of these relationships means that not only former hierarchical dynamics keep the ex-combatants together, also their social and family

¹³² Nussio defines the emotional legacy of war as the emotional dimension of today’s perception of the past involvement in war (Nussio, 2011, p.100).

relationships, their shared identity, and their experiences of hardship and marginalisation (Munive & Stepputat, 2015; De Vries & Wiegink, 2011).

Collective reincorporation acknowledges ex-combatants' social relationships and their symbolic representation of being together. It involves a sense of belonging to the other, the achievement of a collective security and the recognition of a collective memory. This social attachment enables the maintenance of the ex-comrades' social networks and the interaction with their families and friends, who subsequently become integrated into a big community involving families, surrounding communities and ex-combatants (See for example studies of De Vries & Wiegink, 2011; Kaplan & Nussio, 2016; Van Leeuwen, 2018).

In this framework, the "re" of collective reincorporation does not illustrate a term that implies a new beginning or the rebirth of ex-combatants (Hoyos & Fattal, 2013). Rather, it means building a tandem reality using the experiences, memories and knowledge gained from the past to build ex-combatants' current dynamics and relationships. As such, collective reincorporation does not assume that FARC-EP ex-members were in another reality to the one in which they are now belonging.

Four elements distinguish the *fariana*¹³³ collective: their history, their former relationships with communities, their culture and their territory of origin. These aspects consolidate their history as ex-guerrillas and the reasons for their fighting. For FARC-EP ex-members, the only way to honour their history is by using their legacy during reincorporation, which represents for Marcela a "duty to disclose their history" (Marcela, member of AETCR LLano Grande, November 2018).

Theidon (2009) defines ex-combatants as transitional subjects. It implies a transition of their routines and styles of living together with the reconfiguration of the contexts in which reintegration occurs. This process implies reconversion in reintegration, which means using the capital accumulated by the ex-combatants during the war now in post-conflict environments (Sprenkels, 2014).

Accordingly, the collective approach in reincorporation is linked to the traditional way in which the FARC-EP was internally organised. Christian, a social and political leader in Agua Bonita, sustains in one of the interviews offered for local television in Caquetá that assuming the collective structure in the *Farianos* made their process of transition towards peace easier: "The collective meanings were already applying in the FARC-EP before the peace agreement

¹³³ The FARC-EP ex-members who are in collectives named themselves *Los Farianos*.

was signed. For us, it was easier to mobilise under this structure as it delivered better social and security guarantees” (Christian, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019). Nevertheless, new intergroup relations, experiences and interests acquired throughout the reincorporation process have transformed ex-combatants’ behaviour towards the idea of collectivity¹³⁴, producing a kind of hybridity in which self-thinking, identity and new ways of participation interact in defining the collective thinking (Reynolds, 2012; Turner, et al., 1994).

One of the most remarkable aspects of collective reincorporation is the active participation of FARC-EP ex-members in decision-making, and their involvement in the design of the reincorporation policy. Nubia, one of the FARC-EP ex-members who worked with the government in the implementation of the policy of reincorporation, states that ex-combatants actively play a role in not just the implementation of reincorporation but also in designing the policy:

The reincorporation policy is made collectively. For instance, if we apply a baseline, this has to be approved first by the FARC ex-members, which means the CNR. They have the right to modify the government proposes before being implemented in the territories (Nubia, FARC-EP ex-member and facilitator, AETCR Llano Grande, November 2019)

The active participation of FARC-EP ex-members in decision-making allows them to have an active role in the political arena as political actors. On assuming this role, they use their political-military insurgency knowledge but now under a legal framework. As the International Crisis Group (ICG) states: “The guerrillas are thus recognised as agents of transformation” (ICG, 2014, p.18). Additionally, being involved in the design and implementation of the reincorporation policy allows FARC-EP ex-members to control and avoid interventions that do not align with their ideological perspective. For instance, in some territories FARC-EP ex-members have restricted the implementation of some programmes suggested by governmental or international organisations, as they do not respond to their ways of operation, such has been the case of surveys, workshops or trainings that do not contribute to their collective way of thinking or living.

¹³⁴ For more information about this, see Chapter 7.

Gloria, a woman who was a guerrilla for 16 years and is a current leader in Agua Bonita, sustains that collectivity helps them to take advantage of the benefits given by the external interveners by grouping these benefits under a single purpose:

The collectivity of *ex-guerrilleros* is an exercise in which we work for everyone. We are now receiving support from the government, such as food and basic rent, and help from other organisations. If we have the opportunity to receive some benefits, we should work collectively to see more guarantees and provide stability in the future. Collectivity is not that all people have to pick up an axe and shovel. It is not like that. Not everyone can do the same job. Some clean the meadow, others cook for the workers, others feed the animals, the pigs and so on, but everyone has to go out and work. (Gloria, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

Acting under a collective idea seeks to create new socio-economic alternatives for the benefit of society as a whole. This process aims to overcome the issues of reintegration programmes that just have short-term benefits for the micro-systems in which FARC-EP ex-members are living. It implies the empowerment of communities as a way to reconstruct ex-combatants' lives. The process of empowerment demands "an individual construct that links individual strengths and competences, natural helping systems and proactive behaviors to social policy and social changes. It links the individual wellbeing with the large social and political environment" (Zimmerman, 1995, p.569).

Therefore, collectivity in reincorporation entails a twofold objective: the active reincorporation of FARC-EP ex-members in society; and the improvement of the contexts in which they reincorporate. It implies the resignification of the symbolic and emotional relations built between the locals-locals and the socio-political and economic process within this framework. As Sprenkels (2014, p.6) notes: "The literature furthermore pays little attention to how reintegration itself may function as a socio-political process as if the arrival of peace somehow annuls the insurgents' sense of collectiveness, their political aspirations and their claims to power". Similarly, one of Forero's research interviewers argues: "Keeping a collective production means the generation of a new prototype of society"(Forero, 2019).

Thus, the use of collectivity provides a perspective that replicates the political, social and economic aspirations that ex-combatants had during their insurgent times, triggering a

sense of power produced by proximity, trust and comradeship, which foster social transformation and inclusivity (Björkdahl & Mannergren, 2016).

Marcos, one of the most versatile and charitable FARC-EP ex-members I met, sustains that collectivity is attached to his way of living and his interactions with others:

We have applied, since a long time ago, the collective actions. I do not think just about myself but all people, about the welfare of everyone, of the communities, of the men, of the women that are around us [...]. If I do something, I am not looking for the benefit of just myself, but I seek the benefit for all. For instance, if I rescue a pig tomorrow this will contribute to all of the community, which is good because I am doing something for everyone and for the cooperative. (Marcos, member of AECTR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

The collectivity of ex-combatants entails horizontal relationships that represent different forms of making decisions, delegating leaders and distributing roles inside communities. For instance, FARC-EP ex-members are still acting under an assembly model. The meetings are organised every month and where all actions, projects and in which all duties for the collective are discussed. The use of this participative technique enlarges the possibilities of decisions being made together, contributing to the strengthening of social bonds (Howarth, et al., 2015). During the assemblies, the leaders share common situations, problems and projects they have with the whole community and then through democracy and discussion they decide the best solutions for the collective.

Nestor, one of the ex-commanders of front 58 who is now living in San José de León, states that all actions in the collective are made by consensus. “Here, we do not impose norms. We create the norms in the assembly and follow the agreed decisions in accordance with the responses given by the participants in regard to certain announcements, suggestions or projects that we have to discuss” (Nestor, member of the San José de León community, December 2019).

In sum, reincorporation becomes an active and bi-directional process that requires full involvement of different actors and the transformation of the daily life of FARC-EP ex-members in new spaces and social realities¹³⁵. Achieving this transition requires modifying the

¹³⁵ In the words of Blummer, “Empirical worlds” (Blumer, 1969).

social, political and cultural structures of ex-combatants' surroundings and the adjustment of the intangible and abstract relations that shape social dynamics.

The practices of collective reincorporation redefine concepts around peace and show the liminal space in which reincorporation is situated. In the next section, I detail the meanings of peace given by FARC-EP ex-members and their surrounding communities and the limitations of this term in practice.

5.3. Meaning of Peace in Reincorporation

In a pedagogic peace activity with 50 students from different universities in Antioquia, one student asked Efrain, the leader of San José de León, about the meaning of peace. He answered this question by saying:

The war could not be eternal. We cannot leave our grandchildren and our children that inheritance. We were killing ourselves among those who should not have been killing each other. Soldiers, guerrillas, police, paramilitaries are human beings, are Colombians, with mistakes, with enemies and friends. They have relatives, have children, and have wives. War hurts an entire society. Some people go to combat, and die, and their families do not know why. The state does not stand for peace, the police do not stand for peace. That is a lie. If they did, they would not kill, and they would not die for the love of their country. If they did, we would surely have a country where there would be work, where there would be no poverty, where conditions would be different [...]. We have to have a country with more jobs, more opportunities, with more dignified lives. A professional in the army does mean that he is a more qualified person for war, either because he knows how to camouflage himself or because he could die on the battlefield. A person is a professional when they are prepared, knowledgeable; a person who helps to improve the conditions of their country [...]. The war is not even affecting the interests of the oligarchy, who are the real culprits of the violence. (Efrain, leader of the NAR San José de León, November 2019)

Being in a peace process represents for most people stability, but in real terms it symbolises a process of change (Pouligny, 2005). The meanings of peace comprise macro and micro dynamics exercised in people's everyday lives and move over time as a function of the

social, political and economic challenges that communities and institutions face in the aftermath of conflict.

The definition of peace is usually based on the dichotomy of conflict and peace (Goetze, 2017b). This dichotomy provides that these two dimensions are isolated and are not mutually connected, in which the absence of conflict represents the meaning of peace (Richmond, 2009). This assumption frames the peace in an unrealistic and romanticised setting, in which the conflict apparently disrupts the good practice of peacebuilding. Many scholars have stated that peace needs conflict to keep it on track (Galtung, 1969; Lederach, 1999, 2003) and, in practice, the interlinking of both dimensions may become a positive aspect of this transformation (Lederach, 1999).

In everyday life, peace is expressed through the “local voices” and reflect people’s aspirations and experiences in conflict transformation (Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2014, p.33). As Goetze, (2017a) claims: Peace is not written, but it is represented in the symbolic capital exerted by the locals. The fluidity of the social worlds in which people interact and the myriad of inter- and intra-group negotiations show that peace is constantly changing, adapting, co-opting, resisting and exercising agency in everyday life (Mac Ginty, 2014).

I believe that peace is an intrinsic process attached to people’s everyday life. Everyday peace “refers to the routinised practices used by individuals and collectives as they navigate their way through life in a deeply divided society” (Mac Ginty, 2014, p.549). Both the process of everyday peace and the reincorporation interplay with each other and contribute to the re-signification of meanings of peace by using the positive and negative experiences that emerge from the everyday encounters between FARC-EP ex-members, communities and external actors.

A multiple conceptualisation of peace becomes the base for a critical research agenda. It does not necessarily mean creating more theories that remain in an abstract sphere. Rather, it aims to expand people’s power to exercise their own meanings of peace (Paffenholz, 2015). Peace therefore navigates into a multi-dimensional concept that might represent positive and negative peace (Firchow, 2018).

FARC-EP ex-members mention that the peace agreement was their way of accessing social justice, not the silence of weapons. They stated that when justice is achieved, then peace would become a reality (Martínez, 2018). Liliany, one of the victims of the conflict, who is in a relationship with one of the FARC-EP ex-members, and is now the leader of the gender

committee in San José de León, argues the importance of social justice in peacebuilding: “The thing that I like the most about this process is the social justice [...]. Peace is when you see all women, men, human beings in general enjoying their rights, I as a victim and they as ex-combatants” (Liliany, member of NAR San José de León, December 2018). Similarly, David, a FARC-EP ex-member who is part of the same community, argues that for the government it seems that the laying down of weapons represented peace in itself, but for him it was more than that. It represents dignity, access to human rights, security conditions and economic conditions to survive (David, member of NAR San José de León, November 2019).

Peace goes beyond simple harmonic relationships among members of certain communities and the accessibility to human rights. It represents, at first glance, the freedom of people to establish their own routines, such as taking care of their homes, having food on the table, job opportunities, enjoying leisure time and meeting with others to share everyday experiences and memories without fear of rejection. But it also represents economic, social and security conditions for the entire society.

Macias, a member of the community of Llano Grande, sustains that the tranquillity in everyday life is as important as the possibility of supporting one’s self economically:

For me, peace is to have more opportunities for work, access to health, education [...] and having the possibility to be in this village and working to support the family [...]. We are working, and for me that is very nice since we are supporting this peace process [...]. Now, we have the opportunity to be part of this ETCR. For me, this is good support. It is better to support peace than war. With peace, one can work with peace of mind, go to bed calm and thinking that one can do any job with the possibility of moving and coming back home any time of the day. (Macias, member of Llano Grande community, November 2018)

Similarly, Gloria from the Agua Bonita community believes the importance of access to social benefits in the transition to post-conflict but also the opportunity to decide and contribute in different ways to the achievement of peace:

A peace where all of us have the right to education, to housing, to good health, to diversity, to culture, to a lot of things that we should all have as human beings. That is

what we call peace, where we can reconcile, starting from our own home. (Gloria, member of Agua Bonita community, November 2018)

The ex-members of the FARC-EP continually state that the peace agreement was not just to benefit the collectivity of *farianos*, it was a treaty that seeks to benefit the most vulnerable people in Colombia, mainly the *campesinos*. Samir, one of the natives in the village of San José de León and a producer of cocoa, argues that reincorporation involves the rural areas and the *campesinos*. “We ask for more benefits for the rural areas [...]. We always defend our work, since it is the one most forgotten in Colombia” (Samir, member of AETCR San José de León, December 2018). Nevertheless, he mentions that the benefits given to ex-combatants are not influencing directly the improvement of his, and others like him, economic conditions.

Contrary, Yerson, the housemaster of the AETCR of Llano Grande and a native of this community, argues that the reincorporation process represents progress for the entire community:

I would say that in this community is where you can really feel the peace. You can feel the progress. This is a significant change. Peace here has been something very beautiful for the village, not only for the community here but also for the surrounding communities. (Yerson, member of AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018)

During an assembly held in San José de León, one of the leaders explained the misunderstanding that society has about the peace agreement. Most Colombians think that this process was only to support the ex-combatants of the FARC-EP, thinking that the objectives of the FARC-EP were exclusively the objectives of the peace agreement, but this is just one point of the agreement, the other five points aim to improve the social, political and economic conditions of the whole society. Supporting the peace agreement is not the same as being a sympathiser of the former members of the FARC-EP:

We cannot confuse the peace objectives with our proposal [as *farianos*]. Some people wanted us to go back to the rural areas and stop killing each other. Other people did not want that because they did not understand the meanings of our insurgency or did

not share our practice, but it does not mean that they are not sympathisers of peace. (Efrain at the San José de Leon assembly, October 2019)

The current security, economic and political difficulties in the territories where FARC-EP ex-members live lead to thinking that peace is a utopic concept that is still in progress. Gloria, the leader of the supermarket in Agua Bonita, is conscious that achieving peace is a long-term process. “We have still not observed this peace. I can say that in two, four, or many years we will see the peace but I would be telling lies” (Gloria, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, November 2018). Bernardo, one of the ex-commanders of front 5 and now a leader in Llano Grande, argues that peace “is written in a nice book but this is not yet implemented. This is like the Colombian political constitution. It is written but it is not well implemented” (Bernardo, member of AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018).

For Macias, the community leader of Llano Grande, the peace process is a great opportunity for those who live in rural areas. When he was telling me about his history as a victim of the conflict and the different challenges his community had in the 1990s, he concluded by saying: “it is much more difficult to build the peace than make war”. He remarks that there are still a lot of enemies of the peace process, and is a big reason why this transition has not been easy (Macias, member of the Llano Grande community, November 2019).

One of the great contributions of the peace agreement is the building of everyday grassroots relationships between FARC-EP ex-members and communities. During my fieldwork, I observed how these relationships contributed to a natural reconciliation boosted in their everyday encounters, in which peace emerges from inwards and transcends the private and public life of people. In a conversation with Pedro, an indigenous Emberá who spent more than ten years as a guerrilla, peace is a way of forgiving ourselves and others, opening our hearts to those we hurt. The desire for peace comes from within. “Peace is made by each one of us” (Pedro, member of the Agua Bonita community, October 2018).

Similarly, Jesús, one *campesino* from Agua Bonita who provides milk to this AETCR, relates peace to an “inwards peace” and a “peace in the heart”. When we discussed the meaning of peace in his life, he told me that being in tranquillity has become the most valuable aspect of his life after being affected by the conflict. “The peace is the best thing. It is priceless. Even if you do not eat well, even if you need clothes, even if you need shoes, peace

is there if you feel relaxed and unafraid. This is a life that is priceless” (Jesus, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019).

Peace embraces two dimensions that cannot be easily measured nor are considered in most peacebuilding programmes: the feeling of tranquillity and the freedom to act. Both represent the most significant desires for the FARC-EP ex-members and their surrounding communities when they refer to the meaning of peace. However, the achievement of peace does not rely only on the ex-combatants, but on the compromise each person makes in being part of this transition. In a meeting held with members of the United Nations and FARC-EP ex-members in San José de León, it was argued that peace is more than a unilateral decision made by the government:

The peace process does not depend on the will of a government to sign a peace agreement. It depends on each one of us, we are all responsible for peace and we take it forward, we embrace it, we press it, or we let it go. Let us not believe that peace is exclusively ours or the government’s [...]. We must bet on peace. (Efrain, member of NAR San José de León, October 2019)

Working together under similar goals is one of the strategies FARC-EP ex-members have to achieve peace. For them, peace cannot be achieved on an individual basis.

Toño, the founder of front 5 of FARC-EP, and one the oldest I interviewed with 38 years in the FARC-EP and 78 years old, argues that to achieve peace all should collaborate with each other in the pursuit for a communal benefit for the entire society. Certainly, how Toño lives and thinks showed me the prototype of a *camarada* (*comrade*). A person who is always willing to help and who does not care about his individual rewards or material belongings. Every morning when I went for a walk, I saw him in the community crops cleaning the soil and watering the plants. His house had a distinctiveness from the others. He used old wood from different colours to build what he called “*mi rancho*”. When I asked about the concept of peace, without hesitation, he answered saying that peace is “looking more into the social power than the economic one. It is having the right to share power in equal quantities and enjoying the same benefits” (Toño member of the NAR San José de León, December 2018).

The balance of power between different groups facilitates a reconciliation process by defining a meeting point where various actors acknowledge the harm caused to others and their commitment to non-repetition. Toño insist that the achievement of “Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-repetition”¹³⁶ cannot be achieved only by hearing ex-combatants’ voices. The process of peacebuilding is not just a responsibility of the FARC-EP ex-members. This process entails hearing the voices of the government, private sector, politicians, civil society, other armed groups and international organisations, who to varying extents have contributed to the maintenance of the Colombian conflict. Under this framework, a perspective of reconciliation based on just relationship between citizens and ex-combatants fall short at overlooking the historical depth, diverse forms of violence(s), and ambivalent actors that played a role along of the Colombian conflict (Oettler & Rettberg, 2019)

Amparo, one of the women who is part of the gender committee in the village of Llano Grande, argues that a reconciliation process should also recognise FARC-EP ex-members like any other human being:

They are human beings just like anyone else. We do not know the reason they had to become involved with the guerrillas. I have known too many reasons of why a child decided to go there. It could be because he did not love his family or was not happy with them [...]. Once he is with the guerrillas, he has to follow the rules inside of this structure. (Amparo, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018)

This process goes hand and hand with recognising the damage caused by guerrilla members. In this regard, Christian mentions the importance of being self-critical in the process of reincorporation:

As *farianos*, it is up to us to continue to be self-critical about the faults we have committed throughout our journey as guerrillas. In this way, we can disarm hatreds and resentments and move towards reconciliation and recognition [of ourselves] as a political force. (Christian, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

¹³⁶ This approach is part of point five of the peace agreement, grouped in an integral system that aims to consolidate a transitory or temporary institutional scenario that is sufficient and appropriate to satisfy the rights of the victims of the armed conflict and contribute to national reconciliation (JEP, n.d.).

Peace has no single definition. It is intertwined with the diversity of experiences, spaces, memories and relationships built between ex-combatants and surrounding communities. The meanings of peace are constantly altered by the fluidity of the social worlds, the heterogeneity of groups and the importance of environmental factors such as place or cycles of violence (Mac Ginty, 2014, p. 549). However, two aspects clearly define peace for ex-combatants and their surrounding communities: peace as a social justice; and peace as a tranquillity in everyday life. The achievement of both aspects provides a scenario to facilitate a natural reconciliation and the achievement of local economic, social and political interests and needs of those more affected by the conflict.

5.4. Women in Reincorporation

5.4.1. Meanings around Reincorporation of Women

Some 23 percent of the forces of the FARC-EP were women (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2017). They played a significant role in the military, operational and ideological perspectives of this guerrilla group, and therefore in the current reincorporation and peacebuilding process in Colombia.

The women who took part of the conflict suffered different kinds of violations and have been treated as well as victims of the conflict. The peace accord supports the gender biases in conflict times by including intersectional response to gender-related dimensions of human rights violations and encouraging the strong participation and empowerment of women (Oettler, 2019).

Many debates have taken place on the violation of the rights of women who were part of the FARC-EP. The women I interviewed did not deny that they had had abortions, that they were forced to abandon their children when they could not end their pregnancy and, in some cases, they suffered discrimination and sexual abuses. Even now, there is an organisation in Colombia called “*La Rosa Blanca*” (The White Rose)¹³⁷ that brings together women ex-combatants who claim to have suffered from sexual abuse while they were in the guerrilla group.

The transition to reincorporation has different challenges for women than for men. Women have to deal with their former roles as *guerrilleras*, the stigmas society has towards

¹³⁷ For more information see <https://centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/tag/corporacion-rosa-blanca/>

them, the social prejudices in their reincorporation process and the social overvaluation when they become mothers and wives. Here, they have to stay within the confines of their assigned role in the guerrillas and the parameters of femininity imposed by society. This perspective is reinforced by gender bias in DDR processes, which often labels female ex-combatants as victims, prizes, spectators or just *compañeras* (partners) (Salgado, 2019; Obando Salazar, 2016; Sánchez, 2014) but not as actors with agency who also play a valuable role during insurgent times and subsequently during their reincorporation process (Barrios, 2020). This perspective leaves women ex-combatants at a disadvantage when they want to gain a social, economic and political position in the aftermath of the conflict (Dietrich, 2014)¹³⁸.

To tackle these inequalities, the government together with the FARC-EP considered different economic, political and social benefits to women in the peace process. But, that has not been easy, since the significance of the gendered agenda for peace has not been overstated by the current presidency (Oettler, 2019). Of the 122 dispositions that include gender perspectives in the peace agreement, only 13 have been fulfilled, the rest are still in the implementation phase or have not been implemented yet. On top of that, the Duque government has eliminated 54 of these gender measures during his term in office (GPaz, 2019).

Mainly, the transition to reincorporation poses two challenges for female ex-combatants: playing an active role as female insurgents in society; and shaping their identity with the prototype that society expects from them. Both aspects collide during the reincorporation process. Some women want to maintain their legacy and keep acting in society by gaining a leadership position in the community and political spheres, but they also want to recover their roles as mothers and provide for their family in the aftermath of the conflict. These challenges create many burdens and uncertainties for women at establishing a role in society and life priorities.

Constantly, the role of women in the guerrilla group is related with the word *berraca*¹³⁹. The more they equate to the male role in combat, the more their role as female

¹³⁸ The disadvantage of women ex-combatants in reincorporation links with the “stereotypical conceptions of gender according to which men are prone to violence, aggression and warfare, while women are assumed peaceful by nature, apolitical and victims of war. These gender stereotypes reinforce the idea that armed struggle and militarized contexts are male-connoted environments, without critically examining the context in which conflict takes place” (Dietrich, 2014, p.85).

¹³⁹ This means someone who is brave, determined, gutsy, a team player, hard worker, someone who does not give up and does dangerous but worthwhile things (Taken from <https://howlearnspanish.com/learn-spanish-for-real-1-berraco/#start>)

combatants was valued. Josue, who is responsible for the bakery in Llano Grande, proudly argues:

In the *guerrilla* we had the same duties and responsibilities. Women and men carried 25 pounds of supplies all the time. Even women were more *berracas* than men because they had to carry their mascara, their powders, and their things [...]. Not only women had to work in the *rancha* [kitchen]. That was equal, one day the woman *ranchaba*, another day the man *ranchaba*. (Josue, member of AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018)

Even now, when a FARC-EP ex-member woman is not eager to do some activities, the others recriminate her for not being as woman as she used to be. I remember in one community activity held by the *farianos/as* of Agua Bonita, one woman said to another while she was shovelling soil, “you have to be *berraquita* as we were in the *guerrilla*”. They have to show that they do similar things to men to prove that they do not have differences. That symmetry is not the same in terms of power relations. In the FARC-EP, few women had commander level roles. Mainly, they held a subordinated role¹⁴⁰ (Castrillón, 2015).

Additionally, it seems that the FARC-EP discourses of gender might overlook various rights of women. Women in the FARC-EP had to show that they were willing to do everything even if they were pregnant or suffered from any health issue, ignoring therefore the biological and physical differences between men and women. This resulted in more limitations for women to speak out about their physiognomy/reproductive differences and at expressing freely during reincorporation times the post-traumatic events lived during their conflict. They always had/have to show that they are strong and *berracas*. Apparently, “equality” in the FARC-EP included implicit gender discourses that produced asymmetrical efforts of learning and unlearning those categories that society has conferred on women and men, which triggered in women some trauma that men did not experience (Castrillón, 2015).

However, the former gender perspectives in the FARC-EP in times of (post-)conflict is not contributing to the social and economic gaps women are experiencing in society. During their reincorporation process, both men and women rely on three powerful schemes that

¹⁴⁰ The only woman who reached a high commander position during the FARC-EP’s militancy was a woman with the alias “Karina”, a commander of front 47. She was in charge of a troop of between 120 and 200 combatants (Castrillón, 2015, p.87).

they were not dealing with in times of insurgency: the market economy; the productive/reproductive roles; and the family roles. These social dynamics are shaping the ex-combatants' gender relationships and their roles inside society. Barrios & Richter (2019, p.771) argue: "When it comes to day-to-day social roles, some women confirm that they returned to play the traditional roles that society dictates for them".

Nevertheless, this transformation depends on the role women played in times of conflict and the characteristics of their former guerrilla fronts. I noticed that women who played a leadership role in the FARC-EP, had clear the guerrilla ideological perspective, and who were under a command who respected the equal conditions between women and men, tend to reject more the traditional gender roles in times of reincorporation.

A big difference is clear at addressing gender roles during reincorporation between female ex-combatants who were "foot soldiers" and those who occupied a leadership position in the FARC-EP. The first are more concerned with re-establishing their family role, the second are clear about their political commitment with the political party and with their *fariana* community. Rocio, one of the women who held a commander role in the guerrillas and had a long trajectory in insurgent groups, illustrates how the attachment to an ideology is rooted in people's lives:

I was involved in the insurgency for 31 years. I was a member of the JUCO [young communists]. First, I was a member of the student body at the university, from there I joined the JUCO, and then I started to do one job and another under a clandestine way. I have done the whole process [...]. I have been a permanent militant. Now that I see that our political party is having many difficulties, I am one of those who support it the most. (Rocio, member of the National Party, Bogotá, December 2019)

For Rocio, the high number of pregnant ex-combatants and babies in the AETCRs and NARs highlights how the role of women has been relegated to the private life. The more time women spend with their families and taking care of their children, the more they move away from the collective purpose and their active participation in activities carried out by *Los Comunes* political party. When I asked Rocio about the tensions between motherhood and social compromise with the collectivity of the *farianos*, she said:

We do not want for women to lose what they have gained during insurgent times. We talk a lot with them; that is an everyday effort. Some of them do not see themselves as leaders or playing a political role, especially in the community [...]. The thing that we have tried to do is to support the women in assuming their motherhood, they have all their right to exercise their maternity. Who can tell them 'You do not have the right to be a mother', even more so to those women who have postponed their maternity for so long? But we want to make sure that they do not return to the traditional role. This would be an involution. We cannot permit them to be absorbed entirely by the family dynamics. (Rocio, member of the National Party, Bogotá, December 2019)

During my stay in the AETCRs and NARs, I could see how the women struggled to divide their time between housework, childcare and their responsibilities with the collective. Women without children are usually more active in community activities and in the productive initiatives provided by the reincorporation programmes. Usually, childless women and men made jokes about women with babies, saying that they always use them as an excuse for not taking responsibility in the collective activities. I remember that while I was participating in community work in Agua Bonita, there were 12 women with babies in their arms, and in an informal chat with a group of ex-combatants, one said that women use their babies as an excuse not work in the collective. One of them said making fun of these women: "when they go to the bar to drink beers, the babies do not stop them, they seek for someone to take care of them".

Sara, a leader of the gender perspective in *Los Comunes* party and part of the AETCR Llano Grande, argues that the process of reincorporation is more complex for women than for men, due to the long existent inequalities in Colombia and the role that women ex-combatants are playing now as mothers:

It [the reincorporation process] is different for women. It has always been difficult for them to address the issue of social inclusion because of all the gaps that have existed forever, such as inequalities in accessing benefits or other social facilities. It is not the same to reincorporate a woman who had two or three children during her time as a guerrilla and has now recovered them than for a man who leaves his children and goes

away. For this reason, it is more difficult for women to study and to gain work experience. (Sara, Llano Grande, November 2018)

Sara sustains that she does not want to have babies, as her compromise with her ideology is bigger than her need to fulfil her role as a mother. For her, this would distort the main purpose in her life:

I do not want to be a mum because look at the mothers here, they care about them, about the immediate, about taking care of their children and they do not think about the future. That is why they no longer contribute in the collective. (Sara, Agua Bonita, November 2019)

The routines in the territories where ex-combatants are located show the division of duties between men and women. Those who work outside or have a paid job are mostly men. They are gaining social networks outside the collectivity and job experience. While the men go to collect coffee or work as day labourers, women stay with their babies at home and attend the meetings required for their reincorporation process.

These dynamics in the short term may affect women ex-combatants' work experience and job opportunities. This could lead to greater problems for them to become economically independent when the reincorporation benefits end, perpetuating the traditional reproductive role of women and the productive role of men. Mesa corroborates this by studying the reintegration of ex-combatants in Colombia. He points out:

It was easier for ex-combatant women to reintegrate into the community than into work, as their stigmas were concentrated on their alleged inability to work outside the domestic sphere. In the case of the men, it was easier to reintegrate into the labour market than into the community, since their stigmas were concentrated on their supposed inability to generate confidence in others." (Mesa, 2017, p.119).

In sum, the differences between women and men in their reincorporation process are not only related to the sacrifices and pressures women face in times of conflict and their impossibility to exercise their motherhood, but also to the tensions they face in integrating their past as female ex-combatants with their present as civilians. In the following section, I

describe the terms “children of peace” or “baby boom” managed by the media in the configuration of women ex-combatants’ identity.

5.4.2. Children of Peace

Over the past four years, international and national media have produced life stories, documentaries, articles and interviews with women ex-combatants of the FARC-EP. A typical photo of a “successful” reincorporation process shows a woman or a couple holding their new baby, alongside the title, the “children of peace”. By 2019, there were 2,449 children born to ex-combatants between the ages of 0 and 5 years-old (Barragan, 2019). Colloquially, this phenomenon has been referred to as the “baby boom”.

Apparently, a successful reincorporation shows that following gender traditional patterns represents better inclusion in society. The reincorporation of women is not the exception. The media shows that a good woman ex-combatant is able to break her life in two: a period as a combatant and a period as a mother, leaving aside other roles that they must fulfil as part of their reincorporation process.

Most of the media, government and international discourses constantly show how the babies of ex-combatants become the best symbol of transition to peace. “Ex-combatants change the weapons for babies” (AP, 2017); “Women of the FARC change the weapons for babies” (Clarín Mundo, 2018); “FARC women swap guns for nappies in peacetimes” (Diario de las Américas, 2017) are just some examples. In this context, having babies not only represents dignity, freedom of choice and deliberation, but also social pressure, adaptation and alienation. Some FARC-EP female ex-members argue that having children is a symbol to recover the restriction of their right to be mothers in the guerrillas. Now, they are able to hold a baby in their hands without the fear of being forced to hand them over. Others believe that it is just one-step to achieving their citizen condition.

Ledys, an FARC-EP ex-member who was at all meetings in Llano Grande and is fully committed to the collective of *farianos* told me that she got pregnant in the guerrillas when she was 25 years-old. Due to the advanced stage of her pregnancy when it was discovered, she was allowed to have her baby. During her pregnancy, she was sent to a troop where she did not have to walk too much or carry out hard jungle duties. When she was at full term, she went to the house of a midwife who delivered her baby and then looked after it. While she was talking about her baby’s delivery, she remembers that most of the people told her:

“Ledys, do not get attached to that child because you must hand it over”. After 20 days with her baby, she had to leave her and return to her troop and her life as a *guerrillera*. To date, she still does not know where her child is. Now, she has a baby that is two months-old, and she believes being able to look after her child is the best thing that the peace process has given to her (Ledys, member of AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018).

On the contrary, following the birth of her child, Gina was able to leave her daughter with her mother while she was in the FARC-EP. Unfortunately, she could only see her baby twice during the six years while. After the peace agreement, she recovered her child and now she lives with her in San Jose de León, together with her husband — another FARC-WP ex-member — and their newborn baby. When I asked her if this transition was difficult for her, she answers saying:

I have had my girl with me for only two months and I am learning to be her mother. I could not enjoy her as a baby because I had to hand her over after two months. I was lucky because they did not make me have an abortion. (Gina, San José León, November 2019)

Being part of the patriarchal society of Colombia leads FARC-EP ex-members to assume and adapt to the parameters imposed on motherhood and fatherhood (Puyana & Mosquera, 2005). These parameters accept more the women *ex-guerrilleras* who have babies, as it apparently shows they are adapting more into society, undermining other dimensions of their reincorporation, such as their involvement in social, political and economic environments (Salgado, 2019). However, the important aspect to analyse here is how the overrepresentation of motherhood in times of reincorporation shows in a more nuanced way how the motherhood of FARC-EP ex-members is addressed (Elston, 2020, p.76).

The presence of children in the NARs and AETCRs is bringing a new environment to these communities. In one of the schools that I visited near the AETCR Llano Grande, the teacher told me that since the children of FARC-EP ex-members have begun to study there, the dynamics have changed. There are 35 pupils in his class, 18 of whom are children or relatives of ex-combatants. Now, at school they are talking more about the causes and effects of the conflict and are developing projects around peacebuilding alternatives.

Additional, the massive increase in the number of babies in the territories prompted the national government and international organisations to create projects to support the “baby boom” and programmes related to contraception, childcare, prenatal care and parenting education, among others. In two of the places that I visited are childcare centres, and in the other, there is a school under construction at which 15 children, who are mostly relatives of FARC-EP ex-members, attend. Additionally, the massive number of children in the collective reincorporation has created a new social network among mothers and wives of FARC-EP ex-members, who support each other in raising their children.

What is clear in the reincorporation process is that motherhood for FARC-EP ex-members women represents the recovery of their reproductive rights, but this is only a small part of the myriad of rights and responsibilities they have to exercise in times of reincorporation. They also have the responsibility to continue fighting for their rights by playing an active role in their communities and in the collective actions of *Los Comunes* political party.

Being a mother is not the final stage of women’s reincorporation; it is a minor part of the complete political, economic and social reincorporation process that women should fulfill.

5.5. Conclusions

In this chapter, the concept of reincorporation and collectivity in reincorporation were discussed. By analysing the everyday life of ex-combatants and ideas that come into their mind when referring to these concepts, I identified that FARC-EP ex-members have a discourse that moves between their former ideologies as guerrillas and the demands exerted by society. This demonstrates that the formation of meanings is a pattern that is in constant transition and dispute.

Although some FARC-EP ex-members understand collective reincorporation as a core aspect of peacebuilding, others find it a double-edged sword. Being in a new social, political and economic condition leads ex-combatants to act away from their legacy as *farianos*. Those who had a clear idea of the ideology and purpose of their *fariano* struggle are the ones who have to make more compromise towards their collectivity.

In their reincorporation process, FARC-EP ex-members have to handle three different realities: the one attached to their legacy; the one demanded by the government; and the one required by their surroundings. These three aspects shape continually the meanings of

collective reincorporation. Some define reincorporation as a simple adaptation to society following the standards of being civilians and others go further and understand this as a transformation of the economic, social and political surroundings.

