BUILDING CITIZENS.

Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) Process in Colombia, 2002-2010.

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Declaration for SOAS PhD thesis

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Abstract

In the literature on Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR), security problems in post-conflict settings are too readily attributed to the personality traits or economic ambitions of the ex-combatants. Alternatively, this thesis analyses the challenges and dilemmas they have to face as part of the reintegration process. Drawing on the DDR process that took place in Colombia under Alvaro Uribe's government (2002-2010), this research questions how the Colombian Agency for Reintegration (ACR) contributed to the economic, social and political reintegration of former guerrilla and paramilitary members. The thesis is divided into two parts: the first aims to understand how the Colombian DDR originated and evolved. The third chapter illustrates how the initial DDR design responded to a national security strategy that established differential treatment towards the guerrillas and paramilitaries, yet neglected the long-term reintegration of rank-and-file ex-combatants and the need for assistance to the receiving communities. Moreover, the entire DDR policy was fiercely contested and adjusted by the country's judicial institutions, which pushed the ex-combatants into both legal and institutional uncertainty. The fourth chapter highlights the extent to which responsibility for the reintegration was assumed by the municipal authorities of Medellín and Bogotá, which in turn encouraged and underpinned the creation of a DDR programme beyond its initially narrow, security-centric goals. The second part of this thesis explores the personal experiences of ex-combatants across three key dimensions: although the ACR programme seems to have had little success in terms of *economic reintegration, social reintegration* emerges as a more important organising element thanks to the creation of social fabric between the families, the communities and the overarching ACR bureaucracy. In particular, a positive experience with the reintegration officers had a ameliorative effect on *political reintegration:* by facilitating access to the mechanisms of democracy, new forms of interacting with the state were opened up to the ex-combatants, which would ultimately contribute to their forging of a new identity as citizens.

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ACRONYMS AND NAMES

ACRONYM	ENGLISH	SPANISH
ACMM	Self-Defense Groups of Magdalena Medio	Autodefensas Campesinas del Magdalena Medio
ACR	Colombian Agency for Reintegration	Alta Consejería para la Reintegración (2006-2011) Agencia Colombiana para la Reintegración
Alianza Oriente	Self-Defense Groups of Casanare and Self-Defense Groups of Meta and Vichada	Autodefensas del Casanare; Autodefensas del Meta y el Vichada
AUC	Colombian United Self-Defenses	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia
BACRIM	Criminal Bands	Bandas Criminales
BCB	Central Bolivar Bloc	Bloque Central Bolivar
BCN	Cacique Nutibara Bloc	Bloque Cacique Nutibara
CEPAR	Institute for Education of Demobilised Population in Medellin	Centro de Formación para la Paz y la Reconciliación
CNR	National Council for Reincorporation	Consejo Nacional de la Reincorporación
CRO	PRVC's Regional Offices	Centro de Referencia y Oportunidad
CRP	Corporate Responsibility Programme	Programa de Responsabilidad Corporativa
DAS	National Secret Service	Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad
DDR	Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration	Desmovilización, Desarme y Reintegración
ELN	National Liberation Army	Ejército de Liberación Nacional
ERU	Economic Reintegration Unit	Unidad de Reintegración Económica
FARC	Colombian Revolutionay Armed Forces	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
ICC	International Criminal Court	Corte Penal Internacional
IOM	International Organization for Migration	Organización Internacional para las Migraciones
MAPAZ	Model for the Provision of Psycho-social Services	Modelo de Atención Psicosocial para la Paz
MAPP-OEA	Mission to Support the Peace Process - Organization of American States	Misión de Apoyo al Proceso de Paz - Organización de Estados Americanos
OACP	Peace Commissioner Office	Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz
PAPDRB	Bogota's Reintegration Programme	Programa de Atención al Proceso de Desmovilización y Reinserción en Bogotá
Peace and Reconciliation	Medellin's Reintegration Programme	Paz y Reconciliación
PRSE	National Policy of Social and Economic Reintegration	Política Nacional de Reincorporación Social y Política
PRVC	Program of Reincorporation to the Civil Life 2003-2006	Programa de Reincorporación a la vida civil
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	Síndrome de Stress Post-traumático
Return to Legality	Medellin's Reintegration Model	Retorno a la Legalidad
SENA	National Institute for Job Skills Training	Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje
UPAR	Risk Prevention and Attention Unit	Unidad de Prevención y Atención de Riesgos
SRU	Social Reintegration Unit	Unidad de Reintegración Social
UWC	Community Work Unit	Unidad de Trabajo con la Comunidad

Colombia

Caribbean Sea

Aruba (NETH.)   Oranjestad
Aruba   Willemstad
Curaçao   Bonaire
Netherlands Antilles (NETH.)

HONDURAS

NICARAGUA

COSTA RICA

San Andrés y Providencia
Isla de Providencia
Isla de San Andrés (department capital)

Caribbean Sea

Puerto Bolívar
LA GUAJIRA
Riohacha
Santa Marta
Barranquilla
ATLÁNTICO
Cartagena
MAGDALENA
Cerrejón (coal mine)
Valledupar
CESAR
Maracaibo
Golfo de Venezuela
Coro
Caracas
Puerto Cabello
Maracay
Valencia
San Felipe
Barquisimeto
San Carlos
San Juan de Los Morros

Covenas
Sincelejo
Monteria
SUCRE
CÓRDOBA
BOLÍVAR
Trujillo
Mérida
Barinas
Guanare
VENEZUELA
San Fernando
Cabruta
Caicara de Orinoco

Colón
Panama
PANAMA
Yaviza
Turbo
Carepa
NORTE DE SANTANDER
Cúcuta
San Cristóbal
Barrancabermeja
Bucaramanga
SANTANDER
El Amparo
Arauca
ARAUCA
Rio Arauca
Rio Meta
Puerto Páez
Puerto Carreño
Caicara

PANAMA
NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN
COLOMBIA
Isla de Malpelo

CHOCÓ
Quibdó
ANTIOQUIA
Medellín
Puerto Berrío
Puerto Salgar
Paz de Río
BOYACÁ
Tunja
Yopal
CASANARE
Santa Rita
Puerto Ayacucho
Morganito
San Fernando de Atabapo
VICHADA

CALDAS
Manizales
RISARALDA
Pereira
Armenia
Ibagué
Tuluá
Tolemaida
BogotÁ
CUNDINAMARCA
DISTRITO CAPITAL
Villavicencio
META
Barrancomina
Puerto Inírida
GUAINÍA
Rio Guainía

NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN
Buenaventura
VALLE DEL CAUCA
Cali
CAUCA
Neiva
HUILA
Popayán
San Vicente del Caguán
San José del Guaviare
Calamar
GUAVIARE
Rio Guaviare
Mitú
Cucuí

Tumaco
NARIÑO
San Lorenzo
Esmeraldas
Pasto
Mocoa
Santa Ana
Puerto Asís
PUTUMAYO
Tres Esquinas
Florencia
Larandia
CAQUETÁ
VAUPÉS
Iauareté
Rio Vaupés

Tulcán
Ipiales
San Miguel
ECUADOR
Quito
Nueva Loja
La Tagua
Puerto Leguízamo
Pantoja
São Gabriel da Cachoeira
Rio Negro

Vidal
Flor de Agosto
Iquitos
PERU
El Encanto
Puerto Santander
AMAZONAS
La Pedrera
Vila Bittencourt
BRAZIL
Rio Japurá
Fonte Boa

Leticia
Tabatinga
Rio Javari
Amazon

Acknowledgments

Introduction

At the beginning of this research, when talking to others about my interest in analysing the process of ex-combatant reintegration in Colombia, there was much scepticism about any real willingness or capacity among the demobilised to abandon their life in the armed groups: "You cannot take the wild out of the tiger", as the saying goes. Throughout the development of this thesis I have found these assumptions in folk and expert knowledge alike: stemming from assumptions rooted in neoclassical economic theories, fighters are often deemed to be "irrational" in their actions and inevitably "greedy" in their motivations, which subsequently drives them towards violence in the form of criminality or their recruitment into rebel groups. By consequence, war and political conflict are commonly attributed to the personality traits of individuals, while the social arrangements and interactions that cause and reproduce political conflict are neglected (Martín-Baró, 1990:27).

Liberal and neoclassical doctrines[1] understand war as "development in reverse" (Collier, 2004:2) and have highlighted the primacy of economic factors as causes of political violence. Baas has argued that the recurrent emphasis on greed as explanation for violence has two different ontologies: while Collier and Hoeffler (2002, 2004) state the universality and priority of economic motivations across time and cultures, Kaldor (2010:2) accepts that the causes of conflict may change, but assumes that all civil conflicts that started in the dawn of the 20th century have replaced their political motivations with criminal aims driven by mere economic profit (Baas, 2012:16). Gutierrez Sanin has similarly indicated two major pitfalls in these theories: on the one hand, it is assumed that all wars are alike, that all armed groups are similarly greedy and that all rebels are utility-maximisers by nature; on the other, political conflicts are understood as ultimately criminal endeavours: "[a]s Collier and associates did, to study rebellion as a form of criminality, that can be explained as a confluence of rent seeking actions by the leadership and the existence of a labour market for armed action" (2008:5).

Additionally, there is a romanticised view of conditions pre-war and an assumption the combatants broke some sort of golden or halcyon order, ignoring the social and political

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[1] Especially those by Collier and Hoeffler (2004); Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner (2008) and Kaldor (2006).

causes that ignited the conflict in the first place, such as poverty, inequality or totalitarian rule. Such assumptions are evidenced in the following statement by the World Bank:

"[DDR contributes to the] restoration of civil society and peaceful return to productive civilian life of hitherto destabilizing forces."

(Colletta, Kostner and Wiederhofer 1996:72, emphasis mine)

On the contrary, research has shown that war and political violence are closely connected to progress and development (Cramer, 2006:45): on the one hand, rebellion and its contestation were forces that underpinned the formation of modern development states by transforming bygone feudal structures and bringing about industrialisation and democratisation (Weber, 1920:324; Moore, 1966; Tilly, 1985). In turn, much of the violence that takes place in times of political conflict is in fact controlled and addressed to specific and rational aims, thus greediness is but one of many reasons behind war-like behaviours (Keen, 1994; Cramer, 2006; Mitton, 2012).

Subsequently, the demobilisation of troops and the reintegration of ex-combatants back into society constitute an important part of the historical process that has shaped modern civilisation. When conflicts come to an end, breaking the military structure of the warring factions – and the decision to reallocate the soldiers into new military structures or to simply send them home – constitutes an important part of the new security and political arrangements in post-conflict societies. Questions on what to do with the surplus of soldiers left after the conflict, on the adverse effects of their military-like behaviours, as well as doubts and fears on their capabilities or willingness to go back to civilian life can be traced back to the Napoleonic wars, the World Wars or the Vietnam War (Söderström, 2011:16; Kriger, 2003:21). As Tilly has pointed out:

In royal service, soldiers and sailors were often expected to provide for themselves by preying on the civilian population: commandeering, raping, looting, taking prizes. When demobilised, they commonly continued the same practices, but without the same royal protection; demobilised ships became pirate vessels, demobilised troops bandits. It also worked the other way: A king's best

source of armed supporter was sometimes the world of outlaws. Robin Hood's
conversion to royal archer may be a myth, but the myth records a practice.

(Tilly, 1985:173)

Certainly, people make choices, but they do so limited by their circumstances and in response to different institutional contexts (Putnam, 1995; Foucault, 1982:790; Cramer, 2002:1847). Rather than entering into the debate of whether fighters are wild and savage bandits or freedom-fighters and heroes, this thesis problematises the assumptions of some nascent and natural proclivity to the use of violence, This study also questions the tendency of categorising the ex-combatants as an automatic security risk due to an allegued tendency to returning to their groups or by joining criminality, exploring instead the difficulties, challenges and dilemmas combatants may have in integrating within a post-conflict society and switching to the citizen identity.

International DDR programmes and the Colombian DDR process

The first UN peace operations to include an explicit mandate to assist in the demobilisation of troops took place in 1989 in Nicaragua (UNPKOa, 2010:18) and Namibia (Muggah, 2009:5). Since then, there have been UN-led DDR missions to El Salvador, Mozambique, Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Sudan, Nepal, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Côte d'Ivoire (UNPKOa, 2010; UNPKOb, 2010; Caramés and Sanz, 2009; Özerdem, 2008; Mcmullin, 2013). In a similar vein, in the 1990s the World Bank provided technical and financial assistance through Demobilisation and Reconstruction Programmes (DRP)[2] to Mozambique, Rwanda and Uganda; it had also expected to provide more assistance to around a dozen more countries (Colletta, Kostner and Wiederhofer, 1996:vi). From 2002 to 2009, the World Bank then implemented a multilateral DDR programme in seven countries transitioning from war to peace: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda (MDRP, 2010:1).

Independent from the UN or the World Bank mandates, additional processes of demobilisation and reintegration have taken place as part of nation-led processes in

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[2] In more recent literature, the acronym DRP has been replaced by DDR.

Ethiopia, Eritrea, Russia and the Philippines (Muggha, 2009:5), Northern Ireland (Rolston, 2007), Tajikistan (Torjesen and MacFarlane, 2007), Lebanon (Karamé, 2009) and Colombia.

As part of an effort to operationalise the empirical experience amassed from almost two decades of peace-building operations, the UN published the International Standards on DDR (IDDRS) in 2006. Although the IDDRS originally addressed the planning, management and implementation of UN operations, it soon became a benchmark in the literature: its concepts and terminology have been largely adopted by policy-makers, practitioners and scholars. This thesis also adopts the definitions stated in the IDDRS: DDR is understood as "a process that contributes to security and stability in a post-conflict recovery context by removing weapons from the hands of combatants, taking the combatants out of military structures and helping them to integrate socially and economically into society by finding civilian livelihoods". In turn, demobilisation is defined as "the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups", which usually comprises two stages: the cantonment of troops prior to the official demobilisation ceremony, and the provision of reinsertion[3] aid and support. Disarmament is the removal of weapons, ammunition and explosives from the hands of ex-combatants, usually also including weapons management programmes for the general population. Finally, reintegration "is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income" (UNDP, 2006,1.20: 5-6). The UN differentiates between reinsertion and reintegration. The former is the initial assistance offered to the ex-combatants immediately after their demobilisation and is regarded as a transitional period prior to the longer process of reintegrating as civilians (IDDRS, 2004:1.10,2)

The implementation of post war DDR programmes have become an important part of a wider set of policies on peace-building and models for state reconstruction pursued by multilateral organisations such as United Nations or the World Bank (Ottoway, 2003; Muggah, Berdal and Torjesen, 2009:270). The UN has stated that the DDR programmes' focus on ex-combatants is "necessary and justified in order to build confidence and security in war-torn societies" (UNDP, 2006, 4.30:6) by preventing the

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[3] Some authors refer to reinsertion as a "small r" in the acronym: DDr; others have also included reinsertion with capital R in the acronym: DDRR.

transformation of combatants into self-equipped soldiers or mercenary groups. Thus, the aims of these programmes are twofold: the disbandment of rebel and paramilitary groups that jeopardise the state's monopoly of force and the management of ex-combatants that are the product of these demobilisations:

> *The UN sees DDR as an early step in a series of peace-building processes. DDR focuses on the immediate management of people previously associated with armed forces and groups; lays the groundwork for safeguarding and sustaining the communities in which these individuals can live as law-abiding citizens; and builds national capacity for long-term peace, security and development.*

> *(UNDP, 2006, 2.10:5)*

However, it has been argued that these DDR programmes prioritise the security concerns and economic agendas of the countries that dominate the international political order, while ignoring the social and political reality of the local governments and communities (Ottaway, 2003, Kriger, 2003:20; Cramer, 2006:258; Muggah, 2009:2). Likewise, Baas (2012:204) and Mcmullin (2013:7) have claimed that the debates on DDR literature revolve around issues concerning the practice of multilateral organisms when designing and implementing their DDR programmes, which are not always related to the needs perceived by the governments or warring factions involved in their actual negotiation or implementation. Furthermore, the effectiveness of these programmes has proved limited as many of them have failed to achieve their purposes (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2007, 2009; Mcmulllin, 2013:13), with about half of the countries in which they were implemented having suffered renewed violence (Stockholm, 2005:9).

At this point, it is important to clarify the difference between DDR *processes* and *programmes*. The former is an overarching term referring to a series of events and actions that start with the disbanding of armed troops in the aftermath of conflict. The latter is an organised and intended set of policies, institutions and practices for the demobilisation and reintegration of combatants, aiming to prevent and control security problems that may arise from the reduction of troops in post-conflict settings (UNDP, 2006, 1.10:1; Colletta, Kostner and Wiederhofer 1996:v). As such, a DDR *process* could or could not include a *programme,* and certainly the ex-combatants can go

through their own demobilisation and reintegration *process* regardless of their participation in a *programme*. My aim is to contribute to the literature on DDR by studying a *programme* that was built locally in Colombia and as part of a very contentious political DDR *process*, in which multilateral organisations had little influence.

Some authors have established categories to classify DDR programmes and processes according to the context in which they are implemented. Berdal identifies three different categories: first, most DDR programmes and processes have been part of international missions to establish a peace settlement in conflicts where no side achieved a clear victory; second, there have been some nation-led initiatives to undertake reduction of military forces post conflict; third, there have also been attempts to impose the disarmament of fighters through the use of international military force, which in practice have proved ineffective and counterproductive (Berdal, 1996:10). Equally, DDR processes may take place against a variety of backdrops: as reductions of military personnel and resources in peacetime; in the transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic ones; and in post-conflict situations as a measure to prevent relapse into conflict (Rufer, 2005:17; Özerdem, 2009:13). The World Bank has also proposed four key political scenarios for the implementation of DDR programmes: first, situations where internal conflict is still on-going in the absence of or with a weak government in charge; second, where a government has been established but warring factions still maintain their military structures and compete for power; third, a post-conflict scenario in which the clear winner has achieved control of the government; and fourth, in the aftermath of civil wars, with the possible prevalence of small-scale illegal armed groups (quoted in Özerdem, 2009:3). Muggah has proposed an alternative typology taking into account whether DDR programmes have taken place before conflict, by downsizing national forces as a crisis prevention measure; during conflict, as partial demobilisations with some reintegration activities; and post-conflict in two possible settings: following cross-border conflict or internal conflict, which imply total demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of troops, as well as some activities for reconciliation and rehabilitation (Muggah, 2009:5).

However, these typologies fail to capture the complexity of the Colombian DDR analysed in this thesis. Firstly, this was a nation-led process; neither the UN nor the

World Bank intervened. Although there was some involvement from multilateral organisms and foreign governments, their activities were limited to monitoring the demobilisation and providing financing or technical assistance to specific tasks in the reintegration phase. Secondly, as Muggah has noted, it was a process that took place in the midst of an ongoing conflict, but it was also part of a strategy of security with differential treatment for each armed group: the government signed deals with the paramilitary groups while simultaneously increasing its military attacks against the guerrillas and fostering the desertion of its members. Finally, the DDR was operating within the fundamental paradox of the Colombian state: a system of long-term institutions coexisting and interacting with a medium-intensity war. The Colombian state is neither failed nor weak, but a fully functioning democracy with a complex setting of institutions and democratic mechanisms. Thus, the Colombian case is atypical compared to those cases in Africa and Asia on which the international community bases its literature. Other experiences (such as El Salvador and Nicaragua) are closer in regional features, but these DDRs took place 20 years ago and were marked by a continuation of criminal violence that had important differences to the Colombian political conflict.

Negotiation, Demobilisation and Reintegration, 2002-2010

I draw my analysis from the DDR process that took place in Colombia during Alvaro Uribe's Presidency (2002-2010). The Colombian DDR was one of the pillars of Uribe's national security programme, the Policy of Defense and Democratic Security[4], which included two different yet complementary strategies: the government opted for negotiating and establishing a peace settlement with paramilitary groups, while at the same time increasing its military offensive against the FARC guerrillas. In practice, the DDR was developed in two stages that coincide with Uribe's two presidential terms: the negotiation, demobilisation and disarmament phases (2002-2006) and the reintegration phase (2006-2010).

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[4] Hereafter referred to as the Policy of Democratic Security. For his second mandate Uribe continued with this policy under the name of the 'Policy of Consolidation of the Democratic Security'.

Negotiation with paramilitary leaders began two months after Uribe assumed the Presidency in 2002. Due to the fragmentation of the paramilitary leadership, four different negotiating tables were created, resulting in the "collective" demobilisation of 31,671 soldiers organised across 37 structures by 2006 (OACP, 2006:8). In 2008 there were also some collective demobilisations of small guerrilla structures comprising 264 members, including the FARC group Caica Gaitana (alleged FARC dissidents), other FARC militias and imprisoned members, and a small dissident guerrilla force named the Guevarist Revolutionary Army[5] (ODDR, 2008).

In a parallel process, an increasing number of deserters from the guerrillas surrendered to the authorities as a result of sustained military operations and programmes that encouraged defection from rebel groups (Pinto et al, 2002). Based on a set of laws and legal procedures launched in the early 1990s[6], deserter guerrilla members were entitled to judicial benefits and reinsertion treatment, through which they could attain the status of demobilised population (Villarraga, 2006:31). This type of demobilisation has been called "individual", as there was no negotiation between the armed factions, and this was indeed a process that targeted scattered individuals, mainly combatants from two guerrilla forces still operating in the country: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). During Uribe's government there were 23,001 of these individual demobilisations, of which 81.6 per cent were former members of the ELN or the FARC and 16.3 per cent were ex-paramilitaries (Ministry of Defense, 2013). This policy has been maintained by current President Juan Manuel Santos[7].

The Colombian government orchestrated the design, administration, fundraising and implementation of the entire demobilisation policy. Although in 2003 Uribe launched an initiative to attract external aid and cooperation (ACCI, 2005:27; Acción Social, 2006), by 2005 the national budget had financed most of the demobilisation expenditure (Schönrock, 2005:8). The government of the United States provided some resources through USAid in the form of the Plan Colombia cooperation policy (US, 2008:54), but

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[5] Ejército Revolucionario Guevarista (ERG).

[6] Law 104/1993, Decree 1384/1994 (Pinto et al, 2002:1; Villarraga, 2006:31).

[7] Juan Manuel Santos was elected twice: for the periods 2010-2014 and 2014-2018.

the international community proved to be highly reluctant to fund the DDR process: both the European Union (EU) and some US Congress members raised concerns over the negotiations between the Government and the paramilitary leaders, including the clandestine involvement of drug-traffickers, the lack of advance planning for the reintegration phase, and the government's proposal of universal amnesty for crimes punishable by the International Criminal Court and crimes related to drug-trafficking (ICG, 2004; CIDH, 2006; Guáqueta, 2007:26; UN 2003; 2004).

In 2004, at the request of the Colombian government, the Organisation of American States (OAS) took on an observational role by creating the Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP). However, the international community was again reticent to provide funding for MAPP's operations: to the point that the Colombian government had to 'donate' US$ 1million to get the mission off the ground (El Tiempo, 22/06/04). Even then, the OAS remained highly critical of Uribe's DDR, as evidenced in the reports presented by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (CIDH, 2004) and by MAPP itself (especially reports 7th, 2006 and 8th, 10th, 2007). In a more operational and technical role, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) administered USAid resources and implemented an information system called SAME[8], a database on the personal situation and individual progress of each of the demobilised within the reintegration programme. For the reintegration phase, the Colombian government was more successful in attracting external funding from the governments of Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden and Spain.