Seeing reintegration through the lens of collectivity leads to an understanding of the emotional attachment that FARC-EP ex-members have to their former comrades and the benefits of staying together in their reintegration process. Collectivity in reincorporation implies a transformation of the routines, styles of life and relationships FARC-EP ex-members used to have in conflict times. This collectivity implies integrating the past with the present and using their legacy in the transition to post-conflict. In such a way, the meanings of peace for FARC-EP ex-members goes beyond forgetting the conflict or just receiving benefits, it represent peace as a social justice; and peace as a tranquility in everyday life. The use of their legacy and their collective initiatives contribute in the achievement of a long-term peace in the territories where they are settled.

In terms of the gender perspective in reincorporation, I argued that women have more challenges in reincorporating than men do. Mostly, the discourses around reintegration forget to study the effects of women's physiognomy/reproductive characteristics during conflict times, women's challenges to adapt/shape in a patriarchal society, their gender roles and their motherhood role in reincorporation times.

Additionally, I found that the so-called "baby boom" and "children of peace" in reincorporation represent traditional gender roles. Motherhood represents only one of the many rights recovered by women ex-combatants in reincorporation times. However, it alone does not represent the successful reincorporation of the FARC-EP ex-members who are women.

In the following chapter, by studying the economic, social and political dimensions of reincorporation, I will explore the practices and challenges in implementing collective actions in reincorporation.

“Reincorporation means to end the war and search the way towards peace. It is ‘bacano’, being with the society, doing this and that, but where is the other face of us, how are we going to live? What should we do for a successful reincorporation? Can I live with 700m pesos decently? Is a minimal education enough? Where am I going to implement what I have learnt if I do not have a job? I have a metre of land to cultivate one bush of onion, am I going to live from that? [...]. Despite the difficulties we are here to continue this agreement.”

(Jovial, Llano Grande)

6. Out of the Mainstream: Dimensions in Collective Reincorporation

6.1. The Dimensions of Reincorporation under a Collective Perspective

The previous chapter defined the meanings of collective reincorporation from ex-combatants’ voices and the particularities of this term in relation to traditional approaches of reintegration. I explained the different perspectives about reincorporation in practice and the multiple challenges FARC-EP ex-members face to remain together, with a focus on women. This analysis allows me to discuss in this chapter the different dimensions of reincorporation exposed in both the DDR standards and the current policy of reincorporation.

Point three of the peace agreement defines the process of laying down arms of FARC-EP ex-members, their commitment to reincorporation and the government’s compliance in providing legal, economic and security guarantees to ex-combatants after the signing of the peace agreement. Three dimensions comply the achievement of the third point: *economic*, which comprises the creation of associative and organisational income generation projects among FARC-EP ex-members and the strength of their work capacities; *political*, which implies the transition of the FARC-EP from an armed organisation to a political party and their local participation in political and participatory actions; and *social reincorporation*, which aims to strengthen the social fabric, co-existence and reconciliation in society (CONPES, 2018; Presidencia de la República, 2016).

As my interest is not to disarticulate practices into fragments, in the following I will venture to analyse the different dimensions of reincorporation in a single chapter, to define the multiple challenges, dynamics and actors involved in the broader framework of collective reincorporation, as well as their articulation in practice. In this chapter, I will show that although the social, economic and political dimensions align with traditional approaches to

DDR, collective actions in these dimensions do not conform to traditional ways of looking at reintegration (CEDE, 2020). However, the need to achieve these dimensions in reincorporation responds to the ex-combatants' interest in achieving economic recovery with development, security stabilisation, conflict prevention and the achievement of reconciliation (United Nations, 2006, p.4).

Throughout this chapter, I consider the collective dimension as another form of *doing* reintegration by not only using the opportunities and regulations provided by the state but also by considering the creation of new alternatives that aim to overcome the homogenisation of the citizens' roles and their alienation from the economic, educational, social and political patterns. In this regard, I illustrate the different acts of resistance ex-combatants have exerted in practice to guide their reincorporation process away from the idea of bringing them into the "social and economic mainstream" or by "conducting their conduct" (Metsola, 2006, p.1127).

This chapter is structured as follows. In the first section, I will explore political reincorporation. To do so, I will analyse the different challenges of *Los Comunes* political party and the internal and external difficulties FARC-EP ex-members have faced in strengthening their political status. In the second section, I will explore the meanings of collective income generation projects and the alternatives that ex-combatants have acquired to achieve economic self-sustainability.

Finally, the third section will focus on social reincorporation, in which I will define the scope and different actors that intertwine in this process. Within this framework, I will look at the three sub-dimensions of social reincorporation: education; family and community. Education is seen as an alternative that values ex-combatants' and locals' knowledge; family as a network that contributes to the social stability of ex-combatants; and community as the network that facilitates the inclusion of ex-combatants and benefit their local development.

To close this chapter, I will conclude by saying that reintegration is a holistic approach that encompasses different dimensions that interact with each other. FARC-EP ex-members play an important role in improving these dimensions by taking an active role in transforming their environment through the creation of alternative livelihoods that seek to improve the social, economic and political conditions of the local population.

6.2. Political Reincorporation

6.2.1. The Political Reincorporation Agreements and Challenges

My second fieldwork in Agua Bonita was prior to the regional political elections. After helping the four candidates with documents, slogans, posters and even calls, I resulted in being one of their logistic supporters during their campaign.

People are getting ready to start the caravan. Some are joining with their motorbikes and others are in “*Los mixtos*¹⁴¹”. “*Los mixtos*” have stuck on them the posters of the political campaign of the FARC party, as well as posters of the candidates for mayor and governor that the ex-members of the FARC-EP support. Most of the wives and children of the FARC-EP ex-members are on the bus, while they are behind us on their motorbikes. Four families from neighbouring communities are joining us, as they want to support the election of FARC candidates to the local council. At the meeting point, I could see how other parties greeted the main candidate of the FARC and her substitutes for the party. I noticed how this big “family” of the FARC party was gathering in the same place. Children, friends, relatives who live in this municipality and nearby are around the flags of the Rosa party (FARC party). This was the first time that I saw a flag of the FARC political party in a public event. Since then, I realised that they are a new legal political actor in my country. They moved their flag with pride and interacted with other parties without any kind of fear of rejection. (Notes from my fieldwork, closure of the election campaign, 2019)

After the signing of the final peace agreement and the laying down of weapons by the FARC-EP, the government committed to supporting a political party made up of FARC-EP ex-members by providing five seats in the Senate and five seats in the House of Representatives. This transition signified one of the biggest challenges in peacebuilding (Presidencia de la República, 2016), as implies that ex-combatants not only “lay down their weapons and hand in the military fatigues, but more importantly compel former rebel leaders to change their military struggle into political ones” (De Zeeuw, 2008, p.1). It also includes changing the power structure and the recognition of FARC-EP ex-members as a legal political unit.

¹⁴¹ Special rural buses in Colombia.

The guarantees¹⁴² provided for the FARC political party (from now on *Los Comunes*¹⁴³) lasted for two political periods, and after this period they have to dispute their seats in the political arena following a democratic election (Presidencia de la República, 2016). In 2018, the ex-members of FARC-EP had the right to participate as a political party in the legislative elections but without putting the risk their 10 seats agreed in the peace accord. During this election, they presented 23 candidates for Senate and five lists for the House of Representatives with 52 candidates. The candidates obtained 32,636 and 52,532 votes respectively. However, the votes were not enough to achieve the minimum threshold to claim an additional seat (Bravo, 2018; Instituto KROC, 2018).

In November 2019, *Los Comunes* participated in the regional elections all over the country. 308 candidates registered as part of *Los Comunes*, 242 represented this political party alone and 59 were part of a coalition with other political parties (KROC, 2020). Among the universe of candidates, 111 of them were FARC-EP ex-members and the rest had some kind of affiliation with them; 13 of them applied for mayor, 249 registered for municipal councils and 30 candidates registered for the Local Administrative Board. None applied for regional governments (Ramírez, 2019). Despite the large number of candidates, this did not produce encouraging results. As part of a coalition, *Los Comunes* obtained just the seat of the mayor of Guapí (Cauca). Three more FARC-EP ex-members obtained a seat in the political administration, but supported by another political party, such was the case of Julian Comrado, who won the position of mayor in Turbaco with the coalition of the Colombia Humana and the Patriotic Union (UP) party. The same happened with two local councillors in Bogotá (Forero, 2019).

Los Comunes has faced various challenges in adapting to the political dynamics of the country. The party has struggled from the beginning to create political alliances as a result of other parties' fear of affecting their neutrality and political recognition due to prejudice towards FARC-EP ex-members and political polarisation towards the peace agreement.

¹⁴² It includes registration in the National Electoral Council (*Consejo Nacional Electoral*), access to the media, funding for election campaigns and for the operation of party headquarters and security conditions for the representatives of the political party (Presidencia de la República, 2016, p.70-71).

¹⁴³ The political party of FARC-EP ex-members was until February 2021 called the Common Alternative Revolutionary Force (*Fuerzas Alternativas Revolucionarias del Común-FARC*), and since then it is called The Commons (*Los Comunes*). Colloquially is also called the Rosa Party (*El partido de la Rosa*).

After the elections, the members of San José de León met in an assembly to discuss issues such as the participation in the last political elections, and the low percentage of votes for *Los Comunes*. Efrain, the ex-combatant leader of this community, argues:

There is a lot of stigma still attached to us. Until we clear up our legal situation with the JEP [The Special Jurisdiction for Peace] and get rid of all that karma from the past we cannot start a new life. We believed that only with the desire for peace that people have, they supported us, but it is not like that. (Efrain member of the NAR San José de León, November 2019)

Lozada, one of the political representatives of *Los Comunes*, claims: “You cannot be consistent with peace when you try to exclude from politics the party that emerged from a peace agreement” (Lozada, 2019). In this sense, the transit of the FARC-EP into a political party has no validity if its structure is not nourished by its relationship with others. A political party becomes a power structure when it has a space and a voice in political spheres (Hobson et al., 2007). It needs recognition from the state, the society and the political party’s peers (Söderström, 2019). What was established in the peace agreement was not only the creation of the FARC-EP political party, but also political strategies to include *Los Comunes* in the political arena on equal terms with other traditional parties and their involvement in political discussions and decision-making.

The political dynamics in the transition to post-conflict depend on how well the ex-combatants deal with the “elites” and how they adapt to an “apparent” democracy, showing a participation in politics with a blurry perspective of democratic values (Söderström, 2020, p.10). In this vein, the ex-combatants’ political party is merely a label that aim to demonstrate that they are part of a democratic dynamic, but in practice it does not actually contribute to the inclusion or acceptance of them in the political environment. Rather, constantly calls them into question. For instance, when FARC-EP ex-members align themselves with bureaucratic dynamics, or are part of the apparent democratic values, they are stigmatised and recriminated by the hegemonic political parties for having double moral standards, and even argued that the FARC-EP’s socialist perspective was a fallacy that covered up its terrorist tendencies.

At present, FARC-EP ex-members find themselves at a crossroads where they are ignored by the state, are submerged in a political system that is not transparent and with high levels of corruption that do not respond to the country's democratic principles. The dynamics of the government have plunged FARC-EP ex-members into a system that encourages individuality and anti-democratic principles, seeking to contain their agency and to overlook their ideological legacy and veteran status.

FARC-EP ex-members sustain that the creation of *Los Comunes* political party was premature (NAR San José de León assembly, November 2019) and it was not the time to gain knowledge to transition from insurgent military politics to a legal political party (El Tiempo, 2020). The timing did not allow them to work on the communities and to gain recognition by playing a role that contributed to the improvement of society away from the one that they had during conflict times. Mario, a FARC-EP ex-member who was a militia during conflict times, states the importance of gaining the trust of communities in political dynamics:

All politicians have to show something with facts. For instance, we should have a history of working with communities, but the only thing we have done is come from conflict without providing anything as a rewards. We have not been able to do anything with communities during this peace process. (Mario, San Jose de León, November 2019)

Additionally, there was not time to train the ex-combatants to submerge in the political dynamics and to gain knowledge about the process of political elections. Most of the FARC-EP ex-members had problems with acquiring the legal documentation to vote, while others did not know how to do it due to the lack of time that the leaders had to carry out a "voting pedagogy". On top of that, the lack of resources the candidates of *Los Comunes* had in the regions to carry out campaigning and the little political training they received was detrimental to the performance of the party.

FARC-EP ex-members claim that most of their political party's supporters are in rural areas and they are the ones who are less likely to vote, either because of accessibility to the polling stations or because they are unwilling to do so. On the contrary, others argue that members of rural communities where the FARC-EP used to operate are resistant to the idea of supporting their political party, as they argue that this guerrilla group abandoned them

after the peace agreement. Carlos, one of the FARC-EP ex-members who disagreed with how their leaders conducted the peace agreement, argues that all the effort they made during the time of the conflict is now in vain. They have lost credibility in some communities and some of them are reluctant to now support the political party. “We were fighting for the benefit of the people and some communities say we left them behind for this peace process” (Carlos, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018).

Additionally, the public policy of current President Ivan Duque, “Peace with legality”, is thought to disagree with the peace process and certainly with the creation of *Los Comunes* political party (CSIVI-FARC, 2019a; Valencia & Chaverra, 2020). Medina (2020) argues that the peace process does not have the official support of the current government, as its political orientation is at odds with how the former government proceeded in the peace agreement.

Considering the aforementioned, political reincorporation is not only about the transition of FARC-EP guerrillas to a political party and the expansion of the democratic apparatus by offering some seats to this group on the political stage. This transition does not only contribute to strengthening the apparatus of democracy or the discourses of post-conflict reconstruction, but it also contributes to the state’s formation (Metsola, 2006). It implies broadening political voice and accountability to create new discourses on how to distribute and access to collective goods (Sindre & Söderström, 2016, p.115).

Applying the ideology of ex-combatants in their reincorporation process can have positive effects not only on political party acceptance, but also in shaping post-conflict politics and livelihoods (Wiegink & Sprenkels, 2020, p.3). This is possible by the use of the identity and legacy ex-combatants bring from conflict times, which become the core aspects to transforming their war ideologies into a political party (Sindre & Söderström, 2016).

While revolutionaries or armed groups in the global north are treated as veterans, in the global south they are treated as ex-combatants, delegitimising their ideological and social contribution in the transition to post-conflict (Söderström, 2020; Wiegink & Sprenkels, 2020). Here, the label of “ex-combatants” does not only influence the political recognition of FARC-EP ex-members, but also delegitimises their ideological legacies. Being part of a political environment in times of reintegration becomes a form of loyalty towards ex-combatants’ past and a protection of their conflict memories (Lawther, 2017).

One of the main causes of instability in *Los Comunes* political party is the internal division of FARC-EP ex-members in terms of ideological and personal interest. These aspects will be analysed in detail below.

6.2.2. Internal Divisions and Fragmentation of the Political Party

According to Ávila, the strength, centralisation and unity of the FARC astonished analysts in 50 years of war. Now, after the signing of the Peace Accord, this force (the ex-FARC-EP guerrilla group) is an archipelago of groups and tendencies that have generated fragmentation and discord within the FARC-EP ex-members and a weakening of its political party (Ávila, 2020a). In August 2019, Iván Márquez and Jesús Santrich, two of *Los Comunes* political leaders, announced their return to arms in response to the Colombian government's failure to comply with the peace agreement. Following this announcement, various news reports appeared showing the disputes and internal fragmentation inside *Los Comunes*.

The fragmentation of FARC-EP ex-members was evident during the laying down of weapons. The pressure from international and national actors for this to happen caused many tensions between the different actors involved in the peace agreement. The rapid laying down of weapons created uncertainty and distrust among some FARC-EP members, leading them to abandon the process and remain in clandestinity. This produced many disagreements within the *fariana* collective and an initial division of this unity. On top of that, the leaders did not have time to prepare the troops for this new phase, nor the chance to create collective strategies to address the challenges of reincorporation.

Ana, an ex-combatant who played a role in the FARC-EP's politics, explains the fractured cohesion of this organisation in the transition to post-conflict:

I think that one mistake in our disarticulation was not to clarify with the armed guerrillas what was to happen after they had laid down their weapons [...]. Some of the commanders had their discrepancies with the troops, so when we left the military structure, the troops did not copy [follow the orders] the commanders [...]. I think that now that is not an order, this is a political conscience. Perhaps, it was not clear to the troops that being part of this process and having these new opportunities and this new beginning is due to our armed struggle. (Ana, member of the NAR San Jose de León, November 2019).

According to Zambrano-Quintero (2019), the first area of discrepancy within the FARC-EP was presented in the level of its leadership when defining its ideological orientation as a political party. Two political ideologies have emerged inside the FARC-EP since the peace Havana dialogues. One is considered more open and less dogmatic, led by Timoleón Jiménez “Timochenko”, with the support of Pastor Alape, Pablo Catatumbo, Rodrigo Granda and Carlos Antonio Lozada, who are now the political leaders of *Los Comunes* political party. The second is more traditional and follows the left-wing ideas from the 1970s, led by deserters Iván Márquez and Jesús Santrich (Semana, 2020). The latter agrees with the discourses maintained in former failed peace dialogues with the FARC-EP¹⁴⁴ and the ideological bases of the FARC’s founders (Medina, 2020).

For Andrés París, one of the political leaders of the FARC-EP and former member of *Los Comunes*, the political objectives of this party were not clear from the beginning. The point of political reincorporation during the peace process was negotiated in a hasty manner, which affected a profound analysis of its political principles and caused a further disintegration of its members (Interview with Andrés París by Emmanuelson, 2019).

Some FARC-EP ex-members feel that the division of *Los Comunes* directly affects collective reincorporation. Rocio, one of the national political leaders of *Los Comunes* and a gender activist, argues that detaching from the political party “contributes to the de-ideologisation of the *fariana* community, to the depoliticisation of our people and the individualisation” (Rocio, member of the National Party, Bogotá, December 2019). Other FARC-EP ex-members have stated publicly that they do not share the ideologies of *Los Comunes*. They criticised the loss of the essential principles within the organisation, such as collective leadership, conscious discipline, the practice of democratic centralism and the exercise of criticism and self-criticism. They believe that the leaders are responsible for giving up weapons without the assurance that the national government would comply with the agreement (ANNCOL, 2017).

These divisions have affected the sense of belonging to *Los Comunes* political party. The low levels of credibility are particularly felt by the FARC-EP ex-members settled in the AETCRs or NARs who see little support and encouragement from their national political leaders. Nubia, one of the ex-combatants who demobilised before the peace agreement and is now a member of the ARN, states:

¹⁴⁴ Such as La Uribe (1984) and El Caguán (1999-2002).

I think if El Mono¹⁴⁵ was alive, he would be visiting all of these territories. I know he would go from space to space raising the revolutionary morale, carrying the concerns and reporting on the progress of each territory. (Nubia, FARC-EP ex-member and facilitator AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018)

Nubia argues that FARC-EP ex-members feel like they have been abandoned by the central political party and it is not helping in keeping the *fariana* collective together. Even, some FARC-EP ex-members argue that *Los Comunes* political leaders are now part of “the bourgeoisie”. This political party has become a militancy, which is incorporated into the schemes of power and local control in the territories. FARC-EP ex-members claim that the leaders of the political party do not fight for the needs and requirements of the *farianos* who are located in the rural areas; instead they argue that their political party at the national level shows “bureaucratic fighters” who do not align with the ideologies and principles of guerrillas (Munive & Jakobsen, 2012, p.364).

FARC-EP ex-members argue that their *fariano* feeling is related to the emotional belonging to their former comrades, their ideological legacies and the respect for their former commanders, but is not necessarily related to the level of support for *Los Comunes* political party. Accordingly, they argue that there should not be a causal relationship between the success of reincorporation and the success of their political party. For instance, at present, there are numerous collective strategies driven by FARC-EP ex-members that are contributing to peacebuilding, but not necessarily to the political structure of *Los Comunes*.

Andrés París argues that during the peace process in Havana, the FARC-EP's experience of militancy was not taken into consideration. Instead, the leaders of the FARC political party preferred to seek generational change with the objective of destroying the most revolutionary centre of *Los Comunes*. He argues that by saying: “The peace agreement did not say that the representatives of the FARC had to become anti-guerrillas as a way of being incorporated into the ruling class” (Interview with Andrés París by Emmanuelson, 2019).

¹⁴⁵ El Mono Jojoy was one of the most recognised commanders of the FARC-EP. He was murdered in September 2010 by military forces in Colombia.

Colloquially, the FARC-EP ex-members used to call their political party the “rosca”¹⁴⁶ party, showing that the ones who hold representative roles in the political party generally had some kind of relationships with those in the higher echelons of the former FARC-EP. This demonstrates the absence of a democratic process that does not allow for new leadership positions inside of *Los Comunes* political party.

The credibility of the representatives of *Los Comunes* began to wane after the creation of the ZVTNs. A number of FARC-EP ex-members mention that there were many irregularities in the construction of the camps. Marcela, a political leader of *Los Comunes*, argues that, since then, there has been little faith in the head of the party:

There is no credibility anymore. There are people who even do not trust in Timo¹⁴⁷. Nobody is blind, we have seen too many things and many things have been done behind our backs [...]. There has been bad management since we arrived here. (Marcela, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018)

The lack of belief towards the members of *Los Comunes* is mostly for the national political leaders and not for the local leaders. The FARC-EP ex-members see directly how the local leaders work and create political alliances to benefit the local socio-economic conditions. However, they do not see the role of their national representatives in the local sphere and usually blame them for all the difficulties that they have experienced in their territories. Mario, one of the leaders of the NAR San José de León, who was one of the most reckless combatants in Uraba, says that people are confused about the role of the political party and its functions within the *fariana* community, resulting in little trust for *Los Comunes* party and their leaders. He follows this by saying: “We do not need anyone else to kill us, we are killing ourselves” (Mario, member of the NAR San José de León, December 2019).

Since 2018, many representatives from *Los Comunes* have announced their retirement from the party, but not from the peace process, as a result of various disputes among their members. Such was the case of a group of FARC-EP ex-members¹⁴⁸ who sent a letter to the

¹⁴⁶ In English, similar to “to be in the loop with”.

¹⁴⁷ Rodrigo León Echeverry or Timoleón Jimenez, the current president of *Los Comunes*.

¹⁴⁸ 35 FARC-EP ex-members attended this meeting, representing more than 1,000 ex-combatants who argued that they no longer identified with the FARC's political party (Velez, 2019).

government in September 2019 explaining that they did not feel represented by the political party and therefore they did not commune with their decisions:

We want to decentralise the reincorporation with *Los Comunes*, since the political leaders want to take decisions that do not represent us. They abandoned its grassroots guerrilla movement a long time ago. (Comment from the ex-combatant Victor Hugo Silva in Velez, 2019)

Additionally, ex-member and leader of the FARC-EP, alias Pablo Atrato¹⁴⁹, argues:

When we were in a revolutionary army we understood that orders had to be fulfilled. However, today we are in a political party and the relationship is horizontal. They [the leaders of *Los Comunes*] have not understood this and they want their opinions to be carried out as they say. Here is where we do not understand each other. (El Espectador, 2020)

Although some leaders of the former FARC-EP have announced their individual retirements for disagreeing with how the political party is proceeding (Rafael Gutierrez, Tanja Nijmeijer and Martin Batalla to name a few), other political party leaders have been forced to retire from *Los Comunes*. According to the leaders of *Los Comunes*, these leaders were hindering the principles of the party (among those who were dismissed were Andrés París, Pablo Atrato, Benedicto de Jesús Rodríguez and Fabian Ramirez) (Soto, 2020). The ones who were forced to retire from *Los Comunes* were part of the Major State of the FARC-EP and their principles with socialist ideas were stronger than the held by the current political leaders. Oppenheim, et al., (2015) argue that the ones who had stronger ideological perspectives during the conflict are most likely to suffer disillusionment and rejection when their political party acts contrary to their former ideologies.

Moreover, the current division of *Los Comunes* is reinforced by the government's failure to value collective initiatives, which ignores the contributions made by collective reincorporation in the transformation of the Colombian conflict. This individual perspective is promulgated by DDR and Security Sector Reform (SSR) policies, which often attempt to

¹⁴⁹ Ubaldo Enrique Zúñiga.

separate ex-combatant networks and disconnect individuals from their former structures (Sindre & Söderström, 2016).

Currently, *Los Comunes* political party is dealing with two challenges: the recovery of the internal collectivity within FARC-EP ex-members and the transformation of their guerrilla ideology into a political structure. This challenge is part of the natural progress of a group that moves from war politics to peace agreements. This transition “involves the construction, negotiation and contestation of relationships among veterans and between veterans and the state (or state-like institutions) to establish a distinct form of post-war citizenship” (Wiegink & Sprenkels, 2020, p.3). The transition from FARC-EP guerrillas to a political party requires time, not only to adapt insurgent ideologies to a political party, but also for ex-combatants to assimilate their role as political actors and to generate acceptance from both other political parties and society at large.

However, political reincorporation is not limited to the participation of FARC-EP ex-members in national governmental structures, but also involves their role in the local everyday political relations and their contribution to the transformation of the territories affected during the conflict. In the next section, I explain the contribution of political reincorporation from bottom-up dynamics and the importance of seeing former FARC-EP members as active actors in political dynamics.

6.2.3. Collective Political Reincorporation: Beyond a Political Party

Beyond the creation of a political party, the collectivity of *farianos* aims to contribute to the local participatory democracy in the territories. This process implies that FARC-EP ex-members can count on their individual freedom to participate in any local organisation by being part of the communities’ social leadership. Their local participation can go from being part of the local community board (*Junta de Acción Comunal* - JAC) to participation in local, regional and national bodies created from the peace agreement. In these groups, they can have roles as leaders of their communities and advocators of the peace agreement.

The so-called “political reintegration” approach falls short at fulfilling the expectations of the ex-combatants. Traditional perspectives still equate acceptance into society as the acquisition of a national identity card, the passive adaptation of people to the political sphere or the right to vote. Contrary, FARC-EP ex-members recognise their citizenship as the recovery of a mutual relationship and the possibility of interacting in the public sphere by

exercising their legacy from conflict times. This process involves the recovery of a mutual relationship, in which the inclusion of ex-combatants in politics can only be achieved by recognising their political agency (Carranza-Franco, 2019; Söderström, 2014).

According to Özerdem, political reincorporation implies that ex-combatants:

Have access to decision-making mechanisms of community, institutional and political structures. As part of transforming their identity from a combatant to citizen, former combatants should be able to take an active role in such decision-making mechanisms, which would create significant opportunities for social cohesion and reintegration. (2012, p. 67)

In exercising their political participation in reincorporation, FARC-EP ex-members use their experiences and competences acquired during conflict times and their work with the masses under a socialist ideological perspective, which provide a surplus of knowledge when cooperating with other groups in society, mainly with regard to peasant communities and their fundamental rights (Acosta, 2020; Oppenheim, et al., 2015). While FARC-EP ex-members exercise their active role in the local arena, they are also progressing their citizen conditions.

Accordingly, the process of local political reincorporation implies a process of empowerment in which the individual competences link with the collective in a natural supportive system, using proactive behaviours to transform political dynamics and subsequently producing social changes (Zimmerman, 1995). During a monthly assembly organised in San José de León, the FARC-EP ex-members argue that their political proposal aims to get closer to the communities by acting and doing things together for the benefit of the social development of the territories. Additionally, they wish to tackle local corruption by providing a transparent political agenda. Efrain argues:

I talked with the mayor and I told him we are going to work on a compromise for a transparent administration [...]. I told him that I am not going to ask him for a soda, I only ask for transparency for the municipality. If he agrees with that, we can work together. (Efrain, San José de León assembly, November 2019)

In this statement, Efrain sustains that they do not expect anything in return, except the cooperation of the politicians in the development of their communities. They seek to transform their political dynamics into a transparent and participatory relationship by acting on their collective principles and the sustainable development of their communities.

During their reincorporation process, FARC-EP ex-members have to convince the communities that their ideology may improve the socio-economic conditions of their territories by actively partaking in social leadership and acting according to their ideological principles. Altering the micro context by promoting tolerance and respect in the communities may provide an opportunity for political leadership, transforming local attitudes towards peace, and improving conflict transformation processes (McEvoy & Shirlow, 2009).

At present, FARC-EP ex-members are advocators of the points agreed in the peace process. They play an active role in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CEV), the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), the Unit for the Search of Disappeared Persons (UBPD), the Territorial Council for Reincorporation (CTR) and the National Council for Reincorporation (CNR), among others. The challenge for FARC-EP ex-members' in the peace agreement was that they would not just be part of the reincorporation process, but that they could support the rights of peasants with comprehensive rural reform, promoting political democratic participation, providing a solution to the illicit drugs trafficking and the recovery of victims' rights. By doing so, they cannot only protect their personal interests but also enforce the rural guarantees agreed during the dialogues in Havana.

In this regard, the politic reincorporation does not only align with the collective of FARC-EP ex-members or their political party, but also with the varieties of "post-insurgent individuality" (Binford, 2010, p .554). This insurgent behaviour emerged from those who detached from the *farianos/as* collective, the community supporters of these guerrilla groups and other civil organisations that contributed to the maintenance of the FARC-EP fighting for more than 50 years.

In sum, the political action of FARC-EP ex-members should not be limited to their participation in political structures; rather it should extend to political actions that can be performed in the everyday life of the territories. Therefore, beyond following the government's parameters of what an active citizen should be, rather they can build by themselves their own meanings of citizens while they actively participate in the formal and informal political discourses that have arisen in the aftermath of the conflict.

6.3. Economic Dimension

6.3.1. Challenges of Collective Self-Sustainability

One of the most challenging parts of collective reincorporation is the economic self-sustainability of FARC-EP ex-members. From the outset, the *fariana* collective has sought to work as a cooperative to develop income-generating projects, moving away from the concept of “employability” used in DDR approaches. They seek to move from short-term employment to a lasting collective and community approach.

At this stage, FARC-EP ex-members are more committed to individual and collective rural income generation projects than to accessing formal employment. To date, only 4,3 percent of ex-combatants want to join the labour market¹⁵⁰. Their jobs are in rural areas and involve activities such as animal production and agriculture. The ex-combatants’ interest with rural work relates to their former activities as guerrillas and their role before they enroll in the group¹⁵¹. Josue, one of the youth FARC-EP ex-members leaders in Llano Grande, state: “Most of us are peasants, who just want one piece of land, where we can work, where we do not need to go elsewhere to find work [...]. Here, we are all purely farmers” (Josue, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018). Similarly, José, one of the leaders of Agua Bonita who has worked as a facilitator for the ARN and the JEP, says:

In the guerrillas, we sowed everything; [...] there were even fronts where there was a company completely available to sow the food. They sowed rice, corn, whatever else they could. That was fundamental in the economic part of the FARC. (José, members of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

To integrate all the collective initiatives at national level, during the peace agreement the *fariana* collective created ECOMÚN,¹⁵² “Common Solidarity Economies”. This is a national organisation in charge of integrating all FARC-EP ex-members’ collective economic initiatives. This process of cooperativism comes from the ideological base of the FARC guerrillas, which aligns with their critical perspective against the capitalist market (Valencia Agudelo &

¹⁵⁰ According to the *Registro Nacional de Reincorporación* (National Reincorporation Registry-RNR) at <https://twitter.com/ARNColombia/status/1117789691842125825>.

¹⁵¹ Despite the fact that the majority of FARC-EP ex-members have rural backgrounds and interests in working as peasants, some of them are interested in living in cities, mainly for two reasons: invisibility to avoid security threats and interests in accessing higher education and achieving better job opportunities.

¹⁵² *Economías Solidarias del Común*.

Chaverra, 2019). This approach expects going against a transition “from a wartime subsistence regime to postwar reintegration into national (and international) capitalism” (as was the case of the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberations “FMLN” insurgents) (Binford, 2010, p.532, for more see Silver, 2011; Wood, 2003).

For FARC-EP ex-members, the importance of creating their own ways of subsistence is related to the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of their surroundings and their contribution to the development of the territories most affected by the conflict. Jorge, one of the most committed FARC-EP ex-members in Agua Bonita to the collective economic projects, assures that economic reincorporation is not just about receiving money to survive. He argues that by saying: “we have to generate employment, if there is not employment there is no human development” (Jorge member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019). This process entails an inclusive development of projects in the territories where ex-combatants are settled and the creation of economic initiatives that overcome traditional ways of production (Guasca et al., 2021).

Thus, the collective economic reincorporation sheds light on alternatives that may detach from the centralist economic structure of Colombia and the control of norms and practices that legitimise relationships of production based on capitalist-dominated societies. By acting under collective self-sustainability, FARC-EP ex-members try to overcome the employability strategy used in former reintegration processes that just attempted to undermine the ex-combatants’ agency by enforcing obedience, dependency and loyalty towards the state (Metsola, 2006).

The employability approach disengages from the collective purposes of the FARC-EP ex-members by showing them that by receiving a salary they will be able to fulfil their reincorporation objectives, undermining other social, emotional and political needs required to achieve citizenship status. Reintegration programmes use a salary as a way to indoctrinate and assert power over the territories, affecting the freedom ex-combatants have to explore alternatives to the detriment of the economic conditions of society. Elmer Arrieta, a FARC-EP ex-member who was part of the front 18 for 26 years and now leader of the *farianos* explains why a “cooperativist” perspective was followed in the reincorporation process:

We adopted cooperativism in our return to civil life as it provides the capacity to develop new relationships within the framework of the capitalist economy, without

yet leaving it, but always trying to overcome its selfish and individualistic elements. We have to take into account that the guerrilla experience was a socialist experience at a high level of development and we could not suddenly switch to forms of the economy where exploitation and individual appropriation are reproduced. (Interview with Elmer Arrieta in Valencia Agudelo & Chaverra Colorado, 2019)

At this point, 70 cooperatives have been organised by FARC-EP ex-members and involve 3,276 ex-combatants. Each cooperative has its own resources, infrastructure and capital (CONPES, 2018). However, according to the KROC Institute, these cooperatives lack economic resources and administrative control, and do not have a strategic plan. Additionally, the centralism of FARC-EP ex-members has affected the good performance of the cooperatives in terms of internal decision-making and the disarticulation of the associations and cooperatives in the territories (KROC, 2019, 2020).

In this regard, the achievement of self-sustainability has not been easy for either ex-combatants or their surrounding communities. According to Martínez & Lefebvre (2019, p.11) different reasons show the difficulty to achieve collective self-sustainability income generation projects in Colombia:

The development gaps in the Colombian countryside that inhibit efficiency in production and commercialisation; the gaps and uncertainty about the rules of game for collective and individual economic reincorporation; and the persistence of illegal economies configured as escape routes for some ex-combatants who are suspicious of what it means to bet on new forms of legal income are some of the most significant aspects that interfere the ex-combatants' economic collective initiatives.

FARC-EP ex-members agree that one of the most significant aspects that is affecting access to income generation projects is the absence of land to create their own agricultural projects. Now, most of them are living on land rented out by the government and the uncertainty about a place to work in agriculture does not help them to implement their economic projects. Sergio, one of the FARC-EP ex-members who was in prison, and released

thanks to the benefits of the peace agreement, and who is now involved in the strategy of peace pedagogies¹⁵³, argues:

The problem here is that there is no land to work on, how can you set up a collective work if there is no place to work. There may be the will of some to work in collectivity and they think we are going to organise ourselves and we are going to work, but where are we going to work? There may be good ideas to work, there may be ideas on how to sow a banana plant, but where are we going to sow it? This uncertainty means that people are now all hopeless. (Sergio, member of AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018)

The absence of land is also a barrier to accessing economic benefits. The money provided by the government to invest in the development of income generation projects cannot be used to buy land, but if the FARC-EP ex-members do not have land to develop their projects, the government does not approve these economic resources. This leaves them in a kind of limbo, where they are uncertain about how to develop their economic projects.

Despite these difficulties, the FARC-EP ex-members continue to develop their individual and collective projects. As of June 2020, the CNR had approved 57 collective projects benefiting 2,712 former FARC-EP combatants and their families. The ARN had approved 1,387 individual projects benefiting 1,630 former combatants. In total, the reincorporation process has supported 1,444 productive projects involving 4,342 FARC-EP ex-members (Presidencia de la República, 2020).

By using ex-combatants' knowledge acquired in the guerrilla times and their previous experience as farmers, international organisations together with the government have created for FARC-EP ex-members new alternatives of production and a commitment to self-sustainability. Now, some of these projects are recognised at national and international levels, such is the case of the beer "*La Roja*" (The Red), the rafting ecotourism projects¹⁵⁴, *Confeciones La Montaña* (The Mountain Confections), and the sale of boots in Tierra Grata.

¹⁵³ "The pedagogy of peace" is a strategy created in the framework of the peace agreement, which attempts to develop and disseminate educational content that promotes knowledge of the policy of peace, legality and coexistence and the content of the peace agreements with illegal armed groups by using pedagogic, cultural, participative and communicative strategies (taking from <http://www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co/legalidad-convivencia/pedagogia/pedagogia-para-la-paz>).

¹⁵⁴ At the moment, there are 17 tourism projects led by ex-combatants (PNUD Colombia, 2019).

At a lower scale, there are projects such as fish production, pineapple crops, oil of asaichi, elaboration of dolls and confections, among others.

Despite the large number of collective projects at the national level, FARC-EP ex-members do not still have the capacity to generate resources for the entire *fariana* community. Most of the initial resources to start up these projects has come from the one-time normalisation allocation of 2m pesos¹⁵⁵, and some have strengthened these projects with the economic support of 8m¹⁵⁶ pesos granted for income-generating projects. According to the CNR, of the 292 productive projects, 180 are self-financed (64 percent), i.e., they are supported with the reincorporation process collective's own resources. So far, only 57 initiatives have government support, which is 20 percent of the total projects supported (Medina, 2020). Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the sustainability of their projects in terms of funding, production and commercialisation.

Moreover, the ECOMÚN cooperatives have not been suitable for providing jobs with remuneration to all the FARC-EP ex-members, mainly for two reasons: the cooperatives have low-scale production; and they do not have the economic capacity to expand their business, with limited resources and little competences to expand their administration and commercialisation. Most of these organisations are under the umbrella of multi-active cooperatives, which means they are an organ that includes several branches: production; education; and saving. More than producing capital, they are expected to achieve the integral development of their cooperative members.

Under such conditions, FARC-EP ex-members feel frustrated when they have to work in the collective without receiving anything in reward. They sustain that they cannot invest all of their time to work in collective initiatives, as they are responsables for their families. This force them find a job outside their collective, mainly as *jornaleros*, “day labourers”. Those who are working as *jornaleros* argue that working in these kinds of job go against their ideological principles. For them, the unequal distribution of land and the lack of guarantees to the farmers delivers inequality and the power remains in the hands of a few large landowners.

Other FARC-EP ex-members are renting spots of land to cultivate or they are working with the owners of the land for a reward of a percentage of the final profits of the harvested product. According to research carried out by Bräuchler (2017) in Maluku, Eastern Indonesia,

¹⁵⁵ Approximately €500.

¹⁵⁶ Approximately €1600.

the ambivalence of peace engineering reproduces actions that foster the conflict by using the traditional structures that increased exclusivism and exacerbated conflicts during war times. On this basis, the absence of collectivism leads to the maintenance of traditional individual forms of production, which are controlled by the market-driven competitive structure.

One of the alternatives that FARC-EP ex-members have found to maintain the essence of “cooperativism” and the economic sustainability of the collective is to participate in different projects promoted by the government or international organisations. In the development of these projects, they are using their labour and their collective principles as a central aspect of their production. In addition, in the process of economic reincorporation, families, host communities and FARC-EP ex-members are creating an economic network that has strengthened local capacities in the territories by integrating individual and collective economic initiatives. In the following section, I explain how individual and collective initiatives can merge as an alternative to achieve collective reincorporation.

6.3.2. Merging Individual and Collective Economic Initiatives in Reincorporation

The alternation of individual and collective economic initiatives has become one way to promote both the FARC-EP cooperation legacy and the ex-combatants’ self-sustainability. This perspective integrates with the individual and family projects that are being undertaken by FARC-EP ex-members and their families, and the collective projects led by the cooperatives. Both aspects may interlink or become opposed according to the time and value ex-combatants give to each economic project.

In an informal conversation with two leaders of Agua Bonita, they argue that the cooperatives do not have the infrastructure to provide jobs to all people. Jorge states: “We cannot keep saying that all is collective because we are conscious that in our collective we do not have enough capacities to sort out the problems of all people.” (Jorge, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019). Therefore, it is important that each family seeks their own economic benefits, but without forgetting the principles of cooperativism and their roles in the cooperatives. In an interview with Christian, he argues that the economic dynamics of the FARC-EP have changed exponentially in the reincorporation process:

We do not have a mechanism, an organisation that tells people that we will guarantee to them all their needs in exchange for their active participation in all the activities that take place here every day, as we could do in the guerrilla struggle. In the guerrillas, there was a commission that was in charge of acquiring finances, and with the finances, all the needs in the framework of the guerrilla struggle were solved for each of the men and women who were part of the FARC-EP. In this new reality, we do not have this capacity [...]. What are we able to do? To generate a space of reflection where people understand the importance of collective production, and thus to create new networks between people without losing these bonds that we have historically built. (Christian, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019)

Similarly, for Gerardo, one of the leaders of family and collective productive projects, the collective and individual initiatives have to work in tandem:

The collective and the individual projects work well together [...]. If we impose only the collective and deny the individual it is possible that we fail in the collective. It is important to know that everyone needs each other, but at the same time, we can allow people to have their individual projects. In the beginning, the community wanted to promote unity among us, and I agreed with that. However, I thought the important to have my individual project, so I did. Everyone should have a life project as a person [...]. But, if a person wants to have something individual in the collective mission, they must consult with the assembly. (Gerardo, member of the NAR San José de León, December 2018)

In the AETCRs and the NARs in which I conducted my fieldwork, I experienced how the individual and collective economic initiatives are merging into one. For instance, in Agua Bonita, there is a community workday, in which everyone has to participate at least once a week. If they cannot participate in this collective action, they have to pay a fine of 30,000 pesos¹⁵⁷. Another example is in San José de León, where the pisciculture collective projects

¹⁵⁷ Approximately €8.

are at the centre of the cooperative, and they provide jobs according to the demands of these economic projects. However, they also support family projects through the cooperative. When they have a big order that the collective fish tanks cannot fulfil, they communicate to the individuals who have family fish tanks. In that case, the family who have fish tanks sell them to the cooperative. The cooperative takes a small percentage of each kilo of fish to keep supporting the collective structure.

Despite the advances in the individual and collective economic projects, achieving sustainability is yet to be seen. The economic reincorporation process of FARC-EP ex-members are still in an initial phase and they receive little profits in rewards. Besides that, they are still receiving the basic monthly allowance from the government and food assistance, which allows them to invest more time in the collective as their basic needs are covered.

For instance, Carolina, one of the FARC-EP ex-members who lives in the NAR in Godo and is part of collective and individual economic projects, states: “If the government did not give us basic income, we would have no money to survive. Now, we have no direct income from our productive projects because we invest everything. With the money they [the government] give us, we develop our collective projects.” (Carolina, member of NAR Godo/Llano Grande, December 2019). Similarly, Gina, who is responsible for the poultry economic project, sustains that the collective is easy to maintain if the basic allowance continues. If this ends, she thinks that most people will have no choice but to go out to find a job to survive, and just a few people could remain in the village in charge of the collective projects (Gina, member of NAR San José de León, November 2019).

The fact that FARC-EP ex-members remain dependent on the government produces mixed feelings among them. Although some of them recognise the importance of the government’s assistance and its partial compliance with what was agreed in Havana, others deny it, saying that the money they receive does not come from the Colombian state but from international organisations. Others argue that they now receive this compensation because of their long years of struggle in *El Monte* defending the rights of the most disadvantaged in Colombia.

Although I do not yet have a clear picture of the success of the articulation of individual and collective economic initiatives, what is clear is that the cooperativist perspective is yielding positive results for the peace process. Acting under collective meanings creates a supportive environment in the territories where FARC-EP ex-members are settled, in

which they make use of their empowerment, visibility and agency as a way to improve their surroundings (Guasca, et al., 2021).

Now, FARC-EP ex-members and surrounding rural communities are creating a cooperative system that benefits their self-sustainability. The communities are offering some jobs to the ex-combatants during planting and harvest seasons and the collective of the ex-FARC offers some job opportunities to the local communities when they receive projects from external and government donors. Additionally, Guasca, et al., (2020, p.80) argue that the collective tourism initiatives established with the *farianos* have converted into a “mechanism to promote reconciliation at the micro-level, parallel to macro-processes like transitional justice and reparation of victims. It can help pave the way for social cohesion and create support networks for ex-combatants.”

In sum, the success of collective reincorporation depends on different aspects that rely not only on the willingness of FARC-EP ex-members to work. It relates to the political and institutional willingness to contribute to these initiatives, the context in which they are being set up, the access to land and the adequate technical assistance and access to markets that might make the productive projects sustainable.

6.4. Social Reincorporation

Gloria, a woman who was a militia in the FARC-EP for 20 years, describes the importance of social reincorporation by saying: “We are one family, we are the sons of Colombia, and our mother is the motherland that has given birth to all of us.” (Gloria, Agua Bonita, October 2019). Social reintegration is the dimension more studied by the scholars who specialise in DDR, but it is the least clear in terms of its definition and forms of intervention. Even it seems that for the United Nations, this dimension is taken for granted when the other dimensions of reintegration¹⁵⁸ are achieved (United Nations, 2006).

Most of the studies of social reintegration are linked with community participation (Caramés, 2003; Kaplan & Nussio, 2015; Rhyn, 2019), family recovery and the strength of social bonds (Karamé, 2009; Özerdem, 2012), the acquisition of citizen conditions (Carranza-Franco, 2016, 2019; Rodríguez López, et al., 2015), and reconciliation and social coexistence (Prieto, 2012; Bowd, 2008). It seems that all of these aspects in some way are articulated with

¹⁵⁸ The United Nations defines the three dimensions of reintegration as: social, economic and political (United Nations, 2006).

the term “social reincorporation” and have an influence to varying extent on its successful performance.

However, in most of cases, these approaches show a rupture between the past and the present of FARC-EP ex-members and an alleged transformation of the social, political and economic conditions of the territories where they have settled after the peace agreement. This dichotomy between the past and present means that the *farianos* live part-time as ex-combatants and part-time as community members (Jensen and Stepputat 2001; Torjesen 2013).

Traditional discourses on reintegration show the ex-combatants detached from the communities in which they are “reintegrating”, as if they had fought in another social dimension (De Vries & Wiegink, 2011). Contrary, FARC-EP ex-members see the reincorporation process as a change of role in the communities, keeping their same collective and communal principles, but with the difference that now they do not have to live clandestinely and can instead live based on a citizen¹⁵⁹ condition.

The reincorporation discourses of the Colombian government are not far from the above perspectives. They integrate the social and economic dimension as one, showing that the achievement of an economic dimension will produce by itself a successful social dimension. On the other hand, community reincorporation embeds the strength of social ties, coexistence and reconciliation in the territories. The reincorporation policy defines these aspects as part of the “Community reincorporation with territorial approach”, which means the “promotion of community reincorporation in the territory, oriented to the strengthening of the social fabric, coexistence and reconciliation”¹⁶⁰ (CONPES, 2018, p. 79).

Compared with former reintegration processes, FARC-EP ex-members now have the freedom to act under the title of *farianos/as* by performing their ideological perspectives without hiding their identity. Now, they are using their own agency and their right to influence society, which means they are free to participate actively in the different meetings and committees carried out in the communities.

¹⁵⁹ I used here the word citizen instead of civilian as the first represents the right of people to exercise an active participation in society. According to Carranza-Franco, a citizen condition defines the “person’s political agency in relation to the state” (2016, p.54).

¹⁶⁰ This process aligns with the 3R approach to reintegration, which means: reinsertion, the initial support given to the ex-combatants; reparation, recognising the needs of the victims; and reconciliation, that relates to the achievement of mutual acceptance and forgiveness between different members of society (Denissen, 2010).

In the words of some FARC-EP ex-members, social reincorporation relates to the positive relationships among local actors, the recovery of social bonds and the “community empowerment and human agency” that they have in exercising collective actions¹⁶¹. These aspects are achieved by a process of local resistance that requires the recognition of people’s identity, the sense of belonging to a territory, freedom of action, respect for people's dignity and their right to achieve their full development. In the following, I analyse these perspectives further.

6.4.1. Community Reincorporation

The term “(re)incorporation” in the community dimension implies the continuation, “not the beginning”, of the ex-combatants’ relationships with surrounding communities, but with the difference that now they are playing an egalitarian role within the territories. In contrast with traditional perspectives that show only the ex-combatants as being excluded and rejected by society, collective reincorporation identifies different ways, groups and forms of exclusion in the aftermath of the conflict. This process does not only relate to a bi-directional relationship between the receiving communities and ex-combatants but also a multi-dimensional relationship, which involves all actors who in any way contributed to the conflict and were affected by it. All of them have to play an active role in social reincorporation and are part of the recovery of the social bonds inside society.

Community reincorporation implies the flexibility of social actors to modify their role and behaviours exerted during conflict times and adapt to the current demands of the surroundings. Now, in the AETCRs and NARs, the police, army, community, victims, external actors, foreigners and members of the state interact in the everyday life of the territories. They are constantly adjusting their needs, interests and their perceptions about the others in their everyday encounters. This process involves the modification of prejudices towards the FARC-EP ex-members but also towards the police, the army, and even towards the private sector and governmental actors.

Jovial, one of the political and community leaders in Llano Grande explains to me the reaction of the communities when the FARC-EP ex-members moved to their territories to begin the reincorporation process:

¹⁶¹ Information taken from an informal discussion with three ex-combatants in the AETCR Llano Grande on November 30, 2019.

The population felt nervous when they realised that the FARC had arrived. People felt afraid of us, but after working together, after talking to them, after they came down here and after we played football together between guerrillas, soldiers and police, we found this harmony, with laughter and hugs. We still have people who reject us, but we try to talk with them. These are things that we lived with in the war, in the conflict, but we cannot continue to live as we were. I think that this forgiveness and non-repetition perspective is a very special thing. The community are starting to see the FARC differently and not as they thought. (Jovial, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018)

On top of that, one of the most important aspects that is affecting the community reincorporation is the “fractured”¹⁶² society to which ex-combatants return. The ongoing conflict makes them feel like they are in an insecure position, in which not only their life is constantly at risk but also the security of their family and surrounding communities. Under these conditions, communities around them may have mixed feelings. Some community members argue that if FARC-EP ex-members move elsewhere or if the AETCRs are closed, the state will abandon them again and the dissident groups will retake their territories. They claim that the presence of the army, international organisations and the government in their villages has brought more security and peace to the territory (such is the case in Caquetá, Guajira and Tolima). On the other hand, some communities reject them because they bring more insecurity to the areas by attracting dissident groups that retaliate against them (such is the case in Putumayo, some parts of Nariño and Ituango, Antioquia).

Nevertheless, after 5 years, communities and ex-combatants have learnt to live together. At this time, they share the same territory, needs and fears and develop projects in the benefit of the development of their territories. Yerson, a member of the community and now a plumber in the AETCR Llano Grande, explains how football has benefited this sense of familiarity among both group of population:

Outsiders call us the Llano Grande family. This is how they recognise us without excluding anyone. The football games strengthened the bond between us because we

¹⁶² In the words of ex-combatant “Diego” in Agua Bonita.

were all united no matter where we came from. The “enemy” was the other team. These people who first hated each other [police, military and ex-combatants] were all aligned and ended up playing together to beat the other team. (Yerson, member of Llano Grande community, November 2018)

Football matches, celebrations, sharing work and regular meetings have become some of the most common activities to achieve community reincorporation. For instance, in Sierra Leone, a study done by Dyck (2011) identifies that football matches improve the social relations between ex-combatants and communities, creating a solid social network¹⁶³. However, we should not overestimate this practice. The transformation of relationships has to go beyond the football court and transform prejudices and imaginaries people have among them. Some FARC-EP ex-members argue that these activities are becoming a smokescreen that hide their real needs and their only purpose is showing a superficial reincorporation that is manipulated by the media.

Other examples that show a superficial reincorporation are the quantitative data that shows the number of FARC-EP ex-members involve in short-term economic projects, workshops or trainings; and the “physical” participation of FARC-EP ex-members in different public discussion only for political interests or requirements. These practices have become typical ways of showing society that FARC-EP ex-members are undergoing a “real” transformation. For the FARC-EP ex-members, all these symbolic and media events are just *telenovelas* (soap operas)¹⁶⁴ that do not contribute in reality to their real interests and needs. Carlos, an ex-combatant who was in prison and benefited from the peace process amnesties, confirms this by saying: “These end up being a model of peace that is deconstructed in a show that with a smokescreen conceals what is really overwhelming us” (Carlos, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018).

Similarly, some practices exerted by the government and international organisations create an infrastructure of community reintegration that may increase the stigmatisation of FARC-EP ex-members. Acosta-Navas & Reyes (2018) point out that in some situations these activities are detrimental to achieving reconciliation. Such is the case of the forgiveness

¹⁶³ However, he states that football is a temporary entertainment activity that must be complemented with other long-term projects. “Sports like football are heavily gendered and segregated activities, which may reinforce certain hierarchical relations in a post-war society” (Dyck, 2011, p. 408).

¹⁶⁴ Comments coming from an informal conversation held with two FARC-EP ex-members in Llano Grande (November 2018).

rituals, which enforce divisions and recap harms caused in times of conflict, triggering more stigmatisation and divisions among society members.

According to Ezequiel, one of the FARC-EP ex-members who has always disagreed with the social and economic interventions implemented by outsiders, the only thing these activities do is distract people from their real needs. He says: “They [the government and international organisations] come here to take pictures and say that this is wonderful, but it's not like that...” (Ezequiel, member of NAR San José de León, December 2018). This illusion may be attributed to the idealised perspectives of external actors towards reincorporation, who romanticise reincorporation life and overlook the real dynamics and needs of ex-combatants and communities.

On the contrary, the everyday dynamics that FARC-EP ex-members exercise naturally with the surrounding communities have a better impact on community reincorporation, as they are articulated with the everyday life of local dynamics and exercised in a natural setting, without a previous planning or supervision. Cooking together, working in collectivity, participating in meetings organised by community members or even playing football without any kind of external surveillance are everyday practices that promote a peace environment and community reincorporation. These activities represent the essence of socialisation and the use of human agency as a tool for social coexistence and recovery of post-conflict relations, which does not exclusively require the assistance of so-called “practitioners” or “social experts”.

One of the aspects that most distances the FARC-EP ex-members from the neighbouring communities are the benefits that they receive as part of their reincorporation process. These benefits may be one of the most divisive factors in the recovery of social coexistence in the transition to post-conflict. Ex-combatants receive economic, social and political guarantees that the rural communities around them have never had, which generates a kind of resistance and apparent injustice in peace processes (Kaplan & Nussio, 2016; McFee, 2016).

However, in different discussions I had with some of the AETCR members, they argue that the peace process was not just for them, and that the benefits they were claiming aimed to support people in need, mainly those who were affected by the conflict and lived in rural areas. This is confirmed by Socorro, a FARC-EP ex-member, who argues: “We need, but so do the people who live near to us. The peace agreement was not only for us, we were not

claiming only for us, but for all those whose rights have been violated for years” (Socorro, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018).

On the other hand, the fact that FARC-EP ex-members are interacting under collective meanings leads them to understand relationships differently to surrounding communities. While they live on collective land and work under the basis of collectivity, their surrounding communities work in a family unit or individually. These distinctions may create a division between both groups of society, which could increase stigmas and hamper the ex-combatants’ social reincorporation. Contrary, being together can be used as a tool to define ex-combatants’ particular spaces and identities, as they can freely relate to their past without being socially penalised.

In sum, community reincorporation goes beyond the provision of a package of social activities to open spaces for encounter and reconciliation. It requires the active empowerment and agency of the locals in the development of a natural relationship and the articulation of efforts to benefit the social, political and economic conditions of the communities in which FARC-EP ex-members are reincorporating.

6.4.2. Education: Beyond an Alienation?

Providing formal education to ex-combatants is one of the dimensions to achieve social reincorporation. More than 80 percent of FARC-EP ex-members were illiterate when they enrol the armed group, and after the laying down of weapons, around 90 percent of them have at least the abilities to read and write (Diaz, 2020; Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2017). One of the challenges of some FARC-EP leaders was to create an alternative way to promote an education based on territorial and popular education approach.

As part of this challenge, the minister of education signed an agreement with the Norwegian Council and the FARC-EP members in 2017 to develop the *Arando la Educación*¹⁶⁵ project. This project started with 128 teachers and, as of the end of 2018, provided primary and secondary education to more than 3,200 people from communities and more than 3,500 ex-combatants in the 24 AETCRs (NRC, 2018). However, the pedagogic strategy is not yet fulfilling the *fariana* vision. Mariela, a FARC-EP ex-member who militated for more than 20 years and played her role as a teacher and ideology trainer in her militancy, and now leader of education in the AETCR Agua Bonita, argues that the role of education does not mean

¹⁶⁵ In English, “forged the education”.

alienation to educative traditional patterns, rather it is an education based on the territorial needs and interests of the locals:

At the moment, we are studying, but at the same time, we are preparing the popular education strategy that links to our collective meaning, in which we can develop our own territorial approach, based on a model of popular education [...]. They [the government] never see what is happening in the territory; instead they bring the education from another part. People do not know for instance the history of Simón Bolívar [...]; they teach us a colonised history. (Mariela, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019)

The *fariana* educational model has its origins in Paulo Freire's¹⁶⁶ perspective, which emphasises that dialogue, inter-individual relationships and a bi-directional learning process are the ways to achieve personal development. This approach considers critical thinking and individuals' recognition as social, economic and political actors, with social consciousness and transformative practices. As such, popular education incites individual curiosity and a critical reflection as an educational discourse¹⁶⁷. As part of this strategy, the AETCR Agua Bonita created the "Alfonso Cano" Popular Library. This library offers public computers for learning and teaching and archives with information and books about the history of the FARC-EP. Additionally, Agua Bonita develops different projects with children and youth, such as communication strategies and film clubs.

To date, the FARC-EP ex-members have not yet implemented the imagined model of popular education. In the meantime, they are following a flexible educational model with some particularities. The classes are given in situ and are part of FARC-EP ex-members' everyday encounters with their family and the surrounding communities. The structure of this education programme is based on study validation. They can enrol at different times of the year according to their needs and compromises.

I found that attending classes has become another way to encourage social reincorporation. Two reasons comprise this assumption. Education provides better economic and social opportunities for the participants in the transition to post-conflict; and it encourage

¹⁶⁶ Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educator and philosopher who promoted popular education by advocating a critical pedagogy through his masterpiece *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Gerhardt, 1993).

¹⁶⁷ According to a document reviewed in the library of the ETCR Agua Bonita called popular education.

the FARC-EP ex-members to follow their goals by helping each other in the achievements of these objectives. For instance, it is normal to see a group of FARC-EP ex-members gathering in a house of one of them to review or study any topic of the class. Even I have seen ex-combatants explaining a topic to another group of people who are not part of the *fariana* collective.

More than providing formal education to reincorporation, the education process has become the best way of FARC-EP ex-members of socialising and performing better in their everyday life. Education goes beyond acquiring a large quantity of diplomas to be part of the “civilian” life, rather it represents the claim of rights and the freedom to act of any human being.

Additionally, the knowledge acquired by the members of FARC-EP is now used as a strategy of formal validation and access to better job opportunities¹⁶⁸. However, it has not been possible to a large extent. Rocio sustains that “the state is not interested that FARC members get qualifications” (Rocio, member of the national party, Bogotá, December 2019). Contrary, FARC-EP ex-members believe that they have knowledge that they could use in their reincorporation process, but they do not have the title or the diploma to validate their competences. Similarly, Jose claims: “People say that we have a big amount of accumulated knowledge and it makes us different to others. What we miss are the diplomas” (Jose, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018).

The teachers living in the AETCRs and NARs, or nearby, confirm that by saying that although the FARC-EP ex-members have some knowledge gaps, they have enough empirical expertise in other aspects. Maria and Oscar, some of the teachers in Agua Bonita show their interests in strengthening the abilities and knowledge of ex-combatants by creating practical exercises and using the FARC-EP memories as a way to improve their literacy skills. Additionally, as part of their pedagogic strategy, they use participation, democracy and peacebuilding discourses in the classrooms as a strategy to develop the students’ autonomy¹⁶⁹.

¹⁶⁸ In 2019, 181 ex-combatants validated their knowledge in nursing and gained the certification of Nursing Assistants, Public Health Assistants, Pharmacy Assistants, and Administrative Assistants (ARN, 2019b).

¹⁶⁹ As a response to the *Arando la Educación* project, the Universidad Abierta y a Distancia - UNAD (Open and Distance University) has produced two publications on this project: “*Nunca es demasiado Tarde*” (It is never too late) and “*Cancharinas, magia, fútbol y pocimas de amor*” (Cancharina, magic, football and love potion). Both publications expose aspects of the war that have not been told before from the voices of the FARC-EP ex-members (UNAD, 2019).

Despite the efforts to create an alternative educational strategy, the structure of *Arando la Education* has similar problems to the traditional education programmes implemented in the country. According to Maria and Oscar, they have to follow a booklet that does not help their methodological strategies. They argue that having FARC-EP ex-members as students requires a personalised pedagogy and a dynamic that integrates their past with their present, covering their different backgrounds, skills and interests in their transition to the post-conflict period.

On the other hand, FARC-EP ex-members argue that the massive amount of technical training they receive is not contributing as much to the improvement of their economic development. Various external actors go mostly every week to train them in different kinds of work activities; however, these training sessions or workshops just turn into isolated activities that do not contribute to the ex-combatants long-term life goals. Sergio, argues that these courses become an accumulation of diplomas that do not have any use in the improvement of their lives:

I did a technical agricultural course in Panaca Quindío for three months, a very nice diploma, but look where it is [...] in this folder and I have to leave it here [...] because we do not know where we will implement the knowledge we acquired there. (Sergio, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018)

For some FARC-EP ex-members, attending a large number of training sessions has led them to abandon their economic projects and compromises to the collective of *farianos/as*. In the end, these training programmes create a kind of frustration and resistance from their side, as they do not see the benefits of them in their economic development. Carlos mentions that the government tends to cover the ex-combatants' real needs by showing to the media the massive efforts it is doing in educating the ex-combatants, but without showing the real needs of the collectivity of *farianos/as*. "How will an ex-combatant study if he knows that after three days he will not have rice to eat?" (Carlos, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018).

I could prove the aforementioned when I participated in the different training sessions led by international organisations, NGOs and the national government. I realised that some facilitators of these activities did not even know the characteristics of the territories, the

people and their current needs. They just come as a requirement of their organisation, facilitate the workshop, collect signatures and photos, and disappear, leaving in the FARC-EP ex-members a sense of frustration and a lack of clarity about the functionality of these activities.

In sum, education cannot be converted into a strategy to alienate or “rehabilitate”¹⁷⁰ FARC-EP ex-members, or even as a governmental requirement that does not contribute to the improvement of the ex-combatants’ lives. Education should involve alternative pedagogies, a territorial approach and the involvement of ex-combatants’ knowledge acquired during conflict times. Beyond considering education as a requirement to be fulfilled as part of DDR perspectives, it should be seen as a dimension that interacts with processes of political participation, community inclusion and employment opportunities.

6.4.3. Family in Reincorporation

When I heard the history of Gerardo, a man who lost one of his hands when he tried to activate a landmine, I could understand how the ex-combatants’ memories merge in the everyday life of their family and even into their children’s perception of the conflict. Gerardo explains:

My son asked me, ‘Daddy, what happened to your hand?’, I told him the hard life I had before. Then, he asked me ‘why did you abandon me?’ I said to him because you could not walk with me in *El Monte* and then I started to explain to him how my life was as a guerrilla. My son just looked at me sad and excited at hearing my story. I will remember this conversation forever. (Gerardo member of the NAR San José de León, December 2018)

The Family dimension places the ex-combatant under another role in society, such as parents, husbands, wives and relatives. These roles generate new responsibilities and emotional experiences that ultimately contribute to the life planning of FARC-EP ex-members and to their grounding in life as civilians. Several studies show the importance of the family in the recovery of social ties, the minimisation of recidivism and the strengthening of a social

¹⁷⁰ The word “rehabilitation” is commonly used in different documents on the reintegration of ex-combatants (see for example Maedl, Schauer, Odenwald., 2010; Hayden, 2004).

network (Kaplan & Nussio, 2016; Theidon, 2007; Derks, et al., 2011; Luna, 2019; McFee, 2016; Planta, 2017).

The encounters with the family after the peace agreement produce in FARC-EP ex-members a sense of satisfaction and positive rewards, but also a feeling of responsibility. During the insurgency, most of the FARC-EP ex-members had little contact with their relatives, which made them, to an extent, detached from the economic, health and social problems of their family. Jorge, a former militant of the FARC-EP, who saw his mother again after ten years, argues:

In the guerrillas, you did not have much information about your family and now you do and it brings more responsibilities for us. Now, you receive information that your mother is sick, that there are siblings who have no money that your grandmother is suffering. Therefore, one begins to help them in something and to have these concerns that one did not have in the guerrillas. (Jorge, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, December 2018)

The lack of resources and capabilities available to FARC-EP ex-members to help their families leads them to have no other option than to take their families with them and share the benefits they receive from the reincorporation process. Now, in the AETCRs or NARs, along with the children of FARC-EP ex-members, also live their parents and extensive relatives. Carol, one of the FARC ex-members and a leader in Agua Bonita who lives with her partner and takes care of other ex-combatants' children, says: "Here, the families are depending on them [us]. They [FARC-EP ex-members] say to them 'come and stay 8 or 15 days'. So when they arrive, they have no choice but to help them" (Carol, Agua Bonita, October 2018). In some cases, ex-combatants become the family members with the best economic conditions, which in turn means more emotional and economic support for them. This responsibility encourages ex-combatants to keep searching for better economic opportunities, not just for themselves but also for their entire family. Pedro and Maria, a couple who have just had a baby, argue:

One needs a permanent job to help the family because most of our families are poor and sometimes it is very difficult to help them. If we have a permanent job, we

could live quietly. A reincorporation would be nice if one studies, graduates and has a job. (Pedro, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, November 2018)

Now you have one more reason to continue with this life; that is, the hope that our child has a better future, a better childhood and we have to fight for him. Both of us are very happy. At this stage, there is a new life, and there are new plans. One is planning what to do, what one wants, while in the guerrilla one was planning the future of many people. (Maria, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

In this case, the responsibility towards their family and their emotional support is fundamental to maintaining the ex-combatants' interest in their process of reincorporation and in determining clear goals for their future. Miguel, a FARC-EP ex-member who recovered his three children from a previous relationship and now has a baby with his current partner, says: "Now, I have four children, I worry about that, but for that reason I should not be desperate and take wrong turns" (Miguel, member of AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018)

Having a family for the FARC-EP ex-members brings new challenges. Their memories from their childhood are impregnated with violence, poverty and conflict, but also with positive memories, affection and protection. This generates a bittersweet sense of their past and, sometimes, little knowledge of how to raise their children. In a workshop on intra-family relationships, the FARC-EP ex-members stated that most of their families were of peasant origin, and their parents' treatment was severe and physical punishment was usual. The process of raising their own children under the current uncertain conditions and security risks makes parenthood more difficult for ex-combatants, especially when they feel they do not have sufficient skills to raise their children in an appropriate way.

This situation gets more complex when they recover their children and live with them for the first time. Living again with their children increases FARC-EP ex-members' responsibilities since they have to recover the time lost with them and to acquire a parental role that they did not have before. This transition demands more economic resources and a new family life organisation, which requires agreements between the couples and distribution of roles and responsibilities that they did not experience in the guerrilla life.

Javier and Gina, former FARC-EP ex-members, explain the new experiences and economic responsibilities they are having now as parents:

Now we are in a different situation. We have to buy diapers, we have to buy milk, we already have other needs that we did not have before. We have children and babies, so the expenses are very different. (Javier, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019)

We take out the money, but I do not handle it for him, I give it to him. When we are both here, we buy everything we need in the house, right? Then, we come and do the accounts. With this, we buy diapers, soap, everything. For example, I tell him I spent 430,000 pesos on this and then we divide it between both of us. (Gina, member of the NAR San José de León, November 2019)

The roles as parents show the configuration of roles that guerrilla couples have to assume in their reincorporation process. They have now other responsibilities and challenges as a family, by assuming a role not just in the so-called “*fariana* family”¹⁷¹ but also in their family system and in society.

Despite the benefits that the family provides to the reincorporation process, I can say that the family dynamics and the role in the collective can cause some friction when it comes to setting priorities for the FARC-EP ex-members. In an informal conversation that I hold with two ex-combatants, they mention that it is impossible to focus only on the collective as they cannot survive from collective actions. Instead, it is necessary to create income generation projects together with their families to increase their private capital. However, according to Diego, collective initiatives cannot be developed without family initiatives:

Reincorporation requires the reconstruction of the social fabric, and the social fabric involves rebuilding the basic unit of society, which is the family. Then, it would not make sense to do a reincorporation process if there was not the possibility of meeting with the family. (Diego, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

Considering the thoughts of Diego, the family concept should not be seen under the western nuclear family perspective, in which the private and individual life becomes the core

¹⁷¹ See in details chapter 7.4.

aspect of existence. Instead, the family should entail the capacity to interlink the private and public dynamics to benefit community life.

A conception of a family based on a capitalist perspective may weaken FARC-EP ex-members' collectivity, as this enforces competition with neighbours and the acquisition of private belongings, supporting the bourgeoisie and social inequalities. From this perspective, the family could turn into "a competitive economic unit apart from, and later even opposed to, the rest of the society" (Zaretsky, 1976, p.42). FARC-EP ex-members now see their family as a private sphere without much compatibility with collective dynamics. For them, the acquisition of new belongings equates to their private life, which means individual efforts apart from their collective unity. Family life in general tend to compete with the social and economic action that precede a political action (Stoker & Jennings, 1995).

Consequently, the family structure must go beyond the idea of private property that must accumulate goods based on competitiveness and productive relations. Rather, the concept of the family should be articulated with communal objectives that empower the idea of a communal family. Women play an essential role in this regard. Their traditional role in the private spheres could become a more communal way of encounter, in which they have the space to engage in the discourses and actions happening in society.

6.5. Conclusions

This chapter identifies the different dimensions of the current reincorporation policy in Colombia and its implementation in the territories in which the FARC-EP ex-members are settled. By analysing the political, economic and social dimensions, I shed light on the role of collectivity for successful reincorporation and the different challenges that FARC-EP ex-members and surrounding communities face when involved in collective reincorporation.

By addressing the dimension of political reincorporation, I sustained that the creation of a political party is not enough to guarantee the political participation of ex-combatants; it requires a modification of the national political structure and a transformation of the political prejudices and polarisation in Colombia. Hence, the guarantee of a number of seats in the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives does not represent by itself the fulfilment of the agreements in the peace process. To this end, FARC-EP ex-members in the political arena must first receive political training that puts them on an equal footing with other political

parties. It requires an agreement with other political parties to work with *Los Comunes* in the achievement of a common political agenda.

I argued that *Los Comunes* is at a disadvantage in comparison with other traditional political parties. Their low expertise in manoeuvring in political environments, the high levels of discrimination that FARC-EP ex-members face and the corrupt political apparatus affect establishing a political dialogue under equal conditions. A better outcome could be creating an alternative democracy that involves the claims and needs of the locals, rather than training ex-combatant political leaders to deal with a corrupt democracy. It is evident that the traditional democracy does not fit with the gains and setback cycles that have emerged in countries that are in constant post-conflict transition.

Additionally, in this chapter, I showed how the different internal tensions of the political party have produced division among their members and a detachment of the reincorporation practices with the political party. On top of that, and recognising that this peace process was based on a territorial peace approach, I pointed out that political reincorporation should focus more on the contributions that *Los Comunes* political party is making to the territories and the benefits in the transformation of participatory actions and political advocacy in the local political arena.

On the other hand, collective economic reincorporation shows a great lesson for the DDR approach. It highlights a need to create new ways of understanding self-sustainability and income generation projects away from the traditional DDR short-term employment economic alternatives. Economic sustainability goes beyond a dependency on the state or access to job opportunities; rather it values the agency of the collective of FARC-EP ex-members to create their own rural economic alternatives and collective income generation projects. Yet, I identified that collective reincorporation cannot rely only on collective actions, as they cannot provide enough economic benefits for the whole *fariana* community. An alternative to that is merging the collective and the individual economic initiatives as a form of self-sustainability by integrating individual needs with collective objectives. This approach cannot yet be evaluated as FARC-EP ex-members are still receiving a basic monthly income equivalent to 90 percent of the Minimum Monthly Legal Wage, which serves to support their collective economic projects.

Therefore, economic reincorporation should not be the creation of an isolated and temporary alternative only for FARC-EP ex-members. It is necessary to integrate the different

economic projects and initiatives developed by the national government in the transition to post-conflict and articulate them with the social and political dimensions established in the peace agreement.

In terms of social reincorporation, I argued that on paper this dimension is not far from the traditional reintegration programmes in Colombia. However, upon further analysis of ex-combatants' everyday life, I discovered that a transition from conflict to peace in the lives of local communities has transformed contexts, roles, showing a (post-)conflict process with different nuances. The purpose of social reincorporation is to guarantee that the FARC-EP ex-members have the necessary conditions to exercise their active role as citizens. Community reincorporation is central in this regards, as the development of joining projects between FARC-EP ex-members and communities contribute in the achievement of their citizenship conditions.