The demobilisation of paramilitary fighters took place within two different legal frameworks (OACP/ACR, 2010:88). On the one hand, the rank-and-file paramilitaries and guerrilla deserters were treated under the same scheme: Law 782 of transitional justice, which covered political crimes as part of the armed conflict such as belonging to or collaborating with rebel groups or the use of illegal weapons and military fatigues. On the other hand, the paramilitary leaders were in need of a separate law of transitional justice that would provide amnesty or lenient treatment on gross human rights violations and crimes punishable under international criminal law. The approval of this law was

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[8] Acronym in Spanish. Sistema de Alerta Monitoreo y Evaluación. SAME was implemented from from 2003 to 2009, when the ACR developed its own software: Sistema de Información para la Reintegración (SIR).

the subject of fierce debates in Congress for two years until it was finally enacted in 2005 under the name of Law 975 of Justice and Peace. However, both laws 782 and 975 were subject to substantial amendments throughout the DDR process, with subsequent changes to the legal and political status of the paramilitaries who demobilised collectively, and yet further impact on those guerrilla members who demobilised individually.

Between 2003 and 2006, the government implemented a set of reinsertion policies, which were initially set to last for 18 months, but were extended to nine years due to a variety of political circumstances that I explain below. As mentioned earlier, throughout the conflict the Colombian state maintained a crucial capacity to build institutions. Thus, during the DDR process, there was an array of offices and programmes already in place to manage the demobilised population: during the first phase, the collective negotiation and demobilisation of paramilitaries were carried out by the Peace Commissioner Office, while the individual demobilisations were the responsibility of the Ministry of Defense. The Ministry of the Interior and Justice was initially designated to carry out the reinsertion policies through the Programme of Reincorporation to the Civil Life (PRVC)[9]. In addition, at the sub-national level two independent programmes were created by the Mayoral Offices of the two largest and most important cities in the country: "Peace and Reconciliation" in Medellín and the "Programme of Services to the Process of Demobilisation and Reintegration" (PAPDRB) in Bogotá. All three programmes had different approaches to the provision of services to the demobilised. However, in September 2006, the PRVC was replaced by the High Counsellor for Reintegration (ACR)[10], an office that reported directly to the President. It was at this point that the ACR consolidated and unified a reintegration strategy and a national reintegration programme was finally put into action. The ACR programme was later implemented nationwide and made compulsory to all the demobilised.

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[9] Acronym in Spanish. Programa de Reincorporación a la Vida Civil. Previously Dirección Nacional para la Reinserción. For an account of the different institutions involved in reintegration and their transformations, see Pinto et al, 2002 and FIP and Alfaomega, 2003.

[10] Acronym in Spanish. Alta Consejería Presidencial para la Reintegración Social y Económica de Personas y Grupos Alzados en Armas. Decree 3043/2006. On 3 November 2011, the ACR was transformed into the Colombian Agency for Reintegration, retaining the same acronym. Decree 4138/2011.

In 2008 – five years after the first demobilisations – the National Policy of Social and Economic Reintegration (PRSE)[11] was finally enacted and other minor offices or civil servants were delegated to specific DDR duties within fourteen Ministries and public offices (Rodríguez, 2006:111). However, in practice, all low-ranking paramilitaries that demobilised from 2003 onwards entered into a judicial limbo: they were not considered criminals, but there were legal impediments that prevented the ACR programme from setting out the requirements or deadline by which the ex-combatants could be considered fully reintegrated members of society. From 2006 to 2011, the demobilised could be classified as "inactive" with regard to the ACR programme, meaning that they were registered but there was no further information on their whereabouts. Following the election of President Santos in 2010, the ACR underwent an internal re-organisation and Congress enacted Law 1424 in 2011, replacing Law 782 and changing for the third time the legal status of the demobilised. Law 1424 at last established a procedural closure to the reintegration process, stating that enrolment in and satisfactory approval of the ACR programme was a compulsory requirement for the ex-combatants to complete the judicial process and graduate as citizens.

The reintegration phase was the product of a fracture in, rather than a continuation of, Uribe's policy: chapter three will show how the initial DDR design was reconsidered due to strong political opposition and contestation, and the ruling of the Supreme Court of Justice. Chapter four, meanwhile, explores how the reintegration phase was born out of the crisis of the reinsertion strategy as first implemented by Uribe's government. In practice, the demobilised had to navigate their reintegration in the midst of both legal and institutional uncertainty. Understanding the complex legal and political milieu in which the Colombian DDR process and the ACR programme emerged is therefore of the utmost importance in analysing the personal experiences of the ex-combatants involved.

As will be explained in the next section, Colombia is a country with a long history of peace processes, some of which have ended in peace agreements. Subsequently, the judicial system and the institutions have developed laws and procedures for the management of the former combatants of rebel groups, including the provision of

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[11] Acronym in Spanish. Política Nacional de Reintegración Social y Económica para personas y grupos armados ilegales. Conpes 3554 enacted on 1 December 2008.

services for short-term reinsertion aid. In this particular DDR process, low-ranking combatants from guerrillas and paramilitaries were equally accused of the political crimes of sedition and rebellion, and accordingly received the benefits of the transitional laws: amnesty and short-term economic benefits. The differences in the demobilisation of both types of combatants will be discussed in detail in chapter four, suffice it to say that while the paramilitaries were the responsibility of civilan institutions and were sent home after the ceremonies, former guerrilla members were handled by military institutions and were allocated to temporary shelters in Bogotá. More significant was the difference in treatment between low-ranking paramilitaries and their leaders: the negotiation with and demobilisation of the paramilitary leaders required the modification of transitional laws and procedures, and in particular the criteria defining the diference between criminality and political violence. Chapter three explains the mobilisation of political forces for and against the treatment of paramilitaries as a political armed group, which was ultimately the process that defined the initial design of the DDR process under Uribe's administration.

Uribe's strong-arm approach to the armed conflict gained him huge popularity and political leverage with which to make structural changes to the institutions, including several attempts to reform the Constitution to bring about his reelection. At the same time, however, his policies were heavily criticised at national and international level due to concerns over human rights abuses, corruption and complicity with paramilitary groups and drug-traffickers. The negotiations themselves raised questions about the over-friendly, even complicit relationship between Uribe and the paramilitary leaders[12]. The discussions and agreements reached during the negotiation phase, for one, were kept secret and never disclosed to the public, leaving many doubts over the legality and constitutionality of the DDR process. Moreover, the collective demobilisations were widely perceived as a ruse to provide amnesty to paramilitary leaders for gross human rights violations, and to save drug-barons from extradition to the US. In contrast, the low-ranking ex-paramilitaries received no such attention, and were sent home without access to the services appropriate for their long-term reintegration. The outcomes of the process, therefore, remain decidedly ambivalent: on the one hand, thousands of

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[12] When Uribe was Governor of the department of Antioquia, he strongly supported a form of legal paramilitary groups, the CONVIVIR: cooperatives of private security.

members from paramilitary groups and guerrillas demobilised, and the security indicators for the country improved at an impressive rate; on the other, powerful criminal bands (known as BACRIM[13]) emerged as a by-product of the demobilisations in areas previously controlled by the paramilitaries.

One month after the approval of Law 975, the political influence of the paramilitary groups within the government was uncovered in what has been called the "para-politics" scandal: abundant evidence revealed that many politicians, public servants and influential figures had engaged in unlawful alliances with these groups and other drug-traffickers. Far from marginal, these alliances lay at the heart of many democratic institutions – including Congress, the National Secret Service (DAS[14]) and offices inside the judiciary system – and hence greatly influenced the provision of services from an array of public institutions as well as the approval of laws, including Law 975 (Semana, 11/09/05; López and Sevillano, 2007; Acemoglu, Robinson and Santos, 2009; López (ed), 2010).

By 2015, and as a result of fierce political and legal battles, 20 of Uribe's close advisers had been removed from office and/or were in jail or fugitives from the Colombian law, including four ex-ministers, two former DAS directors, two of his personal secretaries, his security chief, and sixty members of Congress, most of them belonging to Uribe's political coalition (Silla Vacia, 16/04/15; Verdad Abierta, 28/08/13). Significantly for this research, a legal investigation was opened against Peace Commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo, who had been delegated by the government to head the negotiation and demobilisation of the paramilitary groups. Criminal charges were filed against him for his involvement in the demobilising of the FARC Cacica Gaitana, a group that was later discovered to be fake. Restrepo was summoned to testify by the Colombian authorities but fled the country (BBC 09/02/12), and attempts to call him to trial have so far been unsuccessful.

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[13] The term BACRIM was coined in Colombia to describe the criminal bands (in Spanish, Bandas Criminales) that remained or were created after demobilisation. There is still much debate as to whether the BACRIM were new criminal structures looking to control the areas of drug-trafficking or the continuation of certain paramilitary groups (Árias and Guáqueta, 2008:5; Ávila, 2010:157).

[14] Acromyn in Spanish. Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad.

Many demobilisations but no peace

The modern Colombian state is the product of the Civil War that took place from 1949 to 1953 between the Liberal and Conservative parties. After a transitional period of five years in which a military junta governed, democracy was established in 1957 under a peace settlement that restricted the participation in elections – and thus the sharing of power at any level – to those two parties alone (Tirado, 1996). These restrictive power arrangements produced the conditions for guerrilla warfare: first with the creation of the FARC and ELN guerrillas in the 1960s, and then with the emergence of another five guerrilla groups in the 1970s and 1980s (Villarraga, 2006:18; Guáqueta, 2007). Paradoxically, then, the growth of democracy in Colombia has been inextricably linked with political turmoil: the conflict has lasted as long as the democratic institutions and has been particularly strong in areas where the public institutions have a significant presence, for instance in the department of Antioquia and its capital Medellín[15].

By consequence, Colombia has a tradition of successful peace processes and demobilisations that still have not brought the conflict to an end: at least nine different peace agreements between the government and different guerrillas, paramilitary groups and militias took place from 1953 to 2002, with subsequent demobilisations and ex-combatant reintegration (Villarraga, 2006; Rodríguez, 2006:112). For this research I refer as context to the demobilisations that occurred in the mid-1980s and 1990s, when a conservative president took power yet chose to forward some very liberal ideas: President Betancur[16] understood the guerrilla struggle as the by-product of widespread social inequality and restricted political participation (Villarraga, 2006; Turriago and Bustamante, 2003). This discourse of reconciliation rather than confrontation continued with the next president, Virgilio Barco, and led to the demobilisation of five guerrilla movements that were subsequently transformed into political parties or civic organisation[17]. The institutions and policies for reintegration are seen to develop from

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[15] For a detailed account of the relationship between the violence in Medellín and local institutions, see the esssays collected in Hincapie, 2006; Gutierrez and Jaramillo, 2004; and Gutierrez et al, 2009.

[16] Belisario Betancur (1982-1986); Virgilio Barco (1986-1990).

[17] The M-19 demobilised in 1990, Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL), Movimiento Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (MRT) and Movimiento Quintín Lame (MQL) in 1991, and Corriente de Revolución Socialista (CRS) in 1994. The FARC, ELN and EPL made their own attempts to create political parties from 1985 to 1990.

the Betancur government onwards, when the PRVC and other related offices were created to support ex-guerrilla members in their transition to civilian life[18].

These demobilisations transformed the political landscape: the peace settlement between the government and the rebels demanded the enshrining of a new Constitution, as well as various institutional arrangements, that allowed the participation of new political parties. Additionally, the entire process prompted the introduction of democratic institutions that increased and facilitated state access, control and accountability at the national and sub-national levels, including the creation of the Fiscal Office, the Constitutional Court, the Inspector General's Office (Procuraduría) and the Office for the Defense of the People (Defensoría del Pueblo) (Constitution 1991, arts. 116, 118; Semana, 08/07/08). In a study comparing the political reintegration of the M-19 guerrilla in the 1990s and the paramilitary groups in the 2000s, Guáqueta (2007:425) has argued that the rebels sought out a more favourable social and political environment for their participation in elections: their actions were perceived as a reaction to appalling social conditions and restrictions of the political system. Their petitions and proposals, too, had addressed structural changes towards more and better democracy. The guerrilla demobilisations were thus perceived as Robin Hood-esque in their actions, and there were widespread feelings of sympathy towards the ex-combatants.

However, these reforms impacted enormously on the power of the traditional parties and elites in the regions, which led to the polarisation of the political landscape (Romero, 2003:40). This also coincided with burgeoning military competition among the different armed groups operating in the country at the time: on the one hand, two guerrilla factions reluctant to demobilise (FARC and ELN) became stronger in both number of troops and military tactics, which in turn prompted the creation of illegal paramilitary groups to counter the guerrilla threat (Ferro and Uribe, 2002; Echandia, 2006:28). On the other, drug-trafficking began its expansion across the country and provided sizeable economic resources to finance the military power of both guerrillas

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[18] Consejería para la Reconciliación, la Normalización y la Rehabilitación (CRNR), decrees 2577/1986 and 1860/1991 and Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación (PNR), decree 2707/1993. For a detailed account of programmes and offices, see FIP, nd; Turriago and Bustamente, 2003:25).

and paramilitaries, as well as prompting the creation of private armies to fulfil the security needs inherent in criminality (Romero, 2003; Gutierrez and Baron, 2004).

During Barco's Presidency, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Defense and the Inspector General advocated for the creation of self-defense groups to counter the guerrilla threat, while the Ministry of Government and the Counsellor for Peace denounced these private armies as criminals (Romero, 2003:204; Pardo, 2007:18). Whereas Barco at first claimed that the debate was purely "semantic", he later strongly opposed the creation of any type of private army (ICG, 2003:5-7; Pardo, 2007:18; Ávila, 2010:106). Significantly, the debate as to whether illegal private security groups of a counter-insurgent nature could be considered to be politically motivated became the crux of the political treatment of the paramilitary leaders. Ultimately, then, the use of the terms "self-defenses" or "paramilitary" has profound consequences as a means of legitimising or de-legitimising these groups (Ljodal 2002:297).

Romero considers the difference between the two to be whether the group is defensive or offensive in nature: while the former is a strategy of protection against guerrillas or other security threats, the latter describes groups that actively engage in military offensives and territorial expansion. However, he clarifies, these differences have become blurred as the Colombian conflict has developed (2003:37). Key to this research, during Uribe's presidency the political battle over the approval of Law 975 revolved around whether the military actions of the paramilitary groups and their involvement in drug-trafficking could be justified by the pursuit of political aims, and thereby be judged by transitional laws rather than criminal justice.

I have chosen to use the term "paramilitary" here as it is the most common nomenclature. However, the paramilitary groups lacked any sense of military and political unity. It is important to take into account that various scattered armed groups demobilised – all with contrasting origins, aims and economic bases. These included local vigilante groups as well as small private armies for the protection of drug-traffickers. Specifically, I will refer here to the Colombian United Self-Defenses (AUC)[19], an organisation that tried to unify diverse groups such as private armies, gangs and vigilante groups under the umbrella of the paramilitary cause, and which played a

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[19] Acromyn in Spanish. Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia.

crucial role in the negotiations with the Uribe government and the subsequent demobilisations.

The creation of paramilitary groups brought about one of the most violent periods in Colombian history. Although the new leftist parties were highly successful against their more traditional counterparts in winning democratic elections, few of their elected candidates were ever able to exercise their mandate or even be inaugurated into office. Many politicians, mainly but not only those from new leftist parties, fell victim to selective killings by the guerrillas, the paramilitaries, the drug-traffickers and the national army (Romero, 2003:91; Avila, 2010:102). By the mid-1990s entire political parties – those formed by ex-rebels but also by civic movements – were wiped out through the systematic murder of their politicians, members and sympathisers.

Remarkably, the political and social environment mentioned above contrasts sharply with some of the assumptions found in the literature on DDR, which tends to foreground the risk the demobilised may pose in a post-conflict setting:

> *[DDR] aims to deal with the post-conflict security problem that results from ex-combatants being left without livelihoods or support networks, other than their former comrades, during the critical transition period from conflict to peace and development.*
>
> *(UNDP, 2006, 2.10:4)*

> *Without [a reintegration programme] they will most likely return to lawlessness, banditry and violence.*
>
> *(Gleichmann et al, 2004:51)*

Mcmullin has argued that "the claim that ex-combatant criminality could 'spiral up' to threaten security in the post-conflict state relies upon the assumption that ex-combatants naturally and seamlessly turn to lives of crime after conflict" (2012:13). DDR discourses have tended to reinforce forms of domination from international agents over programme beneficiaries by ignoring the historical and political context of conflicts and instead perpetuating stereotypes of communities and ex-combatants (Kriger, 2003:6; Mcmullin, 2013:23). Moreover, multilateral and international organisations reproduce

and perpetuate the discourses and practices embedded in international macro-economic policies and global politics (Ruffer, 2005:12; Bowd and Özerdem, 2013:20), and impose prescriptive and normative discourses that assume war to be an anomaly and combatants to always be deviant (Duclos; 2012:7). Conversely, alternative approaches that portray the ex-combatants as human resources for development and reconstruction have received less attention (Nübler, 1997; Özerdem, 2009:47).

The ex-rebels who decided to demobilise during the 1990s in Colombia became the victims of, rather than a threat to, the security situation of the country. Furthermore, and despite the bloodshed, the former guerrillas contributed to producing structural changes that favoured democracy: updating a Constitution that was more than a hundred years old; breaking a bygone tradition of bi-partisan politics to include new political parties; and prompting the creation of institutions of control and mechanisms for citizenship participation and protection. Certainly, former combatants could equally help either to build and strengthen democracy or to threaten its security, and the reasons and circumstances behind one or the other may reach beyond the creation of a programme to deal with the ex-combatants.

My contention is that, by emphasising the risks they pose, the design and implementation of DDR programmes reproduces stereotypes and misconceptions of the fighters. Other aspects could instead be taken into account, such as the security problems the demobilised face themselves, the challenges and dilemmas associated with their reintegration, or their own potential contribution to post-conflict society. By analysing the institutional learning of the Colombian reintegration institutions, and by listening to the personal experiences of former combatants, this thesis aims to shed new light on how a reintegration programme could be effective in fostering a safe environment both for ex-combatants and society in general.

The central research question of this thesis, then, is how the Colombian reintegration programme contributed to the economic, social and political reintegration of the ex-combatants. Adopting an approach from social constructivism, the research focuses on the interaction between the reintegration programme and its participants. It is assumed that the individuals' behaviours and preferences are the result of social relationships and roles brought about by their interaction with the institutions. The resulting analysis is

twofold: firstly through an historical reconstruction of how the DDR process evolved and how the ACR programme came into being; secondly, by investigating the personal experiences of the demobilised who participated in the ACR programme.

By taking both the ACR programme and the excombatants into account, this thesis understands the DDR as a set of social relationships that could potentially prompt political and identity transformations. The design and implementation of a DDR programme goes beyond technical considerations, being as they are part of larger political and historical processes, to which the DDR officers also belong. The format by which the demobilisation and disarmament are negotiated greatly influences initial programme design, as well as how it evolves, is contested and implemented. All of this inevitably affects the capacity of the programme to support the ex-combatants in their reintegration and in their transition into law-abiding citizens. New questions must surely be raised over existing DDR literature and practice: such as where responsibility should lie for implementing the reintegration, and to what extent the relationships created between the demobilised and the DDR officers are meaningful, meaningless or conflicting.

At the time of writing, there are currently two relevant processes underway in Colombia: first, peace negotiations with the FARC have reached a final agreement and the demobilisation of its troops is due to begin within a matter of months. Second, the DDR process analysed here is coming to an end: on the one hand, the former rank-and-file guerrillas and paramilitaries are finishing their reintegration programme and graduating as citizens; on the other, the situation of the paramilitary leaders has been resolved and (those who were extradited aside) they have started to be released from prison after completing the sentences imposed on them by Law 975. Hence, this analysis is of foremost importance given its potential contribution to designing and implementating future DDR strategy, to improving the reintegration of former paramiltary leaders, and to helping Colombian society come to terms with past DDR experience and the violence perpetrated by the ex-combatants.

Research purpose and thesis outline

DDR policies and literature have assumed that two elements are crucial to prevent the ex-combatants from following a certain tendency towards violence by returning to their

armed groups or engaging into criminal networks: first, breaking the social ties and hierarchies within the military factions and second, fostering the establishment of livelihoods out of the non-war economy. However, armed conflict may continue after the successful demobilisation of groups and fighters due to a variety of factors: the relapse into war may involve different people (Mcmullin, 2012:11); security problems may be due to a re-accommodation of the criminal world (Massé, 2011); and failures in addressing the security dilemma, i.e. the mass killing of the demobilised population, may result in the rearming of the demobilised (Themnér, 2011).

Although I agree that breaking the military structure constitutes an important step towards the process of laying down arms, I also contend that the social and political environment that receives them is a fundamental factor in achieving a successful reintegration. This environment is not restricted to their families or their recipient communities, but to the creation of institutions, mechanisms and a bureaucracy that establish real and functional links between the former combatants and the state. Ultimately, ex-combatants do not reintegrate in a vacuum and their transformation into law-abiding citizens requires an adequate political context for doing so.

Adopting a social constructivism perspective, this research analyses the interaction between individuals and institutions. More to the point, it explores whether and how the ACR reintegration programme contributed to the reintegration of ex-combatants in three different dimensions: economic (if it prepared the ex-combatants to earn livelihoods in non-war activities), social (favouring the break of factional ties and the creation of other social links) and political (whether it contributed to generate faith in the democratic process and their transformation into law-abiding citizens). The focus of this thesis is on the reintegration of low- and mid-ranking ex-paramilitaries and ex-guerrillas who were subject to laws 782 and 1424, and thus active participants in the ACR reintegration programme. Paramilitary leaders did not participate in the programme: although by 2015 a handful have been released from jail having complied with eight-year sentences under law 975, the trials of most of them continue and their judicial situation remains uncertain.

This thesis is organised as follows: chapter one presents an overview of four main debates on the design of DDR programmes – the scope of the DDR, who to target with

reintegration benefits, the ownership by the local government and the reintegration phase. This chapter shows that the role of state institutions in the transformation of combatants into law-abiding citizens has been largely neglected. The second chapter presents the methodology and data: it describes the fieldwork and the thematic analysis applied to the interviews and focus groups. The third chapter explains the design of the Colombian DDR process and how the differential security policies in dealing with the paramilitary and the guerrillas defined who would receive status as demobilised, and how. As a result, the initial DDR policy neglected the long-term reintegration of ex-combatants or the provision of aid to the receiving communities. Chapter four describes the process of ownership and state-building, exploring how the implementation and contestation of national DDR policy by the Mayoralties of Medellín and Bogotá transformed the DDR, which in turn resulted in the creation of a national policy for reintegration and the ACR programme.

The last three chapters present a micro-level analysis of the ex-combatants' personal experiences during their reintegration process. The fifth chapter evaluates the different strategies of economic reintegration, highlighting the difficulties faced by the demobilised in obtaining employment within the formal economy. Nonetheless, these challenges did not necessarily result in recidivism among the ex-combatant population. The sixth chapter analyses the creation of social bonds with family and community, as well as with the ACR reintegration officers. It shows that the reintegration phase in Colombia introduced the psycho-social as the organising element for the other dimensions and addressed the social relationships as a means to change the ex-combatants' behaviours. Chapter seven presents three different scenarios for a political reintegration: the transformation of ex-paramilitary groups into political parties, the creation of grass-roots organisations and the building of a citizen identity. This analysis shows how the ACR programme can contribute to access to the democratic mechanisms and the subsequent creation of new forms of interacting with the state, which in turn resulted in the creation of a new identity as citizens. Finally, I conclude by summarising the findings and conclusions of this research and presenting some recommendations for the demobilisation and reintegration of FARC troops.