Additionally, I related the dimension of social reincorporation to the role of education and family. I analysed education as a way to integrate the knowledge between the past and present of ex-combatants. Education in reincorporation implies an articulation with the ex-combatants' needs and objectives rather than the interests of external agents to alienate ex-combatants' ideas to the hegemonic demands. I analysed the family as both a unity and a social network that contributes to the reincorporation process of FARC-EP ex-members. However, I argued that family interests could undermine the collective intention of the *farianos/as* when they see the family structure as a private sphere detached from society.

These findings broaden my understanding of collective reincorporation, by determining that this transition to society is not only about the provision of economic guarantees to FARC-EP ex-members, but also about the transformation of territories through collective actions. These actions involve a holistic intervention in which social, political and economic dimensions intertwine to generate local empowerment and the recovery of the rights of all those who were affected by the conflict.

One of the missing aspects explored in this chapter was the government's differential approaches and the null effects in practice. Generally, ex-combatants are treated under a single category, in which their individual characteristics are ignored. They are afro, indigenes, women, men, youth, elderly or disabled who require an intersectional view. Under this view,

a tokenism¹⁷² strategy should not be used in reintegration process. The symbolic effort made to include ex-combatants in various public events just to meet the parameters of diversity and inclusion set out in the policies leads to a lack of understanding of the contributions and roles that each actor can play in the post-conflict transition.

In the next chapter, I explore the evolving of FARC-EP ex-members in their transition to reincorporation by linking their past experiences, relationships and memories with their current reincorporation approach. I define how this shapes their identities and create new hybrid forms of understanding themselves and their surroundings.

¹⁷² Tokenism usually refers to those “women or minorities who are hired, admitted or appointed to a group because of their difference from other members, perhaps to serve as “proof” that the group does not discriminate”. “Consequently, they are never permitted by ‘insiders’ to become full members and may even be ejected if they stray too far from the special ‘niche’ outlined for them” (Zimmer, 1988, p.65).

"I cannot get 'El Monte' out of my head. 'Ese Monte' built my being and my feeling."

(Fernando, Agua Bonita, October 2018)

7. The Everyday of Collective Reincorporation: Tandem Realities

7.1. Introduction: Why is "Everyday Peace" Important?

Everyday peace has become one of the buzzwords in peacebuilding studies. It is used indistinctly to refer to the different aspects that emerge in the lives of so-called locals. The term "everyday peace" means the "routinised practices used by individuals and collectives as they navigate their way through life in a deeply divided society" (Mac Ginty, 2014, p.549). It places the local and its original contribution to peace at the centre of all peacebuilding practices (Randazzo, 2016; Richmond, 2009, 2011).

Not too dis-similar from what was analysed in the previous chapter, everyday peace shows the different ways in which people develop economic, social and political practices in local dynamics. I want to show in this chapter that the transition from past to present in ex-combatants' lives influences the performance of these dimensions. These dimensions combine in a myriad of social interactions, relationships and powers, showing identity and knowledge as volatile terms that change according to the building of relationships (Randazzo, 2016).

Everyday peace is a form of agency (Mac Ginty, 2014). It provides the basis for understanding the sustainable and emancipatory actions produced by the locals when exert their resistance and empowerment (Simons and Zanker, 2014; Richmond, 2010). Everyday peace analysis overcomes rigid, institutional and top-down logic by using the voices of locals as a guide to peacebuilding actions and as the most sustainable way to achieve peacebuilding and policy-making in line with conflict transformation (Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2014, p.33). Certeau points to the importance of people's agency in everyday interactions and in achieving their outcomes. For him, "everyday life furtively invents itself in countless ways in the ownership of others" (Certeau, 1984, p. XII).

The everyday life of FARC-EP ex-members is mainly divided into three dimensions: one with their families; one with their collective and surrounding communities; and one with

external actors. Ex-combatants try to balance these three dimensions in their everyday life, but with some tensions between them. Sometimes one overlaps with the other, leaving no room for their natural practice. In other cases, these dimensions evolve in tandem, showing an interaction between the past and present *realities* of FARC-EP ex-members.

By using the category of everyday peace, I want to explore local *realities* as a cornerstone of peacebuilding studies and the so-called extraordinary ordinary abilities of people (Mac Ginty, 2013). Under this framework, understanding intergroup contact and the diversity of actors that interplay in peacebuilding allows me to identify the heterogeneity of relationships, the diversity of social worlds and the structural factors that shape ex-combatants' everyday peace.

To analyse the integration of FARC-EP ex-members' past experiences with their current reincorporation process, I will focus on three main aspects: legacies; artefacts; and identity. These aspects interact with the acquisition of new experiences, encounters and needs in times of reincorporation, which provide new forms of security, protection and cohesion among them.

The freedom of choice, the acquisition of new responsibilities and rights, and the response to the demands of society lead ex-combatants to re-signify their old social patterns and adapt them to the demands of their environment. In this transition, new interests and needs emerge, influencing ex-combatants' collective meanings and priorities in their reincorporation process. Both aspects provide tensions, in which the empowerment of the individual can undermine their collective's performance.

Although the collective shows a form of resistance to an individualistic economic model, it may also influence the freedom of ex-FARC-EP members to decide their lives outside of their emotional attachment built up in times of conflict. Individual actions may apparently show more freedom of choice. However, this individual perspective does not necessarily detach from the patterns of alienation imposed by capitalist models that ultimately limit the ability to be free. The hybridity of individual and collective actions clearly shows the volatility of life and the different layers that compose a reincorporation process.

In this chapter, I argue that collective reincorporation varies according to the environment's demands and the relationships built between local-local actors. The more FARC-EP ex-members adapt to the needs of the environment and the benefits of collectivity, the more they recognise the positive effects of being together. I propose that everyday life in

peacebuilding becomes the point of departure of the configuration of ex-combatants' identity as individuals and as part of a collective.

At the beginning of this chapter, I describe the transition to reincorporation, and the challenges, difficulties and collective forms of organisation among FARC-EP ex-members. Next, I discuss the importance of their legacy in reincorporation times and the role of collectivity in strengthening or weakening this legacy. Subsequently, I emphasise the concept of the "*fariana* family" and the different implications of this dimension in the collective of ex-combatants in their everyday life relationships. Along with this, I focus on the artefacts as a way of evoking the FARC-EP ex-members' past in their present lives. I then focus on the term "self-identity" to define how it relates to the new experiences, needs and interests that FARC-EP ex-members have acquired following the peace agreement. This chapter ends by saying that everyday peace involves diversity of tension between the past and the present of ex-combatants in terms of identity, belonging and relationships.

7.2. On the Way to Reincorporation

The journey to reincorporation began in early 2017 with the relocation of more than 13,000 FARC-EP ex-members in different territories of Colombia. There were parades and caravans of welcoming by the natives of the communities on their way to the camps. The natives of the region waved white flags and shook hands with FARC-EP ex-members as a symbol of welcome. Jeronimo, an ex-combatant who was part of the FARC-EP's front 14, describes his arrival in Agua Bonita:

There were like 2,500 people who went out to accompany us in this caravan [...]. They came from different villages, even people from the other side of the river. They even hired cars and motorbikes. It was so nice seeing all this caravan of cars until we reached this place [ZVTN]. (Jeronimo, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita October 2019)

The arrival of FARC-EP ex-members to the territories where the ZVTNs were established showed at first glance a form of acceptance by both parties and an initial recognition of the ex-combatants as part of society. This initial acceptance labelled the former FARC-EP members under another identity and role, opening the conditions for the beginning

of a social relationship and integration with society (Rodríguez López, et al., 2015). However, various problems emerged in the initial reincorporation phase due to the government's failure to comply with the peace agreement in terms of time and benefits, and the lack of physical infrastructure and guarantees offered in the territories where FARC-EP ex-members were grouped. There were even accusations by the former chief prosecutor Nestor Martinez in 2018 against *El Fondo Paz* (The Special Peace Programmes Fund) about possible irregularities in the adjudication of contracts (El Tiempo, 2018).

The initial shortcomings that arose at the beginning of the reincorporation process related to delays in the construction of infrastructure in the ZVTNs showed the capacity of the former FARC-EP members to adapt and create alternatives to live on their own. In these conditions, they had no choice but to adapt their old ways of life in their reincorporation process. José, a leader in Agua Bonita, explains:

When we arrived here in this area, there was practically nothing. There were paddocks. I remember that there was a kind of welcome party at the Agua Bonita school with the mayor of the municipality. The only thing that existed there were some towers with some tanks, but there was nothing else. (José, member of the AECTR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

This situation obligated the FARC-EP ex-members to live in *cambuches* (shacks) and with the minimum of living conditions for more than six months. Living far away from the social infrastructure, made the access to benefits and basic needs difficult, resulting in the doubling of effort from international organisations and the government to invest in economic and social inclusion programmes.

The houses designed by the government for ex-combatants were temporary, they were built with low quality materials and the basics of living. To finish the construction of these "blocks" (as they call these houses), the FARC-EP ex-members contributed with labour, but without receiving any economic benefits in return. This provoked a kind of rejection from their side. Bernardo, one of the ex-combatants who worked on the building of these "blocks", explains:

First, we lived in those tents, the ones they use for events [...], then the construction of the modules came and we together with the engineer started to build these blocks. These [the houses] were built by ourselves and without receiving any payment in return. However, with this experience, some people learned to work in construction and now make a living from it. I remember that those who had jobs back then had to work at night from 6 to 10pm, others worked all day. (Bernardo, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018)

The first eight months of reincorporation were part of the so-called D+180, which was the deadline for handing over all the weapons possessed by ex-combatants¹⁷³. While FARC-EP ex-members lived in such deplorable conditions, they had to assume drastic changes in their personal and social life. The change of their personal identification, reunion with family members and civilian responsibilities were part of their everyday life.

The fact that the FARC-EP had been a clandestine group for more than 50 years attracted many visitors in the zones where they were located. FARC-EP ex-members argue that during these days, they received a large number of prestigious national and international actors. Most people wanted to meet them and interact with them. Gerardo explains: “They thought we were people from another world or were different to them, but we were the same as any person” (Gerardo, member of the NAR San Jose de Leon, December 2018).

At the end of D+180, the FARC-EP ex-members handed over their weapons and the formal transition to “civility” started. Macias, the leader of the Llano Grande community and a victim of the conflict, describes the first months of ex-combatants living in his village:

They [FARC-EP ex-members] were here for eight months with weapons. In the first stage they had the weapons, they kept camouflaged and they kept guarding as before. They took turns doing security. During their shifts, they were always with their camouflage and their guns. Some of them did not have their guns. They collected them and put them in a specific place to be delivered in August. At that time, they had to exploit the *caletas*¹⁷⁴ that contained weapons or explosives. I had to help them find

¹⁷³ The period of the handing over of all weapons by the FARC-EP was extended for more than eight months, apparently due to the delays in the construction of the infrastructure where FARC-EP ex-members were going to live. The combatants stated that the handing over of the weapons was the only tool to guarantee compliance with what was agreed in the peace process.

¹⁷⁴ Coves.

the ground to explode all the grenades. This process was done little by little. We made a hole from here to there, about three metres long, where they could explode ten grenades at a time [...]. When the disarmament was over, the second phase started. Their return to the civil life began. (Macias, leader of Llano Grande community, November 2018)

From the beginning of the peace process, the structure of collectivity led the FARC-EP ex-members to remain together, becoming a replica of the organisational model they had in times of conflict, but now with more levels of vulnerability, as they did not count with their weapons to protect themselves. In the first year, the organisation in the ZVTNs resembled life in times of conflict. They had a *rancho*¹⁷⁵ to cook for everyone and distributed this responsibility among all members of the fronts who were assigned to these zones. Additionally, they had an *economato* and *economos*, the place and the persons respectively in charge of collecting the food provided by the government and distributing to the whole community.

However, this structure changed over time. As FARC-EP ex-members built their own kitchens and brought their families over, they began to detach from the *rancho* responsibilities to cook for themselves. José explains that the dissolution of the collective *rancho* was the beginning of their life as independent individuals: “The detachment from the collectivity began when everyone started to build their own kitchen and preferred to *ranchar* individually” (José, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018). The same happened with the collective work on the crops, the collective building of houses, or the participation in meetings. Over time, the members of the collective began to participate in these activities less and less, but there always remained a group with high levels of commitment to collective action.

As a way of improving their collective initiatives, the FARC-EP ex-members organised themselves into working groups, which facilitated their progress as a collective in different dimensions. Mainly, they were divided into groups for agriculture, road, productivity and co-existence. Now, each group is in charge of all activities promoted in these areas and of organising people in the activities they plan. In addition, their political participation follows the structure of “*celulas*” (cells). Each block of houses meets regularly to discuss the proposals

¹⁷⁵ Kitchen.

they want to send to the national level, and they also create and implement strategies to raise money for the political party. Hence, the structure of *farianos* is divided into three dimensions: the social, the political and the economic. All of them are aligned with the principles of collective reincorporation (See Figure 7). Christian, who actively participates in all three dimensions of the *farianos* collective, explains how they are organised:

Within the framework of collective reincorporation, we proposed an economic approach that would consider people’s needs and possible solutions to those problems. The cooperative emerges as an economic expression that tries to create, on the one hand, productive dynamics that not only solve the needs of the individual but also those of the collective. In the social aspect, we consider the social expression as a means to regulate the relationship of people beyond a simple way of interaction. We consider all dynamics as a communal action, and the strengthening of relationships with the neighbours and with the environment by the congregation of FARC-EP ex-members in the CT [Territorial councils] and their CTR [Territorial Councils for Reincorporation], and logically appears the political party that is our ideological political proposal. (Christian, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

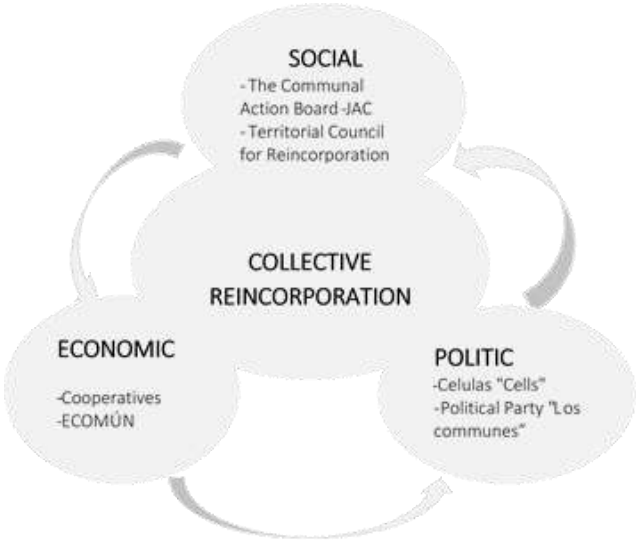


Figure 7: Internal organisation in the AETCRs and NARs. Own elaboration.

The compromise of participating in political, social and economic collectivity has varied with the time in reincorporation and has relied mostly on the same leaders in the last four years. Mainly a variety of individual, family and collective interests has affected these

processes, leading to some FARC-EP ex-members to pursue an individual reincorporation away from the AETCRs or NARs. Additionally, the fragility of the structure of the FARC-EP previous to the peace agreement and the diverse conflicting opinions towards the viability of the peace agreement triggered tensions and disarticulation among members, which in the end has affected the unity of the *fariana* collective.

In the everyday, FARC-EP ex-members face more challenges, opportunities and contributions that enrich the collective reincorporation. One of the aspects to discuss in this transition is the legacy gained from conflict times and its use in the cohesiveness and collective desire of them to remain together. In the following, I explain this in more detail.

7.3. Challenges to Keeping the Legacy in Collective Reincorporation

In this section, I will analyse the term legacy as the different emotional and ideological experiences and perspectives that FARC-EP ex-members acquired during the times of conflict, or as Alape calls it, the “accumulated experience” (CEDE, 2020), that influences their behaviour and their building of relationships.

According to Ugarriza & Craig, being part of a family that follows leftist ideologies plays an important role in enforcing the legacy of guerrilla groups:

It appears that there is a tendency among combatants to join a specific armed group according to their family experience (i.e., political leaning of family, zone of birth) and this tendency is activated, molded, and/or reinforced through combatants’ participation in their armed group. However, this ideological perspective is made stronger during the times of conflict and the relations built at joining the group (2013, p.462).

Ideological perspectives in times of conflict are strengthened through the relationships that are established between comrades, creating an emotional attachment that solidifies cohesion to the group and their maintenance in the armed group, which becomes in times of reincorporation in a feeling of nostalgia from the past as guerrillas. Nussio (2011) identifies that the experiences acquired during the war play an important role in the reincorporation practices of ex-combatants. They guide ex-combatants’ practices in times of reincorporation.

Different studies show that the use of ex-combatants' past experiences facilitate their attachment to society (See, for example, Nussio, 2012; Ugarriza & Craig, 2013; Wiegink & Sprengels, 2020). Using these legacies, ex-combatants play a distinctive role in society, making them actors with local agency capable of exercising social leadership in the territories they are part of (Friðriksdóttir, 2018; McEvoy & Shirlow, 2009; McMullin, 2013). Friðriksdóttir (2018) mentions that ideology is not only related to enrolment in armed groups, but it is also used as a peaceful strategy to achieve positive change.

The origins, ways of operation and long-standing fighting of the FARC-EP distinguished this group from other armed groups in Colombia. The FARC-EP was a group that not only trained their troops to kill, but also to develop economic, social, cultural and educational strategies to improve their war conditions and political relationships. They were considered as a cohesive group with strong social bonds¹⁷⁶. Yulis, a FARC-EP ex-member who leads different collective projects in Agua Bonita, states:

People think that we were guerrillas because we had a weapon, but we were more than that. Who can take away from me what I know, what I think, what I learned in the guerrillas to work collectively? We learnt to value others and to live in harmony with what we have. The most beautiful thing is life and being with others from humility. I will have my experience in the war in my head for the rest of my life. (Yulis, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

Some ex-combatants even argue that the FARC-EP's internal social relations and cultural, emotional and ideological dynamics were one of the aspects that attracted them to become involved in this organisation, as it distinguished it from other armed organisations. Fernando explains one of his reasons for becoming part of the guerrilla group:

When I arrived to the FARC, I found something that I had never seen anywhere else: human warmth, brotherhood, harmony, companionship and solidarity. The respect that was shown to each of the members of the FARC allowed me to assimilate and

¹⁷⁶ In the interviews I held, most of the FARC-EP ex-members argued that they had some kind of sympathy with the FARC-EP before their enrolment, claiming that they were fighting against the injustices of Colombia. Elisabeth Jean Wood argues that involvement in these groups is related to a "pleasure of agency" by considering the example of Salvadoran ex-combatants who took up arms as a way to be part of their country's history (Wood, 2003).

accompany the war difficulties, and overcome them successfully. (Fernando, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

Throughout the reincorporation process, there is evidence of a gradual decrease in the process of belonging and emotional attachment towards the principles of the FARC-EP. The detachment from former emotional and social relationships makes FARC-EP ex-members vulnerable to the political, social and economic patterns imposed by society. Oscar, a FARC-EP ex-member from front 14, told me the difficulties to be in the middle of a system that absorb the ideologies of people: “We are in the middle of capitalism, bourgeoisie and communism” (Oscar member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018). He mentioned that keeping their former ideology and forms of living is not possible in a system that controls your finances, your way of thinking and acting.

Similarly, Carlos, a FARC-EP ex-member with a disability caused during combat with the military forces, mentions that reincorporation is a transition to a “new world”. He argues: “For me, the hardest thing about being in the FARC-EP is being here”. He claims that everything is more difficult in reincorporation. However, as a way to keep an attachment to his history, he argues: “They took away my weapons but not what I think” (Carlos, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, November 2019).

The leaders of the *fariana* collective want to keep their ideology alive through their political party. Reinaldo, one of the supporters of *Los Comunes*, explains the importance of ideology in the transition to reincorporation: “From the moment we started to be part of this reincorporation process, the military structure was broken, but the political structure remains. It tells us how we should behave and what we should do” (Reinaldo, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019).

It is common to see photographs and murals in the AETCRs and the NARs of the political idols and founders of the FARC-EP, as models for their political party (See Photo 1). Using the pioneers of FARC-EP as models of their political ideology shows their desire to revive and show up their value to their history in



Photo 1: Poster promoting the FARC political party. Image by Andrea Jaramillo.

reincorporation times, but is also a way to keep the group of FARC-EP ex-members together around their memories from the conflict. Reinaldo argues:

From the moment we started to be part of this reincorporation process the military structure was broken, but the political structure remains. It tells us how we should behave and what we should do. This indicates that the FARC-EP ex-combatants' ideology has to be represented in the unity they have towards their political party. However, this is not always the case. (Reinaldo, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019).

The fact that the FARC-EP ex-members do not align with the mandate of *Los Comunes* political party does not mean that they do not follow its ideological principles. They may have alternative political ideas that, to some extent, may be aligned with this political party but not with the way its leaders are running it. The freedom to choose a political path in reincorporation is also part of a successful reincorporation process, which in my opinion is another gain of the peace process.

Keeping political unity among FARC-EP ex-members is not easy when the military hierarchical structure is broken. Ex-combatants feel that they are no longer under a military structure and, therefore, do not have to follow the orders of their former commanders. Jorge, a leader of the collective of Agua Bonita, explains the difficulties of maintaining collective thinking without the command structure they used to have in conflict times:

Before it was easier to have a collective thinking because there was a command and there were military orders. The commanders would say that this was going to be done and there was no discussion, and it was done under their orders. We were a group of four or five commanders and a collegiate body, which was the one that made the decisions on the basis of democratic centralism. From democratic centralism came the collective plans and the fulfilment of these plans was done under military rules and regimes [...]. That is why in the FARC it was so easy to work under the idea of collectivity. (Jorge, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019)

Now, in the reincorporation process, FARC-EP ex-members have to follow a community manual that is regulated by the JAC. The compliance of this manual depends on the willingness of its members to act according to the mandate of the JAC, but without the reprimands or punishments that they used to have in conflict times. In their reincorporation process, they can act under their own free will and not under a military regime, which is a challenge for those who were used to indoctrination, and not have the self-will of acting freely in the collective reincorporation initiatives. As Oscar argues: “Here we do not have regulations; we have the conscience to act.” (Oscar, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, November 2019).

The *fariano/a* structure in the post-conflict transition leads to a new internal democracy that transforms vertical dynamics into horizontal relationships, in which participation and consultation become the reference point for decision-making (De Zeeuw, 2008). This transition changes the roles and relationships that ex-combatants have with their former commanders and their subordinated role exercised during guerrilla times.

In this context, the leaders in reincorporation have to change the way they interact with FARC-EP ex-members by assuming a relationship based on empathy and consensus as a means of motivating them to become part of the collective structure. Toño, one of the leaders of the community work in Llano Grande, argues: “Here we cannot give an order we have to convince the people” (member of the NAR San José de León, December 2018).

Former leaders of the FARC-EP have to acquire new skills and competences to keep their leadership in times of reincorporation. That is not easy for them as they are used to giving orders without receiving any pushback. De Zeeuw (2008, p.8) sustains that “successful rebel leaders do not often become successful political leaders, mainly because these different positions involve distinct competencies”.

For instance, FARC-EP members who were more committed to community work, had higher levels of education and had a clear political ideology during the conflict are those who continue to play a successful leadership role in reincorporation. In contrast, those who only exercised military power during the conflict and had no degree of social outreach do not now have the skills to exercise a leadership position in reincorporation. This leadership dynamic has resulted in the emergence of new leaders in the AETCRs and NARs and the concealment of others who had a command role in the FARC-EP.

However, the relay of leadership in the FARC-EP ex-members has not been easy and more for those who played a “foot soldiers” position during conflict times. Being a subordinate for a long time leads ex-combatants to assume passive behaviour in the transition to post-conflict. They do not feel empowered to speak out and to defend their opinion. Nubia, a leader of *farianos/as* and representative of the ARN, mentions that ex-combatants still have this fear to express themselves: “Although we do not have now *consejo de guerra*¹⁷⁷ or sanctions, people are still afraid to speak out or to be against the ex-commands” (facilitator and ex-combatant AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018).

There is a perception that those who remain in the collective have less freedom to act compared with those who decided to participate in individual reincorporation. For some, more freedom means less commitment to their past as guerrillas, as remaining in the collective requires commitments to their former comrades. However, the level of freedom to think in the collective depends on the relationships the guerrillas had with their command. FARC-EP ex-members who were part of a front that had power symmetry are those who now have more agency to act in collective dynamics and decision-making.

In short, the *fariana* legacy is situated in a liminal space in which interact the experiences in times of conflict and the dynamics and demands of reincorporation times. This process provides a series of challenges in the daily lives of FARC-EP ex-members and new ways of assuming roles and relationships acquired in times of conflict. One of the clear representations of the emotional legacy of the FARC-EP is the concept of the “*fariana* family”. This term will be explained in detail below.

7.4. The Fariana Family

The first time that I heard the concept of the “*fariana* family” was while I was chatting with Toño, one of the oldest militant ex-combatants in the NAR San Jose de León. He argues that the FARC-EP was his family in his 50 years of militancy. When I asked him about his biological family, he told me that he had not seen them since he enrolled in the insurgency, and now he is expecting to die there surrounded by the ones who fought with him. The detachment of the political insurgency represents for him a detachment to the idea of “*nosotros*” (we) (Hoyos, 2011). This shows a life devoted to the insurgency that represents a

¹⁷⁷ This was the way in which guerrillas were judged when they committed infractions. Penalties ranged from a minimum, such as doing extra work or fulfilling a task, to a maximum of death (FARC-EP, 2007).

sense of nostalgia and remembrance that is still active in the discourse and stories exposed by the ex-combatants (Nussio, 2012).

The concept of the “*fariana* family” was mentioned by various FARC-EP ex-members I met while carrying out my fieldwork, or as Ugarriza & Craig (2013) calls them, the “leftist” family — a family established in conflict times with other commonalities, relationships and roles different to the ones from a biological family. Gloria, one of the women FARC-EP ex-members who is now leading the process of collective reincorporation in Agua Bonita, describes her detachment from her family during conflict times:

This [the *farianos/as*] is my family. My mother died, my father too. Unfortunately, I was not able to accompany them even on the day of their funeral, precisely because of the conflict. If I would have gone there, I could have been caught or killed. I would have wanted to share with them, and even when this process began, but it was too late. My little brothers have already died too. Now, my family are the ones who are here. (Gloria, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

One of the great strengths of the FARC-EP organisation was the accumulated history of struggle, solidarity, fraternity and cooperative relations among the combatants. These relations made it possible for this organisation to be converted into a real community with its own identity and common aspirations (Zambrano-Quintero, 2019). The “*fariana* family” represents the trust and cooperation that is still alive in most of the *farianos/as* that are in the collective, which nowadays can be translated into a friendship among their members.

Oscar exemplifies how the FARC-EP ex-members are still a unity that cooperate with each other. “Here life is so quiet, we live here in harmony. All of us are a family. For instance, this man was from another front, but since I saw his suffering, I respect and appreciate him as my *camarada*¹⁷⁸” (Oscar, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018).

Josue, one FARC-EP ex-member who decided to bring eight members of his family to the AETCR after multiple complaints from his mother and siblings about moving back to his hometown, explains the reasons why he wants to remain in Llano Grande:

¹⁷⁸ Comrade.

I have had always the support of my family. My mother said to me '*mijo*'¹⁷⁹ come with us and do not stay any longer here, but I rather preferred to stay here with my other family, my second family. The idea is fighting with this family until I can no longer do that. I will only leave this place when somebody takes me out or when the situation becomes harder. (Josue, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018)

Now, the AETCRs and NARs are the meeting point for families to come together. They have turned out to be the places where a special bond has been created between the "*fariana* family" and the biological families. Even now, relationships exist between the family members of *farianos/as*. For example, Josue's mother is now in a relationship with a FARC-EP ex-member who is part of the AETCR.

In other words, the AETCRs and NARs have become the reunion point for FARC-EP ex-members with their biological families. Carol, a FARC-EP ex-member that never lost contact with her father during her 32 years as a guerrilla, describes the first time her father comes to visit her in the AETCR:

The first time my dad came here he did not imagine how it was. He was always *en el Monte* visiting me [...]. When he came here and we showed him where we lived, he said 'This is where my daughter lives? *Mija* has a house, a roof?' Then, I started to cry because he did not think that my life had really changed. When he saw that, he cried too, but this time of happiness. I never abandoned him, whether it was on the sly or through anyone else, I always called him. If I did not call him, he got worried. (Carol, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

The sense of *fariana* familiarity has extended throughout families, creating a kind of social network that has become as one of the few ways that FARC-EP ex-members support each other, mainly in terms of economic and security hardships. This articulation has strengthened the former structure of the FARC-EP as a unity that is still alive, modifying as well the perception communities have towards them.

Beyond seeing FARC-EP ex-members as simple "machines of war", communities now consider them as people with strong social capacities. Rubiela, a member of the community

¹⁷⁹ My son.

of Llano Grande and a victim of the conflict, states: “I am surprised how these people organise themselves and show their unity. That is not easy to find in another community. I believe that they have that because they had to become their own family during the war” (Rubiela, Llano Grande community, November 2019).

The ex-combatants’ feeling of attachment become stronger when they share a collective memory related to the fears, joys, challenges and harms caused by the conflict. They recognise that their sense of comradeship and caring is not easy to find elsewhere, defining this as a path to peace. Vaittinen, et al., (2019) mention that care provides an essential aspect of achieving peaceful transformations in contexts where such transitions are seemingly not possible to achieve. Although the conditions of care among ex-combatants were built during times of conflict, they have served to strengthen their values and relationships with other actors in society, which has led to a process of trust building, community development and local peaceful transformation (Vaittinen, et al., 2019).

On top of that, new actors are intertwining with these relationships. Members of the United Nations, officials of the government, foreigners, children, military forces, police, disabled people and FARC-EP ex-members interconnect in one single setting. One can see how past experiences of war permeate the transition to post-conflict in dynamics that are transformed in harmonic spaces of encounters and discovery. In this context, the *fariana* family becomes an extended group of people that interact with the everyday life of FARC-EP ex-members.

An example of this was the first day I arrived at Llano Grande. There were military personnel with their rifles who interacted with the children, mothers with babies in arms, some ex-combatants playing football with members of the community and in the background was Martin. He was talking with me while he was trying to carry, with difficulty, a baby without his two arms (as a consequence of the land mines). He hugged him and said to me: “This boy is too attached to me.”

The aforementioned represents a space in which different times and relationships are intertwined. Time during the conflict and time during reincorporation. The richness of time is represented by the feelings and relationships that were built during the conflict, creating diachronic dynamics in which past and present intersect in a circular way. This produces a hybrid that shows the richness of peacebuilding scenarios, in which the old relationships established during the conflict become the source of transformation towards peace.

In short, the *fariana* family shows that although the conflict is represented by military schemes, the reality for the ones who handle a weapon embrace different dimensions that are usually hidden behind the war artefacts. Beyond these artefacts, there are other intangible dimensions that keep people 'fighting', but which are not sufficiently explored or valued in conflict analysis, such as social bonds, camaraderie and emotional support. In the following section, I describe how artefacts, symbols and languages acquired during conflict times are adapted in the transition to post-conflict.

7.5. Evoking the Past in the Present

Symbols, objects, language, rituals and memories transit in the life of FARC-EP ex-members in reincorporation times. During this process, they use these artefacts as a representation of their legacy and identity. In some cases, they modify these artefacts to adapt to their civilian life. In other cases, they remain static in time, as a re-affirmation of ex-combatants' identity. New artefacts appear in their transition to civilian life, becoming a way to adapt and access society. So far, FARC-EP ex-members are carrying these "transitional objects" as a way to display their personality, which helps them to de-objectify and re-personalise themselves in their reincorporation trajectory (Parkin, 1999).

The artefacts used by FARC-EP ex-members during the conflict appear as concrete forms established in physical objects, customs, shared memory, language or costumes. In the transition to reincorporation, they re-create their identity with the artefacts that played a role in times of conflict, transcending the temporality and becoming a symbol of distinctiveness during reincorporation. In this case, the weapons, uniforms, backpacks and clothes become part of the artefacts that evoke the ex-combatants' memories. Miller argues: "The artefact, or at least that which the artefact represents, outlasts persons and thus becomes the vehicle by which persons attempt to transcend their own temporal limits" (2002, p. 409).

In the reincorporation process, the objects are homogenised under the characteristics imposed by the environment. As Miller argues (2002, p. 405): "The homogenisation of these artefacts is thus taken as symptomatic of the homogenisation of one's own culture". This homogenisation is shaped by the ex-combatants' everyday life in reincorporation, which means a cultural identity that is objectified by their everyday experience (Bourdieu, 1997).

Weapons had a great symbolic value for FARC-EP ex-members. Beyond being a simple object that is part of the machinery of the war, they represented a symbol of power,

insurgence and resistance against the “imperialist” and “capitalist” state. The laying down of weapons symbolised not just a commitment to the peace agreement, but also a detachment from ex-combatants’ ideology and identity. FARC-EP ex-members argue that they always slept near to their weapons and carried out all their duties with them on their back. Some even gave them a name and decorated them with some colour ribbons as a way of distinction.

The used of the FARC-EP weapons after their laid down were highly criticised by FARC-EP ex-members. Doris Salcedo was an artist delegated to turn the 37 tons of weapons handed over by the FARC-EP into a work of art that represented reconciliation and transition to peace. She converted these weapons into 1,300 metal floor plates made from hammering by victims of sexual violence in Colombia. Iván Márquez was very critical of this “Counter-Monument Fragments”, as Salcedo calls it, because the public could get the wrong idea when stepping on FARC-EP weaponry. For him, the guerrilla weaponry not only represented a tool to harm people, but also the FARC-EP ideology and the history of Colombia.

Fernando, a FARC-EP ex-member from Agua Bonita who was a militia with the FARC-EP for more than 15 years, argues that the weapons were the only tool they had to defend their rights as guerrillas:

As camarada Manuel Marulanda said, the last thing you have to hand over are the weapons. However, in this case, the weapons were the first thing we had to leave. This was all in reverse. If we had now the weapons all gathering in a place, we would have now, ummmm, everything perfect. Everything paved, a synthetic soccer field. (Fernando, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019)

During peace negotiations, the weapons became the vehicle to enforce the peace agreement and the most important artefact in the social contract signed with the Colombian government. Most of the FARC-EP ex-members used them as a strategy to defend their rights and control the compromises made with the government. When the weapons were hastily handed over without clear guarantees for the ex-combatants, many of them preferred to remain clandestine and not take part in the reincorporation process for fear of reprisals from the government or armed groups.

Another distinctive artefact in the FARC-EP members was their clothing. For them, rubber boots became a distinctive element during their insurgency. This footwear distinguished them as an armed group of ideological and rural origin (See Photo 2). Now, for FARC-EP ex-members, rubber boots are seen as a suitable item for working and living in the countryside.

The symbolic representation of these boots has a different meaning for the FARC-EP ex-members than for the peasants, who also wear this kind of footwear. According to Miller (2002), the object and material classifications evoke social distinctions by the experience that each person has with such objects.



Photo 2: Rubber boots. Image by Andrea Jaramillo

To date, ex-combatants still maintain the way they wear these boots. Some of them fold them as they did when they were in the guerrillas. They claim that they did this because of the high temperature in the jungle and the heat produced by the rubber on top. Marcos, a FARC-EP ex-member who participated in several ambushes by the military forces, told me that for ten years he did not take off his boots when he went to sleep for fear of being unprepared for any eventuality.



Photo 3: Backpacks of the FARC-EP. Image by Andrea Jaramillo.

Backpacks also represented an important artefact in the everyday life of ex-combatants (See Photo 3). Linda, an ex-combatant who is part of the gender committee, mentions that they always carried their belongings in this bag. “We had our house in this bag. Every day we had to carry our house to the different places we went” (Linda, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, November 2019). During the conflict, FARC-EP ex-members had to carry 25 kilos on their backs. They usually carried three changes of clothes, personal belongings, their *economía*¹⁸⁰ and ammunition. In addition, they had to hold their weapons at all times. In the midst of so many commonalities, they decorated their backpacks to show their distinctiveness from their comrades as a way of recreating their own identity.

¹⁸⁰ Personal food ration.

The clothing used during the armed conflict by the FARC-EP guerrillas is another element that has significant value for them. In times of reincorporation, FARC-EP ex-members integrate rural clothing with their guerrilla clothing style as a reminder of their memories and self-personality (Parkin, 1999). They have adapted their clothes with new designs that are mixed with camouflage and colours. Some continue to use pieces of clothing, cloths, tents or protective gear left over from the conflict period in their homes to cover windows or as part of the decoration of their rooms.

However, the meanings that these items had for FARC-EP ex-members have been converted into objects for other purposes. At the moment, guerrilla-style clothing is used as a strategy for ex-combatants to undertake productive projects (See Photo 4). Turning FARC-EP clothing designs into merchandise products changes the meanings of these objects as a convenience for the advertiser (Fattal, 2018), and as a response to the demands of modern life (Miller, 2002).