Chapter 1

Ex-combatants in Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) Programmes: Citizens or Civilians?

> *And since the State belongs to the class of compound bodies,*
> *as much as anything else that is a whole itself,*
> *but yet is composed of many factors,*
> *it is clear that it is the citizen who must be first discovered.*
> *(Aristotle, Politics III §1275)*

The UN has stated that "[t]he objective of the DDR process is to contribute to security and stability in post-conflict environments so that recovery and development can begin" (UNDP, 2006, 1.10:1). Thus, although DDR alone cannot solve the conflict or prevent the violence, it is a contributing factor for establishing a secure environment and subsequent social recovery and development (UNDP, 2006, 1.10:1). Similarly, the World Bank claims that "DDR programs and SSR [Security Sector Reform] share the objective of contributing to a countrywide [...] process toward peace and stability and to creating better conditions for development" (MDRP 2003:3). However, Jennings has argued that, in reality, this smooth continuity between security and development does not take place as their goals "[...] may neither coincide nor be mutually realisable" (2008:13).

The main debates in the design of DDR programmes revolve around this security/development relationship. First, there is the question of the scope of the assistance given and whether DDR interventions should be security-oriented (traditional or minimalist) or development-oriented (second generation or maximalist). Secondly, DDR programmes need to find the balance between targeting the ex-combatants with reinsertion aid (combatant-based) or extending that aid to recipient communities and victims (community-based) to ensure better reintegration results and further development. Thirdly, it has been pointed out that DDR programmes impose one-size models made to fit an international security agenda, but lacking national ownership and agency in their own projects for local development. Finally, despite being the ultimate goal of any DDR process, insufficient attention has been paid to ex-combatant reintegration: most DDR programmes include some form of reinsertion assistance to prevent security problems caused by the ex-combatants, but long-term activities to

achieve a sustainable reintegration of the demobilised are not necessarily included in the original design, which has tended to result in the insufficient commitment of donors and governments to provide sustainable funding and resources.

This chapter aims to show how these four debates emerge out in the design of a DDR *programme* by multilateral organisations. In the first to third sections of this chapter, the debates on the scope, targeting and ownership will be expanded in order to identify how this research on the Colombian DDR advances the current literature. In the fourth section emphasis is made on the reintegration phase and its various dimensions (economic, social and political) to claim that while the economic dimension has been stressed, the social and political aspects are often neglected. In the fifth section, it is argued that the ex-combatants are too often perceived as a security risk, based upon methodological individualism that stems from liberalism: it is assumed that these are greedy and apolitical individuals who join wars motivated purely by economic gain, and mistakenly seen as a deviant group entirely separate from society at large. Thereafter, the sixth section looks at the ways in which the design and implementation of DDR programmes tend to address the excombatants as civilians rather than as citizens: while being a civilian defines a person solely in relation to the military or armed forces, being a citizen does so with regard to the wider state and its democratic institutions.

1.1 The scope of assistance: minimalist and maximalist approaches

After the end of the Cold War, practitioners and policy-makers on international peace-keeping missions started to question the effectiveness and ethics of restricting their activities to providing short-term and security-oriented aid (Muggah and Baaré, 2009:227; Berdal, 1996:23). Multilateral operations have therefore progressively moved their focus from narrow 'peace-keeping' to broader 'peace-building' and 'state-building': although originally these missions were deployed with a mandate of maintaining a minimum of security in post-conflict situations by imposing military presence and reducing the number of armed groups that threaten the monopoly of force, more recently the emphasis has shifted towards broader developmental aims (Kriger, 2003:3; Rufer, 2005:27; Muggah, 2010:1; Muggah, Berdal and Torjesen, 2009:270). This prioritising of development, in turn, mirrors changes in the international

community's own precepts and discourses, which have progressively moved towards stressing *positive peace* as opposed to *negative peace* (Özerdem, 2009:45) and focusing on *human security* rather than *military security* (PSD, 2009:13).

More closely, DDR programmes move in a continuum ranging from minimalist to maximalist approaches (Muggah, 2010:14). On the one hand, minimalist approaches address the management of immediate security risks in post-conflict settings. Hence, emphasis is made in preventing and controlling the risk ex-combatants may pose in terms of their return to arms or their involvement in criminality. On the other hand, maximalist approaches imply long-term and more ambitious goals for reconstruction and development, comprising activities to stimulate the economic and social recovery of war-torn societies as a whole (Muggah, 2009:14-15; 2010:2; Torjesen, 2009:412-416).

At the micro-level, the guarantee of a minimum of security conditions for the ex-combatants constitutes a main tenet in any peace settlement: that they will not be killed after surrendering their weapons and that the agreements will be fulfilled to some extent. As such, DDR programmes address this security dilemma by providing the fighters with a safe environment in which to lay down their arms and return to civil life, and – by minimising the presence of spoilers – preventing them from exacerbating the security dilemma for their own benefit (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2007:535). The next step towards security comes "[...] through a process of removing weapons from the hands of combatants, taking the combatants out of military structures and helping them to integrate socially and economically into society" (UNDP, 2006, 1.10:2). In practice, this help takes the form of reinsertion assistance: short-term material and financial aid to cover the basic needs of the ex-combatants and their families and to prepare them for civilian life. This reinsertion assistance is designed to be temporary and transitional – usually lasting no more than one year – and it may include the provision of economic support-schemes, one-off payments, housing or food, as well as short-term education, vocational training and counselling for business creation or employment seeking (ibid, 1.20:19).

At the macro-level, development is expected to occur after certain security conditions have been achieved. Security Structures Reform (SSR) and Judicial Reform (JR) thus complement DDR through the building of efficient and accountable security forces and

judicial mechanisms. These reforms may include the decision to integrate previous rebel forces as part of the national armed forces or to reduce their size by partially demobilising their military, paramilitary and supporting personnel (UNDP, 2006, 2.20:4; MDRP, 2003:4). A further expected outcome is the reallocation of the military expenditure in the form of investment in social and development projects (Berdal, 1996:5; Muggah, 2010:15).

Minimalist approaches have been highly criticised because they have proved insufficient – even counterproductive – in preventing the resumption of conflict or the continuation of violence in other forms. It has been argued that DDR programmes tend to be designed as short-term technocratic interventions: restricted to achieving immediate security goals and insufficiently linked to other critical areas such as reconstruction, security sector and judicial reform, peace-building or development (Thruelsen, 2006; Jennings, 2008:11; Muggah, 2009:2; PDS, 2009:ii). For instance, Berdal (1996:23) has argued that failures in implementing, planning and funding DDR programmes only served to exacerbate the political tensions in Angola and Somalia. The subsequent turn towards a maximalist approach has highlighted the need for long-term and multi-institutional actions to address human security, going beyond mere military security, and producing overarching reforms in the security, political and economic realms (Ottaway, 2003; Gomes, Alden and Parsons, 2007:32; PDS, 2009:13). As the Stockholm contribution has posited:

> *Hence, beyond making a contribution to securing peace, DDR programmes have been considered to be capable of fundamentally transforming social relations, achieving reconciliation, solving structural economic imbalances or helping countries achieve significant developmental leaps.*

> *(Stockholm, 2005:10)*

Accordingly, the UN has recently updated the IDDRS guidelines by addressing 'Second Generation' DDR programmes, as opposed to 'traditional' DDR programmes (UNDPKO, 2010b:3). These second generation programmes have brought about three main shifts in DDR policy-making: first, there is yet greater stress on the importance of long-term development goals, rather than short-term security goals; second, demobilisation, disarmament and reinsertion are no longer considered to be post-

conflict activities but may also be implemented in contexts of ongoing violence caused by civil unrest or criminality; and third, the sequence of DDR has become more flexible, facilitating the implementation of the reintegration phase in parallel or even before the demobilisation and disarmament phases (Muggha, 2009; Munive and Jakobsen, 2012:363; Muggah, Berdal and Torjesen, 2009:270).

At the international level, the emphasis on maximalist versus minimalist approaches may depend on the institutions in charge of the design and implementation of peace operations and DDR programmes. For instance, within the UN, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) carries out security-oriented and combatant-based disarmament and demobilisation missions, according to its mandate of maintaining international security; while the Development Programme (UNDP) or Unicef tend to implement more development-oriented and community-based interventions, focusing on the reinsertion and long-term reintegration of ex-combatants (Muggah, 2009:15; Muggah, Molloy and Halty, 2009:215). In a similar vein, the World Bank's mandate precludes its participation in disarmament or any kind of security operations, hence its activities must focus on development in the demobilisation and reintegration phases (MDRP, 2010b:10).

However, some authors have warned of the excessive expectations placed on DDR programmes, and on the real capacity of the international community to achieve social and economic recovery in war-torn societies. Pugel has made a call for "realism" over "inflation of expectations". He argues that while DDR programmes can provide for short-term livelihood opportunities, long-term employment and reintegration depend more on a variety of elements embedded in local politics and social dynamics that go beyond the action of the international community (2009:90). Both the Stockholm Initiative (SIDDR, 2005:10) and Gleichmann et al. (2004:16) have also signalled the dangers of over-expectation: particularly the impact that DDR programmes may have in changing social relations or addressing the root causes of conflict. Given the fact that international aid projects tend toward the short-term and the specific, they are better suited to activities around demobilisation, disarmament and reinsertion, rather than the long-term and more ambitious actions required for reintegration.

At the local level, the decision between addressing security-oriented versus development-oriented goals may be contingent on the political environment and the nature of the peace settlement. In other words, the scope of DDR programmes, policies and activities should also be considered against the contextual reasoning behind the negotiations, the expectations of the warring factions, and the political arrangements that were negotiated throughout the DDR process. Therefore, while the international community requests (and expects) from war-torn states security as precondition for development – sovereignty and monopoly of force, as much as human security – national governments may have other priorities, namely, their military goals and the consolidation of territorial control. The result, then, is a DDR programme designed to follow a purely security-oriented logic.

1.2 Targeting: community-based and combatant-based approaches

The debate between minimalist and maximalist approaches is also linked to the question of targeting. Does the intervention begin and end with the ex-combatants as the primary recipient of reinsertion aid? Or should other groups and communities affected by the conflict be included as well?.

Sending aid directly to the ex-combatants and their families is deemed to be a means of preventing their involvement in criminal or war-related activities. However, two criticisms have been made of this approach. For one, it has been argued that this constitutes a divisive strategy, creating resentment in the communities and perceptions of reward and impunity towards perpetrators (Özerdem, 2009:54; PDS, 2009:13; Muggah, 2010:8). Additionally, choosing certain people over others may unintentionally strengthen the position of the commanders by legitimising the armed groups and reifying the perpetrators of violence (Torjesen, 2009:415; Schulhofer-Wohl and Sambanis, 2012:25).

Moreover, targeting the demobilised population with differential treatment may have the contrary effect of inhibiting or delaying reintegration by artificially creating differences between the ex-combatants and the community that do not stand up in reality (Gomes, Alden and Parsons, 2007:3). For instance, Karamé (2009:509) has argued that the geography of Lebanon and the rhythm of the war allowed soldiers to alternate between military and civilian lifestyles. Similarly, Muggah et al (2009:197)

have shown that rural soldiers in Ethiopia left their communities only for short periods of time. Jennings' research in Liberia demonstrated that the decision to join an armed group was seen by the soldiers as a job that co-existed alongside their domestic activities in their communities. Furthermore, she argues:

The idea of ex-combatants as a specially disadvantaged group that can be successfully targeted with policy interventions depends on several assumptions: most obviously, that ex-combatants are substantively different (and worse off) than civilians in terms of skills, earning capacity, stigmatisation, and the level of hardship endured during conflict; and furthermore, that there is a clear difference between civilians and combatants; that combatants are organised into a limited number of discrete factions; and that the civilian population is a relatively static, skilled entity into which ex-combatants can be placed.

(Jennings, 2008:13)

Therefore, in areas where going to war is seen as a social norm, reintegration programmes may stigmatise those who would otherwise be "ordinary boys", no more marginalised, no less educated or no less poor than their compatriots in their own communities of origin (Boas and Hatloy, 2008:52).

In contrast, community-centred approaches take into account the role of the recipient communities and the socio-economic needs of the whole population in the areas where the combatants are to be reintegrated (Özerdem, 2012:52; Mcmullin, 2012:28). Such measures might include extending the benefits offered to the ex-combatants to wider sections of the community, or the establishment of common goods and public services (Muggah and Baaré, 2009:238). The World Bank recommends that the needs of both populations be addressed by channelling the monetary assistance to ex-combatants through projects that benefit the communities as well (MDRP, 2004:5). Likewise, the UN has stated that Second Generation DDR programmes should recognise the potential role that local and customary institutions have to play in the reintegration of ex-combatants: providing them with security and alternative sources of employment (Muggha, 2009:276; PDS, 2009:41; UNDPKO, 2010b:3).

Pugel goes further in calling for a "holistic approach" that provides tangible benefits for the recipient community (2009:90); while Gomes, Alden and Parsons (2007:29) have also proposed an integrated approach that factors in the situation of all the affected groups. Özerdem (2012:60), too, argues that the engagement of existing community structures in the reintegration process has a positive impact on the development of civil society and on the ex-combatants' participation in local governance structures. Certainly, research has shown the importance of involving the communities in the reintegration process. For instance, Karamé (2009:506) has argued that successful reintegration is directly linked to the degree of contact the ex-combatants were able to maintain with their communities of origin during the war. Muggah et al (2009:197) also note, that in rural Ethiopia, kinship networks facilitated the return and absorption of ex-combatants once the conflict was over.

However, some authors stress the distinction between *community-based* and *community-located* approaches: whereas the former aim to have an impact on the communities, but do not necessarily include them throughout the process, the later implies full participation of the communities in the design, implementation and assessment of each programme (PSD, 2009:ii,38; Özerdem, 2012:59). Furthermore, Kilroy calls for a "participatory approach" that includes the community in the design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of DDR programmes (2011:129). In practice, though, Kilroy also underlines the wide-ranging array of factors that may impede any sense of a truly bottom-up participatory approach: the short timeframes in which the DDR programmes are implemented; the dependence on donors for quick and measurable results and clear exit strategies; post-war violence and other security concerns; lack of real capacity among the multilateral agencies or the local state to implement the programme; lack of forward planning; divergent interests, agendas and cultures among international agencies; and instability and migration in the ex-combatant population (ibid, 2011:143).

Mcmullin has argued that the preference for community-based over combatant-based approaches may also springs from the moral assumptions and internal needs of multilateral organisations rather than more local concerns regarding security or development. Obtaining funding with which to target the fighters then becomes more difficult: as they would be competing for donations with other vulnerable groups such

as the victims of violence or internal displacement. Equally, the choices of practitioners and policy-makers may rise out of sheer personal preference and the assumption that communities deserve the aid more than the ex-combatants. Consequently, Mcmullin argues, combatant-based approaches are too readily dismissed for sowing the seeds of social tensions and resentment (2013:20,174), as evidenced in the example below:

When compared to per capita aid contributions to others in need, say internally displaced people or those affected by malaria and other communicable diseases, DDR constitutes an especially <u>generous</u> form of compensation. Notwithstanding the <u>ethical dilemmas associated with 'rewarding' bad behaviour,</u> investment in DDR was justified by outsiders as a way of securing the peace.

(Muggah, 2009:7, emphasis mine)

The World Bank, too, maintains this dividing line:

The poverty challenges all of these countries face are massive, and there are numerous beneficiary groups that need to be included – not least of all the victims of the violence <u>rather than</u> the perpetrators of it.

(MDRP, 2010b:85, emphasis mine)

Of crucial importance for this research, finally, is the extent to which the benefits provided as part of reinsertion and reintegration – far from remaining politically neutral – are co-opted and exploited by local political elites as instruments to consolidate their own rule (Mcmullin, 2013:36). The decision to include or exclude certain groups from the status as demobilised and the subsequent economic and judicial benefits, must therefore also be understood within the (often slippery and/or tainted) context of the negotiation of the peace settlement and the political and security needs of the warring factions.

1.3 Ownership and state-building

The UN and the World Bank understand that national ownership is essential for the success and sustainability of DDR programmes. Both institutions recognise that building a national strategy of DDR implies the participation of political and non-

political actors including the central government, authorities at the regional and municipal levels, as well as NGOs, grass-roots organisations and civil society groups. There has been subsequent emphasis on capacity and state-building activities such as training and funding for the involvement of local authorities and civil society groups and the supply of technical assistance to national and sub-national authorities (UNDP, 2006, 2.10:12; 3.30:3; MDRP, 2010a:11; MDRP, 2010b:62). The UN recommends the creation of national institutional capacity through the creation of implementation partnerships within the civil society and the employment of local communities and authorities (UNDP, 2006, 2.10:12), as well as recognising the role of community leaders and civil society in the founding and functioning of new institutions (UNDP, 2006, 3.30). For their programme in the Great Lakes Region, for example, the World Bank trusted the implementation of DDR programmes – and the aid that came with it – to the newly-formed national governments (MDRP, 2010b:45).

However, it has been argued that DDR programmes impose one-size models made to fit an overarching international agenda, and therefore lacking in national ownership and local involvement. The agency of both communities and ex-combatants is often neglected as a result, and their participation is reduced to passive recipients of aid (Özerdem, 2009:39,212; PDS, 2009:ii). Mcmullin has also noted that the dominant blueprint of the IDDRS guidelines for DDR programmes, although couched in terms of empowerment and partnership, only reinforces the dominance of the international agenda as it leaves little room for the input or participation of communities or civil society (2013:28). In sum, although concepts such as "local capacity", "national ownership" and "community empowerment" are widely used in policy-making literature, little has been said on how to tackle these issues in practice (Scott, 2007:11; DFID, 2008:9).

Ottaway raises the point, moreover, that international initiatives in state-building and development are inevitably engaged in a task that is in its very essence oxymoronic: building democratic institutions and fostering social and economic reforms for people who may themselves be unwilling to embrace such policies (2003:261). Similarly, the World Bank has called for "accepting the risks and tradeoffs of national ownership" (MDRP, 2010a:45): when the responsibility – and hence the funding – of implementing DDR programmes rests with national governments, other factors will most likely

influence their outcome. These may include the political environment, the willingness of public servants to carry out a DDR, the capacity of the authorities to enforce the rule of law, and their autonomy in taking decisions that international organisations may not agree with.

In addition, while the demobilisation and disarmament phases are for the most part framed as a military problem, the reintegration phase is generally taken on by civilian institutions (Rufer, 2005:28,31; Berdal, 1996:48; Specker, 2008:3; MDRP, 2010:50). In practice, then, the different phases of DDR can become disconnected as the institutions and organisations involved do not necessarily form a unified body or pursue a coherent policy. More significantly, the demobilisation and disarmament phases tend to be led by top-down policies imposed by international bodies or national governments, taking precedence over smaller political communities in which the reintegration phase takes place. For instance, there is a tendency for multilateral organisms to use local NGOs or grass-roots organisations as mere sub-contractors to implement the international guidelines, which in reality may inhibit the potential for these groups to contest these policies or to mediate between local communities and DDR practitioners (PDS, 2009:71). By way of counterpoint, community-based approaches may choose to focus more on keeping ownership within the recipient communities rather than on larger state-building strategies, which may result in conflicting goals and activities (ibid:41).

It is equally worthy of note that, in the international development literature, "local" usually means national, neglecting not only the dynamics that take place at a municipal and sub-national level, but also the role of intermediary authorities and sub-national administration structures in providing stability and security in post-conflict situations. On the contrary, local dynamics are the by-product of overlapping layers of formal and informal institutions and political relations that mediate between the central government and its citizens (Cramer, 2006:255). When analysing the problems of state formation and consolidation then, it is important to disaggregate the levels of the state (Davis, 2003:29). From international relations to the sub-national level, the institutions that form the state operate at different speeds, within complex and cross-cutting dynamics, and often spurred on by fundamentally contrasting interests.

1.4 Reintegration: economic, social and political

While the demobilisation and disarmament phases pursue fixed and time-limited goals, the reintegration phase targets a broader and longer-term social and economic recovery that consolidates the entire DDR process (UNDP, 2006, 2.10:5; SIDDR, 2005:25). Ultimately, the final analysis of DDR programmes is dependent on whether or not there is a successful reintegration of ex-combatants in the community:

> *Sustainable social and economic reintegration of former combatants is the ultimate objective of DDR. Failure to reintegrate ex-combatants will undermine the achievements of the disarmament and demobilisation phase, placing the DDR programme at risk and causing increasing instability.*
>
> *(UNDP, 2006, 4.30:3)*

The evidence expected of a successful reintegration is twofold: firstly, loyalty towards comrades-in-arms and commanders within the military structure must be re-directed towards a nation-state and the rule of law. Secondly, the economic incentives that the ex-combatants received during the war must be replaced by new skills and capacity to generate income in civilian jobs and non-war related activities:

> *DDR programmes should support the process of turning combatants into productive citizens. This process starts in the demobilisation phase, during which the structures of armed forces and groups are broken down and combatants formally acquire civilian status.*
>
> *(UNDP, 2006:2.10,4)*

However, in practice the reintegration phase is often neglected and underfinanced during DDR programme design (Specker, 2008:v; PDS, 2009:ii). When it is considered at all, there is a tendency to over-emphasise the economic elements, while the social and political receive less attention (Muggah, Berdal and Torjesen, 2009:279). Furthermore, these three dimensions tend to be considered in isolation, as discrete rather than as deeply entangled parts of the whole (Özerdem, 2012:53, 66). Scholars and policy-makers have often forgotten that the economic, the social and the political form part of a complex, interwoven reality and that their separation is only workable for purely

analytical purposes. In the following sub-sections I aim to further evidence and draw out the inter-relation between these three dimensions:

Economic Reintegration

The priority given to the economic dimension has two root causes: on the one hand, economic recovery and the creation of employment opportunities are the central challenges in post-conflict societies; on the other, addressing the personal economic situation of ex-combatants is forwarded as a preventive measure to avoid recurring security problems:

> *At the end of a conflict there is often an abrupt release into the labour market of thousands of ex-combatants who compete with ordinary civilians for extremely scarce jobs and livelihood opportunities. In such circumstances, ex-combatants might attempt to <u>use violence to make a living, becoming involved in banditry, theft and other forms of illegal and harmful activity</u>.*

> *(UNDP, 2006, 4.30:27, emphasis mine)*

> *What is <u>virtually guaranteed</u> is that unless ex-combatants have a real opportunity to acquire functional skills or resume or recreate sustainable livelihoods, <u>they will not return to normal civilian life</u>.*

> *(Stockholm, 2005:24, emphasis mine)*

The World Bank has claimed that failed reintegration may result in a general context of insecurity: as ex-combatants may resort to "rent-seeking behaviour through the barrel of a gun" (Colletta, Kostner and Wiederhofer, 1996:18). Likewise, using several examples of looting and profiting by armed groups in illegal economies in Africa, Berdal has argued that weapons always have economic and security value for those who possess them: "with limited employment opportunities and few marketable skills among soldiers, this in itself is a disincentive to lay down arms" (1996:17). Spear also states that providing legitimate economic opportunities to the ex-combatants is essential "to wean away from the war economy those who saw it as the only means to survive" (2006:168). Finally, Specker upholds the following two factors as crucial to a successful

reintegration: the trust of the ex-combatants in the process and the presence of economic alternatives (2008:1).