These productive projects create imagined communities of ex-combatants shaped by a “media capitalism” that creates new perceptions of imagined worlds (Zifonun & Naglo, 2019, p.63). As such, the media portray the imagined roles of FARC-EP ex-members as perfect civilians who have their own successful economic projects and fit perfectly into a capitalist society.

The modification of clothing for commercialisation begins to lose value when FARC-EP ex-members add new colours, styles and materials and are produced by the market as serial items. The elaboration of this clothing in post-conflict transition and in different places determines other meanings for the objects (Bissell, 2009). People who wear guerrilla clothing create the meaning of these artefacts according to the time and space in which the garment is worn. The garment that had a history becomes a market product for purely productive purposes.



Photo 4: Clothes and outfits. First image by Andrea Jaramillo. The second was taken from <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/los-exfarc-lanzaron-su-coleccion-de-ropa-430718>

In June 2020, “Colombiamoda”¹⁸¹ selected *Confecciones la Montaña*, a new organisation created by FARC-EP ex-members, to participate in one of the biggest fashion events in Colombia. This is part of one of the many economic initiatives that involve ex-members of the FARC-EP and which has become a form of marketing in (post-)conflict times, in which ex-combatants are exploited in the media to capture the interest of viewers, to feed curiosity and interest in getting to know this clandestine group.



Photo 5: Symbols of the FARC. The first image by Andrea Jaramillo.

The second was taken from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEcaGH-k-Fk>

As Fattal (2018, p.197) argues: “The figure of the demobilised and rehabilitated ex-combatant exists only to be consumed by the spectacle itself”, in which the real protagonists end up by being those who invest or contribute in the development of the projects. Although both ex-combatants and sponsors profit from marketing these economic initiatives, the risk is that this “win-win” relationship does not contribute to minimising prejudices towards FARC-EP ex-members. Rather, it could be used as a form of consumption and a marketing strategy that show the ex-combatants as objects of peacebuilding.

Another significant aspect in the life of FARC-EP ex-members is the representation of the symbols that the guerrillas used to have. These symbols now clearly refer to their new political party. For the *Los Comunes* political party, the symbol of the “rose” represents the unity of the FARC-EP ex-members (See Photo 5). Other symbols show a kind of hybridisation between their past as guerrillas and their present life as ex-combatants, such as photos of the FARC-EP founders and their hymns, among others.

As part of their identity and ideology, the FARC-EP ex-members are still sharing and reproducing the former music that emerged during their militancy. There were different musical groups prominent in the guerrillas that still play at the events held by the ex-combatants, such as Julian Conrado, Horizonte Fariano, Christian Perez and Rebeldes del Sur, among others. During conflict times, the lyrics of the musicians served as a pedagogic tool to teach ex-combatants about FARC-EP ideology and to raise the morale and motivation of them

¹⁸¹ For more information see <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/por-primera-vez-excombatientes-de-las-farc-participaran-en-colombiamoda/>

to keep fighting (La Silla Vacía, 2019). Now, these lyrics accompany the different cultural and social events they have with the communities.

The forms of communication and jargon used in times of conflict are now part of their memories as guerrillas. Words such as “*camarada*”, “*rancha*”, “*economato*”, “*tropa*”, “*socio*”¹⁸², among others, are still used widely by the FARC-EP ex-members. These words not only describe the military conflict, but also help to reinforce its social identity. So far, they are carrying these “transitional objects” as a way to display their personality, which helps them to de-objectify and re-personalise themselves in their reincorporation trajectory (Parkin, 1999).

Additionally, the history of FARC-EP becomes an artefact of differentiation. For ex-combatants, reincorporation is also the possibility of sharing their former clandestine life in conferences, seminars and interviews in the transition to post-conflict. Wilmer, a leader in reincorporation, mentions the importance of keeping alive their history and the truth they have from the conflict: “It is important that people like you come to these spaces because we can show the true meaning of the guerrilla. People are only left with the false news that the media show about us” (Wilmer, member of the AETCR San José de León, November 2019).

On the other hand, the reintegration process brings new experiences, interests and responsibilities to FARC-EP ex-members, which broadens their range of needs and belongings. They now value objects that were not accessible to them in times of conflict. For example, having a house or a place to settle becomes a priority for them. With the formation and reunification of families after the peace agreement, they place a



Photo 6: Housing and cooking area. Image by Andrea Jaramillo

high value on their private places, which at the same time strengthens their sense of attachment to a territory (See Photo 6). In a meeting in San José de León, one of their members mentioned the importance of belonging to the territory in their reincorporation process. Now, their homes and private lives become an essential part of belonging to society:

¹⁸² Comrade, kitchen, food store, person in charge of the food store, troop, partner.

Reintegration is directly related to the appropriation of a territory. We now have the idea that this belongs to us and that here we are able to have a house, a life and build our relationships. Appropriating a physical space gives us stability. We did not have that before the war and it is another element in our reincorporation process. (Wilmer, member of the NAR San José de León, November 2019)

The guerrilla culture identified cooking and eating as purely collective activities. Now, these activities merge into the dynamics of the family and the *fariana* family. When FARC-EP ex-members come together to celebrate or share a meal, they replicate past ways of relating to each other, valuing a shared memory (Certeau, 1999). The fact that they did not have a private kitchen in times of conflict made the meal a distinctive space for meeting and relating. After the *rancha* culture¹⁸³ disappeared, every ex-combatant started to build their own kitchen (See Photo 6), not just because they sought independence, but also it was convenient for them in terms of time and freedom. Now, they cook and eat whatever they want and, at any time, but still following the same eating habits of the guerrilla group.

One of the aspects that caught my attention during my fieldwork was the decoration and care of the houses. Brown and Werner (1985) define that the exterior decoration of the house increases contact with neighbours and deepens attachment to the neighbourhood.

This represents the attachment to territory and the sense of belonging that the ex-combatants now have with the places where they are reincorporating. In other words, they are acquiring this feeling of “being at home” that they have never had before.

I could say that the houses of *farianos/as* represent a clear hybrid between the FARC-EP ideology and the new artefacts acquired in the reincorporation process. Now, they use the symbols of the political party *Los Comunes* and photos of their former comrades and idols of their insurgency as a form of decoration and attachment to their memories (See Photo 7).



Photo 7: Symbols and decoration. Images by Andrea Jaramillo.

¹⁸³ The *rancha* were the provisional places created for cooking the food of all troops of the FARC. Every certain number of weeks each subgroup was responsible for cooking for all troops.

Temporality plays an important role in the meanings that FARC-EP ex-members give to their houses. They adapt these objects as new artefacts of their reincorporation process, giving them a kind of temporary identity as a way of materialising their role in society (Miller, 2002).

Birthdays, Christmas, baptisms and weddings are now part of the events that gather FARC-EP ex-members together with the surrounding communities. The same happens with their hobbies and the use of their free time. Football has become a way of reconciliation and socialisation with the surrounding communities, army, police and even with ex-paramilitary groups¹⁸⁴.

Events such as festivals, film clubs, cockfights, among others (See Photo 8), are part of the daily activities that FARC-EP ex-members partake in to share and enjoy their lives. They use their agency as a way of being part of society and expressing their personality to others (Mitchell & Richmond, 2012). The recovery of interests and hobbies becomes a positive aspect of reincorporation. FARC-EP ex-members use the time gained in the peace agreement as a way of socialising and making the most of their free time, while transforming the relationships and perceptions that others have of them.

In short, old and new artefacts are transitional objects that represent ex-combatants' past and current life in reincorporation. These objects are modified according to the new meanings FARC-EP ex-members have in their guerrilla times. However, some objects remain intact over time and others transform or fade away. In the following section, I show how the transition from guerrillas to ex-combatants shows an adaptation of patterns, values, preferences and interests that interconnect past as guerrillas and current relationship built with communities.



Photo 8: Hobbies and free time. Photos taken by Andrea Jaramillo.

¹⁸⁴ A study did in Sierra Leona shows that football is a strategy to achieve development and peace in the communities where ex-combatants are located. The high popularity of football becomes a strong appeal to mobilise individuals and communities (Dyck, 2011).

7.6. Self-Identity vs Collectivity: Transition under Dispute

The daily experiences of FARC-EP ex-members in their transition to reintegration plays a significant role in the reconstruction of their identity. A transition involves a transformation of the self (how one perceives oneself in relation to others) and of the collective self with other groups (intergroup relations) (Turner et al., 1994). The “otherizing” dynamic of conflict environments show that conflict transformation requires a post-identity of the collective “other” (usually the “other” is the victimizer) as a way to achieve processes of reconciliation and transitional justice (Millar, 2012).

The reconstruction of the ex-combatants’ identities begins with the names by which they call each other. Most of them continue to call their former comrades by the alias they had in times of conflict. For them, changing their name does not mean simply using their birth name, but represents a transition to a new identity. Carolina, a FARC-EP ex-member from Godo who militated for 11 years, explains how difficult it has been for her to identify with her birth name:

I cannot say that I am forgetting everything about my past. First of all, here we even do not call ourselves with our own names, we keep calling ourselves with our alias used in the guerrillas. This is our custom and our reality [...]. I spent 11 years in the FARC and now I am 30 and I cannot forget what I was before. (Carolina, member of the NAR Godo/Llano Grande, December, 2019)

The transition of the identity of FARC-EP ex-members in reintegration times depicts the dispute between their past and their imagined self. The process of self-identity is a transitional process involving continuous reflexivity as the present self “I” talks to the future self “you” about the past self “me”. Willey explains it by saying:

Self-identity is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits possessed by the individual. It is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography. Identity here still presumes continuity across time and space, but self-identity is such continuity as interpreted reflexively by the agent. (Wiley, 1994, p.54)

In this sense, a person's name becomes a symbol that is not static, it transcends the past, present and future time of ex-combatants (Watzlawik, et al., 2016). For them, the role played by the alias in times of conflict represents their clandestinity and a parallel perception between civility and insurgency. In conversations with Bertha, she told me that she is changing her birth registration to her FARC-EP alias. Since she joined the FARC-EP at the age of 12, she feels that her *nombre de Guerra* (war name), as they call it, now at the age of 45 years, represents more of her identity than her birth name.

By making their identity visible in the society, the FARC-EP ex-members are prone to promote the interactionist nature of the social identity formation (Postmes & Jetten, 2006). This process of self-identification benefits the integration of ex-combatants to a new social group (González & Clémence, 2017), and show the high levels of flexibility of the social identity nature to create and adapt to different social worlds (Reicher, 2004).

Although having interpersonal ties in a group is important for feeling part of society (Maslow's study, 1943, opened a large number of studies on this subject), personal distinctiveness within the group is also important as it adds value in the construction of people's identity and their contribution to the community (Turner, et al., 1994). Thinking in an individual way determines the course of actions, thoughts and behaviour of people when they interact inside a group. However, by using collective actions, people display a sense of assimilation to their group when they compare with others (Pickett & Leonardelli, 2017). Prentice (2006, p.37) argues: "One acts as an individual when one's behaviour is driven by individualistic goals, motives and self-definitions. One feels like an individual when one experiences one's actions as autonomous and one's personal qualities as distinctive".

So far, FARC-EP ex-members integrate two dimensions, one as individuals distinctive to the collective and the other as a unique collective distinctive from other groups. Both aspects are interrelated in the construction of ex-combatants' personality (Reynolds, 2012).

FARC-EP ex-members feel that if they individualise their lives away from the principles of the collective, they will lose their ideology and the time they invested during the conflict. Their uncertainty about security, economic conditions and social acceptance leads them to remain in the collective, as it provides them with lasting bonds, distinction and the opportunity for self-improvement (Pickett & Leonardelli, 2017). Additionally, being part of the collectively would provide them with more sources for exercising their agency in everyday local practices, strengthening at the same time their sense of identity as individuals.

However, the identity building of FARC-EP members when they are together may affect their freedom to seek their own personal distinctions. The collective “inadvertently” may impose on them a commitment to honour their past, characterised by “relations of dependency, patronage, force and prestige and shaped by friendship and sense of belonging solidarity, share historical and ideology references and moral obligation” (Wiegink & Sprenkels, 2020, p.7).

The sense of belonging varies according to the role and attachment to the ideology that FARC-EP ex-members had in times of conflict. Those who still follow the guerrilla ideology have clear reasons for remaining in the collective. This means that the greater the identification with the group, the greater the collectivist attitude towards it (Hornsey & Jetten, 2004). Contrary, they are others who remain in these settlements only because of the economic, social and security advantages that the collectivity offers.

In short, different aspects influence the self-identity and collective identity of FARC-EP ex-members, such as their legacy, their ideology and their current interests in reincorporation times. Staying together provides them with social recognition, a sense of security and economic protection that is not easily found in individual reincorporation. However, self-identity shows them as distinctive beings among the universe of ex-combatants and as individual subjects within this collective. It remains to be seen over time whether this distinction between the collective and individual identities of ex-combatants complements or relegates each other.

7.7. Conclusions

In this chapter, I began by describing the FARC-EP ex-members’ transition to the territories destined for their reincorporation process, the adaptation of former organisational structures of the collectivity of *farianos/as* and the different challenges around this initial stage in reincorporation. Then, I outlined the positive contribution of emotional legacy in the reincorporation process, showing that the awareness and value of these legacies may produce positive results in the FARC-EP ex-members’ active reincorporation into society.

I identified that the emotional belonging among former comrades and the collective way of living shed light on what the role of FARC-EP ex-members should be in peacebuilding. However, the new contexts, responsibilities and defragmentation of the hierarchical structure of the FARC -EP have weakened the ideology, and therefore the willingness of some of their

members to remain actively involved in collective actions. I complemented this chapter with an overview of the concept of the “*fariana family*”, which represents the bonds built in times of conflict among the comrades and the permanence of this emotional attachment in the collectivity of ex-combatants.

In this chapter, I also laid out the importance of the role of artefacts in the transition to reincorporation. In this section, I explored how FARC-EP ex-members are transforming and adapting their relationship with such objects and memories in their current everyday life. I argued that the FARC-EP ex-members’ identity is configured by the interaction they have with such elements, which contribute to the acquisition of new identity patterns. I explored the identity as a matter of dispute when personal differentiation and adaptation are at stake. In this regard, I argued that the term “collectivity” distinguishes the group of FARC-EP ex-members with other groups. In contrast, I claimed that individual distinctiveness depends on the role and capacities each individual plays inside and outside the collective.

Overall, this chapter shows the difficulty of striking a balance between structures and free will, and addresses the different powers emerged in this interrelationship. Reincorporation is a transition enriched by the past and present of ex-combatants and the different encounters and experiences they get along their life trajectory. I conclude by saying that disrupting the past and present of ex-combatants has repercussions on their adaptation to society and in their possible contributions to the peacebuilding process.

This chapter raises new questions related to the tensions between the military hierarchical structure and the social structure, and the influence of both dimensions in the recognition of ex-combatants’ self-identity. To any extent, the tensions of any structure limit the freedom of shaping ex-combatants’ identity. However, these structures provide a point of reference to define, compare and choose the best way to identify themselves.

In sum, FARC-EP ex-members are constantly confronted with two parallel realities: one based on collective and cooperative meanings; the other based on individual understandings. Both dimensions are not easy to integrate, but what is possible is to develop a hybrid between them that best fits the current reincorporation process of FARC-EP ex-members.

To follow on from what was determined in this chapter, in the next I will analyse the diversity of social worlds in which FARC-EP interact, the transformation of the spaces in which

the AETCRs and NARs are located, and the local-local dynamics in which FARC-EP ex-members interact in their everyday life.

“Perhaps many of you only know what the media has said about us. We would like to share more with you and sit down and tell more of our true stories”. (Iris, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

8. Social Worlds, Power(s) and Territorial Peace in Collective Reincorporation

8.1. Approaching Social Worlds in Collective Reincorporation

The previous chapter laid the foundation for understanding the transition of FARC-EP ex-members to reincorporation by studying the everyday practices of collectivity and the integration of the ex-combatants’ past in the present. This analysis allows me to understand that everyday practices of reincorporation are sub-universes of human existence, where different groups and actors interweave and relate according to their own powers and interests (Luckmann, 1970, p.580).

The aim of this chapter is to explore the theory of social worlds¹⁸⁵ and the diversity of actions that FARC-EP ex-members undertake as a collective to achieve sustainable social, economic and political reincorporation in society while interacting with their peers, surrounding communities and external actors¹⁸⁶. Together, these encounters now represent the way of life of the *fariana* collective and a process of social transformation in different territories of Colombia. In this chapter, I will analyse the relationships and groupings of *farianos/as* by analysing social worlds as “meanings created between groups of actors and collectivities of various kinds that drive collective actions by ‘doing things together’” (Becker, 1986 cited in Clarke & Star, 2008, p. 1).

The term “social worlds” is an interactionist perspective from sociological studies, which represents the basis of human interaction and the formation of society. The “social worlds” offers a unique view that analyses the relationships, contributions and constraints when different groups interact and the production of knowledge trigger from these relations. It shows an interconnectedness of needs and practices between different actors and the

¹⁸⁵ For an explanation of the concept of social worlds, see subchapter 3.2.

¹⁸⁶ When I refer to external actors, I mean members of the government and international organisations.

shaping of their realities when they encounter each other (Clarke & Star, 2008). In terms of collective reincorporation, the theory of social worlds provides the basis for understanding the diversity of the “worlds” in which FARC-EP ex-members interact. The power involved in such interactions and the knowledge building as a result of these encounters shows a world in action, which is not easy to understand if we analyse the life of ex-combatants under fixed categories.

In the framework of this research, I consider FARC-EP ex-members as subjects with the ability to build their own world using their past experiences as components to build new social worlds and subworlds in peacetimes. These capacities provide them with the opportunity to interact with other worlds according to the diversity of needs and interests they have during their reincorporation process.

Sharing with other social worlds contributes to the creation of emotional bonds that define the social identity of FARC-EP ex-members. Social identity theorists stress that the ability to relate to a local community produces an identity in continuous transformation (Turner, 1987). This transformation favours the construction of relationships of FARC-EP ex-members and modifies the perceptions that other social worlds have of them, which can contribute to minimising stigmas and prejudices (Brewer, et al., 2018).

The intersections and segmentations of such worlds may produce an alteration of spaces and a modification of ex-combatants’ ways of living and thinking, producing a transformation of them and their surroundings. This transformation represents the modification of people’s patterns, turning them into “the principal affiliative mechanisms through which people organize social life” (Clarke, 1991, p.131).

The construction of such social worlds is related to multi-sited dimensions influenced by hegemonies of power and time, which extend throughout the spaces in which ex-combatants participate. Spatial, temporal, territorial, formal or belonging boundaries are essential to understanding the performance of such worlds (Unruh, 1980). Space and time in social worlds are the ways of expressing motion. Situating oneself inside a space of action means recognising how time and the world spans within a “social game” by following a “sequential order”. Space is directly related to social relations and provides the set of social norms, values and attributed meanings embedded in a complex social construction (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 26).

Time, in this case, represents the process of acting, experiencing and perceiving the surroundings (Soeffner, 1991, p.365); and power, the capacity to cause effects, to have an impact on or change things, and to influence physical or social worlds (Turner, 2005). Territory, in this context, defines the product of relational networks embedded in certain spaces and times (Painter, 2010).

After observing the collective dynamics of FARC-EP ex-members, I argue that the meaning and practices of reincorporation are in constant fluidity due to the alteration of the worlds in which such practices take place. These worlds are “constantly reproduced and changed by processes of legitimation, segmentation and intersection” (Soeffner & Zifonun, 2008, p.4). As such, the process of reincorporation occurs when former FARC-EP members interact with different social worlds and with global forces, playing an active role in some social arena¹⁸⁷ in the search of social transformations (Zifonun & Naglo, 2019).

FARC-EP ex-members are now actively participating in different social worlds outside their collective by playing multiple roles that intersect and segment with other subworlds (as explained in Section 7.3.1). They are acting under the umbrella of their collective but playing different roles simultaneously (Unruh, 1980). The collective discourse of reincorporation become social arenas that influence other social worlds and transform not just the reality of FARC-EP ex-members but also the worlds with which they interact. In this light, reincorporation not only alters the life of FARC-EP ex-members, their families and surrounding communities (as usually is studied), but also the myriad of social worlds in which there is at least a representative of the ex-combatants’ collectivity.

Multiple powers, conflicts and negotiation processes are visible among the social arena that constitutes the AETCRs and NARs (see subchapter 7.2.2). In each of these social worlds and subworlds, there are representatives of the FARC-EP ex-members who want to debate, fight or manipulate the internal dynamics of this arena (see subchapter 7.2.1). These power struggles do not just involve exclusively political matters, but also involve social, economic and everyday social dynamics (Strauss, 1978).

In carrying out an analysis of reincorporation based on a social world approach, I consider the different actors embedded in the worlds and subworlds in which collective reincorporation takes place. This process allows me to provide a means for better

¹⁸⁷ The social arena is defined as the grouping of different social worlds without firm rules, which give crucial importance to the negotiation of social order (Strauss, 1991).

understanding the process of social change (Strauss, 1978), especially in the transition from war to peace in the territories where FARC-EP ex-members are settled. In this regard, I will show how the everydayness of reincorporation modifies spaces (see subchapter 7.4), other social worlds, ideologies and patterns represented in the lives of *farianos/as*, and the different ways in which it collides and causes disputes in their everyday encounters. I emphasise how a mutual form of social worlds is represented in the worlds and subworlds in which FARC-EP ex-members interact and the creative forms of keeping their collective action alive.

In this chapter, I analyse social worlds as two broad types: the social worlds embedded in the life of FARC-EP ex-members; and the intersection of these social worlds with external actors. For the first type, I focus on the relationship between social worlds and collective reincorporation, the creation of subworlds among FARC-EP ex-members and the configuration of their social arena. In doing so, I focus on the different powers, boundaries, conflicts and roles exerted in these social worlds, as well as the unity embedded in the universe of ex-combatants.

For the second type, I explore the different ways in which FARC-EP ex-members' social worlds are shaped by external worlds, the intersection of their roles in the articulation of social worlds and the positive effects of these intersections on their collective reincorporation. Subsequently, I focus on the transition of place to space through the exercise of agency and self-management of both FARC-EP ex-members and surrounding communities, and the contribution of this in the achievement of a territorial peace in Colombia. Finally, I end with some conclusions.

8.2. The Formation of Social Worlds in Collective Reincorporation

The collective perspective of reincorporation shows a clear picture of how the FARC-EP operated in times of conflict and the “romanticised historical models of communal life”, in which everything is collective (Luckmann, 1970, p. 587). However, interaction with other social worlds in times of reincorporation has stimulated in former FARC-EP members individualities far removed from the interests of their collective, producing new hybridisations between collective and individual actions.

Now, FARC-EP ex-members are creating new social worlds in the places where they are located in an attempt to move away from the typified and pre-established structured worlds that are imposed to them (Soeffner, 1991, p.365). In doing so, they are disrupting the social structures through collective actions, by sharing with others their life stories and a collective model of work and relationship building gained from their accumulated knowledge during times of conflict (González, 2016).

These common patterns represent their similar ways of thinking about their reincorporation process (as explained in Chapter 4) and the common dynamics in their transition from wartime to peacebuilding (as explained in Chapter 6) and represent the FARC-EP ex-members' commitment and loyalty to their past and an identity in continuous transformation (as described in subchapter 7.6). Such is the case of collective economic projects, social activities and political meetings during reincorporation, which, aside from representing a sense of attachment to the collectivity, re-affirming the identity of FARC-EP ex-members as *farianos/as* or as ex-combatants¹⁸⁸. In other words, these actions institutionalise their collective knowledge.

Knowledge comes from integration (Soeffner & Zifonun, 2008). The more integrated the FARC-EP ex-members are, the more experiences and knowledge they share, and therefore, the more organised their new social world will be. The creation of social worlds in the life of *farianos/as* and ex-combatants has its foundations in a "standardized sameness" built by their reasoning about shared beliefs and socio-cultural and political ideas, which give meaning and sense to their social world and constitute their everyday life stock of knowledge¹⁸⁹ (Brewer et al., 2018b).

Sharing knowledge is only possible by participating in society. This participation not only contributes to the legitimisation of FARC-EP ex-members' knowledge but also to their institutionalisation. As Soeffner & Zifonun (2008, p.6) argue: "The institutionalisation of knowledge also involves the institutionalisation of power relations, which as soon as they attain validity, are inherited by the next generation through the process of legitimation". The

¹⁸⁸ I make a distinction between ex-combatants and *farianos/as* as during my fieldwork some of them identified themselves as *farianos/as* as a way of honouring their past, while others simply call themselves ex-combatants. The latter do not show a strong sense of belonging to the FARC-EP, and therefore keep their distance from the label "*farianos/as*" due to some differences they have had mainly with their former commanders or with *Los Comunes* political party and amnesties provided to some ex-combatants.

¹⁸⁹ Although Schutz and Bremer focus mainly on the building of social worlds in victims, I consider that the configuration of worlds in both victims and ex-combatants is comparable as both groups transit from an environment of conflict to another of (post-)conflict. Additionally, they share similar experiences from the past before playing any role in the conflict and inside their groups of identification.

recognition of FARC-EP ex-members demands the legitimization of their knowledge. This is the only way to give value to their past and their power relations with other social worlds.

In an assembly in San Jose de León with 50 ex-members of the FARC-EP, Nestor argues that the government's rejection of the legitimacy of FARC-EP ex-members was manifested in the campaign against the peace process in the 2016 plebiscite:

The government knew the political potential we had. Therefore, political parties and supporters began to smear the campaign. They started to block our strategy of peace pedagogy in the territories. That is why the 'no' won and the 'yes' for peace lost [...] the government neither made the pedagogy nor allowed peace to be achieved. (Nestor, San José de León Assembly, November 2019)

In this statement, the public delegitimation of the FARC-EP's knowledge aimed to override its social world, and thus devalued its collective actions and discourses. In this process, not only the discourses but also the possibility of creating new meanings and social practices are violated. This process of delegitimation also influences in the transformation of the social norms in which these discourses interact (Goetze, 2017b).

In their reincorporation process, FARC-EP ex-members have learnt that by sharing their life stories and their legacy, they are legitimising themselves. The fact they make public their life in *El Monte* and the principles of the FARC-EP while they were clandestine re-signifies their active role in society and the transformation of their surroundings. Likewise, the "listening spaces"¹⁹⁰ in their everyday life help them to re-signify the role others have towards them, transforming the stereotypes and stigmas towards the guerrillas' past (Brewer et al., 2018, p.209). Jose, one of the leaders and representatives of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) in Agua Bonita, argues: "We want to welcome everyone here, they can see who we really are. We can share our history and change the negative image that the media has showed about us in the last 50 years" (José, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018).

¹⁹⁰ Listening spaces refer to "dialogue discourses to others to hear their narratives in order to help transform how the past is understood, how the past is engage with and attitudes we have toward it" (Brewer et al., 2018, p.209).

The legitimisation of FARC-EP ex-members is not attached exclusively to a territorial delimitation, it is geographically disperse. That is the case of the universe of the ex-combatants who are interacting in a big arena, in which common stories, memories and principles are unified. Now, this arena and social worlds intersect with a variety of subworlds and segments of other worlds already attached in the territories. Such is the case of the *Juntas de Acción Comunal* (communal board organisations- JAC), committees, championships, educational organisations, farming organisations, political parties and entities created as part of the peace process in which FARC-EP ex-members are now actively participating. The participation of ex-combatants in these different entities benefits not just their legitimisation but also the acquisition of new knowledge to achieve their collective desires. Soeffler & Zifonun (2008) argues that social worlds tend to create alliances with other social worlds as soon as they perceive that they are no longer able to deal with new situations.

The *fariana* collective converges with different entities created as part of the peace agreement, in which FARC-EP ex-combatants agreed to participate. Reinaldo, one of the *farianos/as* representatives for the Comprehensive National Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops (PNIS), states:

Within the collective reincorporation process, we are carrying out as part of the peace agreement different responsibilities. We assumed tasks very difficult to accomplish, and very difficult to understand. At the time, we agreed with the peace process, we were saying that we supported the six points of that agreement, but we did not look at the 300-page document in detail. In each point of the agreement, there must have a group of comrades working to carry out the implementation of these points. (Reinaldo, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019)

FARC-EP ex-members are not just in their “small” social world —as usually is thought— trying to figure out how to reincorporate into society; rather they are acting in different worlds to fulfil what was agreed in Havana. Their participation in different social worlds not just contributes to the fulfilment of the peace agreement, but also eases their articulation and interaction with different groups of society, making them visible away from their typified role of perpetrators.

In the following section, I will focus on the subworlds and segmentations in which FARC-EP ex-members interact and the characteristics of ex-combatants' big arena.

8.2.1. The Building of Subworlds in Collective Reincorporation

The military and ideological conditions in which the FARC-EP operated in times of conflict showed a unified group based on a hierarchical order with strong collective dynamics and internal norms that differentiated them from other groups in society. However, in their transition to reincorporation, different subworlds have emerged, produced by the acquisition of new skills and the appropriation of new ideologies and interests, which have led FARC-EP ex-members to act under new forms of individual legitimisation and differentiation.

The diversity of subworlds emerging in the universe of ex-combatants depends on the current social, economic and political conditions in which they now participate and their level of cohesion with their former guerrilla group. Although some have nostalgia from their past and have a clear sense of belonging to their legacy as guerrillas, proudly calling themselves *farianos/as*, others deny this label and prefer to be called ex-combatants. The latter have an ambivalent feeling towards *Los Comunes* political party, a partial detachment from their *fariana* memories. Even now, some are against the amnesties given to some ex-commanders¹⁹¹.

The starting point for understanding the creation of subworlds for the ex-combatants is related to their ideological commitment to the insurgency and the experiences they recall from their life as *guerrilleros*. Although some value the ideological perspective acquired in the guerrilla group, others just consider the military experience as their main interest of being part of this group. Yulis, one of the leaders in Agua Bonita who is actively participating in all collective actions and who was a militia in the FARC-EP for more than 20 years, explains the importance of ideology over military training in reincorporation times, by arguing:

People did not understand that making this transition did not change things. The only thing that changes in our lives is the life of being in *El Monte*, but the ideology should be exactly the same. We should continue with our community work, promote values,

¹⁹¹A clear case was shown among the FARC-EP women ex-members. They have created an organisation called *La Rosa Blanca* (The White Rose), in which they denounce and make explicit all the sexual and gender abuses they suffered during their guerrilla times. They have made known the forced abortions and sexual abuses they experienced, which the JEP exposes in Case 07 (El Mundo, 2019).

and seek equality and respect [...]. At one time, many people joined the FARC-EP and it was just a matter of shooting and shooting; people were never filled with knowledge. Look, if you do not fill your head with knowledge, you can harm anyone with a gun or without a gun. (Yulis, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

Yulis shows how the FARC-EP's ideology defines ex-combatants' identity. She argues that revolution is not with weapons, but with the legitimisation of their ideology. However, not all FARC-EP ex-members have the same view as Yulis. Although some identify their weapons as the only means to fight, others have determined that they are still fighting for their principles and ideological perspectives. For them, their weapons were only a way to show their resistance and control the enemy.

When social worlds are constantly involved in disagreements, divisions are likely to occur (Strauss, 1982). For Carolina, a FARC-EP ex-member who supports the collective actions in Godo, the fragmentation within the FARC-EP ex-members is linked with the experiences each person had during conflict times. For her, the more one suffered during the conflict, the clearer the purpose of fighting became, and therefore the greater the attachment and commitment to the *fariana* collective:

Many comrades were in the mountains and did not know what this fighting meant, they did not have to endure hunger, they did not have to stay two or three days without bathing, walking and carrying heavy things. They did not even carry the 30 pounds of remittances or had to cook in the way we had to do it before. Now, we cook everything on a stove, that is easy and we value it, but we also know the price of suffering. (Carolina, member of NAR Godo/Llano Grande, December 2019)

In conversation with Carolina, she also explains the relationship between the ex-combatants behaviour in reincorporation and the time when they joined the FARC-EP. For her, the guerrilla life in the 2000s was completely different from that of recent times. Those who enrolled to be a guerrilla before this time had more ideological training and commitment to the insurgency, and therefore in reincorporation times have more attachment to the collective. In this vein, the formation of subworlds among ex-combatants is determined by the

diversity of past and present interests and the needs of each individual in their transition to reincorporation.

Although the diversity of thinking around reincorporation on the part of FARC-EP ex-members has weakened what collectivity means, these diversities have at the same time enriched the discourses of their members around economic, political and social projects and their ways of reintegrating into society. The more subworlds created in the universe of FARC-EP ex-members, the greater the diversity of interests and knowledge in the big arena of reincorporation.

The structure, distribution and organisation of the places in which FARC-EP ex-members settled show the social subworld dynamics that are emerging in these territories as a strategy to maintain their collective reincorporation alive. It is normal to see in these territories a group of leaders gathering in the meeting room discussing about their political party, while in another part of the village, there is a group working in agriculture or they are gathering in a house to drink coffee. Others are playing football or billiards. During the day, most of them meet at the central point of the village to discuss any common problem or situations that affect the whole collective.

These subworlds did not emerge as soon as FARC-EP ex-members transitioned to their reincorporation process. Over time, they began to group themselves according to their (post-)conflict interests and views on their reincorporation process. Some have a strong commitment with the collective self-sustainability, while others in an intermittent way contribute in this purpose. They may disagree with how the collective is working, but they are still living with their ex-comrades because they feel an emotional attachment to them.

The different fragmentations in the social worlds of FARC-EP ex-members have been noticeable. These are mainly determined by the socio-economic characteristics in which they live and their different ideological perspectives. Lack of resources, uncertainty about their future, their personal and family objectives and their idea of what reincorporation means have led them to move away from the social world ascribed to the AETCRs and the NARs, but without completely detaching themselves from their initial social world.

When their ideological perspectives are strong and the struggle for resources is not so pronounced, it is unlikely that FARC-EP ex-members will migrate to other social worlds. However, when their social world does not offer enough guarantees, they may create other contact and intersections that favour their social, political and economic stability. Such is the

case of some ex-combatants that now have families and work outside the collective, with the purpose of gaining more money out of the benefits they receive.

In this light, the fragmentation of worlds does not mean the abandonment of the social world of FARC-EP ex-members (Strauss, 1984, p.135). Jorge highlights an example of how time changes their relations with their social worlds, but in other cases strengthens collective meanings:

There are no guarantees of work here to support the whole collective. People tend to go outside and search for a better life wherever he or she thinks there is a better life. There are even people who have left the ETCRs but are now creating their political cells to support our political party. They confirm that being a socialist does not mean living in a group of houses or gathering in a specific place. Contrary, some people live here and do not want to serve the collective [...]. This is a disgrace because they have so many years of experience in the guerrillas but now they do not collaborate with the collective. (Jorge, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019)

Jorge illustrates that the diversity of subworlds among FARC-EP ex-members does not depend on the geographical characteristics in which they are located, nor on their former interests in contributing to the collective. Diverse interests and needs are embedded in the formation of the social worlds, ranging from a sense of emotional attachment to their former comrades to a strong commitment to the political, social and economic collective reincorporation.

Those who are leaders share other kinds of subworlds with outsiders. These subworlds are more structured and visible from others that are hidden in the territories by doing everyday activities in support of the collective. For instance, leaders usually gather in meetings, committees and assemblies and discuss general aspects of the *fariana* collective with other subworlds that may contribute to the strengthening of their own social world. In the words of Unruh (1979), leaders represent the insiders of their social worlds, as their roles create the strongest commitment to the principles of their social world by representing their practices, needs and interests with outsiders.

Within these subworlds, there are different conflicts and negotiations in which particular interests are at stake. Most of the time, the discussions are about the economic,

social and political interests that each subworld has. Each subworld is fighting for its own legitimacy and worthiness inside the social world (Strauss, 1982, p.175). To illustrate with an example, I remember that in an assembly in Agua Bonita, the members were discussing a letter they received from *El Centro Democrático*¹⁹² (Center Democratic) political party to request a meeting in their territory with the collective of the FARC-EP ex-members. The more radical members of the group immediately rejected the idea, as it went against their *farianos* principles. Others (mostly the leaders) said that now as FARC-EP ex-members and a political party, they had to listen to all groups in society, although this did not mean that they aligned themselves with the interests of *El Centro Democrático*. In this scenario, there were not only two subworlds involved in the discussion; various opinions went back and forth in different directions involving variety of perspectives and opinions from different groups.

Nevertheless, other cases show more the characteristics of each subworld. For instance, in a gender committee meeting in San José de León, the group were discussing the levels of patriarchy and machismo the women endure in this collective. Although the majority of women agreed with these observations, the other part of the group of FARC-EP ex-members (all men) questioned them. In this case, this discussion attacked the principles of a subworld (the gender group) but apparently not the principles of the entire FARC-EP collective, as was exposed in the first example. Gender, in this case, was seen as an isolated category that does not relate to other subworlds. However, the women's role in the subworlds of FARC-EP ex-members is not only related to the gender committee subworld, but also to economic, cultural, social and political projects implemented by the collective reincorporation.