Certainly, former fighters can face significant disadvantages in finding civilian employment. Firstly, the ex-combatants often lack the education and working skills required to perform jobs outside of military action. Secondly, there is widespread rejection of ex-combatants in places of work as potential employers fear and discriminate them on the basis of their military background. Thirdly, poor macro-economic conditions and the low socio-economic capacity of the society to provide jobs for the general population constitute a very common setting in post-conflict societies (BICC, 2003:31; Gomes, Alden and Parsons, 2007:115; PSD, 2009:13; Muggah et al., 2009:197). To address these issues, DDR programmes develop economic reintegration activities that tend to take the form of schemes of temporary monetary assistance, vocational training, and support for the creation of employment opportunities and micro-businesses.

However, much criticism has been made of this tendency of DDR policies to prioritise economic reintegration, and the underlying assumption that social and political reintegration will result automatically from a successful strategy of promoting income generation and employment (Gomes, Alden and Parsons, 2007; Bhatia and Muggah; 2009:126; Munive and Jakobsen; 2012:373; Baas, 2012:177; Özerdem, 2012:52; Bowd and Özerdem, 2013:20):

> *A major working hypothesis of the literature on reintegration of ex-combatants is that reintegration depends on the successful establishment of economic livelihoods. This operates on two levels: firstly because sustainable economic livelihoods are seen as a crucial and free-standing element of reintegration, and secondly because economic independence is seen as supporting other elements of social and political reintegration.*
>
> *(Gomes, Alden and Parsons, 2007:115)*

Historically, this emphasis on economic reintegration stems from theories that have highlighted the primacy of economic factors as causes of political violence. On the contrary, research has since shown how these theories overstate the economic

motivations: greediness, unemployment or poverty have proved insufficient in explaining the origin and continuation of civil strife or the recruitment into armed groups (Cramer, 2006:124-135; Mcmullin, 2012:13; Baas, 2012:204). Furthermore, in Colombia, the decision to join the guerrillas is more likely to worsen the economic prospects of the combatants than to improve their opportunities of obtaining income through salary or looting (Gutierrez Sanin, 2003, 2008). In Liberia, too, research has also challenged the salience of economic reintegration: Boas and Hatloy (2008) found that unemployment and idleness have been overemphasised as reasons to join an armed group. Rather, it was the combatants´ concerns for their own safety and that of their families that initially led young people to war:

> *Thus, our data suggest that the effects of 'idleness' and 'unemployment' are overstated with regard to people joining armed groups, and thereby also the effect on societal security of combating 'idleness' and 'unemployment' through the [DDR] programme. Thus, the question that begs to be asked in the Liberian case is, if idleness does not seem to have been behind the first decision to pick up the gun, then why should post-conflict policy-makers assume that idleness would be behind security problems after the war?*
>
> *(Boas and Hatloy, 2008:49)*

More broadly, too, the debate remains open as to how to effectively assess a successful economic reintegration: while some practitioners and scholars argue that DDR should aim to equalise the economic conditions of the ex-combatants with that of the rest of the population, others say that doing so only serves to position them in the same marginalised conditions that ignited war in the first place (Alden, 2002:342; Rufer, 2005:76; Gomes, Alden and Parsons, 2007:49; PDS, 2009:13; MDRP, 2010a:2; Mcmullin, 2013:19).

Ultimately, it is precisely in the creation of employment for ex-combatants and economic recovery for the communities involved that DDR programmes have hitherto shown little success. Even in countries where DDR programmes adopted maximalist approaches and were heralded as successful by the international community, unemployment among ex-combatants remained high amid widespread poverty and inequality, as witnessed in Namibia, El Salvador, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Liberia

and Kosovo (Alden, 2002:6; BICC, 2003:31; Mitton, 2008; Mcmullin, 2013; Özerdem, 2008). And in the example of Ethiopia the income of ex-combatants was found to be lower than pre-war levels (Muggah et al. 2009:197).

Gomes, Alden and Parsons have pointed to the international community's apparent overlooking of the fact that DDR programmes may only achieve "reintegration into poverty" (2007:140). Certainly, the capacity of the ex-combatants to provide a livelihood for themselves and their families could be taken as a key indicator of a successful reintegration to the civil life as well as of a general economic recovery. However, the assumption that there is such continuity between political violence and criminality is a flawed one, even more so when considering how the economic motivations fall short by way of explanation. The real weight of economic incentives in the decision to leave an armed group and remain attached to the reintegration process requires a more nuanced assessment.

Social Reintegration

Alternatively, social reintegration could be emphasised as the crux around which the other economic and political dimensions of reintegration can be articulated. The Cartagena Contribution has stated that:

> *Ultimately, social reintegration is the foundation of all other forms of reintegration (economic and political). If it is mishandled or fails, all other forms of reintegration will be endangered as state legitimacy, civic trust, and social cohesion will be undermined.*
>
> *(Cartagena Contribution, 2009:45)*

Özerdem (2012:53, 60) has also argued that social reintegration, with a high level of both ex-combatant and community participation, helps in creating those new roles, social ties and social capital that are central to the development of a citizen identity. Social reintegration, in turn, embraces three main areas of intervention: the role of family and community; sustainable employment (social capital support, dealing with the employers and economic conditions of the receiving society); and civic responsibilities

(participation in political life and decision-making process, as well as civil society activities).

The UN makes its own assumption that by breaking the social networks created by the military life – between combatants as peers as well as with their leaders – there will be a transfer of loyalties from the warlords to the democratic system and the rule of law (UNDP, 2006, 6.10:9). Subsequently, the demobilisation and reintegration of troops is portrayed as a means of reducing the risk of relapse into conflict, based on the belief that fragmenting the armed structures hinders any return to armed contestation (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2009:49). Munive and Jakobsen (2012:369) have also warned of the risks of reproducing patron-client structures that characterise the relationships between commanders and their troops in wartime if these structures are not first broken down. Similarly, it has been argued that the lack or failure of reintegration programmes may leave ex-combatants prone to manipulation by their commanders as they try to maintain influence and authority (PSD, 2009:39).

However, studies in Sierra Leone have concluded that breaking up the hierarchies of command and merely sending ex-combatants back to their communities of origin is not sufficient to achieving successful reintegration (Vries and Wiegink, 2011:38). Humphreys and Weinstein (2007:533) found no association between dismantling social ties with the armed group and an improved likelihood of finding employment or acceptance by the communities. On the contrary, supporting networks that originated within the military structures may in fact have helped the reintegration of ex-combatants into civil life (Vries and Wiegink, 2011:47; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2007:532-534). Giustozzi (2008:174) has argued that breaking the social links among ex-combatants did not prevent their absorption by systems of patronage in Afghanistan. Rather, their economic situation was directly dependent on their capacity to take part in these social networks. Similarly, in Northern Ireland, IRA combatants released from jail received support not from the government but from NGOs created by former fellow fighters (McEvoy and Shirlow, 2009:34; Rolston, 2007:271). Therefore, the temporary maintenance of precedent military structures may facilitate and allow time for the transition between military and civil life (Stockholm, 2005:25). And these forms of social fabric among ex-combatants take on particular relevance in cases where the reintegration phase has been poorly conceived or not included in the original DDR

programme design, as well in those cases where the community of origin has been destroyed or returning to it is not a desirable option.

Mcmullin (2012:29) has pointed out that ex-combatants are portrayed by the international community and in the DDR literature as a threat, and at the same time as the subject of resentment from the community. Both narratives thus present former fighters as a group wholly separate from the community and bestow on them sole responsibility for the conflict. As mentioned above, the combatants are not necessarily a deviant group from the wider communities, yet the debates around who to target with reintegration aid nevertheless tend to rest responsibility for reintegration with *either* the ex-combatants *or* the communities.

In sum, the literature on DDR has prioritised the dismantling of military links, without taking into account how to replace the layers of social and political organisation that are also destroyed. It is also important to consider the extent to which the communities are also closely tied into the dynamics of war and the recruitment of their members as part of the armed group. More to the point, ultimate responsibility for carrying out DDR processes – as well as maintaining peace, security and development for their own population – rests with the state and whether or not it is able to create a direct and democratic relationship with the ex-combatants *and* the communities they come from. Therefore, although the DDR literature has addressed the creation of social fabric between the ex-combatants and the recipient communities, other important factors remain largely neglected: namely the creation of social and political links with the state and its institutions as a means to replace the old models of military fellowship.

Political Reintegration

Although international peace-building missions and other military interventions justify their actions in terms of building democratic institutions and establishing free elections, the political dimension has been largely ignored by DDR programmes (Gomes, Alden and Parsons, 2007:100; Guáqueta, 2009:12; Söderström, 2011:38; Duclos, 2012:8). In fact, in policy-making documents by the UN and the World Bank – including the IDDRS – political reintegration is barely mentioned, and much-needed guidelines on specific actions to be taken are noticeably by their absence.

Guáqueta (2009:34) claims that political reintegration forges the link between DDR processes and transitional justice on two levels: the transformation of rebel forces into legitimate political power-brokers and the transformation of combatants into law-abiding citizens. However, in the previous section I have shown how the DDR literature emphasises the breaking of factional ties as a prerequisite of successful reintegration. It could instead be argued that the fragmentation of the military and social structures within warring factions in fact inhibits the transition of the armed group into a formal political party, which in turn prevents the creation of any real political opposition to the government in charge. As a result, the ex-combatants are left to make the move from the military to the civil life as individuals rather than as a group.

Political reintegration also embraces civic responsibilities and other political aspects such as: how justice is meted out for crimes committed during the war, how to establish a new system of law and order, and how ex-combatants can access those decision-making mechanisms available to other citizens (Özerdem, 2012:67). Moreover, although reforms in governance are not prioritised by DDR programmes or peace-building strategies, a successful political reintegration can only be achieved once the political system has been reformed further towards democracy (PDS, 2009:34). The political reintegration of individuals is thus inevitably linked to wider issues of security and state-building:

> *Some of the measures that support the political reintegration of ex-combatants include reforming security forces, developing and strengthening political institutions, government capacities and civil society, as well as enhancing human rights and introducing reconciliation mechanisms.*
>
> *(Gleichmann et al, 2004: 68)*

The UN has claimed that the DDR process should create a *social contract* based on participation and democratic principles (UNDP, 2006, 2.10:6). Other authors have also argued that demobilising and disarming the combatants should be understood in terms of them entering into a social contract with the state and the government (Knight and Özerdem, 2004:506; Özerdem, 2009:50; Duclos, 2012:8; Kilroy, 2011:143; Mcmullin, 2013:35). This notion of DDR as social contract goes beyond the implementation of free elections or mere voting rights: it implies a broader notion of governance,

specifically the extent to which the new economic and social order is perceived to be fairer and more acceptable when compared to its pre-war equivalent (Gomes, Alden and Parsons, 2007:154; Kilroy, 2011:143; Duclos, 2012:8). Rousseau's theory of Social Contract refers to a mutually binding relationship among equals with two key implications: the delegation of the creation and enforcement of the law, and the emergence of a common identity that relies on self-control. Citizens do not renounce their rights of freedom and social order but instead choose to delegate the use of force to an authority in order to protect and preserve these rights. In turn, this implies the creation of a political subjectivity that accepts and supports that authority as legitimate, prompting subsequent changes in individual behaviours (Rousseau, 1923; Magnette, 2005). That political subjectivity takes form as a citizen identity, defined in relation to everyday practices and functional links in regard to state institutions.

Furthermore, Söderström has argued that even if the political needs of the ex-combatant population are largely ignored, the political dimension in DDR programmes still exists. Even if DDR programmes do not explicitly include actions for political reintegration, they could nonetheless contribute either to the positive uptake of democratic behaviours or, on the contrary, to the undermining of trust in democracy (Söderström, 2011:327). Arguably, DDR programmes have assumed that the economic and social reintegration of ex-combatants as civilians (i.e. in their economic and social capacities) is enough to bring security and stability to post-conflict societies, while the fostering of links with the state and the transformation of ex-combatants into *political subjects* – into *citizens* – has been hereto neglected.

1.5 Ex-combatants as a security risk

Mcmullin (2012:18) has alluded to several flaws in the DDR policies: firstly, these policies tend to overstate the scale and scope of the threat posed by ex-combatants to the state or to the local community. Secondly, the ex-combatants are described in deterministic terms as security threats, ignoring other sources of insecurity such as national armies, political elites or the wealthier classes. Thirdly, reintegration from this perspective aims to achieve a negative peace, brushing aside any sense of social struggle to overcome inequality or poverty. Fourthly, the potential for the ex-combatants

themselves becoming agents of reconciliation and reconstruction has been greately reduced.

In a similar vein, Guáqueta (2009:12) has argued that emphasising economic factors in the analysis of armed conflict has "portrayed fighters as greedy individuals who do not have a legitimate political cause and, therefore, can or should not be politically reintegrated". Similarly, Gomes, Alden and Parsons claim that theories on DDR characterise the combatants as mere "potential spoiler[s] resorting to violence, criminal activity and predatory behaviour" (2007:27). Vries and Wiegink (2011:38) also note that combatants are imagined as ticking-time bombs and that it is too easily assumed that unsuccessfully reintegrated combatants will automatically pose a threat to peace. Finally, Özerdem signals (2008:45) the stereotyping of ex-combatants as security risks on two levels: at the micro-level, it is assumed that lack of employment, together with the military skills acquired in the armed groups, increases the propensity of ex-combatants to get involved in criminality. At the macro-level, these same unhappy former fighters are thought to harbour the potential to destabilise the state and the government by creating civil unrest and re-igniting the conflict.

The following excerpts from policy documents would appear to confirm this perceived labelling of ex-combatants as usual suspects. For the UN:

> *The return of ex-combatants can also <u>worsen</u> the real or perceived vulnerability of local populations. Ex-combatants may be seen as a '<u>lost generation</u>', having been <u>deprived</u> of education, employment and training during the conflict period. Often they are left <u>traumatised</u> by war and <u>can only understand the world from a military perspective</u>. Their <u>lack of civilian skills or assets</u>, combined with their <u>habit of relying on violence to get what they want</u>, may result in their becoming involved in <u>predatory behaviour</u> against communities, such as <u>banditry and theft</u>; or they <u>may turn once more to organised armed violence</u> in a group.*
>
> *(UNDP, 2006, 4.30:3; emphasis mine)*

Similarly, the World Bank justifies its combatant-based approach thus:

There are several reasons that underlie the MDRP strategy of providing direct support for the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-soldiers and guerrillas. First, <u>failed reintegration of ex-combatants could jeopardise the peace-building process</u>. Indeed, <u>long-term costs for the entire society could be considerable</u> if ex-combatants are not able to establish new livelihoods and reintegrate in communities. <u>Their inability to do so</u> could contribute to <u>new violent political opposition</u> or lead to an <u>increase in banditry and insecurity that could inhibit recovery and development efforts</u>

(MDRP, 2004:1, emphasis mine)

Such discourse only served to reinforce the stigmatisation of ex-soldiers as a source of violence: propagating a sense that ex-combatants will slide back into violence as a natural recourse or as a direct result of their unsatisfied claims. Conversely, research has shown that many ex-combatants are unwilling to go back to war out of a sense of fatigue and scepticism over the efficacy of violence (Fithen and Richards, 2005:135; Thruelsen, 2006:15; Pugel, 2009:88). It should be remembered that the relapse into violence may involve different people (Mcmullin, 2012:11), or that the decrease in security is not necessarily caused by the ex-combatants themselves, but by other factors such as the weakening of the controls that the illegal armed groups have on petty crime (Massé, 2011).

In their seminal study, Colletta, Kostner and Wiederhofer found no increase in criminality in the aftermath of DDR processes in Ethiopia, Namibia and Uganda and that crimes attributed to ex-combatants were "infrequent" and "negligible" (1996:63). Furthermore, in all three countries the ex-combatants entered the poorest echelons of society and received incomes far lower than the national average. Despite their circumstances, however, it was noted that "most ex-combatants are disciplined" and "only some 10 percent are considered undisciplined, troublemakers, drug-abusers or thieves" (1996:55). Likewise, Pugel's (2009:88) study in Liberia concluded that those ex-combatants from the poorest, least-educated and most agricultural backgrounds were successful in reintegrating, despite being more economically disadvantaged than other former combatants.

Certainly, the possibility remains of the ex-combatants re-mobilising into armed groups or criminality, but rather than purely economic factors, there are other elements that should be taken into consideration. These include the re-marginalisation of ex-combatants, especially in the political arena; the presence of mid-level spoilers who assemble new armed factions; and the creation of coalitions between the former and the latter (Themner, 2011:7). Moreover, renewed emphasis on the security risk posed by the ex-combatants may also justify certain political manoeuvres. Buzan, Waever and Wilde have argued that "the invocation of security has been the key to legitimising the use of force, but more generally it has opened the way for the state to mobilise, or to take special powers, to handle existential threats" (1998:21). Foucault and Arendt, too, warn of the priority given to national security to justify the restriction of citizenship rights, which certain power elites manipulate in order to maintain their privileges and avoid their own accountability (Rojas, 2009:230).

Nübler (1997) and Özerdem (2009:47) have proposed an alternative approach by which the ex-combatants are treated as human resources, with an enormous potential to contribute to development as members of the working force or in generating economic activities. At this point, the question of "reintegration into what?" gains crucial importance (Jennings 2007:214; Vries and Wiegink, 2011:44). DDR programmes may also tend to become endeavours that avoid tackling the more structural issues of land reform, inequality and access to political participation (Mcmullin, 2013:242). By reducing the ex-combatants to the singular status of security threat in post-conflict settings, the power arrangements and institutional designs that perpetuate conflict are left to fail by the wayside. Subsequently, DDR literature continues to overlook the ways in which a successful reintegration of ex-combatants may depend more on the social, political and economic conditions they are placed back into, and certainly more so than any notion of personal preferences or ambitions.

1.6 Ex-combatants: citizens or civilians?

Despite their vastly differing meanings and origins, in DDR literature the words *citizen* and *civilian* are often used synonymously. However, 'civilian' is a classification that refers specifically to non-military people, while 'citizen' defines a person's political agency in relation to the state. On the one hand, of course, a citizen can also be a soldier.

Moreover, being a citizen implies some degree of willingness to participate in the defence of the political body: the Athenian polis, the Roman Empire, the medieval city or many modern nations base their security on the military draft of citizens. On the other hand, a civilian is not necessarily a citizen: as in cases where individuals or indeed communities lack citizenship within a given state.

Mcmullin has noted that the literature on DDR does not bestow on the ex-combatants the title of veterans: while former fighters in developed countries are reified as heroes and freedom-fighters, having a crucial role in the defence or construction of the nation-state, combatants from the so-called 'new wars' are portrayed as angry, irrational and violent, with a natural tendency towards banditry and mercenarism (Mcmullin, 2013:22). In addition, the category of 'civilian' is established by outsiders and ignores the fact that a person may become a combatant or a civilian at different places or times (Cramer, 2006:77; Mitton, 2012:105). Arguably, 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.

Although the DDR literature pays heed to the idea of the social contract, modern citizenship is also entrenched in the doctrine of liberalism and its methodological individualism: while the social contract implies a mutually binding relationship among equals, liberalism promotes the notion that social relations follow mainly economic laws. Every single person is thus provided with individual and inalienable rights, regardless of his or her belonging to a political community. As a result, it has been assumed that a citizen should be understood as a subject with individual rights, embedded in social and economic relations, but apolitical and guided solely by his or her own selfish desires (Magnette, 2005; Turner, 2000:ix; Foucault, 2009:39). Mouffe (1992:4; 2005), for example, believes that the modern understanding of citizenship has been reduced to a purely legal status:

> *The failure of current democracy theory to tackle the question on citizenship is the consequence of their operating with a conception of the subject which sees individuals as prior to society, bearers of natural rights, and either maximising agents or rational subjects. In all cases they are abstracted from social and*

power relations, language, culture and the whole set of practices that make agency possible.

(Mouffe, 2005:95)

The UN has itself recognised this interplay between society and individuals: "Individual demobilisation mirrors the wider demobilisation of a society emerging from conflict, and is an important symbolic phase in the consolidation of peace" (UNDP, 2006, 4.20:2). As Tilly (2003:60) has pointed out, a relational definition of democracy highlights the interaction between citizens and their governments and brings with it questions around the bargaining process that establishes mutual rights and obligations. He further argues that citizenship may refer to a category, a tie, a role or an identity, or a mix of any or all of the above. For theoretical purposes, he restricts his definition of citizenship to a type of tie, using it as a starting point from which the other dimensions may also be understood, specifically as:

A continuing series of transactions between persons and agents of a given state in which each has enforceable rights and obligations uniquely by virtue of (1) the person's membership in an exclusive category, the native-born plus the naturalised and (2) the agent's relation to the state rather than any other authority the agent may enjoy.

(Tilly, 1996:8)

While for Turner:

Citizenship may be defined as that set of practices (juridical, political, economic and cultural) which define a person as a competent member of society, and which as a consequence shape the flow of resources to persons and social groups.

(Turner, 2000:ix)

'Citizen', then, is a category that establishes the boundaries between insiders and outsiders in a given political community. Its grounding in the interplay between duties and obligations transcends the acquisition of legal rights and thus lies at the heart of the problem of how an individual or group is incorporated into a certain society (Shafir, 1998). Ultimately, the concept of citizenship varies depending on the specific social systems and conditions for governability, and how different societies throughout history

have negotiated the distinction between an inhabitant of a certain territory and a member of the political body.

It is also worthy of note that, being a citizen in a certain political group implies a civic spirit or a type of morality that fosters loyalties not towards a sovereign or a territory but to democracy as a social and political order. In turn, existing within that political order requires the citizen to develop certain behaviours and to display a certain level of self-control. Berdal (1996:45) initially introduced this concept of civilianisation, but he fails to develop it any further. Duclos interprets it as follows:

> *Thus it [reintegration] is a matter of encouraging new loyalties to state institutions and in that way cementing the legitimacy of the newly (re)born state. Putting in place a dynamic of 'civilianisation' which can be understood as a definitive return to civilian life, combined with a change of identity that leads the ex-combatant to abandon the military reference and prefer a civil identity, is generally considered an essential step in the normalisation of political life.*

> *(Duclos, 2012:3)*

Özerdem (2009:52), too, has argued that the transformation of combatants into civilians implies a process of socialisation in which the combatants internalise the norms of civil society. Certainly, Rousseau appreciated that the social contract needs to be constantly reinforced through education: natural instincts must be suppressed and replaced with morality for the sake of the common good (Magnette, 2005:89; Heater, 2000:71). Hence, participation in democracy implies the development of specific cognitive, affective and behavioural skills (Almond and Verba, 1989:15; IEA, 2010).

As mentioned above, the theory on DDR is also tied closely to the process of state-building. From a social constructivist approach, the establishment of democratic states is inevitably interlinked with the production of individuals with a political identity as citizens. The process of renouncing the use of force finds its counterpart in the creation of institutions and democratic mechanisms, first to replace the old military order and then to transform those social structures that sparked the conflict in the first place. Therefore, rather than imposing the responsibility for reintegration on the ex-combatants or the communities, there is a case to be made that changes in the

overarching political order will be mirrored in changes in the behaviour and identity of the combatants, as well as their attitude to embracing the rule of law. Otherwise, in the absence or failure of democratic institutions, both ex-combatants and communities are left with little option but to establish social, political and economic relationships with any group that has forcibly claimed control over the place they live in. Citizens cannot be created in a political vacuum. Multilateral organisations or foreign governments may play a role in breaking apart the military factions and in transforming fighters into *civilians*, but their transition into law- abiding *citizens* ultimately depends on their ability to forge structurally sound relationships with the state and its national and local authorities.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has summarised four important debates that rise out of the DDR literature and that address the dilemmas central to DDR programme design. These debates have been framed by the assumption that security must underpin the conditions for all future development in post-conflict societies. However, critics have shown how, in reality, this smooth continuity between security and development does not take place as both could be driven by divergent and conflicting goals. Furthermore, the decisions that shape DDR policy and programmes may respond to the dynamics of local politics, which may contrast greatly with the original objectives and preferences of the multilateral organisations involved.

The first debate refers to the scope of the assistance: policy-making and practice on DDR have progressively moved from security-oriented towards development-oriented approaches that will also bring broader benefits for the communities. It follows that the second debate refers to the population that should be targeted as recipient of reintegration aid: whether DDR programmes should focus on ex-combatants and their families or extended to also cover the needs of communities and victims of violence. As will be explained in the third chapter, contrary to the pattern established by multilateral organisations, the Colombian DDR originated from a security policy that spurned both the development goals and the needs of the community. Thus, DDR policy in Colombia was driven by the security and political needs of a national government that prioritised its military aims and the consolidation of territorial control. By consequence, decision

over who should receive status as demobilised and its benefits also responded to the security needs and political aims of the warring factions, disregarding further long-term reintegration aid to the former combatants or the community at large.

The third debate relates to the ownership and process of state-building. The question remains as to how national governments, local authorities and organisations can assume a role in the design and implementation of DDR programmes. Although multilateral organisations have the common practice of sub-contracting grass-roots organisations or NGOs to implement their guidelines, this in fact may undermine their capacity to effectively mediate and critique the DDR policy. In turn, there may be a detrimental effect on the capacity of the state to adequately address the needs of the communities. Inevitably, then, programme ownership is contingent on the internal political dynamics at the national and sub-national levels. As chapter four will illustrate, an oft-overlooked element in the design of DDR programmes is the role of municipal authorities, which in fact must face up to and deal with the long-term consequences of reintegration by providing them with sustainable sources of income and by fostering social inclusion. In the case of Colombia I aim to analyse the extent to which the ACR reintegration programme resulted from tensions between the national government and the municipal authorities of the two most important cities in the country, which shaped the reintegration programme into an exercise in bottom-up state-building.

It is also important to bear in mind that DDR programmes do not necessarily proceed according to their original design. The scope of the assistance and the people to be targeted may evolve from one approach to another as a consequence of changes from a range of factors including the political context, the peace settlement arrangements, the possibilities or restrictions established by the international donors, the nature of the DDR institutions, the global strategic interest, or the levels of available funding. In Colombia, the initial security-oriented DDR aims and design shifted over time towards more developmental aims, including actions to benefit the wider community.

Finally, the fourth debate revolves around the reintegration phase. Although the ultimate goal of DDR programmes is ex-combatant reintegration, this phase is often neglected and underfinanced. The three dimensions of reintegration need to be analysed in how they articulate to one another: the social dimension especially may triangulate the other

economic and political dimensions. However, there is a tendency to emphasise the economic dimension due to the latent belief that economic incentives are the principal drivers for recruitment into armed groups and that ambition lies at the root of political conflict. The true power of economic incentives in the decision to leave an armed group and pursue successful reintegration will be analysed in the fifth chapter.

Alternatively, the social dimension could be stressed as playing a more important role in reintegration success. The sixth chapter will show, that beyond dismantling loyalties and social links among the members of the armed groups, greater emphasis should be placed on the creation of social fabric, in the first instance between the ex-combatants and the communities, and yet more significantly between both parties and their respective civilian and democratic authorities. Finally, although political reintegration has been largely disregarded in policy-making documents, DDR programmes have the potential to engender trust in the democratic process, as well as the transformation of ex-combatants into law-abiding citizens. The seventh chapter will illustrate that, although reintegration does not necessarily mean that rank-on-file combatants want to involve themselves in politics, nevertheless it does represent a process of socialisation that ends in their new political identity as citizens.

The assumption that all ex-combatants present a security risk remains deeply entrenched in DDR policy-making and its associated literature. This outlook, indeed, only reinforces the stigmatisation of ex-soldiers as a source of violence. However, in reality many ex-combatants are unwilling to go back to war or their armed groups, while the structures that perpetuate war and conflict may remain without their participation. The successful reintegration of ex-combatants, therefore, may depend more on the social, political and economic contexts into which they return, rather than their personal preferences or ambitions. Certainly, the theory on DDR has addressed the problem of state-building, but more attention should be paid to those problems the ex-combatants face when trying to build an identity as citizens, namely their access and use of democratic institutions. Ultimately, DDR processes change the nature of the political relationship between the state and the ex-combatants: the latter accept the surrender of their power, while the former includes them in the decision-making process and provides them with three important keys to unlocking citizenship: security, participation and democracy.

Chapter 2

Methodology and Data

2.1 Methodological Approach

Cramer has argued that following the end of the Cold War, neo-classical economic theories started to dominate the study of war and conflict, areas that were previously associated only with other fields of knowledge. Although the neo-classical analysis has provided some important insights, its inherent methodological individualism has also produced a number of significant flaws and shortcomings in the understanding of war and conflict: including the assumption that individual behaviours are motivated purely by economic incentives, leaving behind the necessary analysis of other social and political elements (Cramer, 2002:1846). Social constructivism, on the other hand, gives a new perspective on the reintegration of ex-combatants into post-conflict societies: the process of learning identities and cognitive functions is, ultimately, a process of integrating individuals into the community (Mead, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978). In essence, individuals form part of a social whole in which the institutions function as social systems of control that prescribe "the habits of individuals in their interrelation with each other" (Mead, 1977:25). Martin-Baró (1983:24) contends that individual behaviours – including those considered violent and deviant – should be analysed as socially constructed in a process of mutual interaction between individuals and their political and social environment. Hence, he argues that damaging behaviours, attitudes or preferences have more to do with broken, damaged or unequal social relationships, rather than abnormalities within people's minds (Martin-Baró,1990:27).

Nussio has pointed out that the literature on DDR tends to speak from the viewpoint of public policy. He catalogues four different approaches to the existing research. Firstly, the majority of studies revolve around the analysis of public policy on DDR and its function in peace-making. Secondly, there has been some research on public policy based on the experiences of the ex-combatants themselves. Thirdly, there are studies that look at public policy in relation to its political, social and economic contexts. Finally, a small number of studies have taken the personal experiences of the demobilised as their central focus, without the overriding frame of public policy. Nussio himself adopts this latter approach, arguing that the individual's behaviour is ultimately

the basic unit of social life (2012:22-23). Although I would agree that there is a need to include the ex-combatants' voice as part of the research and policy-making on DDR, an approach based solely on the individual's perspective runs the risk of reproducing those same limitations of methodological individualism that underpin the prevailing liberal and neo-classical economic theories. Thus, while this thesis gives voice to the ex-combatants, it is located in the second category described by Nussio: in its focal analysis of the articulation between public policy and individual's experience.

Kalyvas has proposed that the analysis of demobilisation and reintegration should comprise three levels: beginning at the macro-level, which aims to understand the strategic objectives that the different warring factions and political actors may have in negotiating a peace settlement. Secondly, the meso-level analysis should pay attention to the organisational structure of the rebel groups: their internal cohesion and centralisation, their practices for recruiting and socialising members, as well as their interactions with the general population. Finally, and the least investigated of all, research at the micro-level should focus on the individual experiences of both combatants *and* non-combatants; specifically on how the conflict has impacted on their identities as well as their political and social behaviour (2012: viii). Although an analysis of all these elements sits outside the realms of possibility for a sole researcher, I agree with Kalyvas that it is important to articulate these three levels of analysis. This research thus incorporates the macro-level (Colombian DDR policy and institutional dynamics at the national and municipal levels), the meso-level (how the features and structure of the paramilitary groups defined the negotiation and demobilisation) and the micro-level (the ex-combatants' experiences of interacting with the institutions) strands of the Kalyvas approach.

Research Question and Aims

The research question of this thesis is whether and how the ACR reintegration programme in Colombia contributed to the reintegration of ex-combatants according to three different dimensions: *economic* (if it prepared the ex-combatants to earn livelihoods in non-war activities), *social* (favouring the break of factional ties and the

forging of other social links) and *political* (whether it helped generate faith in the democratic process and the resulting transformation into law-abiding citizens).

Focusing on the ACR reintegration programme in particular allows a thorough analysis based on the three-level approach proposed by Kalyvas, and driven by two aims: on the one hand, to understand further how the programme itself came into being and evolved; on the other, to explore its interaction with the former combatants.Over the course of nine years a complex set of institutions were created to provide services for the ex-combatant population, thus, I contend that the process of reintegration did not take place in a social or political vacuum, nor at a purely individual level. As the DDR policy was itself highly contested and modified several times, it was important to establish the extent to which these broader legal and political factors affected the ex-combatants in their economic, social and political capacities of reintegrating. During the fieldwork it became clearly apparent that the creation of the ACR was a major turning point in the process which prompted the forging of new social and political relationships that had a transformative effect on the ex-combatants' behaviours.

Research Design

Humphreys and Weinstein's research in Sierra Leone (2007:532) consisted of a comparative study between ex-combatants who did and did not participate in the reintegration programme. Similarly, Baas in South Sudan (2012:23) compared three groups: those combatants that joined the army, and those who reintegrated with and without government assistance. Söderström's research in Liberia (2011) also contrasted the political reintegration of ex-combatants participating in different programmes and implemented by a variety of contractors.

This thesis, however, does not constitute a comparative study because the fieldwork phase of the research coincided with the beginnings of the implementation of Law 1424, meaning that all ex-combatants were summoned to appear before government offices either to activate their status as participants in the ACR reintegration programme or as eligible candidates for processing under Law 975. Legally at least, there was no possibility of self-reintegration, and the ex-combatants did not join the army due to

strong political opposition. In sum, the Colombian ex-combatants were classified into three groups: first, the rank-and-file ex-paramilitaries and ex-guerrillas, for whom the ACR reintegration programme was compulsory; second, the paramilitary leaders and mid-ranking combatants, who were sent to prison under Law 975; and finally those who did not present themselves and were therefore declared outlaws, with warrants released for their arrest[20]. It was not possible to compare these groups as they were subject to radically different judicial treatment: gaining access to the last two groups would invoke a series of complex legal and security procedures.

Therefore, this research was designed as a case study, albeit accounting for the differences between two main armed groups (the paramilitary and the guerrilla) and two different types of demobilisation (collective and individual). Gerring defines a case study as "an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units" (2004:341), and it is a methodology frequently used to analyse domestic or international policies (Barzelay 1993; Yin, 2009).

One of the most common critiques of case studies is the extent to which analysis of a single particular case can inform the development of a broader theory. George and Bennett (2005) have claimed that generalisation is not a direct function of the number of cases analysed, but rather relies on the capacity of a given study to challenge and refine existent theories or lay-knowledge. Likewise, Barzelay has argued that, in fact, case studies can support empirical generalisations (1993:305) by comparing ideal-types versus real practices and proposing new forms of causality that challenge or nuance well-established – but incorrect or flawed – explanations. It is precisely in its characteristic as a sui generis event (Steinmetz, 2004:390) that the value of analysing the Colombian DDR resides.

As mentioned in the introduction, a telling point – and one which will be expanded on throughout this thesis – is how different the reality of the Colombian DDR is to the cases drawn upon by the literature on DDR. Although generalisations from the Colombian case need to be nuanced using the specificity of other conflicts and

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[20] Law 1424/ 2011, Article 6; Resolution 0163/2011, Article 2 (paragraph 2).

countries, the approach of the Colombian institutions, I would argue, directly challenges theories and assumptions widely accepted by the international community: namely by establishing a ground-breaking approach that emphasises the creation of social fabric, not only between ex-combatants and the communities but also with the DDR institutions and bureaucracy.

Research Scope and Limits

This research focuses on the reintegration process of rank-and-file and adult ex-combatants who participated in the ACR programme, meaning that they demobilised under Law 782 and were not accused of gross human rights violations. However, the reintegration process of the leaders is outside the scope of analysis for this thesis: although the paramilitary bosses played an integral role in the negotiation and demobilisation of their groups, their pressing legal and security situation made their reintegration a far more difficult prospect. Those leaders that were extradited to the US, for instance, have little likelihood of being released from prison in the near future, while other leaders who demobilised and returned to criminality were killed as a result of their illegal activities. By 2015, 4,639 of the mid-ranking and senior leaders were facing trial under Law 975 (Fiscalía, 2015). A number of them had been released from jail, having finished their eight-year sentences; however, although the ACR does provide some services to the leaders and mid-ranking combatants during their jail sentences, their reintegration process is only just beginning.

It it also worthy of note here that the demobilisation of guerrilla members represented a process of scattered but constant desertion by low-ranking combatants while their leaders were being subjected to fierce attacks by the Colombian military forces (US, 2008:25). Significantly, the Colombian Army reported that only 12 per cent of individual demobilisations came from mid- and high-ranking members[21], while the ACR reported that only 5.84 per cent of combatants who used its services were former mid-ranking officers or commanders (ACR, 2011:12).

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[21] Army webpage. Available at http://www.ejercito.mil.co/wap//index.php?idcategoria=274415 [Accessed June 2015].

Furthermore, mid-ranking ex-combatants are difficult to contact for research purposes, as they face a variety of security problems. For instance, they are more likely to be involved in human rights violations, meaning that they can only apply for demobilised status under Law 975 and are therefore awaiting or have already received prison sentences. They are also the frequent victims of killings or attacks for a number of reasons: to prevent them from releasing sensitive information; in retaliation for previous activities during the conflict; or due to their refusal to take part in criminal or illegal activities. During the fieldwork I did in fact interview several combatants who claimed to be former mid-ranking paramilitaries. However, only their personal tutors and I were entrusted with this information, meaning that they were hiding their former status from the ACR to avoid the legal and security ramifications of Law 975. During the interview phase, I recorded only one paramilitary member who demobilised as an individual. By consequence, the collective demobilisations can be used as a proxy for talking about the paramilitary groups, and the individual demobilisations likewise in reference to the ex-guerrilla members.

In evaluating public policy, Barzelay et al highlight an important distinction between two complementary forms of analysis: "Intra-event analysis concentrates on how individual events progressed; cross-event analysis concentrates on analysing how individual events were influenced by others within the larger experience" (2003:39). This research employs intra-event rather than cross-event analysis: while other events were deeply entangled with the DDR, they are brought into the discussion only as a means to explain and analyse the reintegration of the rank-and-file and adult ex-combatants. The first of these events refers to the political clashes around the approval of Law 975 and the related 'para-politics' scandal. An historical reconstruction of these events is presented in Annex E. Secondly, there was a parallel reintegration programme specifically targeting child soldiers, designed and implemented by the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF). Finally, although I often refer to the Policy of Democratic Security, its analysis goes beyond the scope of this study, being as it was a macro-policy that included many other programmes, institutions and policies.

In addition, this research aims to provide certain elements by which the DDR policy and the ACR reintegration programme can be evaluated, as well as a better appreciation of

the experiences of the demobilised themselves. Gordon has warned of the disadvantages of evaluating DDR programmes too early following completion, as premature findings may be misleading (2009:170). Certainly, the fieldwork for this research took place only a few months after several key changes were made to the reintegration process in the wake of the election of President Santos. I would contend that by setting out the procedures for completing the reintegration process in its entirety, the enactment of Law 1424 engendered feelings of closure for both the ex-combatants and their reintegration officers. This in turn allowed them to make a more nuanced assessment of their experiences throughout the process. However, further study will be needed to assess how successful the ACR programme was in demobilising ex-combatants and in bringing greater levels of security and stability to the country as a whole.

Finally, there are certain key methodological considerations to take into account: Uribe's government officially stated that from 2002 to 2010 there were 31,671 collective and 21,117 individual demobilisations [22] (ACR, 2010). Prior to the negotiations, it was calculated that the paramilitary troops numbered around 15,000 soldiers, with FARC members estimated at around 12,000. As will be explained in chapter four, it is evident that both paramilitary leaders and the government inflated the figures for demobilised troops. However, Peace Commisioner Restrepo dismissed the resulting criticism in that regard by claiming that the benefits also covered the non-combatant supporting networks of the illegal armed groups, such as informants or sporadic collaborators (CNRR, 2007:39). Indeed, differentiating between real or false demobilised is a sensitive political issue and has proved difficult for several reasons: first, the paramilitaries retained an extensive network of collaborators who could not be classified as combatants in the strictest sense of the term. Second, the boundaries between paramilitary groups, criminal networks and gangs remain hazy, hence many members of these other groups latterly also gained demobilised status. Third, anyone discovered to be a false ex-combatant will face charges for perverting the course of justice, so there are clearly strong incentives for not disclosing their true status. During the interviews and focus groups, I only encountered one person who admitted to being a

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[22] ACR statisticts 2015, Chart No. 1. Record of the demobilised. Available at http://www.reintegracion.gov.co/es/la-reintegracion/Paginas/cifras.aspx; Ministry of Defence, 2013. Statistics of Individual Demobilisations per year (2002-2012). PAHD. Available at www.defensa.gob.es [Accessed on 12 June 2013]

false demobilised; that interview has been excluded from the results. Although it is of course difficult to be completely sure, I found no other reasons to think that the ex-combatants I interviewed did not belong to the armed group, as they talked very openly about their life and their activities during war-time. Additionally, I have previous experience in researching and working with active members of illegal groups, hence I was able to verify and contrast their narratives with my own knowledge of the topic and with other sources. I can only assume that, as the social and legal pressures on the false demobilised has been so substantial, they preferred not to volunteer for this research.

2.2 Methods and Data Collection

I conducted fieldwork in Colombia over nine months between October 2011 and July 2012. During that time I gathered two types of data: written material found in paper and online archives, and verbal data from focus groups and interviews with four types of informants: a) ex-combatants participating in the ACR reintegration programme; b) leaders of grass-roots organisations; c) reintegration officers, along with contractors from the ACR and the IOM; and d) independent experts in various related areas.

This variety of source material brings internal validity to the findings through two types of triangulation: "data" and "methodological". The former refers to gathering data from different sources, at different times, and from different social situations and people, while the later implies the use of diverse research methods (Denzin, 2009:301). As a result, it was possible to compare and contrast the versions of events and points of view of a variety of actors involved in the DDR, including the central government, sub-national authorities, multilateral organisations, reintegration officers and ex- combatants.

Written data: printed and online sources

Abundant primary and secondary data was found in reports published in print and online. The network of institutions that took part in the DDR process produced several official reports, including those from the Peace Commissioner Office, the Ministries of the Interior and Defence and the ACR. In addition, speeches and press statements have been made available to the general public: from President Uribe, the Peace

Commissioner (Restrepo, 2005 and Restrepo, 2006), and two former ACR directors – Frank Pearl and Alejandro Eder. I also consulted the legislative archives for records of debates in Congress regarding Laws 782, 975 and 1424, as well as other related laws such as decrees and resolutions. Finally, the Mayoral Offices of Bogotá and Medellín published several reports on their own activities, which included the proceedings of public forums that took place in both cities.

Equally, open letters and public statements from the paramilitary groups during the negotiation and demobilisation phases were widely available: having been included in several official reports or published in literature or in the press. The paramilitary leader Carlos Castaño, in particular, was very vocal in his defence of the paramilitary cause; I have made extensive use of his letters and his authorised biography[23]. To a lesser extent, other paramilitary leaders wrote public letters or gave interviews to the press: here I refer to those by Salvatore Mancuso, Vicente Castaño and Iván Duque.

Secondary sources include data gathered from multilateral organisations (United Nations, OAS, MAPP-OAS, IOM) and think-tanks (Corporación Nuevo Arcoiris, Fundación Ideas Para la Paz, and International Crisis Group). I have also made extensive use of press reports from a variety of printed media: the two most important daily journals in the country (*El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*), the influential weekly political journal (*Semana*) and other established websites that collect and post both reports and news on the conflict and the DDR process (Verdad Abierta, La Silla Vacía, IPC). All of this collated information was crucial to reconstructing how the DDR process was contested and defended, as well as tracking how it originated, evolved and changed over time. For the analysis of this written material I used Atlas ti © software (student version).

Verbal Data: Interviews and Focus Groups

The main data source for this thesis comprises verbal data from 215 people distributed as follows: a) 141 ex-combatants who participated in 29 focus groups and 27 interviews;

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[23] Published in Observatorio para la Paz (2002), his biography was written by the journalist Aranguren (2002)

b) six leaders of grass-roots organisations; c) interviews with 46 contractors working for the ACR, 12 for Peace and Reconciliation and four for the PAPDRB, as well as four contractors from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM); and d) seven experts with previous research and/or practice in the Colombian DDR.

The ACR Research Unit authorised interviews with contractors at its Central Office in Bogotá, as well as the interviews and focus groups with reintegration officers and ex-combatants at regional offices in seven capital cities: Cucuta, Bucaramanga, Monteria, Sincelejo, Barranquilla, Cartagena and Yopal. Although I also requested access to the ACR regional offices in Bogotá and Medellín, this was not possible due to a saturation of research studies[24]. As fieldwork in both cities was of the foremost importance, I approached the municipal offices of the PAPDRB in Bogotá and Peace and Reconciliation in Medellin, and both institutions authorised and facilitated the interviews with their own reintegration officers and the ex-combatants working with them.

The cities chosen for the fieldwork covered key regions both during the conflict and the subsequent negotiation and demobilisation phases: the cities of Montería (dep. Córdoba) and Sincelejo (dep. Sucre) were an important paramilitary stronghold and became a focal point for the negotiation and demobilisation phases, while Bucaramanga (dep. Santander), Cucuta (dep. North Santander), Barranquilla (dep. Atlántico) and Cartagena (dep. Bolívar) are all capitals in departments heavily affected by the conflict. Equally, Yopal (dep. Casanare) is the catchment area for the violence from the Western Plains. I was not able to access four capital cities with a significant demobilised population: Santa Marta (dep. Magdalena), Valledupar (dep. Cesar), Cali (dep. Valle del Cauca) and Villavicencio (dep. Meta), due to administrative problems or security issues. However, the fieldwork across the nine cities above effectively covers departments with a high number of ex-combatants (see map 1). It is also important to bear in mind that the data was gathered in the cities where the ex-combatants are currently living, which are not to be confused with the centres of demobilisation or of operation of the groups.