The above examples show how power dynamics influence the relationships between subworlds and the building of meanings around the reincorporation process. In both examples, FARC-EP ex-members are claiming a place in the "firmament of the larger social world" by demanding recognition as being different from the large social world (Strauss, 1982, p.175).

No all FARC-EP ex-members play a clear role in the social subworlds. Some of them are not easy to identify and are invisible in the everyday life of the collectives. They are in charge of intersecting with different subworlds and continually strengthening the identity of the *farianos/as*. Such is the case of the invisible leaders who everyone can count on in the

¹⁹² This political party was opposed to the peace agreement with the FARC-EP and led the campaign for "No" in the peace plebiscite.

development of productive, social and even political actions. Marcos, one FARC-EP ex-member who was a militia for more than 30 years in the mobile column Teofilo Forero, has become the point of reference for any person who needs help in the AETCR Agua Bonita. During my stay in Agua Bonita, everyone felt that they could count on Marcos. He takes care of the pig farms, the greenhouse and always supports the distribution of food to other FARC-EP ex-members. Besides that, he is one of the oldest in this AETCR and the one who entertains the outsiders with his interesting stories from his time in *El Monte*. On top of that, he is an expert at giving massages and is well known by FARC-EP ex-members and *campesinos* nearby. There are people who have similar roles to Marcos in the other AETCRs and NARs. These people keep the big social world of ex-combatants alive and they become the most obvious tie that binds the ex-combatants' subworlds.

Subworlds are not easy to describe on paper as they appear and disappear along with time and are visible in different forms. They might remain for longer or they condense with other subworlds. Some subworlds are temporal and respond to a specific objective. Such is the case of groups formed around temporal jobs, specific social activities or the development of projects. These temporal worlds join other subworlds or spread out in a variety of subworlds that align with their former interests. In the end, these social subworlds meet at one point and connect in different aspects, forming a strong bond from the past and present and turning them into a large structure called a social arena.

8.2.2. The Social Arena of Ex-Combatants

The more than 13,000 ex-combatants who were part of the peace agreement are connected with each other by sharing common memories of their past and by keeping alive their legacy in times of reincorporation. Now, they share common concerns and fears in their transition to society, but also similar patterns of behaviour when referring to their future and their relationships with others. This large arena is articulated with other social worlds, subworlds and actors, which are connected to each other to exercise a political activity that may not necessarily be formal, but rather visible in people's everyday life (Strauss, 1978).

FARC-EP ex-members not only belong to the social arena of guerrilla, but are part of multiple social arenas in which different social worlds interact. In these arenas, they usually struggle with power, authority and legitimacy (Strauss, 1978). In what follows, I will focus only

on the arena of ex-combatants, although this is not the only one to which they ascribe, but the one I did a deep dive into in my research.

A variety of aspects determine the sense of belonging that the FARC-EP ex-members have in their social arena, such as their process of reincorporation, their compromises with the peace agreement and their commitment to the collective of *farianos/as*. Their social arena is not limited to those who support *Los Comunes* political party or the collective reincorporation; nor does it relate to the AETCRs or NARs where FARC-EP ex-members reincorporate into society. It involves different places, levels of commitment, responsibilities and interests (Strauss, 1978).

At present, FARC-EP ex-members are grouped in 84 rural and 12 urban areas throughout Colombia under the name of ETCRs or NARs, and more than 8,000 of them are part of individual reincorporation processes (Rueda, 2020). Despite their dispersion in the territories, the FARC-EP ex-members participate under different forms in the social arena that does not depend on a geographical delimitation. Jorge explains that the collective is not based on a geographical location, it relates more to the ex-combatants' insurgence thinking:

When we talk about the concepts of collective, we are referring to the concept of struggle and resistance. It does not matter if I am in Cauca, in Huila, or El Valle, the important thing is that we have in our heads the desire to fight and to change our surroundings. This does not mean that we must all live in the same town. You can live anywhere but you can maintain your socialist principle. As Che Guevara said, socialism should be everywhere and spread throughout Latin America. (Jorge, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019)

The ex-combatants who decided to be part of an individual reincorporation are also part of the social arena of FARC-EP ex-members. In most cases, they still have contact with their ex-comrades when participating in assemblies and meetings of *Los Comunes* political party, by promoting economic and social projects together or simply by maintaining their friendships with former comrades and commandants.

Rocio, explains how *Los Comunes* political party has become a matter of identification and cohesion. She mentions that the headquarters of the political party has become a centre of gathering for those who live in Bogotá:

We are spread all over the city and what unites us as a collective is the political party and the small projects around reincorporation. [...] Our meeting point is the headquarters of the political party. This is our collective space and the only thing that identifies us here in this big city. That is why we defend it and support it despite all the troubles we have had. (Rocio, member of the national party, Bogotá, December 2019)

In the big cities, it is more difficult for FARC-EP ex-members to gather, as they do in the AETCRs or NARs. Those who live in rural areas and work outside the collective, mostly as *campesinos/as*, keep their belongings and housing in the areas where the collective of FARC-EP exists. They go back and forth depending on the planting and harvesting seasons. Others live in villages near where the AETCRs and NARs are located and maintain constant contact with members of their former fronts. Christian argues that the non-presence of FARC-EP ex-members in the collective reincorporation areas does not mean they are detached from their social arena:

We have many comrades who are studying, others are working with their families, and some are working with their friends. Even though they are doing other activities, they are permanently participating here and there. They have their home within the space and are trying to maintain the collective relationship in one way or another with us. (Christian, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019)

So far, the *fariana* structure has created various methods for ex-combatants to keep in touch and to keep the social arena alive¹⁹³. Such is the case of the political party's flag, the former FARC-EP hymn, national and regional assemblies, the political party's website, the National Council for Reincorporation (CNR), a news channel called "The New Colombia" (NC), among other activities.

Besides that, the social arena of FARC-EP ex-members is not restricted to those who were part of the last peace agreement in 2016. Now, it is normal to see the AETCRs and NARs as a shelter of FARC-EP's ex-combatants who demobilised individually before the peace

¹⁹³ Strauss argues that the maintenance and strengthening of social worlds is not only through communication but also symbols, universes of discourses, activities, memberships, sites, technologies and organisations (Strauss, 1978, p.121).

agreement¹⁹⁴. Vivian is one such example. She was with the FARC-EP for 24 years and, during her time in the guerrillas, she served as a guard the major state of the FARC-EP. Due to health problems and her high-risk pregnancy, she was dismissed from the guerrillas in 2006. Now, she lives in the AETCR Agua Bonita and receive economic and emotional support from her ex-comrades. According to her, most of the members of this community treat her as just another comrade. Vivian explains how she feels in this collective:

I am very happy here, I feel like *fariana* again. I do not need my mum, my brothers, or anything else [...]. When I came here the first time, people asked me if I wanted to live here. If I decided so, they could provide some remittance for my son and me. (Vivian, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, November 2019)

As for Vivian, the case is the same for Wilmer, Tiberio and others I met during my fieldwork. They were part of the FARC-EP, but for different reasons demobilised before the peace agreement came to an end. With these examples, I argue that the construction of a social space (social world) is not subject to a territory or a specific time, but is more related to the human principle of mutual identification, where ideologies, affections and projects are integrated into a unity of relationships.

The recognition of the social arena among FARC-EP ex-members has also protected them from security threats. For example, in 2018, the NAR San José de León hosted six ex-combatants and their families from the AETCR Brisas due to the multiple threats they received from dissident groups. Additionally, they received 93 ex-combatants and their families from Santa Lucia Ituango after the AETCR had to be closed due to the high number of assassinations¹⁹⁵ and threats received from dissident groups (ARN, 2020c). The same happened in Llano Grande. They have received FARC-EP ex-members from Vidri (an ETCR that was closed in 2018) and from other AETCRs in the Antioquia region to protect them from possible reprisals.

Moreover, FARC-EP ex-members are not only ascribed to the social arena of ex-combatants, but are also part of other arenas that contribute to the pursuit of their goals and

¹⁹⁴ These ex-combatants are called deserters. Most of them demobilize as part of the counter-insurgency strategy of former President Alvaro Uribe Velez from 2002 to 2010.

¹⁹⁵ Until 2020, 11 FARC-EP ex-members and 7 of their family members were killed in Ituango Antioquia (Forero, 2020).

interests. In these arenas, they often act as representatives of their social worlds and as ex-combatants that perform collective identities, playing a role as representatives of the great universe of ex-combatants.

It does not matter whether ex-combatants are no longer together in a single place or are not part of the economic, political and social collective reincorporation process, what matters in this social arena is the strong sense of belonging FARC-EP ex-members have towards their legacy and their social need to grow as collective actors.

The main reason why they remain attached to the social arena of the ex-FARC-EP is their need to legitimise themselves as recognisable actors in society. This legitimisation occurs when they interact with other social worlds and make themselves visible from their history. At the same time, the interaction with other worlds shape their main interests as a collective by influencing their everyday dynamics. In the following section, I explain deeper the intersection of ex-combatants with outside worlds during their reincorporation process.

8.3. Intersection of Social Worlds: Ex-Combatants and Outsiders

8.3.1. Intersecting the Social Worlds of Ex-Combatants by the Access to Jobs

One of the most striking aspects that captured my interest when I arrived at the AETCRs and NARs was the presence of bodyguards. Most of the ex-commanders who had any level of representativeness in the FARC-EP, or those who have had security problems after the peace agreement, now have special security treatment. There are always white armoured cars filled with men and women with guns in these territories. These bodyguards are mostly FARC-EP ex-members who, in parallel with their process of reincorporation, are guarding the lives of their former commanders. For me, this dynamic was like replicating the ex-combatants' past now in an environment of legality.

Bhatia and Muggah (2009) mention that the ex-combatants' interest in joining private security companies comes mainly from mid-levels commanders. For them, the economic and social incentives received from DDR programmes are not sufficient, which leads them to acquire roles that reproduce, to a certain extent, the dynamics of the conflict times. One of the ethical dilemmas in the DDR process is that although ex-combatants are seen as "time bombs slowly ticking away" (Mashike, 2004, p.101) and a security threat in the transition to post-conflict, the government uses them as cannon fodder, offering them job opportunities

that feed or reinforce armed security. This dynamic is intended to show that ex-combatants are following the principles of legality while representing the same hegemonic powers.

As part of the peace agreement, the National Unit of Protection (UNP), an entity that belongs to the government, was given the capacity to hire 1,200¹⁹⁶ *agentes de seguridad* “security agents” (women and men) and 105 national administrative staff to protect the life of the FARC-EP ex-members. The decision to hire FARC-EP ex-members for the UNP had two objectives: first, to guarantee the protection of those who have threatened by offering a special security protection through the provision of trusted “security agents”; and second, to provide jobs to the FARC-EP ex-members as part of their economic reincorporation process. Metsola (2006, p. 1126) finds that job provision for ex-combatants has been a matter of social and security policy, with the army and the police being the two largest employers of ex-combatants.

According to Francisco, a FARC-EP ex-member who works for the UNP at the national level, “there are not enough security agents to protect the lives of ex-combatants who have security problems” (Francisco, UNP, November 2019). For him, the best strategy is to hire FARC-EP ex-members that have the military experience and the recognition from the *farianos/as* collective. The FARC-EP ex-members hired by the UNP have a double role: being part of the reincorporation process; and representing the government as security agents. This intersection of worlds creates a hybrid with frictions and ideological disputes among *farianos/as* who, despite criticising the social order, are part of it by playing a role as security agents.

The new security structures in the territories where FARC-EP ex-members settle show an ongoing “conflict post-conflict” dynamic, which has resulted in a partial peacebuilding in which security prevails over other aspects. In this context, It is not possible to transform the FARC-EP ex-members’ perspectives about the war and its implication when everything is measured and evaluated under a power, hierarchical and militarised way. Hoyos & Fattal, argue (2103) that the first step to demilitarising the society is to demilitarise the approaches to reintegration.

In discussions that I held with some FARC-EP ex-members, they argue that having “security agents” goes against their *fariana* ideology by claiming that both the bodyguards

¹⁹⁶ By 2019, out of the 1,200 security agents, 774 were FARC-EP ex-members.

and the protected are now behaving as the *petite bourgeoisie*¹⁹⁷, as they follow the same patterns of Colombian political actors who take advantage of a capitalist system that gives privileges to those in leadership positions. Although the ex-combatants are recognised as a source of peacebuilding expertise, they cannot escape the broader context of militarisation where local peacebuilding takes place (Peace Direct, 2020). FARC-EP ex-members claim that having privileges inside the collective may disrupt the egalitarian collective life that they attempted to achieve in their initial phase of reincorporation.

However, the constant threats that FARC-EP ex-members have received from dissident groups and criminal bands show an environment in which peace can only be achieved by following the traditional security dynamics ascribed to liberal peace discourses. The example FARC-EP ex-members as bodyguards shows an endless cycle of conflict, in which the perception of security becomes the central aspect of fulfilling other social, political and economic guarantees in the transition to peace. Sergio, one of the FARC-EP ex-members who supports the collective in Llano Grande and who has received threats from dissident groups, argues that the security problems are at the centre of the difficulties in reintegration: “How do I reincorporate knowing that the enemy is waiting for me there?” (Sergio, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018). Similarly, Jovial, one of the social leaders who has been threatened by dissident groups, sustains that his current situation is worse than before: “I still feel as insecure as I was in *El Monte* but now it is worse because I am not carrying a weapon” (Jovial, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018).

The uncertain security conditions of FARC-EP ex-members and their need for protection have contributed to strengthening the levels of reliance on the police and military forces. Bernardo, one of the leaders of Llano Grande, explains:

We have a big security problem here, so we agreed to set up this checkpoint at the entrance of the space. Before, we were the ones who controlled all the personnel that came in, the cars, the people, everything. Since last year, we took the hard decision to accept that they [police and military forces] would take control as a public force. (Bernardo, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018)

¹⁹⁷ This refers to article 8 of the FARC-EP statutes: Duties and rights in the FARC-EP, which states “Duties and rights in the FARC-EP are equal for all its members, but without petty bourgeois egalitarianism”(FARC-EP, 2007). This speaks of equality in an unequal and hierarchical environment.

FARC-EP ex-members argue that this transition has not been easy due to the confrontations they previously had with the military and police, and the multiple instances of corruption and violence they have witnessed from these state structures. Some of them argue that the military and police forces are informants for the extreme right parties, or for politicians who are opposed to the peace agreement.

Apart from the jobs offered to FARC-EP ex-members as bodyguards, there are other kinds of opportunities for them to register as employees or as volunteers in different public entities (See Table 1). Another form of employment that caught my attention was *humanicemos*. This kind of job was created as part of the peace agreement, and aims to contribute to the humanitarian demining. It becomes a strategy to both support the economic reincorporation of FARC-EP ex-members and contribute to reparation and reconciliation throughout the Colombian territories. According to my own research, 146 ex-combatants are working in this role, 30 percent of them women. While FARC-EP ex-members offer their knowledge in explosives, activation of landmines and the identification of possible territories with mines still active, *Humanicemos* train them in mine risk education and mine clearance.

Entity/Organisation	Number of FARC-EP ex-members working	Paid
Humanicemos DH	146	Yes
National Unit of Protection (UNP)	774 security agents	Yes
Truth Commission (CEV)	1 per AETCR	No
Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP)	1 per AETCR	Yes
PNIS (Comprehensive National Programme for Substitution of Illicit Crops)	3 per AETCR	No
Unit for the Search of Disappeared Persons (UBPD)	2 per AETCR	No
National Agency for Reincorporation (ARN)	2 per AETCR	Yes
Coldeportes	1 per AETCR	Yes
Territorial Council for Reincorporation (CTR)	Different number in each department	No
Departamental Council for Reincorporation	Different number in each department	No
Congress and Chamber of Representatives of Colombia	5 Senate 5 Chamber of Representatives	Yes
National Council for Reincorporation (CNR)	2 representatives	Yes

International Organisation for Migration (IOM)	1 member	Yes
Political direction	31 members	Yes/No
Political party headquarters	15 members	Yes/No

Figure 8: Public entities and organisations in which ex-combatants work. Own elaboration.

While doing my fieldwork, I attended one of the workshops provided for children at the school near to the AETCR Agua Bonita where half of them are family members of ex-combatants. Four FARC-EP ex-members employed by *humanicemos* led the activity. The aim of the workshop was to explain children the risk of landmines and the different ways to recognise them.

During this activity, one child (the son of an ex-combatant) in the middle of the workshop asked the question: “Why do people lay these mines?” There was silence and the FARC-EP ex-members could not answer immediately. Then one said that Colombia was in the midst of a conflict and those who were fighting laid mines to weaken the adversary.

For me, this activity was meaningful as it showed a transition of ex-combatants’ role in times of “conflict post-conflict”. This kind of activity may not transform adults’ view of FARC-EP ex-members, but they definitely change their role in society with the next generations. As Brewer, et al., (2018, p. 250) argues: “By taking personal responsibility for everyday life peacebuilding, we help develop shared stocks of knowledge in the longer term that to the next generation become normal”. In this respect, the participation of ex-combatants in peacebuilding scenarios influences the configuration of their identity and the perception that others have of them, which is directly related to the process of social transformation.

Another example of intersection is the FARC-EP ex-members who have roles in the government. Some of them are now working with entities such as the Agency for Reincorporation and Normalisation (ARN), the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) or the Truth Commission (CEV), among others. They continuously maintain their discourse as ex-combatants supporting their collective and their reincorporation process, but at the same time, they have to respond to the requirements of the government, responding to the bureaucratic requirements of these entities such as taking photos, filling forms and writing reports.

That is the case of attendance lists, which have become a site of politics and an instrument of power (Krystalli, 2020). There is a perception that the more attendance lists the FARC-EP ex-members fill out, the better their reincorporation process is. In the end, FARC-EP

ex-members become data that is used to highlight at the national and international level how “well” the budget has been used, with the sole purpose of strengthening the bureaucratic apparatus.

On top of that, FARC-EP ex-members who are working for the government are using administrative and discourse mechanisms with which they previously disagreed, but which they now accept as a way of adapting and gaining benefits. José, one of the ex-combatants who worked for the ARN, argues:

When you work with them [government] you have to deliver many reports, you have to say many things to explain a simple activity. I mean, we have to say everything with nice words [...] that is very boring. We have to expand all the reports using their technical language. I do not know why I am still working with them, but maybe because I am earning a salary and we do not know if the contract will continue after December. I want to remain in this job because my partner and I have a dream of buying a house. (José, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

José shows how the discourses of the government and international actors are separate from the ways of thinking and acting of FARC-EP ex-members. Although the activities implemented for them in their everyday life become a natural form of socialisation or work, for the government and international actors these activities transcend different concepts, theories and indicators. In the end, these perspectives are situated in romantic and structured discourses that only respond to institutional requirements.

Similarly, the discourse of governmental and international actors influence the local discourses of FARC-EP ex-members and the surrounding communities, turned into a form of indoctrination and manipulation. It is striking how local leaders now use words such as “local ownerships”, “participatory approach”, “development”, “social cohesion” or “social coexistence” when discussing with other actors. In order to legitimise their social worlds and subworlds, the local actors have to use hegemonic mechanisms and discourses to reinforce their actions and validate their discourses, while claiming their distinctiveness (Strauss, 1982).

This shows how the discourses of external actors aim to configure the social worlds of the locals by adding sophisticated words that are shaped with their institutional or academic discourses, but not with the discourses of the locals. In a meeting that I attended in San José

de Leon about gender, I could see how the external actors shaped the discourses of the locals by adapting their comments with terms such as “masculinity”, “patriarchy” and “gender roles”, leaving aside the daily practices of the FARC-EP ex-members and their own conceptions around gender. External actors give more preference to those who were more familiar with these terms and relegate others to the level of mere observers, largely imposing a hegemonic dynamic that attempts to control the future of the locals (Jamal, 2016).

In sum, the acquisition of new roles and responsibilities in the life of ex-combatants benefits their interaction with new social worlds and provides knowledge and benefits for their collective by showing at different levels a varying degree of openness and closure with other subworlds (Soeffner & Zifonun, 2008). However, when the intersection with other social worlds is not based on an equal or similar power dynamics, the worlds in power tend to manipulate the opinions of the subordinates by influence in their interests, needs and projects. The following section explains in general terms the role of different external agents in shaping the ex-combatants’ social worlds.

8.3.2. Role of External Agents in the Configuration of Ex-Combatants’ Social Worlds

“*El Festival del Chaleco*” (the Waistcoat Festival) or “*El desfile del Chaleco*” (the Waistcoat Parade) are terms frequently used by the local communities in Colombia to define the number of international agencies that appear simultaneously in a specific territory, with the waistcoat representing different national and international entities.

FARC-EP ex-members often interact with members of this *Festival del Chaleco* as they are constantly in their territories providing assistance and supplies to their reincorporation process. The sophisticated cars, the beautiful outfits, their modern media technology and the elaborated discourses around this *Festival del Chaleco* place the members of these groups in a world that little relates to the social dynamics of the NARs and AETCRs, but whose interventions do affect the daily practices of reincorporation.

In the following, I analyse how international organisations and members of the government interfere in the daily lives of FARC-EP ex-members and how power, intentions and hybrid discourses between them and external actors influence the configuration of their social worlds. In this context, I want to show how external actors alter, modify, generate divisions and resistance, and produce new knowledge in the collective of *farianos/as*.

There are different hierarchical levels inside this *Festival del Chaleco*. The budget, media reputation and social recognition these entities have in the region and in the country contribute to the level of acceptance that the population has towards them. The more trust and articulated relationships external actors have with the *fariana* collective, the easier it is for them to influence the ex-combatants' life. Such is the example of the higher level of acceptance that international agencies have over governmental entities.

Lisbeth, one of the ARN officials in Caquetá, argues that at the beginning it was easier to go to the AETCRs in the company of members of the United Nations as it facilitated their approach to the FARC-EP ex-members. She claims that although ex-combatants more easily accept international actors and donors, they constantly reject government personnel. According to Sebastian, one of the ARN staff members, most of the FARC-EP ex-members dismiss government benefits by arguing that these benefits all come from international donors. Sebastian claims that FARC-EP ex-members misunderstand the role of government actors and their functions:

Here, the government's role in the peace process was overlooked and is still not fully recognised. I am not the only representative of the government. The government embedded many entities here. We, as representatives of the ARN, apply and monitor the reincorporation policy. That policy was designed between the government and FARC-EP. If this policy is not progressing, it is because the ex-combatants are also not doing things well there [at the national level]. (Sebastian, member of the ARN, December 2018)

In these dynamics, DDR ends up being a bureaucracy of individuals who are "acting as power brokers between the programme and the beneficiaries, and many others with power, agency and interests in the larger DDR economy" (Munive & Jakobsen, 2012, p.371).

The power of the United Nations over the government to pressure compliance with the peace process leads to the UN to be seen as the protector of ex-combatants' reincorporation process. Tiberio, one of the FARC-EP ex-members in charge of fish farming in San José de León, highlights the great contributions of international agencies in the development of the economic projects:

If it were not for these international organisations and the guarantor countries of the peace process, this process would be a disaster. If it were not for the demands that these organisations made against the government, these projects would not have existed. (Tiberio, member of NAR San José de León, November 2019)

Tiberio's view is often repeated in the everyday comments of FARC-EP ex-members. They tend to approve more of the discourses coming from international organisations, as they perceive their support closer to their collective interests. However, the tensions between governmental actors and international organisations undermine the achievement of peace by hindering efforts to rebuild trust between the state and the citizens.

Carol, a staff member of the ARN in Caquetá, argues that while outsiders (international agencies and INGOs) seek to gain space and recognition in the territories, they are weakening the attempts of the state to reconfigure the transition to peace. This dynamic enforces the idea that DDR represents the "interaction between a 'state' in conditions of 'fragility' and ambitious international actors" (Munive & Jakobsen, 2012, p.377).

The need for FARC-EP ex-members to "discover and claim their value" (Strauss, 1984, p. 173) leads them to reproduce traditional forms of powers and hegemonies by accepting external and economic resources. The utility rewards and power of the resources that each world possesses influences the level of power that individuals have over others. This power allows external actors to define good and bad ex-combatants, empowering some and disempowering others. These patterns of power are reinforced by external actors (Obradovic-Wochnik, 2018), who by appointing some ex-combatants as representatives of the collective and giving them some privileges, are entrenching inequalities among them. In the end, this dynamic creates an unequal environment between the ones emancipated and the ones with less power, weakening the agency of others, increasing inequalities or creating new ones (Englund, 2006). Those who align with the external positions end up being the most visible in the public arena. These power dynamics attempt to shape ways of reincorporation that seek to homogenise the lives of ex-combatants.

The pressure ex-combatants receive from outsiders to become "anyone else" leads them to follow traditional patterns that make them feel more accepted and adapted in some environments, creating different kinds of domestication strategies. Richmond & Mitchell (2012) mention that outsiders prefer to deal with predictable, homogenous and malleable

actors, as it facilitates their adaptation to the institutionalised world. This includes the tendency for external actors to homogenise practices and impacts of aid through labelling and maintaining the status quo of the society (Peterson, 2013; Richmond et al., 2015).

The power of the status quo is represented in the recognition of one's status over others in terms of discourses, demands and roles. In a meeting that I participated in with representatives from the military, the police and the government in Llano Grande, I observed how power intersected with their discourses. Representatives from these entities stood in front of the community and spoke to the audience in a kind of scolding, disapproving tone, flexing their power. They argued that FARC-EP ex-members and surrounding communities were not actively participating in the activities they had developed. They claimed that the community did not value the efforts the external actors were making to improve their village. Suddenly, one of the participants stood up and said, "We are not going to eat in the future with the soccer matches that you organise, we need solutions to achieve our economic stability for the future" (Gobinda, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, November 2018).

This example shows how outsiders expect recognition for their job, making the others see that without them they could not fulfill their goals. As Autesserre (2017, p.125) argues, "This knowledge hierarchy legitimates and justifies the interveners' claim that they have the capacity and expertise necessary to help resolve the host populations' problems".

Camilo, the president of the communal board of Agua Bonita, believes that the image of outsiders as the saviours of the local problems is only in discourses. He explains that external interventions only leave a sense of uncertainty in the local communities as it only focuses on promises:

A member of the government or any international organisation comes to give a talk; he wears us out for about two hours. We talk a lot and we drink coffee. This person brings many projects. He says, 'I bring housing, electrification, and so on' but he only comes to collect information, fill surveys and make reports. Then, we are full of expectations, and suddenly he disappears. When am I going to see him again? (Camilo, member of the Agua Bonita community, October 2018)

Camilo's comments demonstrate how external powers seek to shape the time, interests and projects of FARC-EP ex-members and surrounding communities, valuing only

external needs and providing an apparent idea that the greater participation of them in workshops, meetings and trainings represents greater commitment to the peace agreement. On top of that, the external actors want to show that without their help, the contribution of FARC-EP ex-members to peace would not be the same, overlooking the different actions that the locals have developed in peacebuilding.

The power of other worlds in the configuration of the ex-combatants' lives determines the "making" and "unmaking" of them, delegitimising their own power in deciding their own reintegration process (Munive & Jakobsen, 2012). In this scenario, the role of external actors becomes an unequal relationship between those who contribute and those who receive, leaving aside the multiple dynamics of intersection that both social worlds can play in the configuration of realities.

FARC-EP ex-members and their neighbouring communities argue that they do not want more short-term training or social events; rather they want economic long-term projects in which they can achieve a self-sustainability in their territories. In a discussion that I had with Carla while we were waiting for the beginning of a workshop, she argued that all of these activities are taking her time away from the daily obligations and she is not seeing anything in return:

I came here just for curiosity. I checked on the internet yesterday what PMA was and I saw that it was something about food production. That is nonsense when we do not have lands to cultivate. We are tired of all of these activities. Everybody comes here to offer things and give us training. I have too many certifications but no work. Now they take my time away, which I could instead dedicate to my animals. (Carla, member of the AETCR Llano Grande, December 2019)

Carla is involved in chicken production project and has a small vegetable crop. After the peace process, she decided to start a family, and now she lives with her partner and her three-year old child. She puts aside her responsibilities with her family and economic initiatives to attend all the workshops that are part of her reincorporation process. When I ask her why she goes to these meetings, she mentions that it is a commitment that she has as part of the peace process, and feels obliged to partake in them.

The massive number of uncoordinated interventions and the time invested by FARC-EP ex-members to attend to these activities can turn them into slaves to external demands,

restricting their time and affecting their priorities. In other words, external interventions are restricting the possibility for FARC-EP ex-members to make their local agency visible, leaving aside the competencies they acquired during the conflict. Wilmer, one of the ex-combatants who demobilised prior to the peace agreement during Álvaro Uribe's counterinsurgency policy, argues:

How did we survive when we expected nothing from the state? How did we survive during the times of *El Monte*? They are crashing that capacity of our people to gain their own knowledge to survive. Now, they are worried about not receiving the basic allowance. (Wilmer, member of the NAR San José de León, December 2019)

I can say that the government benefits have become a substitute for the “protected father” that was equal to the armed structure the ex-combatants were used to in their past life, showing it as something that provides the goods and regulates the relationships within their household groups (Hoyos, 2011, p.82). However, the *farianos/as* collective seeks to detach from the structure of the government as the “protected father” by acting against the predefined ideas of reintegration and trying to keep the priorities of their social worlds above the interests of outsiders. In some cases, they have refused some interventions from outside, as they do not align with their collective purposes¹⁹⁸. This pressure has led the government, the INGOs and the United Nations to contribute within the framework of the *farianos/as* collective, creating a kind of hybridity in the development of their projects and more active participation of FARC-EP ex-members in decision-making throughout the implementation of projects.

However, the economic resources given by outsiders limits the hybridity in the development of projects. NGOs, international actors and the government can take advantage of having the control of the economic resources and use them as a way of imposing their own temporality. These external actors want to see quick results and provide evidence of their successful interventions with numbers, producing a superficial intervention that does not meet with the interests of the locals and the socio-economic transformation in the territories. For instance, they define when to start the projects and for how long, shaping the temporality

¹⁹⁸ Such was the case of the implementation of a census, the development of some economic projects and participation in some campaigns and meetings.

dynamics of those who wait (in this case the FARC-EP ex-members), slowing down local dynamics and expectations¹⁹⁹.

Delaying the delivery of some benefits may trigger a way of temporal domination as waiting can be an aspect of immobility (Mueller-Hirth, 2017, p.202). Currently, FARC-EP ex-members are just waiting for the benefits to come, losing hope of moving forward, as they do not have the resources they expected from the government to keep their income initiatives going. These dynamics show an “evil of dependency” manipulated by a series of benefits and coercion.

On the other hand, the acceleration of societies can mean other important aspects that influence the different stages that FARC-EP ex-members and surrounding communities pass through in their transit from conflict to peace. For instance, there can be a time in the life of ex-combatants in which they do not feel part of the structure of the guerrillas, nor part of the society. They create their own world based on their rules and the hybridity of both social worlds. This transition can be described as a liminal condition (Lahad, 2012).

In sum, the intersection of social worlds between external actors and ex-combatants can enrich the achievement of peace by expanding the freedom to act, think and behave on equal terms. This dynamic requires a procedural order that involves negotiation, persuasion, discursivity and agreement between different worlds (Clarke, 2007). This process needs to ensure that people recognise each other in a truly pragmatic way by being aware of their status, power and wealth in the conduct of everyday life and acknowledge that everything is subject to negotiation (Horowitz, 1991, p.xi). In doing so, people then accept the importance of interaction with other groups as a way of achieving each group's own purpose. Below, I explain how interaction with other groups has benefited the collective reincorporation of FARC-EP ex-members.

8.3.3. Positive Effects of Approaching and Intersecting the (Sub-)Worlds in the Life of Ex-Combatants

In the last four years, the process of reincorporation has shown how the worlds of FARC-EP ex-members span the Colombian territory and articulate with different local, national and international spheres. There are now subworlds of *farianos/as* working in political spheres, in gender issues, in social actions and in economic entrepreneurship. Others

¹⁹⁹ This process was called by Obinna Nweke “Politics of waithood” in the Conference (Re)thinking Time and Temporalities in Peace and Conflict. Zentrumstage 2020. October 29-31. Philipps Universität Marburg.

have roles in the government and international organisations as representatives of the ex-FARC-EP. In the transition to reincorporation, FARC-EP ex-members are creating their own identity while interacting with others worlds, showing their distinctiveness as a unique social world with particular characteristics and interests.

The intersection with outside subworlds has helped them to identify other ways of cohesion and belonging, which has facilitated the building of new social networks, as well as a new structure that has resisted from power brokers. In their economic collective reincorporation, the collective of *farianos/as* has established some agreements with international donors to benefit their economic development, such is the case of the pineapple crops in Agua Bonita and fish production in San José de León.

Despite receiving some economic benefits and technical advice to develop their projects, the FARC-EP ex-members have maintained control of production and sales under a collective perspective. The profits obtained go directly to the collective's budget and a small part goes to FARC-EP ex-members who work in the cultivation and harvesting of the pineapple crops and fish. The *farianos/as* collective offers its products directly to the traders, and when there is not enough demand, they go by truck to the municipalities nearby and sell the pineapples on the streets or sell the fish in nearby communities. This case shows how other subworlds contribute to the *fariana* collective but without restricting its ideological basis.

According to José, his collective is now stronger thanks to the alliances they have created so far with different international and governmental entities:

[The collective of ex-combatants] is made possible by the conscious collective work, not only of FARC ex-combatants but also of other members of Colombian society who have joined this initiative. This allows us to be a reference point together with other territorial spaces. We can see the true creative capacity that people can have when they work collectively and in harmony in the construction of common ideals. (José, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

The acknowledgement of the agency of FARC-EP ex-members in their interaction with other (sub-)worlds allows for their legitimisation without running the risk of disempowering

themselves. In this process, FARC-EP ex-members are gaining spaces for advocacy, visibility and recognition of their identity while acting collectively.

FARC-EP ex-members now articulate their efforts with other networks that support their ideas and collective initiatives, making them stronger and more visible in society. To illustrate with an example, in November 2020, FARC-EP ex-members mobilised in various territories of Colombia with the support of social and civil society organisations, demanding more social, economic and security guarantees for “peace signatories”²⁰⁰. They asked for the protection of their lives by highlighting the high number of FARC-EP ex-members who had been assassinated to date²⁰¹.

So far, FARC-EP ex-members have established networks with some independent journalists, NGOs, universities and some agencies of United Nations. They agree that they share their life memories if these organisms replicate and/or support their efforts in the development of collective initiatives or if they commit themselves to contributing to the peace agreement. For example, some independent journalists, individuals and universities have developed projects together with FARC-EP ex-members in terms of reconstruction of memory and truth, festivals, conferences and collective economic projects with the aim to strengthen their ideological legacy.

Approaching or intersecting with other (sub-)worlds is not limited to the FARC-EP ex-members’ interests in expanding their network, gaining visibility or accessing resources and knowledge, but also to the diversity of alternatives that the universe of social worlds offer to them to adapt and create their uniqueness in this world. This process contributes to ex-combatants’ assimilation and differentiation and lays the foundations in the building of their personal identity and the sense of belonging to a certain group.

This process of encounters and mis-encounters with other social worlds is also represented in the local-local dynamics. In the following section, I explain in depth the configuration of social worlds between ex-combatants and surrounding communities.

8.3.4. A Social World between Ex-Combatants and Surrounding Communities

The local-local dynamics in reincorporation have shown a diversity of resistances and encounters that reconfigure social worlds and the formation of a natural setting that

²⁰⁰ The media define ex-combatants as “peace signatories”.

²⁰¹ By that time, 249 FARC-EP ex-members had been assassinated (from <http://www.indepaz.org.co/lideres/>).

generates a process of reconciliation. Everyday local encounters, common needs between the local-local and collective projects have formed new social networks that ease a process of reconciliation and an “authentic reconciliation” process (Brewer et al., 2018). For Camilo, a member of the community of Agua Bonita, interacting with FARC-EP ex-members is not new:

For us, living with them is not a problem; they spent practically all their time living with us in the midst of the conflict. Now that they are at peace, we can live with them better. Now, we share the same territory and similar needs. For *los campesinos* this is no big deal. For those who live in the cities it is a bigger issue. (Camilo, member of Agua Bonita community, October 2018)

Although rural communities had a direct relationship with the FARC-EP in the past, their relationships were built in different circumstances, based on mistrust and submission. In the transition to (post-)conflict, these groups build more homogenous relationships, far removed from the feelings of fear, resistance or subordination engendered during conflict times. The social worlds of both groups now interact under homogenous relationships that respond to the pursuit and achievement of common goals. They act together on the basis of a minimum working consensus (Clarke, 1991) by implementing activities through communication (Strauss, 1978). They share similar routines, work as *campesinos*, struggle under similar socio-economic conditions and share territories abandoned by the state. In the following, I explain the different configurations, intersections and segmentations of the worlds of FARC-EP ex-members and surrounding communities and argue that viewing peace in terms of a “stable” society is a utopian consideration when talking about social worlds (Strauss, 1982, p.173).

The natives of the villages where FARC-EP ex-members are settled have a commitment to the Colombian government to contribute to peacebuilding by integrating former combatants into their daily social, economic and political dynamics²⁰². Camilo, a members of one of these villages, argues that this commitment has not been easy to fulfil, since they have to attend to different meetings, taking them away from their own responsibilities:

²⁰² However, at first some members of these villages did not agree to accept the FARC-EP ex-members.

Within the community boards, we decided that we had to support the peace process. Therefore, we all signed that we supported the integration of the FARC-EP in our communities, but we did not know that we had to engage in so many things. Supporting the FARC-EP is not a bad thing. Instead of seeing them armed and planting landmines, it is better to see them participating in productive projects, right? (Camilo, member of Agua Bonita community, October 2018)

Nevertheless, Camilo argues that both groups (FARC-EP ex-members and surrounding communities) are not completely integrated. FARC-EP ex-members are treated differently and their ways of living are not in line with the socio-economic dynamics of their surrounding communities. For example, in the AETCR Agua Bonita, the collective of ex-combatants obtained legal documentation to form a new JAC called “Agua Bonita II”, which does not integrate the surrounding communities. Jose argues:

We cannot fit with another ‘junta’ [JAC] because we have another organisational system and differential treatment. We cannot impose anything on anyone; they cannot impose anything on us. We are a collective that wants to show that we have a transparent process; however, they (the government) do not want to show that. (José, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019)

José argues that their label as *farianos/as* collective becomes a barrier to seeing the community of Agua Bonita as an integrated village. While FARC-EP ex-members live on collective land with different housing structures and regulations, the surrounding communities have other forms of organisation, they have their own land and family economic initiatives.

In conversation with some members of the JAC of Agua Bonita I (the natives of the village), they argue that the benefits that FARC-EP ex-members receive are far better than the benefits they have received to date, which puts them at a disadvantage²⁰³. This creates a kind

²⁰³ There are a large number of studies that show how the economic resources received by ex-combatants in their reintegration process affect perceptions of justice and prejudice between victims or the economically disadvantaged and ex-combatants (See for example Kaplan & Nussio, 2015; McFee, 2016; Prieto, 2012; Rodríguez López et al., 2015).

of jealousy towards them and a feeling of injustice for those who live in poverty and have been victimised by the conflict.

However, some economic projects involve the surrounding communities, thus benefiting the levels of cohesion with the FARC-EP ex-members. For example, Jorge, FARC-EP ex-member in charge of the sugarcane economic project, argues the importance of building collective dynamics outside the *fariana* collective:

We are working on a sugarcane project and we want to create a collective of five villages, so that in the future they can also get benefits from this initiative. To do this, we are going to create an administrative board to manage the resources obtained and to benefit all of us in a parallel way. We also call this collectivity. (Jorge, member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019)

Over time, different roles and relationships have been built between the FARC-EP ex-members and the natives of the communities. For instance, Yerson, a native of the village Llano Grande, works for the ex-combatants' collective as a janitor and spends most of his time in this AETCR; at the same time, he is part of the JAC of the village of Llano Grande and has a representative role. Yerson rides his motorbike up and down the mountain all the time, encouraging the creation of relationships between villagers and FARC-EP ex-members. He asserts that the presence of the ex-combatants has brought benefits for the villages:

Peace has been a beautiful thing for the people, not only for the community here, but also for the surrounding communities and the municipality. We have made great progress. Now, we have the presence of many entities of the municipality [...]. With the presence of these people [FARC-EP ex-members], we have benefited from little things for the community such as the playground, the improvement of the communal house, the rubbish truck, the improvement of the school, and many other things. Everything has to do with this peace process. (Yerson, member of Llano Grande community, November 2018)

The case of Yerson is similar to the case of Urbano, who has relatives living in the village of Llano Grande. He spends more time in the village than in the space designated to

the FARC-EP ex-members. Another example is the relationship that Sabina, a member of the village of Agua Bonita, has with an ex-combatant from the AETCR, or the case of Laura, the daughter of a FARC-EP ex-member, who is now in a relationship with a soldier who is part of the security structure of the AETCR. All of these cases represent an intersection of subworlds between surrounding communities and FARC-EP ex-members.

However, the members of such worlds either move closer to the current dynamics that involve FARC-EP ex-members or move away to form part of other groups. For instance, there are members of these villages who disagree with living close to FARC-EP ex-combatants. In a conversation that I had with a member of the Llano Grande community, he told me that he strongly disagreed with having ex-combatants in his village and the way in which communities interact with them. He argues that he cannot speak out about it, as he would then be socially penalised. This example demonstrates that the arrival of FARC-EP ex-members also fragmented the local dynamics, dividing communities and the social world of which they were part (Strauss, 1982).

On the contrary, there are people who previously were no part of any of these social worlds (the world of FARC-EP ex-members and the world of surrounding communities) and now have a high level of commitment to one of them. Such is the case of some students who had some affiliation with the political ideology of the FARC-EP and now live in the AETCR, or relatives of FARC-EP ex-members who now live in these territories and have leadership roles. Despite belonging to another social world, they intertwine their subworld of academy and social activism with the current life of FARC-EP ex-members by influencing the reconfiguration of discourses and priorities.

The articulation of such (sub-)worlds becomes stronger when they deal with outside worlds that influence to a varying extent the conditions of their territory. For example, in the latest regional elections, Efrain, the leader of the NAR of San José de León, together with Monica, a victim of the conflict and the president of the JAC of this village, had a meeting with the political candidates for the municipality to demand benefits for their village. A common goal among locals-locals strengthens community ties and benefits the reconciliation and peacebuilding process.

Greater social proximity between victims and ex-combatants can facilitate mutual trust and appreciation of each other's perspective. Putting oneself in the place of the other

benefits reconciliation processes and contributes to the historical reconstruction around the armed conflict (Nussio et al., 2015, p. 18).

Understanding the context in which local-local relations take place helps to understand the physical, spatial and temporal barriers that are affecting the post-conflict transition and the achievement of territorial peace. In the following, I will explore this discussion in greater depth.

8.4. The Local World in the Creation of Territorial Peace

The two pillars that describe the foundations of social worlds are “meaning” and “agency”²⁰⁴, without them the configuration of social worlds cannot be possible. The richness of a “social world” comes from the intersection of these two categories, which in the everyday experiences of people are shaped and reshaped through subjectivity and human practice (Gupta, 2019, p. ix). In the following section, I want to analyse the interweaving of FARC-EP ex-members’ social worlds on territorial peace by considering their agency and the articulation of peace practices as a core aspect in conflict transformation.

Territorial peace is a crosscutting approach included in the 2016 peace agreement in Colombia. This approach has become an essential pillar and a mantra of the six points of the peace agreement. The strategies to address these dimensions are based on participatory and decentralised approaches that seek to involve the voices of communities in the implementation of the peace agendas (Presidencia de la República, 2016).

For Sergio Jaramillo²⁰⁵, territorial peace is possible by increasing the presence of the governmental structures in the territories. He argues that, “We have to fill the space, the territory must be institutionalized”. For him, having public and social infrastructures in the territories means protecting people’s rights in the first place. The stronger the institutions, the better the process of coexistence and cooperation in the territories will be achieved (Jaramillo, 2016).

However, in addition to redesigning government structures and bringing the bureaucratic apparatus to the territories, territorial peace requires participation and

²⁰⁴ Gupta identifies “agency” and “meaning” as the core aspects of the different dimensions of social science. Although the concept of meaning relates to a methodological commitment, agency relates to an ethical commitment. Both, along with the social world (epistemic perspective), represent the foundations of social science, and all three constitute a teleological perspective that defines the study of human practice under a subjective perspective (Gupta, 2019).

²⁰⁵ He was one of the government’s delegates for the peace process with the FARC-EP in Havana.

citizenship built through the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition in the territories (Arévalo, et al., 2019). It means setting the foundations for re-thinking the state and re-imagining the nation (Arévalo, et al., 2019, p.465).

To achieve territorial peace, it is necessary to identify the social and symbolic relationships that emerged in times of conflict between the insurgency, the state and the communities, and to define the meaning of territorial peace for this diverse range of actors (Cairo, et al., 2018). According to Carrillo González (2017), by recognising these relationships and differences in meanings it is easier to transform the “armed everydayness” that is built in times of conflict. This embodies not only the well known dichotomy confrontation, but also the myriad of actors that interact at different levels in the maintenance of the conflict.

Territoriality in reincorporation is about giving voice to the locals by acknowledging their meanings of peace and their everyday peace practices. This requires the creation of projects together with communities, without detaching from the collective memories that emerged in conflict times. Besides giving voice to the locals in the design and implementation of the projects established in the territories (Arévalo, 2014), the government should support the projects that the locals are already implementing in the communities through the use of their own agency and capabilities. It is worth nothing when a peace process links with territorial peace but does not consider the agency of people who live in such territories. Santrich²⁰⁶ argues that the concept of territorial peace “responds to the idea of sustainable peace in the sense that it is about building peace from the regions” (Interview with Jesús Santrich in 2017 in Cairo, et al., 2018, p.466).

Furthermore, Christian argues that territorial peace is accomplished by creating alternatives away from the dependence on external actors or control of their interventions. He shows how the AETCR Agua Bonita is a model of change, as it promotes new self-sustainable productive alternatives based on collective work and development:

We have a small productive project that we call the ‘integral farm’. This project considers all the human and material dimensions. We want to share it with the Colombian society as a small replica of what could be a new productive model of

²⁰⁶ FARC-EP ex-member who occupied one of the seats in the Senate. In 2018, he returned to arms after some non-proven accusations of drug trafficking and threats. He is part of the armed group *La Nueva Marquetalia* (The New Marquetalia) and who apparently was assassinated in Venezuela in June 2021 (Semana, 2021a).

development for other regions of the country. (Christian, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018)

The above example shows not only new ways of self-sustainability but also alternatives for creating pedagogical strategies in rural areas, involving not only FARC-EP ex-members but also the communities surrounding the AETCRs and NARs. At present, the natives of communities and FARC-EP ex-members are trying to establish networks and collaboration strategies with national and international actors, through the creation of equal conditions between them, without representing any kind of power, control or annulment of local agency, but rather a redistribution of power in the society.

Agency is a process of freedom, in which people are “free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important” (Sen, 1985, p.203). When people develop collective actions, the exercise of freedom is represented by people’s desire to change and transform their surroundings and their ability to freely choose the “level of ‘enrolment’ in the projects of others and to exert influence to enrol others in one’s own project” (Cleaver, 2007, p.226). That is the case of the sugarcane project that the *farianos* collective in Agua Bonita are currently developing, in which they want to integrate people from the nearby villages, or the case of San José de León, in which they are integrating the natives of the region in the development of the community fish tanks project.

The value of community agency in transforming surroundings leads to understanding that the protagonists in achieving territorial peace are the people who live in the territories. However, the government’s definition of territorial peace overlooks the different mechanisms that the locals developed to deal with the conflict since its onset (Carrillo González, 2017).

The active role of FARC-EP ex-members in territorial peacebuilding shows that they are not “passive ex-guerrillas” who are limited to occupying a piece of land. They are human beings who have built territories from conflict times for other purposes and roles. They have compromised to build these territories jointly with the surrounding communities under an equilibrium of power.

Under this framework, the new role of FARC-EP ex-members in the territories leads to an institutional and social readjustment in society (Carrillo González, 2017), which not only requires institutional presence but also the freedom of locals to build their own territories. The collective efforts made by the *farianos/as* as a means to ensure the economic, security

and social stability in their territories becomes an effort of “social accountability”²⁰⁷ and the core aspect of conflict transformation (Arévalo et al., 2019).

Andres argues that the AETCRs are a way of resistance towards the system: “This community is an example for the country, there is no community in Colombia that has similar collective projects and an agriculture model that seeks self-sustainability without being driven by the system” (Andres, member of the AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2018).

Collective actions, hybrid peace and attempts to achieve peace in the midst of conflict have led FARC-EP ex-members and surrounding communities to create new strategies of resistance to hegemonic liberal discourses. As Randazzo & Torrent (2020) argue, agency in peacebuilding disentangles dogmatic perspectives and manipulates state discourses on liberal approaches to peace, opening up an epistemological uncertainty that produces new ways of understanding peace.

As such, places in which territorial peace occurs are not just physical locations but rather social constructs, bearers of political identities and ideologies that are “constituted through interaction” (Gaffikin and Morrissey 2011; Lefebvre, 1974). The local resistance becomes a dialectic influenced by the ideology and politics of FARC-EP ex-members, where their legacy interacts with their present as social leaders. In shaping this new role in society, ex-combatants intersect with other actors, create new worlds and find ways to best adapt to society while they relate to family, social, economic and cultural life.

In this sense, the more intersections that FARC-EP ex-members and surrounding communities build with other actors in a balance of power, the easier it will be to achieve territorial peace. In sum, territorial peace is not only the decentralisation of the governmental structure, but also the freedom of local actors to promote actions that contribute to their own meaning of peace.

²⁰⁷ Social accountability includes “procedures for petitions to adopt, amend, or repeal an act, law, or executive order, to demand public hearings on policy decisions and action and to appeal to ombudsman offices in local governments”. This aims at “making local government financial information accessible to the public (including budgets and end of year financial statements); allowing public involvement in the budgetary process through participatory budgeting practices; and initiating independent budget analysis and participatory public-expenditure tracking programmes that monitor Budget execution and leakage of funds” (Mahieu & Yilmaz, 2010, p.269,283).

8.5. Conclusions

In this chapter, I aimed to analyse the reincorporation process from a social world perspective. In doing so, I explored the different kinds of relationships that FARC-EP ex-members establish in times of reincorporation and the patterns of power, identity and agency embedded in the configuration of social worlds.

There is myriad of interconnections that FARC-EP ex-members have built during their reincorporation process that have contributed to a varying extent to their economic, social and political reincorporation. First, I explained the relationship between social worlds and the reincorporation process. I identified past and present characteristics that keep FARC-EP ex-members united in a single world. Second, I showed the many variations that the *farianos/as* collective have developed since the reincorporation process began and their interaction with other subworlds.

Throughout the text, I explored the different external and local powers that have moulded the initial meaning of collectivity in reincorporation. These powers are represented in terms of benefits, personal interests, new job opportunities, configuration of identities, security conditions, territorial dynamics and hegemonic temporalities. In carrying out an analysis under these bases, I identified that the more attachment FARC-EP ex-members have with other social worlds and subworlds away from the ones that enforce collective actions, the more they detach from the initial meanings of reincorporation. However, those who are clear about their legacy and want to continue in the collective, create intersections with external social worlds to benefit their collective in terms of knowledge, guarantees and new support networks. Such is the case of some leaders of the AETCRs and NARs and others who have taken up roles in various national bodies.

I identified that the configuration of social worlds and subworlds among FARC-EP ex-members depends on the experiences they have gained from former times. Although some are clear about their attachment to the *fariano/a* collective, others remain within it only for personal convenience and subscribe to subworlds that do not contribute to the goals of this collective.

Apart from that, I discussed the diversity of hegemonic structures that attempt to reconfigure the social worlds of the locals by controlling their initial goals and everyday routines, such is the case of the inadequate use of local knowledge and the manipulation of local actors through the provision of economic resources. I concluded by saying that the

disarticulated presence of government and international actors in the territories only weakens local peace capacities in the territories and ultimately creates dependency and uncertainty, unless they articulate with the local principles and collective projects.

Furthermore, I found that social benefits, security conditions, territorial attachment and collective/individual ways of living could become a barrier to achieving territorial peace. These forces influence the relationships, expectations, routines and powers embedded at the local level, which shape the spaces and temporality of locals and consequently the construction of peace. An alternative to overcome these barriers is to enrich the everyday relationship of local-locals by supporting their economic, social and political initiatives and building a space for peace in which local social worlds and subworlds may become the pioneers at defining and implementing actions for the benefit of territorial peace.

Aside from that, I also identified that the recognition of the social arena of FARC-EP ex-members makes them visible in the media and in political, social and economic spheres and facilitates their reincorporation process while they share their knowledge acquired in times of conflict. The social arena of FARC-EP ex-members has also contributed to a sense of belonging and cohesion with their surroundings, which increases when they and neighbouring communities share collective actions while exercising local agency.

In short, social worlds represent the best way to understand the relationships that FARC-EP ex-members have throughout their reincorporation process and highlight the importance of intersectionality and segmentations in the process of socialisation and territorial peace. Nevertheless, over time, the social worlds of ex-combatants run the risk of falling into the hands of hegemonic powers and discourses that tend to control the temporality and spatial dynamics in which they are located. These strategies of control weakening to a large extent the local agency and the collective principles that the FARC-EP initially had when the peace agreement was signed.

There are societies in the world that have learned to put others to work almost to the point of enslavement in order to give themselves a luxury hotel [...]. This is not the kind of society we expect to achieve. Here, we are betting on a type of society in which we all participate in the planning, execution and distribution of tasks. This is a concept of society that label ourselves as revolutionaries [...]. We want to continue this fighting in the midst of many adversities (Christian member of AETCR Agua Bonita, October 2019).

9. Conclusions: The Magic Bullet is in the People, not in the Politics

9.1. Recapitulating Research Findings

The title of this section “The magic bullet is in the people, not in the politics” refers to the fact that ex-combatants and local communities are the cornerstone of a successful reintegration. The value of the history and memories of FARC-EP ex-members, their role in different social and political spheres, their physical presence in some Colombian territories and their contributions to peacebuilding have attempted to provide new ways of understanding reintegration in DDR and peacebuilding away from hegemonic politics.

The purpose of this research was to analyse how FARC-EP ex-members understand and practice collective reincorporation in their everyday local practices. Beyond defining the best practices of reincorporation or providing an evaluation of the collective reincorporation of FARC-EP ex-members, my research interest was in understanding how they experience this transition without focusing on political interventions or dimensions, but rather on individual and community approaches. I wanted to see the transition to reincorporation as a fluid process that does not have a gap in between, showing an integration of past and present in (post-)conflict experiences. This fluidity then allowed me to delve into the reconfiguration of identity, roles and relationships of FARC-EP ex-members during their reincorporation process.

By considering theories such as identity, social worlds and legacy, I could approach discourses of DDR from another perspective, focusing mainly on the everyday encounters of *farianos/as* in their reincorporation process and the building of relationships in favour of their political, social and economic dynamics. Studying the transition of FARC-EP ex-members to society under a multisite ethnography approach provided me with the capacity to explore their life in a holistic way. This helped me to prioritise everyday practices as the core of my analysis and explore the life of ex-combatants from different angles.

The following conclusions are divided into three parts, with closing remarks at the end. First, I answer the main question of my research “How does the past in the present of FARC-EP ex-

members influence their everyday meanings and practices of collective reincorporation during their reintegration process?”

In the following conclusions, first I integrate the main findings exposed in the four empirical chapters of this research. Second, I focus on the external and internal difficulties that have weakened collective reincorporation in practice. Finally, based on the gaps of my research and new questions emerged during my fieldwork, I propose new possible avenues for future research on DDR, especially in reintegration processes.

The subsequent section “Living with uncertainty” explores my thoughts on the future of the AETCRs and the NARs in Colombia and the uncertainty regarding their permanence in the future. Additionally, I describe the different feelings, fears and hopes that I experienced throughout these four years of doing my doctoral thesis and mainly during my fieldwork, and the uncertainty that this peace process has generated for me as a Colombian, practitioner and as a researcher.

In the following section, I analyse the everyday of collective reincorporation grounded on three frameworks of analysis. The first refers to the diversity of realities, encounters and subjectivities in which FARC-EP ex-members transit to reincorporation in terms of time and spaces; the configuration of their identity; family and gender; and the role of external actors in reincorporation times. The second shows the importance of FARC-EP ex-members’ visibility in peacebuilding. Finally, I explore the active participation of FARC-EP ex-members as a way of contributing to social, economic and political alternatives outside the scope of reintegration policies.

9.1.1. Diversities and Encounters as the Cornerstone of Collective Reincorporation

Collectivity does not mean a unit with a homogeneous identity, but a diversity of identities that have points in common and consensus. I have demonstrated throughout my research that the diversity of meanings around collective reincorporation vary according to the conditions of FARC-EP ex-members before enrolment in the armed group, during their time as guerrillas and in their reincorporation process.

In Chapter 4, I explained how the past of FARC-EP ex-members configures the terms of collectivity, reincorporation and peace. However, these terms vary according to their former and current relationships with their (ex-)comrades, their memories from conflict times and their contributions to peacebuilding. In the following, I summarise the definition of

reincorporation in relation to three main aspects: the spaces and time in which reincorporation takes place and the configuration of FARC-EP ex-members' identity.

The transition to reincorporation puts the FARC-EP ex-members in a liminal space in which they feel neither part of the guerrilla structure nor society, representing a fusion of perspectives between their past and present. In this vein, labelling participants of reincorporation as "ex"(-combatants) breaks away their transition towards reincorporation and defines FARC-EP ex-members as people without a history. The non-recognition of their past may affect their configuration of identity, role, power, artefacts and emotional attachments in their transition to reincorporation.

In terms of time, I identified that FARC-EP ex-members create different forms of temporalities outside external influences. Although the *farianos/a* collective see their time in reincorporation by drawing on their past as a configuration of their present, the external interveners seek to control the *farianos/as* by configuring their time under the categories of synchrony and linearity. This means a process of reincorporation that looks ahead but not backwards. In Chapter 7 "Tandem realities", I explained how the past of guerrillas configures their present as ex-combatants, in terms of organisation, adaption of their legacy, configuration of their artefacts and sense of belonging to their ex-comrades.

In Chapters 6 and 8, I argued that collectivity is not attached to a specific place or territory in Colombia, but is visible throughout the Colombian territory through the implementation of actions, projects and initiatives in which more than one FARC-EP ex-member participates. I identified that the collective spaces formed by ex-combatants have laid the foundations for the creation of integrated political, social and economic initiatives. Contrary to DDR approaches that exclusively show the importance of building the future of ex-combatants by fragmenting their life in three dimensions (political, social and economic), collective reincorporation shows how these dimensions are articulated and strengthened by making use of FARC-EP ex-members' legacy.

One of the strongest relationships gained by the FARC-EP ex-members in their reincorporation process is the recovery or construction of their family and the permanence of their "*fariana* family". While their biological family relates to the ex-combatants' rights to have children and reinforces their interests and personal responsibilities, the "*fariana* family" seeks to maintain the social bonds and sense of collectivity among them. I suggest that the two do not necessarily go in different directions. While the family contributes to consolidating

a private world and the establishment of individual projects, the “*fariana* family” seeks to strengthen the sense of community and social networks.

The gender perspective has been described throughout this research in different examples. I showed how collectivity may contribute to the role of women in reincorporation not only as label them as the protagonists of family formation, motherhood or as the pioneers for the creation of gender committees, but also as active members of the political, economic and social collective leadership in the territories.

I sustain that female FARC-EP ex-members face tensions between the demands of a patriarchal society on how a woman should behave and their legacy from the armed group. Addressing the gender perspective in DDR requires interrelating the roles and limitations that women had in times of conflict and the prototypes and stereotypes that society expects from them in their reincorporation process. This helps to create alternatives to intervention that value their role as political and social subjects.

Apart from that, I identified the variety of actors and interventions that influence the collectivity of ex-combatants and intersect everyday life. In Chapter 8, I showed how intersections with others groups and segmentations among FARC-EP ex-members configure the meanings and attachment to the social world of the *fariana/a* collective and create an interactive dynamic that can either facilitate the reincorporation or undermine collective initiatives.

In terms of the role of external actors, I found that the presence of a myriad of international organisations and members of the government in the AETCRs and NARs drastically influences the reconfiguration of ex-combatants’ identity and their relationships with ex-comrades. The external influence alienates and manipulates ex-combatants’ time and priorities. The tendency for the government to see ex-combatants as passive individuals rather than collective active agents has affected the FARC-EP ex-members’ sense of attachment towards their collective, enforcing individual perspectives by showing that the acquisition of benefits is easier when one plays an individual role rather than a collective action.

Additionally, the vast interventions of international agencies, NGOs and the government in these territories delegitimises and weakens the natural agencies of these locals, affecting not just their community empowerment but also the achievement of territorial peace. The provision of individual benefits, the disarticulated interventions from

different entities and the short-term meaningless interventions tend to enforce a paternalist approach that negatively influences the reincorporation of FARC-EP ex-members by creating a bubble of security, and a social and economic protection that cannot last forever.

Apart from the multiple meanings, relationships, spaces and temporalities embedded in the collective reincorporation of FARC-EP ex-members, I identifies that all agree by saying that their history cannot be hidden or ignored in their process of reincorporation, as it defines the path that should be taken towards peacebuilding. Consequently, their visibility contributes to keeping alive their history as part of conflict transformation.

9.1.2 Visibility of Ex-Combatants in Peacebuilding

The high levels of stigmatisation and the alleged “evil” role of ex-combatants in the post-conflict transition have in most peace agreements relegated them from their active role in peacebuilding. The role of perpetrators turning them into invisible actors who return to cycles of marginalisation, poverty and conflict. Such was the case of previous reintegration processes in Colombia in which ex-combatants had to hide their past to be accepted by society, concealing a reality that was part of the history of Colombia.

The collective reincorporation of FARC-EP ex-members has shown that they are more than passive beneficiaries or recipients of interventions and are social leaders, family members, economic entrepreneurs and political actors who contribute to the local, regional and national spheres in the transition to peace. I demonstrated in my research how the FARC-EP ex-members from the beginning had an active role in peace negotiations in Havana and, even now, are still active agents in various entities and groups created as part of the peace agreement.

The visibility of FARC-EP ex-members who remain in the collective contributes to peacebuilding in different ways. Firstly, they are visible in the Colombian territory. People know that they are creating alternative ways of living in the AETCRs and NARs and they are labelled as a distinctive group that is implementing actions in the territories for the benefit of peacebuilding in Colombia. Secondly, their visibility allows them to be part of different academic, social and political events, contributing to the truth of the history of the Colombian conflict. Thirdly, being visible contributes to reinforcing their identity and their role in society by valuing their past as a way to transform their present.

Although remaining in the collective helps FARC-EP ex-members to better adapt to society and attain a support network, it can be on the other hand, affect the construction of the self and identity of each ex-combatant. Obedience, peer pressure and subordination gained in times of conflict could be reproduced in (post-)conflict times and affect the freedom of each individual to reconstruct his or her own identity.

By having the freedom to make their past visible as a distinction from other groups in society, FARC-EP ex-members can build their identity through differentiation and comparison, which has positive effects on their process of reintegration. During reincorporation, they face the challenge of rebuilding their identity from their new experiences, agency and relationships with their communities, which ultimately contributes to mutual recognition and social responsibility on the part of both groups.

This sense of belonging involves the creation of strong social relationships among FARC-EP ex-members, which leads them to develop a kind of interdependency and recognition based on a notion of mutual support. The label of *farianos/as* makes them proudly call each other *camaradas*, which denotes their adaptation of the legacy in reincorporation times.

I identified that the visibility of FARC-EP ex-members facilitates the approach to communities, minimising prejudices and promoting reconciliation through everyday interactions. By acting as members of a village, they struggle together with the natives of these communities for better social, economic and political conditions, creating a shared identification and natural socialisation in their everyday encounters. In this scenario, I determined that the parties in the local sphere (ex-combatants and surrounding communities) are not within a structure of dominance as they were before, but rather in an equal relationship.

Conversely, I discussed how the different social, economic, political and legal benefits acquired as part of the reincorporation process may affect the relationships between FARC-EP ex-members and their surrounding communities, creating an idea of privileged life for the ex-combatants that might affect the process of peace and reconciliation, and therefore influencing the perspectives around peace, justice and reparation.

Moreover, I found how the visibility of FARC-EP ex-members benefits collective resistance. By being in a collective, they resist the idea of being forgotten in Colombian history by acting against structures of power that seek to delegitimise them and disregard

their role in the public spheres of peacebuilding. In this context, they become active agents who defend the fulfilment of the peace agreements. Some of them are now spokespersons for victims, peasants and rural communities that were included as beneficiaries of the peace agreement.

Below I explain how the legacy of the FARC-EP has contributed to understanding other ways of reincorporation outside the traditional DDR mainstream.

9.1.3. Outside Mainstream DDR-Reintegration Approaches

From the beginning of the peace agreement, the FARC-EP showed their disagreement with the DDR framework and former reintegration programmes in Colombia, claiming that these politics were aligned with counter-insurgency strategies that followed hegemonic liberal discourses.

In Chapter 4, I mentioned the reasons why former FARC-EP members did not want to be part of the DDR framework. They argued that the peace agreement was not about defeating the guerrilla structure, but a mutual recognition to initiate the peace dialogues. They did not want to be a part of a demobilisation, as they voluntarily mobilised for peace and that they were not part of reintegration, but of reincorporation, as they have always had a role in society.

By creating alternative ways of understanding DDR, the FARC-EP has attempted to consolidate and expand democracy in Colombia by being active in all instances created as part of the peace agreement, which aims to improve the democratic coexistence in the territories between the different actors who were part of the conflict. During their reincorporation process, FARC-EP ex-members propose new ways of thinking about economic, political and social dynamics through participatory and inclusive exercises in the territories most affected by the conflict.

The meanings and practices around collective reincorporation show how agency and power become the ways to achieve alternatives outside mainstream reintegration by opening places for participation and local transformation. Under this framework, collective reincorporation is not about the alienation of FARC-EP ex-members from bureaucratic dynamics, their immersion into a capitalist socio-economic system or the normalisation of capitalist production relations. Rather, their active exercise of citizenship by acting freely under their ideological principles. If the ex-combatants de-mobilise — as DDR states — they

can also mobilise and re-mobilise when they do not gain what they expected in (post-)conflict. They are not transitioning to reincorporation under a process of adaptation, but also under a process of transformation. “Ex-combatants, ex-military, demobilized are words that lead you to immobilization, to get stuck, to say to people that the only future remaining for us is that of the war veterans, that you sit and wait for death (Words of Felipe, an ex-combatant in Söderström, 2020, p.3).

By acting within a collective, FARC-EP ex-members attempt to go against the economic, social and political strategies embedded in DDR perspectives, which have created an imaginary “good citizen” who fits perfectly into a capitalist system but who cannot survive in a “post-conflict society”. The concept of citizen in reintegration should consider the applicability of this term in territories greatly affected by the conflict and in societies in which the trust towards the state does not exist.

The active role of *farianos/as* in peacebuilding have created new meanings around the word “citizen”, expanding the logic of submission and obedience to forms of inclusion and social transformation. In some cases, the government and international organisations have had to adapt their interventions under the demands of the *farianos/as* collective. These dynamics have created other meanings and practices not only around reincorporation but also around the concept of citizenship and peacebuilding. Far from seeing the condition of citizenship as something primarily based on national security and protection, collective reincorporation tends to demonstrate that the active role of the actors in society shows a diversity of meanings around citizenship that not in all cases aligns perfectly with the mandate of the state.

In Chapter 6, I showed how under the social, political and economic dimensions of collective reincorporation, the FARC-EP ex-members have created other kinds of hybrids between individual and collective initiatives away from DDR approaches of “conducting ex-combatants conduct”. In terms of political reincorporation, I identified how the formation of *Los Comunes* political party has been affected by internal and external tensions. I concluded by saying that giving a few seats in the public political arena to FARC-EP ex-members is not enough to achieve a political reincorporation. Instead, I argue that the political inclusion of FARC-EP ex-members requires a reformulation of democratic spheres and the minimisation of polarisation in political dynamics. Additionally, I demonstrated that political reincorporation requires the participation of FARC-EP ex-members in their everyday encounters with local

communities, by their access to local political boards, local councils and regional political meetings.

In terms of collective economic reincorporation, I found that self-sustainability is not easy when FARC-EP ex-members develop agricultural projects without having land to cultivate, the adequate support from the national market or an infrastructure to develop their projects. By creating a cooperative perspective, the *farianos/as* are exposed to a fragile and unstable economic income that affects their long-term stability. One of the alternatives that the *farianos/as* are developing is to merge individual and collective projects in economic reincorporation. The freedom to generate individual economic projects fosters the establishment of personal and family goals and enables integration with other groups in society. This process benefits the local agency and community development, and therefore the achievement of territorial peace.

Furthermore, I emphasised how employment opportunities become a double-edged sword — although they contribute to the economic development and social inclusion of ex-combatants—, they are at the same time disengaging FARC-EP ex-members from their collective legacy as *farianos/as*. These job opportunities involve them in a reincorporation scheme that (un)intentionally expects adaptation to a system, alienation and positive response to a security structure system that aims to show a peace that can only be achieved by these means.

Regarding social reincorporation, I analysed the freedom of action and the respect of the identity, dignity and the right of FARC-EP ex-members and surrounding communities to achieve their own development. Social reincorporation does not happen by itself when economic and political reincorporation is achieved. It requires its own programmatic structure that links the needs and interests of ex-combatants with the surrounding communities. It does not consist of isolated interventions from external actors that only seek to “entertain”, “integrate” and sometimes force communities to be together. Rather, reintegration programmes should be articulated with other initiatives in the larger peacebuilding infrastructure. I found that social reincorporation is not possible without a proper educational and community approach and the support of the families of FARC-EP ex-members. These three aspects lay the foundations for the reconfiguration of social relations and the acceptance of ex-combatants in the life of their surrounding communities.

In conclusion, being outside the DDR mainstream standards has not been easy for the *farianos/as* collective. The efforts to implement collective actions as alternatives to achieve a political, economic and social reincorporation are still showing fractures and many challenges. To date, FARC-EP ex-members depend on the fulfilment of the peace agreement, the economic benefits of reincorporation and the security guarantees to develop and put in practice their collective initiatives. Unfortunately, living in a “conflict post-conflict” world limits the FARC-EP ex-members’ full development of their initiatives, as most of them have been restricted by external dynamics, such as polarisation, economic instability, land property issues, recidivism, armed non-state actor (ANSA) intervention and poverty conditions.

9.2. Internal and External Limitations of Collective Reincorporation

9.2.1. External Limitations

Various discourses agree that the creation of the “collective reincorporation” stated by the representatives of FARC-EP during the peace process was not the most hailed of proposals (Segura & Stein, 2019; Semana, 2017). They sustain that the FARC-EP devalued the more than 14 years’ experience the government had in implementing reintegration programmes.

Throughout this research, I showed how the government programme promoted by current President Iván Duque Márquez is seeking to transform the collective and territorial character of the reincorporation process established in the peace agreement into an individualistic logic, similar to the DDR programmes established in former times. This ignores the essence of collective reincorporation, which aims to strengthen cooperation, integration and local development, blurred and replaced by a policy that resembles the route and social policy offered to the vulnerable population.

The social contract signed between the government and the members of the FARC-EP was not an agreement signed between two parties; it involved the whole of society that to varying degrees was affected by the conflict. This process was not a simple “delivery of benefits”, but rather a strong transformation in the political, social and institutional spheres after the conflict.

So far, Duque’s current mandate attempts to achieve “peace” by maintaining state sovereignty using national military forces and increasing their presence in regions where the

conflict has escalated²⁰⁸, which runs contrary to the provisions of the peace agreement and the collective initiatives of the FARC-EP ex-members. It is not possible to transform ex-combatants' perspectives on war when everything is measured and evaluated under a hierarchy of power and "militarisation". As long as Colombia remains immersed in this cycle of war, in which the number of bodyguards measures the security of the country, and the police and military defend society by generating more conflict, it will never be possible to achieve peace with social justice and a territorial approach.

On the other hand, it is necessary to change the way in which the reintegration process is measured. Most of the visible indicators of reincorporation are based on the access of ex-combatants to any sporadic benefit, the registration to certain educational, productive or social training, the acquisition of legal documentation (such as ID, military passbook or amnesty documents) or just the fulfillment of the reincorporation route (*Ruta*) stated in the reintegration policies²⁰⁹. The idea of measuring reincorporation with quantitative indicators undermines the qualitative characteristics of human beings and the variety of forms to reincorporate into society.

Reincorporation cannot be quantified, it must rather be sensitised in the relations, collective actions and achievements ex-combatants are performing in their everyday life relationships with communities. As stated by Goertz, Diehl & Balas (2016, p.5): "Peace is conceptualised in terms of relationships not under individual events". I can say that peace is framed in a relational concept (Söderström et al., 2020) in which acting in collectivity becomes the only way to generate power from a bottom-up perspective.

Collective reincorporation shows that FARC-EP ex-members are only a few of the countless actors in conflict transformation. Reintegration programmes could contribute more to peacebuilding when they articulate better with the larger peace architecture and the massive efforts made in (post-)conflict environments in terms of transitional justice mechanisms, security reforms, the recovery of human rights and the minimisation of corruption and social segregation.