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[24] At the time, the ACR had requests from more than 30 studies, most of them to be carried out in both cities.
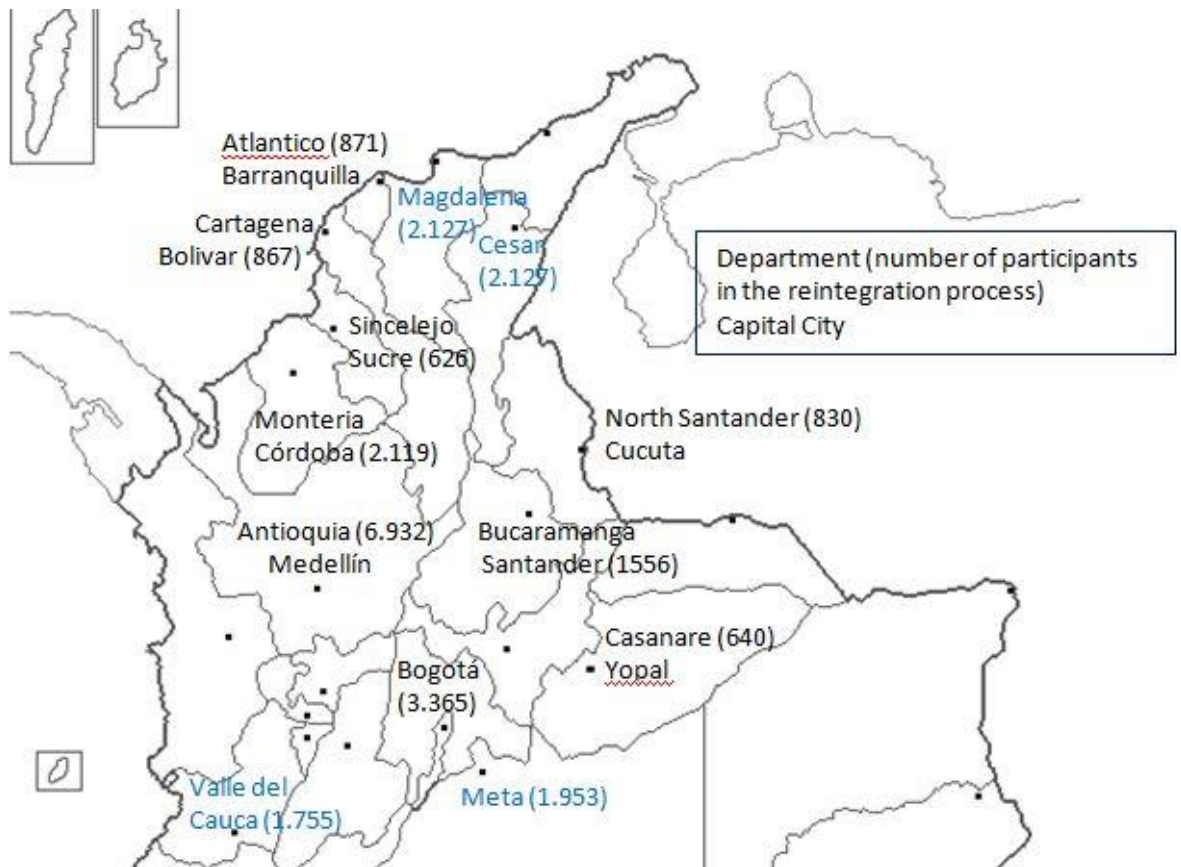
Figure 1. Map of cities represented in the fieldwork. Includes the number of participants in the ACR reintegration programme per department. Departments with a significant demobilised population but where no fieldwork was carried out are in blue.

a. Reintegration officers

At the ACR central office in Bogotá I conducted interviews with contractors working for the Social, Economic, Community Reintegration and Risk Management Prevention Units. I also interviewed the liaison officer from the national police, who has a permanent office at the ACR. After my visit to the regional offices was authorised, I contacted the director to organise the best time to carry out my fieldwork. In each regional office I interviewed the director – or the person in charge – and at least two contractors working in psycho-social services and one in economic reintegration (Table 1, Annex A). On five occasions and owing to restrictions in the officers' time available, I conducted group rather than individual interviews. Additionally, I included four contractors working for the International Organisation for Migration (IOM): the

regional offices considered these contractors to be part of their team and therefore included them in my interview schedule.

As mentioned above, the ACR itself underwent an internal reorganisation due to changes in government and the law. For the timeframe of this research, the contractors had differentiated roles in their functions as psycho-social tutors, or advisors on economic support, community relations or education. However, Law 1424 established the requirement for each contractor to centralise all of these functions (OACP/ACR, 2010:186; 2011:11). During the fieldwork for this thesis, the new scheme was only just starting its implementation, hence the previous one remained the main point of reference for ex-combatants and officers. Therefore, I use the general term 'reintegration officers' to refer to the ACR contractors regardless of their function, but use 'tutors' when talking specifically about those officers in charge of the psycho-social workshops for the demobilised and with degrees as psychologists or social workers.

b. Ex-combatants

My method of approaching the demobilised was mostly through the reintegration institutions, with the exception of the six leaders of grass-roots organisations who I contacted through other ex-combatants or researchers. Once my visits to the regional offices were authorised, the reintegration officers helped me in gathering together volunteers for focus groups and interviews. My initial plan was to run focus groups with the demobilised and interviews with the reintegration officers. In practice, however, I found that each regional office had its own different working dynamics depending on the social context and characteristics of the demobilised. In some offices, for instance, assembling a group of ex-combatants was not always possible as they only had individual appointments with the reintegration officers. To overcome such obstacles, I decided to apply the same questionnaire to individual people as a form of interview. Although this mix of focus groups and interviews was not planned, it ultimately represented a means of establishing methodology triangulation.

Söderström (2011:73) has argued that focus groups are particularly pertinent to the understanding of DDR programmes because the group discussion reveals robust information about a) norms and conceptions; b) why the participants have certain

attitudes or preferences; and c) how the participants interact in a given situation that resembles a democratic environment. Additionally, focus groups are especially fruitful in eliciting knowledge in the respondents' own words and context (Steward, 1990:12). Furthermore, if the focus group emerges out of preexisting networks, this may sufficiently recreate that group's own dynamics, thereby successfully mirroring the social process of building individual opinions (Söderström, 2011:76-78).

The use of focus groups was certainly an appropriate means of exploring the dynamics within the psycho-social workshops and of facilitating the ex-combatants' participation in the discussion. In most cases, these focus groups were created by volunteers from groups already existent in the reintegration workshops, thus they were familiar with working together. I also always worked very closely with the reintegration officers, being conscious not to interrupt their activities and requesting their help in recruiting the participants to be focus groups and interviews. The reintegration officers then invited me to the workshops, courses or other meetings, and after a short debriefing on the research aims and ethics I asked for volunteers. On other occasions I created the groups using participants who had   approached the regional offices individually.

On the one hand, the approach outlined above gave me very valuable ethnographic information on the delivery of the workshops and how the ex-combatants interacted both with one another and with the reintegration officers. On the other, there is always the risk of bias in the selection of participants and groups. However, in most cases, the reintegration officers recommended those groups that they knew were more willing and had more time to speak with me, rather than choosing specific individuals. Similarly, the officers provided me with advance notice of the availability of a variety of workshops, allowing me to choose those most convenient to would-be participants in terms of time and place. As a result, the sampling for this study is purposive and typical (Flick, 2014:122), meaning that this was not a random selection taken from the demobilised population.

Group composition varied in gender and type of demobilisation (individual or collective). For the focus groups I took the methodological decision not to separate the demobilised, though I did account for whether the group was formed by people demobilised collectively or individually or a mixture of both, i.e former paramilitary

and guerrilla members together. As my research focused on their reintegration rather than their previous lives in the groups, it seemed more natural to maintain the usual dynamics of the workshops in which they worked together, regardless of gender, previous group affiliation or type of demobilisation (Table 1, Annex B).

INSTITUTION	TOTAL FIELDWORK			DEMOBILISED INTERVIEWS					DEMOBILISED FOCUS GROUPS							Total ex-combatants	
	OFFICERS	DEMOBILISED	OTHER	Total Interviews	MEN	WOMEN	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Total Focus Groups	MEN	WOMEN	MIX GENDER	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA
ACR – National Office in Bogotá	10			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
PAPDRB (Mayor of Bogotá)	4	12		3	2	1	1	2	3	2	0	1	0	3	0	1	11
Peace and Reconciliation (Mayor of Medellín)	12	16		2	0	2	0	2	4	3	1	0	0	3	1	1	15
ACR – Cúcuta	4	17		4	3	1	4	0	4	2	0	2	2	0	2	15	2
ACR – Bucaramanga	6	14		0	0	0	0	0	5	4	0	1	4	0	1	11	3
ACR – Barranquilla	4	13		2	2	0	1	1	3	2	0	1	2	0	1	11	2
ACR – Cartagena	4	13		6	5	1	6	0	2		0	2	0	0	2	11	2
ACR – Sincelejo	5	21		6	3	3	4	2	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	19	2
ACR – Monteria	7	12		2	2	0	2	0	3	3	0	0	3	0	0	12	0
ACR – Yopal	6	17		2	1	1	1	1	3	2	0	1	0	0	3	9	8
Grass-roots organisations		6		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8	2
IOM			4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Independent researchers			7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	62	141	12	27	18	9	19	8	29	20	1	8	13	6	10	98	47

Table 1. Distribution of interviews and focus groups to reintegration officers and ex-combatants divided by city, gender and armed group affiliation

As depicted in the above table, the vast majority of ex-combatants living in Bogotá and Medellín and who participated in the focus groups and interviews had demobilised individually, meaning most were ex-guerrilla members. This is to be expected in Bogotá, as the city receives approximately 85 per cent of the ex-guerrillas. However, Medellín mainly received the ex-paramilitaries; hence the ex-combatants that participated in this research are not necessarily representative of the city's demobilised population. This occurred for two reasons: firstly, in Medellín the interviews took place among the population that was studying at the CEPAR, an institute for providing adult education to ex-combatants and other marginalised groups. The CEPAR provides services to the more recently demobilised (usually less than two years), who are in the process of finishing their primary- and high-school education. By contrast, those who participated in the collective demobilisations would have completed – or abandoned – the process a long time ago. Secondly, Medellín was the first place I carried out the fieldwork: in January 2012, just a month after Law 1424 had started to be implemented, meaning that

very few of the ex-combatants who demobilised from 2003 to 2010 had activated their status as part of the ACR programme. Moreover in Cúcuta, Bucaramanga, Barranquilla, Cartagena, Sincelejo and Montería, the majority of the ex-combatants involved were ex-paramilitary. Yopal was the only city with a similar number of both types of demobilisations. The total numbers of answers to the questionnaire per city are presented in the annexes.

Remarkably, no clear pattern of responses was identified, meaning that it is not possible to infer from this study any causality links between cities or type of demobilisation, or armed group and answers given. Therefore, intuitive inferences – such as radically different responses from ex-paramilitaries or ex-guerrillas – cannot be made. In addition, due to the qualitative data gathered and the number of participants involved, this research does not constitute a representative sample of the Colombian demobilised. Nevertheless, the findings may serve to provide some avenues for further statistical assessment.

c. Other informants and experts

I also approached experts and key informants with working or research experience of the Colombian DDR process. I interviewed one high-ranking officer working for the MAPP-OAE; one former contractor involved in the demobilisation process; the former director of the Latin America and the Caribbean section of the International Crisis Group; two academics with research expertise in the specific chronology of the DDR (Externado and Sinu Universities); and two independent researchers who had written books on the topic (Cárdenas, 2005; Villarraga, 2006). Although some were still working for institutions involved in the DDR, the interviews were granted due to their personal interest in my research: as such, they do not represent an institutional voice. Nonetheless, these interviews provided valuable historical and analytical insight that complemented my understanding of the DDR process as a whole (Annex C).

Instruments

I created three questionnaires: for the demobilised, for the reintegration officers and for the experts. All of them were semi-structured and with open-ended questions (Annex

D). A variation of the first questionnaire was also applied to the leaders of grass-roots organisations, in this case emphasising their experience in the creation and development of the group, their internal dynamics and how they related to the institutions. The questionnaire for the demobilised focused on their experiences after the reintegration process and comprised two main parts: first, questions about the DDR process and the services provided by the reintegration institutions, including their opinion of the different workshops and activities in psycho-social, economic and community reintegration. Second, some questions were included to evaluate their participation as active citizens across four dimensions: political life, civil society, community life, and values (Hoskins et al 2006:11).

The questionnaire given to the reintegration officers emphasised their individual field of expertise in psycho-social, economic or communitarian reintegration. Additionally, they brought in-depth information on the situation of each ex-combatant and on their roles as channels of communication between the government institutions and the demobilised. The questionnaire thus also included details on the history of the DDR process. Finally, the questionnaire for researchers was adapted to each person's field of expertise. Most of them had participated in or researched the demobilisation and negotiation phases and provided important information about the history and dynamics of the DDR policy and institutions.

2.3 Thematic Analysis

The technique of thematic analysis aims to identify patterns of responses and tendencies in qualitative data (Guest, MacQueen and Namey et al, 2011:142). It was applied to the interviews and focus groups following three steps: firstly, for each question, the answers were coded in categories that were not exclusionary, i.e. multiple answers were possible. This means that opposing answers to the same question were taken into account: for instance, in the focus groups one person may have felt accepted by the receiving community, but another rejected. In the case of "it depends" answers, another code was created to record when an ex-combatant felt accepted in some circumstances yet rejected in others. Secondly, each code was made binary where 1 (one) means that the code was present, and 0 (zero) not present (Fern, 2001:139). Thus, multiple answers to

one question were registered, but only once per interview or focus group. In other words, if in a focus group several respondents gave different answers to the same question, all of them were recorded, but if the answer was repeated several times, it was counted only once. Thirdly, the codes were classified in broader categories and presented in frequency figures and tables. Overall this process gives the reader a more accurate idea of the salience of the code and category, in contrast to those quantifying expressions often used in qualitative studies such as "the majority of respondents..." or "a few people said that…" However, no hierarchies or causalities can be inferred from this information. It should be made clear that this is an exploratory study and further research is needed to explain causalities or other connections between the verbal data and other variables and personal characteristics of the demobilised. The numbers presented, then, are to be taken as descriptive rather than inferential.

Additionally, focus groups and interviews were analysed separately. Each method has different units of analysis: group dynamics in the former and individual opinion in the latter. Significantly, while the interviews yield independent data that can be measured as one independent observation, in focus groups each participant is taking part in a group interaction, and is thus being influenced by or responding to other people (Steward, 1990: 142; Flick, 2014:149,194; Fern, 2001:121,141). Subsequently, it is misleading to count individual answers in the focus groups as it would be inaccurate to make connections between the answers and other variables such as gender, age or armed group affiliation.

For each question a frequency table was created that included responses from the interviews and focus groups, as well as details of former armed group and the city in which the fieldwork was conducted. All the frequency tables are presented here as annexes, while in the main text I include bar charts featuring answers by category and by armed group. Finally, it is important to clarify that given the relatively small number of observations it is inappropriate to use percentages: the tables indicate instead the number of interviews and focus groups in which each particular category of answers was present.

N = Number of total interviews or focus groups	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
Question	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
Category A																									
Category B																									
Category C																									

Table 2. Example of frequency tables presenting answers by category, demoting interviews and focus groups, disaggregating type of demobilisation and city.

This contrast between focus groups and interviews enriches the analysis through a process of method triangulation. On the one hand, the focus groups proved a useful tool to investigate how former combatants from two enemy groups interacted: the mixed groups in particular provided rich conversations around the differences and similarities between their experiences as guerrillas or paramilitaries. On the other hand, the interviews provided a safe space in which to discuss sensitive information, which could never be revealed as part of a group interaction.

2.4 Access and Trust

At first I thought it would be difficult to obtain verbal testimonies around such a sensitive and controversial topic. Surprisingly, I found that both the reintegration officers and the ex-combatants spoke very openly, not only about their personal experiences, but also about their disagreement with the ACR Central Office or with government policies. The polemic surrounding the demobilisation and reintegration process has clearly contributed enormously to a profound incomprehension and rejection of the DDR – and the ex-combatants most of all – among the Colombian general public. In turn, it would appear that, the people who volunteered for this research were highly motivated by the chance to give their versions of the story and to express their own views.

Looking at the fieldwork phase in retrospect, some elements may have contributed to creating an environment of trust. Firstly, I introduced myself as a psychologist who was running an independent study as part of my PhD at the University of London. At the time I was not aware of the significant, ameliorative role that the psychologists had played in the reintegration experience of the ex-combatants. In the case of certain

interviews in particular it became clearly apparent that the ex-combatants trusted, treating me more as a therapist than a researcher: they were forthcoming with personal or sensitive information, some of which could potentially jeopardise their legal situation in the reintegration programme and put them in jail. This trend continued even after I was granted permission to record the conversations. In some instances, participants entrusted me with personal problems or even asked for my help to finish their school homework or transcribe their personal diary. Although I briefly accepted this form of interaction, I understand that the information gathered in these situations was confidential and was therefore not included in the overall analysis.

Secondly, when asking for volunteers in the introductory briefing, I made it clear that my aim was to focus on their experiences of reintegration and that I would not be gathering any personal data or any other information that could be used to identify them. Thirdly, backing from an overseas university also contributed to an overall sense of trust. Some ex-combatants, for example, considered this research as an ideal opportunity to voice their complaints against the government and the ACR programme. Meanwhile, others assumed that I was taking their grievances to an international audience in London:

> *I would like you to help us. You are going back to London, right? I'm asking you to talk about our cases there: that you have talked to us [...] and you can talk about how the government has not fulfilled its promises.*

> *(Focus Group ex-combatants No.3)*

Finally, I made certain that all approaches to the regional offices and the ex-combatants went through the official channels, while also clarifying that my research was wholly independent of the ACR or other related institutions. In practice, though, most of the reintegration officers I worked with would explicitly offer the interviews or focus groups to the demobilised as the equivalent of an official workshop, meaning that the ex-combatants were not using up extra time or sacrificing a mark on their attendance record, on which their monthly government allowance depends. This aside, there were no offers of incentives for participation in this research. The ex-combatants' reasons for taking part in the interviews and focus groups were evidently varied: while on the one

hand some thought they could use the time to make a political stand, others may have seen them as an opportunity to escape an unengaging official workshop.

In regard to the reintegration officers, I sent the questionnaires to them in advance of our meeting, always making clear that I would adapt my schedule according to their activities and conducting the interviews and focus groups at the times and locations most convenient to them. As a result, I obtained more verbal data than initially planned, rich in both personal and professional opinions. Furthermore, although employed as ACR contractors, the officers do not necessarily follow or agree with the official discourse. This is not to say that theirs was the voice of open rejection of policies handed down from the central government, but rather that they were able to make a more nuanced assessment of the DDR process thanks to their position and their practical experience. In particular, the interviews with officers from the reintegration programmes in Medellín and Bogota provided an important contrast with the discourse emanating from the ACR Central Office.

2.5 Ethical considerations and risk assessment

For the purpose of this research, the demobilised are considered to be a vulnerable stratum of the population. The information or opinions they entrusted to me could potentially endanger their legal status or personal security. Similarly, the reintegration officers and researchers could face security or employment problems for expressing their personal opinions on sensitive topics. When asking for participation in each focus group, therefore, it was made clear that this was on an entirely voluntary basis, and that confidentiality was guaranteed. I also requested permission to use a voice-recorder before the start of each session; whenever the participants expressed any discomfort at being recorded, I instead took down the answers by hand. Moreover, in analysing and presenting the data, any personal data or references were deleted or encrypted, hence each focus group or interview will be identified by number alone.

As standard procedure I signed a confidentiality agreement with the ACR: they would permit the fieldwork with the demobilised and the staff on the condition that the data only be used for academic purposes, as stated in the research project presented to them. However, this agreement does not imply the disclosure of information to the ACR or any other institution, nor its influence in presenting the findings. Finally, I was also

obliged by the University in London not to use any of the fieldwork data for any other purpose outside my own academic research.

Chapter 3

DDR design: targeting drug-lords and guerrilla deserters

The criteria that define who attains demobilised status and its corresponding benefits are typically subject to significant challenges throughout the implementation of DDR programmes. Certainly, it is difficult to estimate the total number and characteristics of combatants beforehand, which prevents appropriate planning and funding of the reintegration aid. Commanders may lack any accurate inventory of troop numbers, or may inflate them on purpose; limited or lax criteria may permit the registration of civilians; and surveys or assessments of demobilised populations are often inadequate (Özerdem, 2009:178). On the one hand, relaxed criteria may encourage civilians to seek out those benefits on offer to the combatants, or they may buy or obtain weapons of their own in order to be included in the programmes. On the other, restricted criteria may unwillingly deny demobilised status to those combatants located at the very bottom of the military hierarchy – women and children in particular – who have little chance of demonstrating their affiliation to the group and hold limited access to weapons (Jennings, 2007:209, 2008:20; Özerdem, 2009:178; Söderström, 2011:337; Mcmullin, 2013:204).

Crucially in terms of this research, the DDR literature often overlooks how the criteria to include or exclude certain groups as the target of reintegration benefits is contingent on the reasoning put forward by the leaders of the warring factions in negotiating and pursuing demobilisation. Kriger has argued that the decision on "who" to demobilise and "how" plays a major role in strengthening or weakening the position of the ruling party or coalition, and is thus intrinsically linked to the aims that political actors expect to obtain from a peace settlement (2003:21-22). Furthermore, during the DDR process, military commanders acquire the power to decide who is included or excluded from demobilised status and so obtains the economic and judicial benefits; this in turn may simply reinforce the vertical and patron-client relationship between the leader and his troops, as well as between armed factions and the civilian population (Özerdem, 2009:19; Munive and Jakobsen, 2012:369).

This chapter shows that, in the case of the Colombian DDR, decisions over who would receive demobilised status responded to two different yet complementary strategies

within the framework of the Policy of Defense and Democratic Security. The government opted for negotiating and establishing a peace settlement with paramilitary groups, while at the same time increasing its military offensive against the FARC guerrillas. This resulted in the differential treatment of the demobilised from paramilitary and guerrilla groups. It could be argued, then, that the reintegration process of each group of ex-combatants would somehow echo these structural differences. However, the second part of this thesis provides evidence against this intuitive inference. The contrast between the personal experiences of the demobililised from the guerrillas and the paramiltiaries was not as sharp as may appear at first glance. Such surprising findings can be explained by drawing greater attention to the reintegration phase. When it was finally put in place, the ACR reintegration programme unified the treatment of both groups; hence, my contention is that it played an important role in ironing out and nuancing the profound differences rooted in group characteristics and reaffirmed by government policy.

The first section of this chapter analyses the Policy of Defense and Democratic Security, showing that, where the DDR was concerned, security aims were prioritised over development goals. As a consequence, government policy placed too much focus on the combatants, while failing to take into account any benefits for the wider community. The second section explores the negotiation and collective demobilisation of paramilitary members, highlighting how the criteria for demobilised status were relaxed to include drug-lords seeking judicial advantages, while at the same time excluding child-soldiers. The third section shows that individual demobilisations originated as a strategy to weaken the guerrillas by encouraging desertion, predominantly as a means of intelligence-gathering against the FARC and the ELN. This strategy responded to the emphasis placed by the Policy of Democratic Security on security and counterinsurgency. Finally, the conclusion posits that the Colombian DDR originated as security-oriented and combatant-based because it responded to the specific aims of the leaders, and therefore did not account for the needs of the low-ranking troops, a notion that would also explain the lack of any long-term reintegration strategy.