²⁰⁸ Such was the case in Norte de Santander Catatumbo In 2018, in which the government announced 5,000 more military forces in after a confrontation between military forces and dissident groups (Semana, 2018) or in 2019, where 2,500 military forces were sent to Cauca to take territorial control and dismantle dissidence (El Heraldo, 2019).

²⁰⁹ See as an example the *ARN in Cifras*

<http://www.reincorporacion.gov.co/es/reincorporacion/La%20Reincorporacion%20en%20cifras/Reincorporacio%CC%81n%20en%20cifras%20-%20corte%2030042020.pdf>

One of the most prominent aspects that affects the collective reincorporation of FARC-EP ex-members is the ongoing conflict between dissident groups, ELN and neo-paramilitaries, and their struggle for control of the lands left by the FARC-EP. Now, the illicit economy, illegal mining, infrastructure bombing and attacks against the population are producing an uncontrollable war that oscillates between the power of drug trafficking and the control of the territories (Acosta & Murphy, 2018; Verdad Abierta, 2018).

The presence of new armed groups has led to new ways recruitment and manipulation from illegal armed groups, affected the security stability of FARC-EP ex-members, their reincorporation process and their security conditions. So far, more than 250 FARC-EP ex-members have been assassinated, one AETCR has been relocated for security problems (Santa Lucia Ituango) and those who were in the NAR in Cauca and Meta have been forcefully displaced. Against this background, I can conclude by saying that FARC-EP ex-members have become another group of the population that are becoming victims of the conflict in Colombia, and who have little choice but to live under the shadow of vulnerability.

9.2.2. Internal Limitations

When I asked Rocío, a national leader of the FARC-EP, about the reasons why most former FARC-EP members have left the collective, she replied: “It is like when you try to put several unequal pieces in a sack, to close this sack, you have to shake this sack until the pieces fit in this space” (Rocío, leader of FARC-EP ex-members in Bogotá). She explained that the transition to reincorporation is not easy for most FARC-EP ex-members. They first need to face their new reality on their own and then decide if it is better being part of the collective or being on their own.

Throughout my research, I identified how the leaders — most of them ex-commanders — have become the key figures to maintain the collective approach alive. The more compromise that their leaders made in the peace process, and particularly with regard to the collective economic projects, the more sense of attachment the FARC-EP ex-members have towards their collective actions and more compromises towards peacebuilding. The absence of their ex-commanders in the territories represents a kind of betrayal for the time that FARC-EP ex-members served as guerrillas. However, this can have an implicit effect as it might show the maintenance of commanders’ control over former militants that could affect the full individual development of ex-combatants.

Until now, few ex-commanders remain as leaders in the territories and their role has not been easy to replace due to the specific characteristics of this guerrilla group. The commanders in the guerrillas remained for a long period of time; their position depended on a hierarchical structure²¹⁰ and their leadership strategy was not clear enough in establishing generational relays. This resulted in a strong hierarchical structure in which few people met the military and ideological requirements to hold a command role. In the process of reincorporation, this has translated into a lack of abilities in the ex-troops to lead economic, political or social processes and to gain a leadership position beyond the subordinated roles they used to have as troops.

Additionally, the fragmentation of the *Los Comunes* and the lack of trust towards the leaders of this political party have affected the *farianos/as* collective. So far, there are different ideological positions inside the universe of FARC-EP ex-members, who argue that they can have a successful reincorporation without being involved in the *fariano* discourse or the political party. The detachment from the political perspective of the guerrilla could make FARC-EP ex-members look like mere ex-combatants and not like veterans who can contribute with their political identity to the transition of conflict to post-conflict.

In sum, the sense of belonging of the collective is in constant dispute with the new interests and social realities with which the FARC-EP ex-members interact. This triggers internal disputes that are evident in the relationships among them and their responsibilities towards the collective. However, there is still the possibility of creating a hybrid that articulates the formation of new identities with the former collective actions that FARC-EP ex-members exercised in times of conflict.

9.3. Future Research in DDR Reintegration

Despite the large amount of research conducted on the field of DDR, and exclusively on reintegration by different disciplines, I consider there is still much left to understand about the life of those who transition from armed groups to reintegration programmes. In

²¹⁰ FARC-EP commanders acquire a hierarchy by assuming new command responsibilities. These hierarchies are distributed as follows: squad commander, guerrilla commander, company commander, column commander and front commander. The last stage of this hierarchy is to be part of *El Estado Central Mayor* (the Major Central State). However, not all followed all the hierarchical stages, some remained in the same position for a long time (FARC-EP, 2007).

particular, I believe that more research is needed on the everyday challenges of ex-combatants and their surrounding communities from a bottom-up approach²¹¹.

A number of concrete avenues for further inquiry arise from this study. Firstly, I would be interested to explore in more detail the relationship between identity and collectivity in reintegration processes. More specifically, I am curious to know how the self is integrated with collective actions from a social psychological approach. In this view, an intersectional perspective on reintegration could enrich this study. The analysis of the diversity of ex-combatants in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, age or disability could provide a diversity of approaches in reintegration that so far have not been much explored. Studying the interweaving of the gender perspective in reintegration and the influence of former gender military dynamics could contribute to understanding the various challenges women ex-combatants face in their transition to reintegration.

I suggest as a second avenue for future research comparative studies between countries that have implemented DDR and reintegration processes²¹² based on a local perspective. Specifically, more research is needed on the local everyday practices and the lessons learnt from ex-combatants' "learning by doing" experiences away from politics after war and policy evaluations.

Specifically, on collective reincorporation, I would be interested to see how this process evolves over time across the different territories in Colombia. In my research, I was not able to explore this in depth due to time constraints in the fieldwork and the low number of case studies. It would also be interesting to explore the differences that NARs and AETCRs have in implementing social, economic and political actions in the territories and the contributions of each of them in the peacebuilding infrastructure.

A third avenue for future research relates to the articulation and contribution of collective reincorporation to other organisations created in the framework of peacebuilding in Colombia, such as the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CEV), the Unit for the Search of Disappeared Persons (UBPD), among others. This can be articulated with studies of territorial peace and hybrid peace.

Finally, looking ahead to future peace agreements with guerrilla and paramilitary groups in Colombia, I consider it important to have an empirical evaluation of the benefits

²¹¹ A large number of contributions in this regard in McMullin (2013a), Sprenkels (2014), Wiegink (2020).

²¹² Great contributions have been made in the studies of Ayissi (2021), Colletta, et al., (1996), Söderström (2020) and Wiegink & Sprenkels (2020).

and challenges of individual and collective reintegration and the role of external actors in these processes. The results of these evaluations could provide policymakers with rich knowledge about how to design future DDR programmes in Colombia.

I know how I will sleep and how I will feed my children today, but tomorrow I am uncertain about how I will do that.
(Ezequiel, FARC-EP ex-members, member of the NAR San José de León, December 2018)

10. Final Remarks: Living with Uncertainty

10.1. What is the Future of the AETCRs and NARs?

Considering the different voices that I gathered throughout my fieldwork and the “conflict post-conflict” situation in Colombia, I have called this section “Living with uncertainty”. Uncertainty was a word frequently used by FARC-EP ex-members when referring to their future and their security conditions. This uncertainty is also represented in the lack of clarity they have about where they will live, their role in society and their socio-economic and political stability.

The future of AETCRs and NARs is uncertain, but more so is the stability of AETCRs, whose land status has not been clarified by the government. So far, there are eight AETCRs with their own land²¹³. One of these was bought in 2018 for the members of the *farianos/as* collective of the AETCR Agua Bonita Caquetá and the others were acquired in 2020 and 2021 by the Colombian government, benefiting more than 900 FARC-EP ex-members and their families (Semana, 2021b).

Despite the government's progress in acquiring lands for FARC-EP ex-members who remain in the collective and the continued presence of military and police forces in the territories where the AETCRs are located, there is still a feeling of uncertainty among FARC-EP ex-members and natives of the communities. The high levels of insecurity to which they are exposed, the rising number of dissident groups and criminal gangs in these territories and the reduction in the number of former combatants who still live in these AETCRs are affecting the territorial stability of FARC-EP ex-members.

One of the aspects that caught my attention in the AETCRs is the “security bubble” that these territories have formed through military checkpoints, army battalions and police stations that aim to protect the security exclusively of the territory demarcated as the AETCRs. I can say that the AETCRs are a kind of buffer zones that show a clear demarcation

²¹³ The AETCRs with land titles are: Colinas with 71 ha, La Fila with 22 ha, Llano Grande with 17 ha, El Estrecho with 41 ha; Mutatá with 137 ha; Charras with 197 ha and La Variante with 8 ha (Semana, 2021b).

between inside and outside, showing a seemingly safe environment, but with high levels of insecurity for those who move away from this “containment”.

The security problems outside these demarcations and the hidden role that FARC-EP ex-members have to play in some territories to avoid reprisals have turned the AETCRs and NARs into spaces of refuge and support. Uncertainty about their future has triggered negative effects on the way in which they go about their everyday life, alternating their lives between a process of adaptation and uncertainty about their future, with a blurry outlook with regard to the peace process and their reincorporation achievements. For FARC-EP ex-members, the instability in terms of jobs, housing and security are affecting the successful implementation of the reincorporation policy.

Additionally, what is not clear yet is the long-term economic support for these AETCRs (in terms of security, maintenance, economic provisions and services) and the permanence of the massive of NGOs and International organisations that so far provide benefits to these territories. The absence of this support in the mid-term can create side effects for the communities in terms of lack of empowerment, absence of local agency and high levels of dependency and insecurity. Over the time, these AETCRs and NARs might become part of the dynamics of marginalisation and exclusion that these rural areas have experienced in the past or they might become an atomised and fragmented community, which may be insignificant for wider peace processes (Öjendal et al., 2017).

Conversely, the advanced level of some productive projects, the community leadership acquired after the peace agreement and the building of social ties between the natives of communities and FARC-EP ex-members may turn the AETCRs and NARs in the future into Local Peace Zones (LPZ). These zones could create a model of peace away from traditional top-down perspectives and an alternative for future peace processes in the world.

More clarity about the future of these AETCRs and NARs will be seen when FARC-EP ex-members no longer receive their economic and security benefits for their reincorporation process. It will then be possible to determine how sustainable these communities are and how their level of empowerment and local agency benefit new long-term alternatives for building peace from bottom-up perspectives.

10.2. My Academic and Personal Uncertainty

In this thesis, I wanted to dedicate some pages to myself. In the following paragraphs, I show how this research moved in different directions according to my fears, joys, insecurities and hopes as a Colombian, psychologist, researcher, practitioner and migrant in Germany. Additionally, I want to show with the following memories how my emotions influenced my research and framed my writing.

Considering an auto-ethnography perspective, I wanted to explore the different striking experiences that I lived before I started my PhD and during my research process and the influence of my experiences from the encounters, the narratives and stories told by the ex-members of the FARC-EP.

In 2008, when I started working with ex-combatants, I received a lot of criticism from close friends and family. They wondered how I could work with people who had done so much damage to our country. At that time, I did not imagine that I would be working with them for so long, and even less imaginable was that I would see the day when the FARC-EP would sign a peace agreement with the government and I would have the chance to research their reincorporation process.

I remember the first time I went to visit a FARC-EP ex-combatant at his house in 2008. As part of my psychosocial work, I had to visit them in their homes and see their family relations and process of adaptability. Jorge was waiting for me with chicken soup. He had a live chicken at the back of his house and he was waiting for me to kill it. We talked for a long time, but not so much about his life in the guerrillas. I wanted to have a general chat with him, without pressure, nor with the desire to know some aspects of his life as a guerrilla fighter. That day Jorge shared with me experiences about his life in the countryside and how much he missed it. Then he told me that he had escaped from the FARC-EP because he wanted to have a “normal” life, to have a house, children and to feel safe from danger. He felt that he was losing his life in the guerrillas and that there were no solutions for what they were fighting for. As part of the reintegration process, he worked as a clothing maker, together with his two siblings (also ex-combatants). They had acquired the skills for these jobs when they were in the FARC-EP; two of them designing the uniforms of the south bloc of the FARC-EP.

Ten years later, I was passing a national army checkpoint to go to visit the AETCR Agua Bonita, one of the camps in which more than 100 FARC-EP ex-members were located. I asked the driver why there was this checkpoint (one kilometre away from the AETCR) and he answered that by saying that it is used to keep an eye on the “*muchachos*” (how he referred to the FARC-EP ex-members) and that is why they keep track of people who go to visit them.

I have divided my reflections into three categories: “past experiences”, based on my academic background and my work experience with ex-combatants; “a Colombian in Germany”, in which I show my reflections and biases around my encounters and emotional attachment to territories and other Colombians; and “nostalgia and uncertainty” in which I show up my fears, hopes and nostalgia along this academic journey.

Scene 1: Past Experience

When I was 28 years old, I started working with ex-combatants. I was hired by the Colombian government to be part of the psychosocial team that supported the reintegration of ex-combatants, mainly from the AUC and FARC-EP. I had to support more than 100 ex-combatants in a municipality near Bogotá called Soacha. I cannot forget the first workshop I had with 30 of them. I remember that I spent a lot of time preparing the workshop. I used colour papers, photos and different case studies to integrate my knowledge as a psychologist in the topic of the workshop. When I arrived at the place, there was a group of people, mostly men, waiting for me, seemingly bored and distrustful.

After my introduction, one women ex-combatant interrupted me and said in a rude way: “I have not received the payment for this month and this is your fault” (they received economic benefits from the government for just attending the workshops led by the psychosocial facilitators). She shouted at me: “If you do not sort out this problem, then next week you will have a problem”. Then, the rest of the participants started to complain about the reintegration programme, the delays to receiving their benefits and their security situation. I did not know how to stop this discussion. In the end, I could not facilitate the workshop.

That day I was so nervous because some of the ex-combatants were so aggressive towards me and I worried about how far they could go. I think that they took advantage of my lack of experience working with them and my first day in this job. The next meeting that we

had, I used another strategy, I gave them 20 minutes to let out all their anger and frustration and then we agreed that I could do my work. One of the tricky things with this job was that I had to facilitate the reintegration of both paramilitary groups and guerrilla groups. Both groups had different characteristics in terms of the forms of demobilisation, ideologies, interests in being part of armed groups and attitudes towards reintegration. A kind of mistrust and resistance to initiate a conversation between the two groups was common during my workshops.

In the next sessions, I was able to carry out the activities and workshops for which I had been contracted, but I always had the feeling that I was trying to fit them in a dysfunctional society. What could I say about being a good citizen, or how to integrate into society? There was no easy answer when I knew the security conditions, the economic instability and the invisibility of ex-combatants in society. My only chance was to show them the best part of society by helping with their work, their education and their relationship building with neighbours and families.

For that work, I had to write the life histories of each ex-combatant, fill out forms, visit their homes, implement community activities and even, in some cases, I had to facilitate family therapy. In the end, I became like the other psychosocial professionals for that group of ex-combatants. Over time, they got used to me and I got used to them, and we built a kind of friendship and respect.

During this time, I gained a good relationship with Darwin and Abel, two ex-combatants from the FARC-EP. They were the youngest of my group and the most sympathetic. One was assassinated near to his house for being an informant for the Ministry of Defence as part of the government's counter-insurgency policy and the other was arrested because he was found to have committed crimes not covered by the amnesty.

Darwin, who was 19 years old at the time, was one of the people with whom I especially connected. He had a relationship with a woman ten years older than himself, who he met in the marketplace while he was working as a "*cotero*" (loader of heavy bundles). He decided to accept the offer from the Minister of Defence of becoming an informant, providing details on the hideouts of the guerrilla camps. Without warning, he was killed after helping in this operation.

Abel, who was 26 years old at the time, ended his secondary school education while he was in the reintegration programme. He had a partner and a little baby. They met in their

hometown before he enrolled in the guerrillas. During that time, they maintained a long-distance relationship, although seven years later he decided to escape from the guerrillas to start a family. After the first birthday of his child, he was arrested and taken to prison. I did not know what happened to him, as his wife returned to her hometown and I could not contact her. After these incidents and working for more than three years with the government in this reintegration programme, I decided to quit because it was affecting my emotional stability.

After a while, I took up working again with ex-combatants in different national and international organisations but with less emotional responsibility. However, I, as a psychologist, was still struggling to analyse ex-combatants under psychological discourses. I considered that I did not have the knowledge or the power to classify them as people with high levels of instability, post-traumatic stress disorders, dysfunctionalities or identity crises.

Scene 2: A Colombian in Germany

When I got the scholarship to pursue my PhD in Germany, I was at first hesitant to accept it. The peace agreement in Colombia was coming to a conclusion, I was happy with my job and I knew that good opportunities were coming up in my career to support this process. In the end, however, I accepted the scholarship and decided to embark on the academic life even though I knew that it was going to be a challenging process for me, as I did not have the competence and experience as a researcher. However, this liminal phase, between studying in Germany and carrying out fieldwork in my country allowed me to think “outside the box” and helped me to understand a range of perspectives on what peace implies, and the biases of this term from this side of the world.

What surprised me the most at the beginning of my PhD was how many Germans and people from all over the world were studying the case of the Colombian conflict. I was unaware of most of the knowledge, theories and methodologies they implement(ed) to study the peace agreement and the transition to post-conflict. Over time, I discovered that being a Colombian in Germany led me to approach my country’s situation from a different perspective away from operational practices and activities. I had the opportunity to approach Colombian dynamics from both a practical and a theoretical perspective. I tried to create a

praxis that helped me to interconnect concepts, relationships, time and space, which gave me another perspective of Colombia and exclusively of the life of ex-combatants.

My positionality in this research moved between my feelings of being Colombian, the memories I had from my work experiences and my academic life. The three of them interacted with my findings and the priorities in my fieldwork. However, the uncertainty about the things I was doing in my research, my lack of experience in writing (especially in another language), my insecurities and my resistance to see myself far away from my former life caused me a deep emotional shock. Over time, I became used to this complex isolated world of a researcher and the daily challenges that every PhD student struggles with, and even more so in times of COVID-19.

After almost a year and a half in Germany, I returned to Colombia to begin my fieldwork. I did not want to understand the practical aspects of the reincorporation of ex-combatants, as I previously had, but was interested in following in detail the transition of the FARC-EP guerrilla group into society. I discovered through this research how little detailed knowledge I had about the people I had been working with for more than seven years. It was the first time that I had the chance to interact with ex-combatants without having any predefined duty, activity, indicator or list of attendance to fulfil. In this case, I just wanted to share with FARC-EP ex-members their life. I realised that I had heard many stories from them, but they were fragmented in little pieces that I had not been able to organise and articulate with theories or concepts.

Arriving in the territories as a researcher gave me a kind of tranquility. In the past, I had always carried a label of an organisation, which formed different kinds of opinions, false expectations and hierarchies in the territories. People do not expect as much from a researcher as they do from an international organisation or government representative.

Seeing ex-combatants contributing to peacebuilding was deeply emotional for me. Even more, it showed me how far my life was different from the life of other Colombians and how much I needed to learn from them. I remember that Tobias, a FARC-EP ex-member part of Agua Bonita, told me one day that the thing that he liked the most about me was that I had curiosity about simple things that they usually did in their everyday life. Fishing from the lake, killing a cow, jumping from the river, crossing floods on a motorbike and other events were experiences that I had rarely had in my life but they have experienced for several years. I can

say that life between the cities and the rural areas in Colombia is as different as the life between Germany and Colombia.

Now I can understand that being a researcher allows people to think, explore, analyse and integrate experiences and events in an organised, theoretical and analytical way. Before I did not have this privilege, as I always had to deal with the immediate demands of the communities and the duties of my jobs.

Scene 3: Nostalgia and Uncertainty

The second year that I returned to my fieldwork, I brought three gifts for the newborn babies of the ex-combatants. The happiness of seeing them holding their babies filled me with nostalgia, as it did when I had the opportunity to go to some of their graduation ceremonies or when I saw the flag of the FARC-EP political party visible in a public space. These experiences showed me that I was living in and sharing with others a transitional time. I felt full of hope at seeing the efforts of communities and FARC-EP ex-members to achieve peace. It made me feel that peace was already there in every effort that each member of these communities put in the activities that they developed.

Every story that FARC-EP ex-members shared showed me the value of being with others. My transition to a PhD was full of nostalgia for my country, and the impotence and uncertainty I felt about this peace process and my doubt about my capacities to fulfil this research. The more I heard in the news about assassinations, massacres, corruption and the formation of new armed groups, the more disappointed I was about this transition to post-conflict.

I am nostalgic for my academic journey that is about to end and hopeful for what is to come for Colombia and for my life. Being a migrant taught me that we carry our history wherever we are, and it defines our new encounters and life experiences. Being on this side of the world, writing about the lives of FARC-EP ex-members gave me a privilege that few have in my country and the possibility to stop and reflect on how life unfolds in the daily lives of those who played an active role in the conflict. I conclude saying that ex-combatants are not like “everyone else”. They carry a past that most of us would want to hide or make disappear — a past as human beings who have struggled with emotional, social, political and economic situations that have not been easy to overcome.

This research showed me that although it is important to invest time in reading books, articles or attending classes to gain an analytical understanding of life, it is also important to gain knowledge through the interaction and effort that each person invests to make others feel more human. What is clear to me from this PhD experience is that even if one day I get to know the lives of ex-combatants in depth, I will never be able to understand what it means to live in the midst of war.

Lilian, who allowed me to stay in her house for a month, told me the first night, *“Sleep with the mosquito net that accompanied me in El Monte, so that you can feel a little of what it means to live in the war”*, and she was right, when I slept under it, I could still feel and smell *El Monte*.

* * *

APPENDICES

Annex I: Format of Interviews

For FARC-EP ex-members

1. How has your experience been so far in this process of reincorporation?
2. How would you define collective reincorporation?
3. What kind of changes have you seen in the last three years in the *farianos* collective?
4. What collective practices do you follow and which ones do you not?
5. How can you progress as a person and as a family by being part of a collective?
6. What advantages and disadvantages do you see in remaining in a collective?
7. What are the biggest barriers to becoming a collective? What do you share and what do not you share in this collective?
8. What keeps you together and what can break you apart as *farianos/as*?

For communities

1. How is your relationship with the ex-combatants?
2. In what ways have you been involved in the collective actions of this group? Have you benefited? How would you like to benefit more from them?
3. What activities or events do you do together? Who do you get on best with in the community of the ETCRs? Why?
4. What difficulties still exist between you (ex-combatants and the community), what have improved?
5. What should be the role of the government and external actors in the reincorporation of ex-combatants?

Annex II: List of Documentaries, Interviews and Films to Analyse the Role of FARC-EP ex-members and their Transition to Reincorporation

Name of the Film/Documentary or Interview	Director or Company	Link
<i>"Me enamoraba cada vez más de la lucha: La cara femenina de las FARC"</i> (I fell more and more in love with the struggle: The female face of the FARC)	RT en Español	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWQM1BKjgxA&list=PLo0pVQov4BMPJPSUKsiwq80vF-zK1pwvb&index=1&t=1s
<i>"Nunca invisibles, mujeres farianas, adiós a la guerra"</i> (Never invisible, fariana women, farewell to the war)	NC (Nueva Colombia)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzmMzDwYe4Y&list=PLo0pVQov4BMPJPSUKsiwq80vF-zK1pwvb&index=4
<i>"Para la Guerra Nada"</i> (For the war of nothing)	William Parra	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1TZQntg_KQ&list=PLo0pVQov4BMPJPSUKsiwq80vF-zK1pwvb&index=5
Colombia: The long road to peace after the civil war	DW Documentary	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xO6AnTc0OE8&list=PLo0pVQov4BMPJPSUKsiwq80vF-zK1pwvb&index=6
<i>"Hagamos Memoria: 50 años de las Farc"</i> (Making memories: 50 years of the FARC)	Canal Capital With the collaboration of Truth Commission (CEV)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YmFGveOFMw&list=PLo0pVQov4BMPJPSUKsiwq80vF-zK1pwvb&index=8
<i>"La Música de las FARC"</i> (The music of the FARC)	La Silla Vacía	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hIRp4LQuve0&list=PLo0pVQov4BMPJPSUKsiwq80vF-zK1pwvb&index=18
Between the Integral Reincorporation and the DDR	CLACSO TV Professor: Jaime Zuluaga	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVUNnbraEc&list=LL&index=68
<i>"Qué es y cuáles son los desafíos de la reincorporación de las FARC?"</i> (What is it and what are the challenges of FARC reincorporation?)	<i>La Voz del Derecho</i> - Interview with Sindy Torres, advisor for the implementation of the Havana peace agreement and the gender approach in the reincorporation process.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIMmKteLTH4&list=LL&index=69
<i>"El silencio de los fusiles"</i> (The Silence of the Weapons)	Natalia Orozco	https://elpais.com/cultura/2018/12/28/actualidad/1546025329_519807.html
<i>"La Negociación"</i> (The Negotiation)	Margarita Martínez	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRqznWxbPSo
<i>"La dirección del partido Farc 'ha abandonado la militancia': Andrés"</i>	Interview with Dick Emanuelsson	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffX4HD5YptY

<i>París</i> (The FARC party leadership “has abandoned militancy”: Andrés París)		
<i>“Cuál es la Estrategia para la Reincorporación de las FARC a la Sociedad Civil?”</i> (What is the strategy for the reincorporation of the FARC into civil society?)	Semana en Vivo	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9jBw6YUWN9o&t=593s
<i>Hablan las disidencias de la FARC al mando de Gentil Duarte</i> (FARC dissidents under the command of Gentil Duarte speak out)	El Espectador - Ariel Avila	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rqIJZd0pHo
Colombia in my arms	Jenni Kivistö, Jussi Rastas	https://www.imdb.com/title/tt11563822/
<i>“No somos aperos que hablan. Documental sobre reincorporación Farc”</i> We are not talking tools. Documentary on FARC reincorporation	Arnico.Estudio.com Directed by: Felipe Chávez	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1pv2cx09dg&t=25s
Disarming the mind: Reintegrating ex-combatants in Colombia	Nature video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqb4KtGxZ7o&t=0s
Colombia: The long road to peace after the civil war	DW documentary	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xO6AnTc0OE8&t=2s

Annex III: People Interviewed

LOCATION	PHASE OF FIELDWORK	FICTITIOUS NAME	ROLE IN THE FARC-EP	AGE (YEARS)	TIME IN THE FARC-EP (YEARS)
AGUA BONITA	First Fieldwork	Oscar	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		José	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		Andres	Militia	Under 30	Under 5
		Marcos	Troop	Between 50 and 60	More than 20
		Maria	Troop	Between 30 and 40	More than 20
		Socorro	Troop	Under 30	Between 10 and 20
		Pedro	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		Yulis	Troop	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
		Pedro	Commander	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		Juan	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		Jeronimo	Troop	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
		Julia	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		Fernando	Troop	Between 40 and 50	Between 10 and 20
		Carol	Commander	Between 50 and 60	More than 20
		Christian	Commander	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
		Gloria	Commander	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
		Pablo	Commander	Over 60	More than 30
	Second Fieldwork	Matias	Troop	Between 40 and 50	Between 10 and 20
		Mariela	Commander	Between 50 and 60	More than 30
		Doris	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		Gilberto	Troop	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
		Jorge	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		Exequiel	Troop	Between 30	Between 10 and 20

				and 40	
		Claudia	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		Javier	Commander	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
		Reinaldo	Troop	Between 30 and 40	More than 20
		Vivian	Troop	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
LLANO GRANDE	First Fieldwork	Sergio	Troop (in prison)	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
		Nubia	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		Marcela	Commander	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
		Miguel	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		David	Commander	Over 60	More than 30
		Sofia	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		Josue	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		Bernardo	Commander	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
		Carlos	Troop	Between 40 and 50	Between 10 and 20
		Norberto	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 to 20
		Jovial	Commander	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
	German	Commander	Between 50 and 60	More than 20	
	Second Fieldwork	Marco	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		Carolina	Troop	Between 40 and 50	Between 10 and 20
SAN JOSE DE LEON	First Fieldwork	Gerardo	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		Toño	Commander	Over 60	More than 30
		Ezequiel	Commander	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
	Second Fieldwork	Ana	Militia	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
		Esteban	Troop	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
Ferney		Commander	Between 40 and 50	More than 20	

		Dana	Troop	Between 40 and 50	Between 10 and 20
		Victor	Militia	Under 30	Under 5
		Fercho	Militia	Under 30	Between 5 and 10
		Wiliam	Militia	Between 40 and 50	Between 10 and 20
		Efrain	Commander	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
		Gina	Troop	Between 40 and 50	Between 10 and 20
		Nestor	Commander	Between 40 and 50	More than 20
		Sonia	Troop	Between 30 and 40	Between 10 and 20
		Wendy	Troop	Under 30	Between 10 and 20
		Wilmer	Troop	Between 40 and 50	Between 10 and 20
		Tiberio	Commander	Between 50 and 60	More than 20
NATIONAL LEVEL		Rocio	Leader, FARC political party		
		Francisco	Ex-combatant, member of UNP in Bogotá		
		Damaris	Ex-combatant, staff member from the ARN		
COMMUNITY LEVEL		Macias	Leader, JAC Llano Grande village		
		Amparo	Community leader, Llano Grande		
		Yerson	Community leader, Llano Grande and janitor in the AETCR		
		Lucho	Community member, Llano Grande community		
		Alex	Community leader, Llano Grande		
		Jesus	Community member, Agua Bonita		
		Samir	Community member, San José de León		
		Camilo	President, JAC Agua Bonita		
		Liliany	Wife of an ex-combatant and victim of conflict		
		Monica	President, JAC San José de León		
		Ernesto	Community leader, Llano Grande		
Nataly	Wife of an ex-combatant and victim of conflict				

Annex IV: Categories of Analysis

CATEGORIES			
COLLECTIVE	Meanings of collectivity	Equal conditions and benefits	
	Reciprocity and solidarity in the collective		
	The everyday in collective		
	Role of leader in collective	<i>Fariano/a</i> leadership	
		Competences in the leaders	
	Challenge in the collective	Lack of lands	
		Lack of leaders	Leaders from outside but not from inside
			Lack of trust towards the leaders
			Saturation of leaders
			Lack of delegation
		Economic benefits that meet needs	
		Transformation of the collective over time	
		Maintenance of military doctrine	
		Increased stigmatisation	
		Disinterest in the collective by the government	
		Capitalist influence	
		Lack of interest to work in collective	
		Hybrid between individual and collective	
		Grouping for reinstatement benefits only	
	Internal organisation of FARC-EP	Absence of leaders	
		Lack of <i>fariana</i> ideology	
Mistrust			
Internal communication			
Importance of collective	Resistance		
	Identity, recognition		
	Collective welfare		
	Visibility of ex-combatants		
	Pressure to enforce agreements		
CONFLICT IN COLOMBIA	Gender relationships in the FARC-EP		
	Sacrifices made by combatants in the conflict		
	The military vs the ideology		
	Perceptions towards the government		
	The FARC-EP in the conflict	Weakening of the FARC-EP	
		Roles within the FARC-EP	
		Reasons for joining the FARC-EP	
	Effects of the war on the community		
	Tales of war and peace	Life in the receptive communities	
		Life in the guerrillas	The day to day in the guerrillas
Combats in the FARC-EP			

			Organisation of the guerrillas
			Affective relationships in the FARC-EP
	Perceptions towards the conflict in Colombia		
FARIANA IDEOLOGY	Integration of the <i>fariana</i> ideology with current concepts		
	Values – <i>Fariana</i> ideology	Values	Loss of ideology
			Collectivity
			<i>Buen vivir</i> "good living"
			Care for the environment
			Equal conditions
			Solidarity
		Dignity	
		Socialist ideas	
		Ideological training of the FARC-EP	
		Beliefs and rituals	
	Artefacts	Houses as an artifact in reincorporation	
		Their history as an artifact	
Artefacts in reintegration brought back from conflict times			
Importance of war artefacts			
<i>Fariana</i> ideology vs roles to be assumed in civility			
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EX-COMBATANTS AND EXTERNAL ACTORS	Hybrid between taking on government/external role and being ex-combatants		
	External actors involved in the reincorporation dynamic		
	External perceptions of the AETCRs		
	Frictions between community and external actors		
PERCEPTION OF THE COMMUNITY TOWARDS THE EX-COMBATANTS	Acceptation towards the ex-combatants		
	Frictions between community and ex-combatants	Attitudes and prejudices towards the FARC-EP	
	Trust towards the peace process	Attitudes towards peace process	
		Close community – FARC-EP relations in the conflict	
Equal benefits for FARC-EP and community			
EXTERNAL ACTORS IN REINCORPORATION	Negative effects of external actors	Saturation of activities	Power and manipulation/use of time
			Coercion of community agency
		Superficial reincorporation	
		Articulation between entities	
		Waste of resources	
		Low levels of participation and indoctrination of ideas	
		Lack of expertise/tailor-made projects	
		Lack of results	
		Short-sighted proposal	
		Armed forces and other organisations	
		Role of civil society in reincorporation	
	Role of the media in reincorporation		
	Role of FARC-EP political party in reincorporation		

	Role of government and international actors in reincorporation			
	Negative perception towards external research and interventions			
EFFECTS OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE PEACE-AGREEMENT	Uncertainty about the future			
	Disinterest/discouragement in the reincorporation process			
	Lack of awareness of the government's contributions			
	(Dis)trust in the government			
SPATIAL AND TERRITORIAL DYNAMICS	Sense of belonging to the territory/reincorporation			
	Space as an individualiser of collectives			
	Spatial (ideological) integration from different places			
	Spaces as conflict transformers			
	Space as facilitator of collectives			
	Minimisation of stereotypes through social contact			
	Physical and personal spatial barriers			
MEANINGS OF PEACE	Peace as an everyday practice			
	Peace as a utopia			
	Beyond the handing over of guns			
	Peace within			
	Community progress			
	Access to fundamental rights			
	Balance of power			
	Tranquillity in local routines			
	Rebuilding society on the basis of values			
	Reconciliation			
REINCORPORATION	Differences between reincorporation and reintegration	Contribution to society by the <i>fariana</i> ideology.		
		Visibility		
		Ex-combatants that are part of policy/agreement		
		Deserters vs ex-guerrillas		
	Definition of reincorporation	Reincorporation as law - following alignment		
		Becoming part of civilian life		
		Minimum access to social guarantees		
		Positive relations with local and community authorities		
		Word created by the state	Reincorporation from the state	
			Count as part of the state	
		Change of space/context and time		
	Undertaking collective action for social benefit			
	Transition and life in reincorporation	Artistic/sporting events as a form of acceptance and trust		
		Empowerment or maintenance of power?		
		Adaptation to the system		
		Integration between past and present		
		Identity building	New ways of thinking and acting post-agreement	
Future plans of ex-combatants				
Changing narratives and interests				

		<i>Fariana</i> and community entrepreneurship	Community agency	
			Participation of ex-combatants in community activities	
		Community reconstruction		
		Legal conditions for ex-combatants	Legality from a <i>fariana</i> point of view	
			Amnestied from prison	
			Legislative inconsistencies in the peace agreement	
		Organisation of FARC-EP - post agreement	FARC-EP participation in the creation of ETCRs	
			Assemblies	
			Free time/sport/leisure	
			Transition to ETCRs	
			Distribution of spaces	
			Organisation of FARC-EP in the ETCRs and in the civic sphere	
			Distribution of roles	
			Maintenance of FARC-EP ideology	
			Resolution of internal problems	
		Politics of FARC-EP	Weaknesses of the FARC-EP party	
			Disagreements in the FARC-EP's politics	
		New responsibilities in civility		
		Education of <i>farianos/as</i>	Creation of an educational model for <i>farianos/as</i>	
			Use of competences of <i>farianos/as</i>	
		Work offered to ex-combatants	Self-management models	
			Productive projects	
		FARC-EP customs in civil life		
		Perception and importance of psychosocial issues		
		Family in reincorporation	New social and economic responsibilities	
			<i>Fariana</i> family	Sense of belonging towards the FARC-EP
				Comradeship
AETCRs as social network				
Friendship among <i>farianos/as</i>				
Experiences of conflict with families				
Family as compromise in civilian life				
Intrafamily relationships	Family vs collective			
Influencers in reincorporation	Differences among ex-combatants	Gender in reincorporation		

			Inequality within the <i>farianos/as</i>
			Frictions within <i>farianos/as</i>
			Differential approaches in reincorporation
		Recidivism	
		Territorial characteristics	
		Reincorporation and poverty	
		Drugs trafficking	
	Security of ex-combatants and communities		
	Rights of ex-combatants	Freedom of expression and decision	
		Right of housing	
		Right to life	
	Benefits of reincorporation	Material benefits of reincorporation	
		Personal benefits of reincorporation	Family consolidation
			Maintenance of <i>fariana</i> ideology
			Study
Tranquillity			
Freedom of choice			
Enjoying hobbies			
COMMITMENT TO PEACE BY THE EX-COMBATANTS	Commitment to the truth		
	FARC-EP's ideological commitment to the people		
	Contributions of reincorporation to communities		
	Recognition of the harm caused by the FARC-EP		
	AETCRs as models of peace		

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