The first section of this chapter analyses the Policy of Defense and Democratic Security, showing that security aims were prioritised over development goals in regard to the DDR. As a consequence, there was a focus on the combatants, failing to take into

account the benefits for the wider community. The second section explores the negotiation and collective demobilisation of paramilitary members, highlighting that the criteria to obtain demobilised status was relaxed to include drug-lords looking for judicial benefits, while at the same time excluding child-soldiers. The third section shows that individual demobilisations originated as a strategy to weaken the guerrillas by encouraging desertion, predominantly as a means of intelligence-gathering and against the FARC and the ELN. This strategy responded to the emphasis placed by the Policy of Democratic Security on security and counterinsurgency. Finally, the conclusion posits that the Colombian DDR originated as security-oriented and combatant-based because it responded to the specific aims of the leaders, and therefore did not account for the needs of the low-ranking troops, which would also explain the lack of any long-term reintegration strategy.

3.1 Policy of Defence and Democratic Security: stressing security, neglecting development

This Policy promised to recover the monopoly of force into the hands of the state by attacking criminality and the outlaw armed groups operating in the country, in order to establish nationwide security that would lead to opportunities for development:

Economic development and employment depend on a security environment that allows investment, commerce and the spending of municipal resources to benefit the communities, all of which are subject of permanent predation by the armed groups.

(Policy of Democratic Security, 2003:22§31)

However, although provision was made for actions addressing the protection of the citizens, social and economic development, as well as the efficiency and transparency of institutions, the security goals were prioritised through a counterinsurgency offensive underpinned by two military strategies: the Plan Colombia[25] and the Plan Patriota. The Plan Colombia was a programme of US military aid that adopted the language of counter-terrorism, co-opting the war against drugs and the attacks on guerrilla groups under the same strategy. Its budget of US$6.13bn allocated US$4.859bn to military aid,

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[25] The Plan Colombia started with President Pastrana but was carried out mostly under Uribe's mandate.

US$1.031bn to promote social and economic justice and only US$238 m to promote the rule of law (US, 2008:15). According to its initial design, the European Union was to finance the development component by funding these latter two as parts of promoting justice and the rule of law, but ultimately withdrew its offer of aid, partly due to concerns over human rights violations and the para-politics scandal (Gutierrez and Rincón, 2008:81). As a result, the Plan Colombia was devoted almost entirely to its security goals, abandoning its development aims to a large extent (US, 2008; Gutierrez and Rincón, 2008; Hylton, 2010; Oehme; 2010). The Plan Patriota, meanwhile was the national military strategy to attack FARC-controlled areas near Bogotá and in the southern departments of Caquetá, Guaviare and Meta (US, 2008:13; Semana 05/02/06).

Some analysts agree that this privileging of the military goals was entirely justified, given the threat to the state posed by the illegal armed groups; yet this also comes with a warning that the emphasis on security should quickly evolve into institutional reforms and social development programmes that consolidate the security gains in the long-term (Mason, 2003; Marks, 2006). Elsewhere, the case has been made for a more nuanced analysis of the outcomes of the Policy in three main areas. Firstly, both the Plan Colombia and the Plan Patriota aimed to improve the efficiency of the armed forces by increasing troop numbers as well as the overall level of professionalisation. To do so, the Plan Colombia injected significant economic resources into the military, and the state increased the internal budget allocated to them[26] (US, 2008; Rojas, 2009:233). This sudden boost in economic resources, however, took the form of a system of incentives that led to heightened levels of corruption inside the military, including the widespread practice of murdering civilians and disguising them as guerrillas to present as military results (Cárdenas and Villa, 2012)[27]. Secondly, President Uribe himself has been accused of attempts to concentrate power and bypass other authorities, and of the systematic use of illegal espionage and sabotage to achieve political advantage,

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[26] Uribe also created a new tax for security purposes. Decree 1838/2002.

[27] Critics on this Policy come from both outside and inside the military. In recent declarations, the ex-coronel Juan Carlos Rodriguez, who was sentenced to 40 years in jail for his collaboration with paramilitary groups said that the Colombian army had become a "mercenary army". Recordings of the open audience in the Peace and Justice trial to the 285 members of the Central Bolivar Bloc, 22 September 2015.

including reforms to the Constitution to allow his own re-election[28] (Pachón, 2009; Rojas, 2009). Finally, under the façade of development projects – such as agribusiness or ecotourism, many of them financed by the World Bank or USAid – the reality has been a legalisation of land grabbing, forced displacement and mass murdering by the paramilitary forces and drug-traffickers (Ballvé, 2012:618; Ojeda, 2012). Between 2002 and 2009, for instance, more than 2.4 million people were forcibly displaced – the third highest rate in the world – with the majority of them expelled from their land by paramilitary forces (Howe et al, 2010:9; Romero, 2003:55; CCJ, 2008:180), Similarly, the country ranked first in the world in the killing of union leaders, which in turn has resulted in the continuation of poor working conditions and low wages (Maher and Thompson, 2011:96).

Therefore, as Jennings (2008:13) has warned, this emphasis on security did not necessarily translate into development in the form of services and welfare for the wider communities. Furthermore, Rojas has argued that during Uribe's presidency, the emphasis on national security found its counterpart in the creation of insecurities at the micro-level: allowing paramilitary control to continue unabated while weakening the democratic mechanisms and impeding the implementation of citizenship rights in those areas (2009a:234; 2009b). Paradoxically, then, the improvement in overall security has been accompanied by weaknesses in bringing governability, especially in the rural areas (Delgado, 2015; US, 2008:47, 59).

Crucially in terms of this research, the DDR was one of the pillars of the Policy of Democratic Security, and thus mirrored its abandonment of further development aims. Rather, it concentrated on dealing with the armed groups and developed very different strategies to tackle the paramilitary problem and the guerrillas. The following section maps out the political negotiations that decided who would receive the judicial benefits as demobilised.

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[28] As part of the power controls imposed after the civil war, any President was only allowed one term of office (four years). Uribe succeeded in modifying the law, allowing himself a second term.

3.2 Collective negotiation and demobilisation of paramilitary groups

Legislation authorising the creation of paramilitary groups in Colombia has its origins in 1965[29]. However, apart from some spurious groups and some voices encouraging the civil population to arm itself, it was not until the 1980s that the country began to experience the creation of private armies as an extended social phenomenon. Two influential social groups played an important role in this: on the one hand, wealthy agrarian elites – mainly cattle ranchers – who decided to take up measures of local security in the face of the state's inability to halt the guerrillas' extension of territorial control and the subsequent increase in kidnapping and extortion. These elites were also threatened by the opening up of democracy and the creation of new leftist parties, which increased electoral competition and impacted enormously on the power held by their traditional parties (Romero, 2003:40). On the other hand, drug-traffickers were growing increasingly powerful, and were looking to protect and expand their illegal businesses in coca cultivation and cocaine trafficking (Gutierrez and Baron, 2005; Romero, 2003). Unlike Guatemala or Afghanistan, in Colombia the paramilitary groups were not created or supported officially by the state; however, the involvement of sections of the military and the civil service in their inception and activities has been widely documented (ICG, 2006:15; Romero, 2003:244; Guzman and Moreno, 2007:199) and even recognised by the paramilitaries themselves (Aranguren, 2002:7). In sum, the paramilitary groups were private armies that succeeded in creating a heterogeneous coalition that catalysed the security needs of the regional elites and politicians, sections of the military and the drug-traffickers. In turn, these groups found a common cause in the counterinsurgency discourse that collapsed the guerrilla threat and the extension of democracy together as the same enemy (Romero, 2003a:41,227; 2003b).

By the time negotiation between the paramilitary groups and Uribe's government began, the paramilitaries had seized control of one third of the country, having expelled the guerrillas from a substantial portion of Colombian territory and ingrained significant levels of influence over political and democratic institutions. Conversely, the military

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[29] President Guillermo Leon Valencia (1962-1966) launched the Decree 3398/1965 allowing the creation of paramilitary groups. President Carlos Lleras Restrepo (1966-1970) enacted the Law 48/1968 that allowed the Ministry of Defense to create vigilante groups of armed civilians (Villamizar, 2007:330; Villarraga, 2013:67; ICG, 2003:5). Also Turbay Ayala (1978-1982) both promoted a very repressive security policy and encouraged civilians to arm themselves (Gutierrez and Baron, 2004:4).

expansion of the paramilitaries has little to do with their own combat capabilities; it was rather the result of their strategy of using ruthless violence against civilians, exercising forms of social control and allying themselves with sections of the army and powerful wealthy elites (Gutierrez, 2010:20; Ávila, 2010:126).

More significantly, these groups lacked military or political unity: they were at war with each other more often than with the guerrillas, largely due to problems produced by their involvement with the drug-trafficking economy. The paramilitary leader Carlos Castaño had attempted in 1997 to unify these disparate military activities and political interests into a federation under the umbrella of the United Colombian Self-Defenses (AUC)[30] (ICG, 2003:8; Romero, 2007:13; Pardo, 2007:14; Jaramillo, 2002:69). His brother, Fidel Castaño was a renowned rancher and drug-lord who collaborated closely with the big boss of the Medellín Cartel, Pablo Escobar, until their long-term friendship ended in war (Aranguren, 2002:79). As the paramilitaries were expanding, the cattle ranchers and landowners' economy was too small to support the costs of these small private armies, so the narcotics trade became their primary source of financing (Romero, 2003:249; Gutierrez and Barón, 2005:13; Guáqueta, 2013:23). The AUC was also engaged in the practice of selling protection, either by directly sending armies to certain regions or in the form of military franchises in alliance with the drug-traffickers (Arias and Guáqueta, 2008:7). Achieving territorial control was crucial in the war against the guerrillas, but this was equally the case when it came to profiteering from coca cultivation and trafficking. Hence, the drug trade played a key role in the inner dynamics of the paramilitary groups from their very beginnings.

However, and precisely because of his inner knowledge of the drug-traffickers, Carlos Castaño was very aware of the ripple effects of these alliances. In personal communications he sent to the press[31], he condemned drug-trafficking as "the cancer" that is causing the "feudalisation of the self-defenses", or "the force that is sinking the paramilitary cause" keeping the AUC divided. Castaño advocated strongly for the

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[30] There were three brothers: Fidel, Carlos and Vicente. Fidel had created the Self-Defenses of Magdalena Medio and started the project of expanding and unifying the paramilitary project before his death in 1994. Carlos then took over the leadership and in 1997 founded the AUC.

[31] Public letter s. "The Self-Defense's Sour Duty"; (September 20, 2002), Annex 29:361-365. "Who will trust in us again?" (July 21, 2002), Annex 20:322; "Letter to Anne Patterson" (September 24, 2002), Annex 30: 365-366; Public letter to Luis Carlos Restrepo announcing the re-establishment of the AUC (September 4, 2002), Annex 28:358. In Corporación Observatorio para la Paz (2002).

paramilitaries to renounce drug-trafficking: he suggested to replace its enormous rents with other legal businesses or to shift to illegal but less dangerous activities such as smuggling or taxing coca crops. This would mean smaller profits but more tolerable for society[32].

This shift in Carlos Castaño's position was also linked to the strengthening of the international community's position against the paramilitary cause: in 2001 the US[33] and in 2002 the European Union[34] included the AUC on their lists of terrorist organisations. By September 2002 the US demanded the extradition of Carlos Castaño and Salvatore Mancuso[35] under charges of drug-trafficking. Castaño had already resigned from the AUC, but three days after the extradition request, he took back the AUC leadership and released two statements[36]. In both letters the AUC stated their political unity and expressed their commitment to achieving a negotiated solution to the armed conflict. In addition, the statements reaffirmed that their intention was not to attack the government, but rather to transfer the control of territory back into the hands of the state. Finally, they invited the paramilitary groups to cease fire, transfer their controlled territories to the state and bring an end both to their own internecine clashes and to the violence perpetrated against civilians, other than that justified by counterinsurgency against the guerrillas. In further communications, Castaño urged both the government and the AUC members to make a clear distinction between paramilitaries and drug-lords, and also states his willingness to surrender to the US[37]. In stark contrast to this, the majority of the paramilitary leaders sitting around the negotiating table with the government were known to be powerful drug-lords with international warrants for extradition (Semana 13/06/04). Some had adopted the paramilitary cause in order to conquer certain territories either by making military alliances with the AUC or by buying the AUC franchise (Guáqueta, 2013:433; Árias and Guáqueta, 2008:15).

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[32] Public Letters. Op cit. "The Self-Defense's Sour Duty" and "Who will trust on us Again?"

[33] Designation of the AUC as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation. Secretary Colin L. Powell, Washington, D.C. September 10, 2001, Annex 23:342, in Corporación Observatorio para la Paz (2002).

[34] European Union decision on updating the list of terrorist organizations, May 3, 2002 (Villarraga, 2013:151).

[35] On September 1, 2002

[36] September 4, 2002, Public Letter, Annex 26: 347-52; Letter to Peace Commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo, Monseñor Pedro Rubiano, Ann Paterson and Kofi Annan, Annex 28: 358-61 in Corporación Observatorio para la Paz (2002).

[37] "The Self-Defense's Sour Duty".

Colombia had also recently signed the Rome Statute to join the International Criminal Court[38] (ICC), which posed another international threat to the paramilitaries. The text was ratified in secret two days before Alvaro Uribe took the oath as President, however making use of Article 124 in the treaty to include a seven-year delay of its implementation. It was argued that the ICC's action was incompatible with the government effort in pursuing negotiations with the paramilitary groups. As a result, enforcement of the statute would not apply to political war crimes committed on Colombian soil prior to 2009 (ICC, 2012:8; El Tiempo 31/07/02; 01/09/02; HRC, 2011). Nevertheless the military strategy of the paramilitaries of attacking the civilian population and their involvement in drug-trafficking, made it difficult for the international community to accept neither their status as a politically motivated group nor the counter-insurgency justification behind their actions.

In such a context, defining the political status of the paramilitaries became integral to their demobilisation. In a meeting with other paramilitaries, Carlos Castaño argued that:

> *It is not viable to try to obtain promises from the government not to extradite the AUC members. The extradition is a policy of the US and they are not going to stop just because two guys with warrants for extradition from Colombia ask for that. It is better to demonstrate to Colombia, to the world, and particularly to the US, that we are not drug-traffickers, and we can do that through our commitment to withdraw from that business and our good behaviour during the negotiations. [...] Once the [negotiation] process is advanced and we no longer constitute a problem for [the US], and if we learn how to ask in a very subtle way if they can withdraw the extradition, demonstrating that we are innocent; maybe we'll achieve it, or at least we should try. [39]*

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[38] Colombia signed the statute on 10th December 1998. Its enforcement was expected to begin on 1st July 2002, and it was ratified on 5th August 2002 and unveiled by the media on 1st September. http://www.icc-cpi.int/en_menus/asp/states%20parties/latin%20american%20and%20caribbean%20states/Pages/colombia.aspx.

[39] Carlos Castaño speaks in an AUC meeting. "My own considerations and suggestions to the AUC", 11 November, 2002, translation mine. Available at:
www.verdadabierta.com/documentos/historia/paramilitares/general/152-intervencion-de-carlos-castaf1o-en-reunion-de-auc-11-11-2002-1+&cd=1&hl=es&ct=clnk&gl=co

Likewise, the paramilitary commanders Salvatore Mancuso and Vicente Castaño later referred to the action of the ICC and the extradition as major problems that needed to be overcome through the legal recognition of their political status (Semana, 18/04/05; 05/06/05; 07/10/06). In a speech in Congress Mancuso stated that:

> *It is not sufficient for the peace process to achieve its aims: it must satisfy the warring factions, but that is not enough. It should produce positive and visible results to Colombians, but also be convincing to the international community.* [40]

Crucially, the extradition is a political decision taken by the Colombian President. The Peace Commissioner declared in an interview: "He [Uribe] can suspend the extradition of some members of the Self-Defences, provided that they comply with certain requirements" (Semana 12/02/06). In the Colombian legal system, while Congress approves the laws around extradition and the Supreme Court allows or denies extradition requests, it is the President who carries the final discretional power in making it effective.

Negotiating their political status

The existing legal framework for establishing peace negotiations allowed the President to enter into dialogue with those illegal armed groups that had previously been recognised as politically motivated[41] (OACP/ACR, 2010:66). As the efforts to remould the paramilitaries into this category proved unsuccessful, the law was eventually modified. The new Law 782 gave equal political status to both guerrillas and paramilitaries under the name of "outlaw armed groups" (Art. 8), allowing the President to grant amnesty from political crimes to groups that had negotiated peace with the government, or to individuals who decided to demobilise (Art. 50). In practice, this authorised the President to sign resolutions[42] to legalise the demobilisation of any group, regardless of its political status (Pardo, 2007:47,143; OACP/ACR, 2010:85). However,

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[40] Salvatore Mancuso. Speech in front of Congress. 28 July, 2004, translation mine.

[41] The legal framework has been modified depending on the political circumstances of peace dialogues: Law 104/1993, Law 418/1997, Law 548/1999 and Law782/2002.

[42] It is important here to differentiate between laws, resolution and decrees. For the purpose of this study, it is sufficient to say for now that the laws are approved by the Congress, while the last two can be enacted by the President, Ministries or Public Institutions, with no consultation from other democratic bodies.

this law only covered the rank-and-file fighters as they were considered guilty of crimes related to rebellion activities but not involved in gross human rights violations, crimes against humanity, or drug-trafficking.

One of the main problems during the negotiations was the prospect of maintaining unity and control of the paramilitary troops under the AUC, but also under Carlos Castaño's political leadership as opposed to the military leadership of Salvatore Mancuso, Vicente Castaño and Iván Roberto Duque. The alliance between paramilitaries was extremely volatile: their origins and interests proved difficult to harmonise and their respective links with criminality and drug-trafficking invariably pushed them into internecine conflict. This became apparent during the negotiations, with Peace Commissioner entering into talks with three different clusters: the AUC, the Bloque Central Bolivar and the East Alliance[43], while the Peasant Self-Defences of Magdalena Medio (ACMM)[44] accepted to negotiate with the government but refused to join the other three (OACP, 2006:6).

Nonetheless, the demobilisations started in June 2003: sixty-nine child and young soldiers were progressively handed over by the paramilitary groups to the Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF) (OACP, 2006:6). In July, both sides signed the Ralito[45] Agreement "to finish the exploration phase and start the negotiating one" (point 4). As a result, the paramilitaries committed to gradual demobilisation of all their structures to be completed within 18 months (point 2), to declare a cease of fire (point 6), and to distance themselves from activities related to drug-trafficking (point 7).

The government then introduced the Alternative Penalty Bill[46] to Congress, which aimed to provide a legal framework of transitional justice for the treatment of people who committed grave human rights violations and crimes against humanity during the armed conflict. The debates in Congress around this bill and other subsequent bills sparked a judicial battle that lasted for two years. On the one hand, it was argued that although the paramilitaries lacked political identity or the intention to govern, they

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[43] The East Alliance (Alianza Oriente) included the Peasant Self-Defense of Casanare and the Meta and Vichada Self-Defense Groups.

[44] Acronym in Spanish. Autodefensas Campesinas del Magdalena Medio.

[45] Ralito is a small town located in the department of Cordoba, in a zone of paramilitary control.

[46] Bill to modify the Constitution No. 85. Introduced to Congress on 21st August 2003. In *Gaceta del Congreso* 436, (27 August, 2003). http://www.imprenta.gov.co/gacetap/gaceta.nivel_3.

constituted a political, social and economic authority de facto, in the absence of the state. On the other, detractors claimed their participation in gross human rights violations and their involvement in drug-trafficking made them not suitable to political status (Guáqueta, 2013:436). The debates also addressed the implications of considering the crimes committed by the paramilitary groups as political [47], meaning their legal treatment could include amnesty and pardon, their participation in politics, the possibility of requesting political asylum in foreign countries, as well as the guarantee of no extradition[48].

Outside of Colombia, the international community attacked the Alternative Penalty Bill: the UN argued that it would provide amnesty and impunity for crimes committed by drug-traffickers who were using the paramilitary cause as a political smokescreen (UN, 2003:12; 2004:10). Similarly, reports from Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused the demobilisation process of being a strategy to avoid extradition to the US under charges of drug-trafficking (2005a:3; 2005b:55). By contrast, the government countered by arguing that, in practice, all the illegal armed groups had some degree of involvement in the drug trade, thus excluding crimes related to drug-trafficking from the possibility of judicial favour would prove problematic (Pardo, 2007:152). Moreover, Peace Commissioner Restrepo himself recalled the guerrilla demobilisations of the 1990s, recommending the actions of paramilitary groups to be considered as rebellion, and therefore treated as political crime[49]. He also endorsed the advantages of providing the paramilitaries with lenient jail sentences[50] and compared the request of making them confess their crimes to authoritarian systems of torture and inquisition[51]. It was in the midst of such surrounding controversy that the demobilisations of adult combatants began.

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[47] Classified as sedition and rebellion

[48] Speech on the second appeal to Articles 61 and 64. Bill No. 211/2005 in the Senate and No. 293/2005 in the House of Representatives. *Gaceta Del Congreso* 331/2005.

[49] Press release, "Political Crime Definition", March 13, 2005, pp 29-32; "Self-Defence's criminal classifying", 13 March 2005, pp 33-40 (Restrepo, 2005).

[50] Press release, "Reflection on jail sentences". 10 March, 2005 pp 65-68; "Diminishing of jail sentences", 13 March, 2005 pp.69-72 (Restrepo, 2005).

[51] Press release, "Speech in front of the First Commissions from Senate and Chamber of Representatives". April 5, 2005, pp 177-193 (Restrepo, 2005).

It is worthy of note, then, that the paramilitary demobilisation did not take place after but during the negotiations. The decision on who to demobilise and how was inevitably embedded in the bargaining process over the political status of the paramilitaries. As will be explained below, the paramilitary leaders decided on the demobilisation of certain specific groups and provided the relevant list of ex-combatants, purely according to their own needs and in the broader absence of a DDR strategy. These groups were clearly not core military or political structures: they first demobilised some minors, but this was a far cry from any sense of coherent policy or practice in the treatment of child soldiers. On the contrary, it was soon followed by efforts to deny their existence. Two groups of adults were then demobilised: starting with an urban group that operated in Medellín and was known more as a drug-trafficking gang than a group with political motivations. This was followed by a group of indigenous self-defenses that held little military power or sway.

Neglecting child soldiers

From 1999, ICBF had run a programme to protect and reintegrate child soldiers[52], which was then extended and updated in 2002 to provide services to minors within paramilitary groups (ICBF, 2010; Gallardo, 2007). Additionally, Laws 782 and 975 established special treatment for demobilising under-18 year olds, considering them victims of the political conflict (DNP, 2006:5; OACP/ACR, 2010:85). At the time, the UN and Human Rights Watch (HRW) calculated between 11,000 and 14,000 minors participating in illegal armed groups, and estimated that approximately 2,000 of them were recruited by the paramilitary troops (HRW, 2004:14; UNPD, 2006:22). Research since has shown that the guerrillas tend to recruit members at a younger age, and those belonging to a less educated, more peasant demographic than the paramilitary groups (UNDP, 2006:7; Gutierrez, 2008:12).

However, the number of minors who took part in the collective demobilisations was far less than expected: the AUC only handed over 212 child soldiers to the ICBF (Procuraduría, 2006:338; CCJ, 2008:89). By 2007 the Peace Commissioner stated that

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[52] Programme to Support Children, Teenagers and Youth Demobilised from the Armed Groups: Preparing them for Citizenship and Social Integration (ICBF, 2010).

his office had demobilised 823 minors and the MAPP reported that 1,037 minors belonging to the AUC had entered into the ICBF reintegration programme, but only 391 of them demobilised collectively, whereas 432 had demobilised individually and 214 were captured (UNDP, 2006:7; MAPP, 11:12; ODDR, 2011:5). Furthermore, of the 2,685 child and young ex-combatants receiving protection and reintegration services from the ICBF between 1999 and 2005, 63 per cent demobilised individually, 23 per cent were captured by the army, and only 14 per cent were part of the collective paramilitary demobilisation (DNP, 2006:14).

There has been heavy criticism of the paramilitaries for not demobilising child soldiers, and the decision to instead send them home to avoid charges for recruiting minors. As a result, many child-soldiers decided to demobilise individually after they were denied participation in the collective demobilisation by their commanders or after being captured by the army (HRW, 2008:77; Procuraduría, 2006:339, CCJ, 2008:89). In declarations in the framework of Law 975, the paramilitary commander Iván Duque said that he discussed the topic with Restrepo, but the Peace Commissioner told him that the President would not to allow the demobilisation of child soldiers or even make them visible at the demobilisation ceremonies (El Espectador 17/07/14). Similarly, other commanders also later confessed to having denied the existence of minors within their troops (El Tiempo, 12/07/08; Semana 27/03/09; CCJ, 2008:92)[53]

As child recruitment is a crime punished by the ICC, war-lords and rebel leaders tend to be reluctant to recognise the existence of child soldiers (MDRP, 2004:2; Mcmullin, 2013:169). In the case of Colombia, the demobilisations themselves were based on the troop list provided by the paramilitary leaders, thus most of the child soldiers were excluded for fear of being accused of child recruitment. There were reports of children joining other groups after being left out of the demobilisation by their commanders (El Tiempo 12/07/08; El Espectador 17/07/14). Moreover, despite having the capacity to assist, the ICBF programme failed to provide reintegration services to many minors, as they never officially demobilised (Defensoría, 2006:56; Interview Villarraga). This exclusion also impacted on the child and young soldiers' legal status and their

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[53] In declarations in the frame of Law 975, the paramilitary leaders have accepted the recruitment of minors. Recordings of the trials to Ramón Isaza, Walter Ochoa, Luis Zuluaga and John Freddy Gallo. 6 September, 2013.

possibilities for claiming socio-economic benefits, which left them more vulnerable to becoming the victims of violence at the hands of other armed groups, or to be recruited into other armed groups.

Targeting drug-lords

The Cacique Nutibara Bloc (BCN) was an urban group that operated in Medellín and became the first paramilitary front to demobilise under the Ralito Agreement in November 2003. The Bloc was primarily made up of gangs and petty criminals led by Don Berna, head of the drug-trafficking organisation known as the Envigado Office. Don Berna had made an alliance with the AUC in 2001 to gain military control over Medellín slums. In October 2002, the National Army launched the military operation Orion to occupy and control Comuna 13, the most violent neighbourhood in the city. It has been argued that Orion received some support from the Cacique Nutibara Bloc and the operation mainly targeted guerrilla militias and other paramilitary groups that were not willing to join the negotiations with the government, such as Don Berna's competitor, the Metro Bloc (Romero, 2007:393; Gutierrez et al, 2009:12; Árias and Guáqueta, 2008:14). A few days after Orion, Don Berna declared a ceasefire and expressed his willingness to demobilise the Cacique Nutibara Bloc. By the time the demobilisation took place, his troops numbered around 4,000 members and controlled three quarters of Medellín's poorest neighbourhoods (ICG, 2004:12). In spite of this strength, it only demobilised 868 of its members along with two leaders: Giovanni Marin and Fabio Orlando Acevedo (aka Don Fabio). Don Berna himself did not demobilise but stayed at the negotiating table. Crucially for this research, the Cacique Nutibara demobilisation had no prior cantonment and there was no strategy for their reinsertion or reintegration; however, two weeks later La Ceja Agreement was signed, placing responsibility for the reinsertion of these troops[54] on Medellín's Mayoralty.

In December 2003, a second group under the name Peasant Self-Defense of Ortega[55] demobilised 168 members. This was a small and indigenous group created in 2000 following the massacre of thirteen members of the community at the hands of FARC. Its

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[54] La Ceja Agreement (2003), a peace agreement between the National Government and the Bloque Cacique Nutibara. Signed in La Ceja, Antioquia, on 10th December 2003. Available at http://www.verdadabierta.com/

[55] Autodefensas Campesinas de Ortega.

members only used machetes and hand-crafted weapons (OACP, 2006:16; ACR, Video). Arguably, this was the only group of a purely defensive nature that demobilised during this time: none of their leaders was present at the negotiations; none of them has been accused of drug-trafficking; and there have been no reported incidents of them relapsing into violence.

In March 2004 the government finally succeeded in creating a unified negotiating table[56], but this was placed in jeopardy by the increasing fragmentation within the paramilitaries, as the AUC political leaders started to be killed by those commanders more involved in drug-trafficking (Gutierrez, 2004:27; Romero, 2007:82). Carlos Castaño himself fell victim to the internecine conflict and two other commanders who had distanced themselves from drug-trafficking were also neutralised: the commander of the defeated Metro Bloc, Carlos Fernandez aka Doble Cero was murdered[57] (ICG, 2004:7); while Martín Llanos, commander of the Casanare Peasant Self-Defenses, was forced to cede territorial control to the Centauros Bloc – an AUC franchise bought by drug-lord Miguel Arroyave[58] – before fleeing to Venezuela[59].

As criticism of the negotiations between the government and the paramilitaries continued, a new agreement was signed outlining the creation of a zone for the concentration of troops in Ralito, Department of Cordoba[60]. On 15th June 2004 the government was forced to withdraw the Alternative Penalty Bill as reaching a Congress approval proved difficult and the legal deadline for legal expiration was close. On the same day Uribe signed two resolutions formalising, at last, the negotiations that had started unofficially almost a year earlier[61]. In practice, this had two main outcomes: the government suspended the arrest warrants of the paramilitary leaders and, in exchange, they gathered some of their troops in the designated concentration zones.

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[56] Public Letter, "Unity for Peace", March 31, 2004 (Villarraga, 2013:223).

[57] Carlos Castaño disappeared in April 2004, most likely to be murdered by his former associates (Semana 23/08/06, CCJ, 2008:40). He had publicly stated his sympathy for Carlos Fernandez and aka Martin Llanos in "The Self-Defense's Sour Duty".

[58] Arroyave was later murdered on 19th September, 2004 by his own associates.

[59] Sentence to José Barnery Veloza García §211, pp 78-79. Bananero, Calima and Centauros Bloc Trial, No. 2006/80585. Available at http://www.fiscalia.gov.co/jyp/direccion-de-fiscalia-nacional-especializada-de-justicia-transicional/ley_justicia_y_paz/

[60] Fatima Agreement, May 13, 2004. More of these concentration zones were then created by Presidential decree under the title of Temporary Zones of Location (OACP/ACR, 2010:85)

[61] Resolution 091 and 092/2004.

The debates in Congress continued over, not one, but nine other bills that were introduced by different political forces (ICG, 2005:20; Palou, 2006; Pardo, 2007:99). Palou has argued that following the withdrawal of the Alternative Penalty bill, the government decided to change its strategy by trying to achieve political consensus before introducing a replacement bill (2006:49, 69). Hence, at the end of July 2004, three key paramilitary leaders – Salvatore Mancuso, Iván Roberto Duque and Ramon Isaza[62] – made a surprising visit to an informal session of Congress, giving speeches that received standing ovations by a third of Congress members in attendance[63] (Pardo, 2007:141). The speeches had only been made possible because two Congress members summoned the paramilitary leaders to speak[64], and the visit was ratified by the Peace Commissioner, who issued freedom of movement permits. Furthermore, the mayor of Monteria and the governor of Cordoba accompanied them on the trip to Bogotá; the National Army and the police provided transport and logistics and this extraordinary session was broadcast on national TV (Semana 01/08/04; El Tiempo 29/07/04; Pardo, 2007:141). In the end, however, the whole event drew enormous criticism from a wide variety of groups, nationally and internationally. The US ambassador to Colombia, along with members of US Congress, expressed their disapproval (Pardo, 2007; Palou, 2006:69). Similarly, the leaders' visit to Congress created fractures within the government as some Congress members, including some who were part of Uribe's coalition, rose up against it (Semana 01/08/04; El Tiempo 29/07/04). Only a few months later, in November 2004, 27 members of Congress visited the negotiations in Ralito and proposed a constitutional reform to forbid extradition in the case of peace processes (El Tiempo 12/11/04; Pardo, 2007:147). This proposal never came to fruition.

Just as the overarching process was entering into crisis, the demobilisations started again: the paramilitaries announced the demobilisation of three different structures between November and December 2004 [65]. However, before their inception, the

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[62] Iván Roberto Duque aka Ernesto Baez; Ramon Isaza aka El Viejo.

[63] At the time, Congress was made up of 268 members, of whom 60 were present in the meeting. Only Senators Gustavo Petro and Rafael Pardo, as well as the representative Gina Parody, abstained from applauding the paramilitary leaders.

[64] Rocio Arias and Eleonora Pineda.

[65] The Western Plains Self-Defense (led by Miguel Arroyave, Pablo Mejia and Guillermo Torres), the North Bloc (led by Salvatore Mancuso, Jorge 40, Diego Vecino, Ramón Mojana, Camilo Catatumbo) and the Bloque Bananero (led by Ever Velosa García aka Hernán Hernandez). Public letter, August 12, 2004, Annex 11, pp 133 (OACP, 2006).

Supreme Court of Justice authorised the extradition of one paramilitary leader held in the encampment area: Juan Carlos Sierra aka El Tuso. The President was reluctant to effect the extradition (Palou, 2006:71), until the political journal <u>Semana</u> leaked a secret recording between paramilitary leader Salvatore Mancuso and Peace Commissioner Restrepo, which revealed that the extradition was one of the main points discussed at the negotiating table (<u>Semana</u> 24/09/2004)[66]. Two days later, Uribe authorised the extradition of El Tuso to the US, and in October the paramilitaries issued a statement entitled "An act of faith in the peace", announcing a new wave of demobilisations due to start in November, in order "to gain back confidence in the process"[67]. Subsequently, at the end of 2004 and the beginning of 2005[68] eight military structures demobilised, including Mancuso and 2,362 of his troops. The Peace Commissioner would claim that "[It] is a gesture of good will that the Self-Defenses had declared a ceasing of hostilities and the demobilisation of [4,820] of its members", before the approval of the transitional law (Restrepo, 2005:39).

The negotiations continued but in April 2005, politician Orlando Benitez[69] was assassinated along with his sister and driver very close to Ralito. Don Berna, still present at the negotiating table, was himself accused of the murders and an arrest warrant was issued in his name. It was alleged that he had ordered the attack because Benitez was carrying out a political campaign in the area without paramilitary authorisation. Don Berna fled, only to surrender three days later after a man-hunt by the Army and intermediation by the Peace Commissioner (<u>El Tiempo</u> 27/05/2005). Despite the incident, he was granted demobilised status and was thus allowed to continue in his role as a member of the negotiation team (Pardo, 2007:144). Only a few weeks later, in June 2005 Don Berna demobilised as the leader of the Heroes de Tolová Bloc. On 25th July 2005 the transitional law was finally approved by Congress, entitled Law 975 of

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[66] This is the only known evidence of the dynamics and topics addressed in the negotiations. <u>Semana</u> 24/09/2004.

[67] Public Letter "An act of faith on the peace", October 7th, 2004, Annex 12, pp 134 (OACP, 2006).

[68] Commander Ever Veloza demobilised the Bananero and Calima Blocs; Mancuso demobilised the Catatumbo and Cordoba Blocs; and other smaller groups were included: South Magdalena Self-Defense group, as well as three military structures: Cundinamarca, South-West Antioquia and Mojana Blocs. The demobilisation of the Self-Defense of the Western Plains never took place as its leader Miguel Arroyave was murdered by his own associates when he left the encampment area. The North Bloc demobilised later in 2006.

[69] Orlando Benitez, from the Liberal Party.

Justice and Peace. In total eleven paramilitary structures containing 5,903 fighters had demobilised in the interim, making it for 18.63 per cent of the total paramilitary demobilisation.

Demobilisations as part of negotiating the political status

The decision as to who would obtain demobilised status was defined through the interplay of these three elements: the negotiation between government and paramilitary groups, the demobilisation of paramilitary members, and the debates in Congress to approve the transitional law. Table 3 shows how decision-making over the demobilisation schedule was linked to specific events that had a direct impact on the negotiations or their legal context. To develop Kriger's statement (2003), it was the paramiltiaries who decided not only who and how to demobilise, but also *when.*

EVENT	NEGOTIATIONS	LEGAL SPHERE	DEMOBILISATIONS
	Ralito Agreement to demobilise the BCN. **15/07/2003**	Introduction of the Alternative Penalty Bill to Congress. **21/08/2003**	Demobilisation of child soldiers and the Cacique Nutibara Bloc. **07/2003**
Secret recording is leaked to the press. **25/09/2004**	"Act of Faith" agreement to demobilise three structures. **07/10/2004**	Uribe authorises the extradition of Juan Carlos Sierra. **26/09/2004**	
		The Supreme Court of Justice authorises extradition of Salvatore Mancuso. **24/11/2004**	Salvatore Mancuso demobilises with the Catatumbo Bloc. **10/12/2004**
Killing of politician Orlando Benitez, his sister and his driver. **11/04/2005**		Court issues warrant for Don Berna for the Benitez murder. **22/05/2005**	Don Berna demobilises with the Heroes de Tolová Bloc. **15/06/2005**

Table 3. Examples of the interplay between the negotiations, the legal sphere and the demobilisations.

The demobilisation of troops took place at the beginning of the negotiations (the demobilisation of the Cacique Nutibara Bloc and of 69 minors) and when the approval of the transitional law in Congress entered into crisis after the leak of the secret recordings. Furthermore, paramilitary leaders Salvatore Mancuso and Don Berna only demobilised when they could no longer avoid jail: their status as demobilised protected them from imprisonment and extradition, at least temporarily. Therefore, the demobilisations were instrumental in the efforts of the paramilitary leaders to gain

public trust and to pressurise Congress into approving a legal framework that would mitigate the extradition and the international justice threats against drug-lords disguised as paramilitary leaders (ICG, 2004:3; Pardo, 2007:143-147; Guáqueta, 2013:435). In response to the unfulfilled deadline that was initially established for the demobilisations, the Peace Commissioner declared:

> *[...] We are worried that the Self-Defenses have postponed the demobilisations before and have used that as a strategy for the negotiation. This cannot become an excuse to revisit topics that have already been covered at the negotiating table, or topics that are in the hands of the government, by the Law of Justice and Peace or by going to prison to pay for their alternative jail terms.[70]*

Law 782 authorised the President to demobilise rank-and-file troops and rebel leaders, but it was the need to include lax criteria on drug-trafficking crimes that defined the timing and number of the demobilised troops. There was thus a need for the paramilitaries to find political backing for their cause (outside of support from the President) in order to make structural reforms to the legal system. These reforms would lead to the form of transitional justice needed for their crimes to be treated as politically motivated. The paramilitary commander Vicente Castaño issued the following complaint about later changes made to Law 975:

> *I totally trust in Uribe, but one swallow does not make a summer [...]. Even if we achieve our aims, the international community or a new president may overthrow everything [...]. That is why the law of Justice and Peace is full of hidden issues not in our favour but against us, in order to put us in the deepest dungeons of torture by the Americans and the International Criminal Court.[71]*

In practice, under the original version of Law 975 charges of drug-trafficking were easy to avoid, and while the war-lords' properties and goods could be expropriated in theory, in reality it was difficult to prove them as the products of criminal activities (ICG, 2003:12). In the case of being found guilty of war crimes the paramilitary leaders could have their sentence reduced to a maximum of eight years, having fulfilled certain requirements such as collaboration with the authorities and reparation of the victims.

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[70] In an interview to <u>Semana</u>. "The Peace Commissioner Uncovered", February 12, 2006.
[71] Vicente Castaño, Interview in <u>Semana</u>. "Vicente Castaño Uncover", October 7th, 2006.

However, confessing was optional and false or incomplete confessions were not punished (ICG, 2005:20; Pardo, 2007:108). Similarly, paramilitaries who demobilised individually could be entitled to the judicial benefits even if the group continued its activities, and their sentences could potentially be reduced to as little as 22 months (ICG, 2005:21). Furthermore, Law 975 was lenient in its procedures and its interpretation could easily be manipulated: had the accused not confessed or accepted any of the charges against him, for instance, the Fiscal Office would only have 60 days to present evidence and call the accused to trial, a time which proved too short to collect and prepare a case against them[72]. The Fiscal Office would hence have missed the deadline to present the case, the accused would be acquitted of charges and set free due to legal technicalities (Pardo, 2007:102, HRW, 2005b:55). Ultimately, then, had the Alternative Penalty Bill been approved or Law 975 implemented without modifications, the paramilitaries would have achieved immunity at the international level. In the hypothetical case of being judged and sentenced in Colombia, they could then not be judged for a second time for the same crimes under international law (Palou, 2006:31). Drug-trafficking could have been justified to finance the counterinsurgency war and, given the immense political influence of the paramilitary forces and their infiltration of the judicial system, they were very likely to avoid the effective enforcement of the law in the form of jail sentences.

Following the approval of Law 975, 26 paramilitary structures comprising 26,366 soldiers demobilised between August 2005 and April 2006, but this did not stop the criticism of the government and the legal and political battles. In the face of these apparent shortcomings, Law 975 was subjected to several demands of unconstitutionality and a number of amendments were made by the Constitutional Court: its final version states that crimes against humanity (e.g. kidnapping, genocide and terrorism) and crimes not related to the nature of the armed conflict (e.g. rape, fraud and drug-trafficking) are to be excluded from legal favour[73] (PRVC, 2006:41). Confession of crimes became compulsory and the paramilitary leaders were required to declare for

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[72] The delay in criminal procedures in Colombia is inherent to the justice system. Calling a person to trial may take years, even if incarcerated.

[73] Sentences from the Constitutional Court C-531 in 12 July, 2006; C-127 22 February, 2006. Sentence C-370/2006 18 May, 2006 that modifies the paragraph 71 among others (CONPES 3554:5; OACP/ACR, 2010:86)

their crimes in front of the Fiscal Office[74]. Looking further ahead, the actions of the justice system changed the course of the DDR process and the conditions that the paramilitary leaders had negotiated with the government for their demobilisation were overturned: on the one hand, the paramilitary leaders who demobilised were not able to escape from jail or extradition (see Annex F); on the other, the low-ranking demobilised fell into a judicial limbo and their legal situation remained unsolved for nine years. Crucially, then, the debates revolved around the legal benefits for the demobilised paramilitary leaders, while any negotiation on the future reintegration or the legal, economic or social situation of former rank-and-file combatants were left to fall by the wayside. Furthermore, the reintegration of low-ranking fighters was impeded by their unsolved legal situation, and the lack of a strategy either on the part of government or of the paramilitary leaders.

3.3 Individual demobilisations

The legal framework for the individual demobilisations originated in 1958[75] and aimed to provide amnesty to the liberal guerrillas who had fought in the civil war (Schuster, 2009:21; Villarraga, 2006:21). The intensity of the guerrilla warfare demands levels of commitment as well as physical and mental conditioning that are difficult to maintain over long periods of time, subsequently the guerrillas typically move through a more or less constant cycle of recruitment and desertion (Pinto et al, 2002:1; Cardenas, 2005:13; Interview Villarraga).

In 2002, a report by the National Department of Planning (DNP)[76] showed that desertions of guerrilla members had increased from 150 to 1,200 fighters between 1998 and 2002. The report also suggested that the government could benefit from this desertion phenomenon in order to reduce the numbers of the rebel groups and to gather intelligence against them, with the additional benefit that reintegrating guerrilla fighters was cheaper than fighting them head-on (Pinto et al, 2002:29,65). The Policy of Democratic Security, therefore, depicted the individual demobilisations as a strategy to

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[74] Currently, there are thousands of declarations used by the judicial system to judge the paramilitary leaders, but also to open new investigations against those people who were involved acts of violence, including the financing of violence or military support in the case of army personnel.

[75] Decree 328 and 2582/1958, under the presidency of Alberto Lleras Camargo. Updated by Decree 1384 and 1385/1994, under César Gaviria.

[76] Acronym in Spanish: Departamento Nacional de Planeación.

increase the military pressure on the guerrillas within the counterinsurgency frame (Pretelt, 2006:25; Cartagena Contribution, 2009:10; OACP/ACR, 2010:98).

As part of its mandate, in 2003 the Ministry of Defence launched a campaign to encourage the desertion from the guerrillas by offering demobilisation benefits (OACP/ACR, 2010:117). This campaign featured advertisements on radio and TV, as well as other marketing strategies: including broadcasting a song, throwing flyers from helicopters flying over combat zones, and hanging Christmas lights in a tree in one of the guerrilla corridors[77]. In the same vein, imprisoned guerrilla members, or those caught up in combat with the army were offered the benefits of demobilisation and reintegration, in exchange for the jail sentences they faced.

The institution responsible for the individual demobilisations was the Programme for Humanitarian Assistance to the Demobilised (PAHD)[78], administered by the Ministry of Defence. The PAHD had four main objectives: to foster the demobilisation of guerrilla members, especially from mid-ranking soldiers and urban militias; to promote a positive image of the demobilisations among the national and international community; to provide humanitarian services to the demobilised; and to prevent recruitment within illegal armed groups (OACP/ACR, 2010:98; Army webpage). Equally, the Director of the reinsertion programme, stated that the offer of demobilisation to guerrilla members aimed to slow down the expansion and strengthening of the illegal armed groups, by providing alternatives to the use of military force or criminal prosecution to process the ex-combatants (Angel, 2006:199).

Desertion from the guerrillas is considered betrayal and invariably punished by death. However, many fighters prefer to risk their lives and abandon the group, rather than bearing the intensity of the combat, the precarious living conditions and the proximity to death involved in the guerrilla warfare. Building on this, the Ministry of Defence focused its attention on those that dared to escape and managed to survive. Deserters from the guerrillas could simply present themselves in front of any civil or military authority and request status as demobilised. The combatants would then be transferred

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[77] The campaign and the songs were posted in Youtube, subtitles in English available. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2rMCp9CQj8; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5BkUWJzuGM.
[78] Acronym in Spanish. Programa de Atención Humanitaria al Desmovilizado. Resolution 0722/2001

to a military compound where he or she would remain for a maximum of two weeks for adults and 36 hours for minors. Following this period, they would proceed to one of a set of shelters administered by the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Defence, mainly located in Bogotá. Finally, in a crucial point of difference to the collective demobilisations, the ex-combatants could also include their families in the programme: specifically their partners and children, or their parents (OACP/ACR, 2010:102; ACR, 2011).

During Uribe's administration, there were circa 23,000 reported individual demobilisations[79]. Between August 2002 and October 2008, 17,450 people were granted demobilised status, an average of eight per day (Conpes, 3554:12). Ex-guerrillas, both from FARC and ELN, constituted 67 per cent of the individual demobilisations, compared to 13.41 per cent of ex-members of paramilitary groups (Table 4).

GROUP	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007[80]	2008	2009	2010	%
FARC	529	1376	1300	1135	1558	2480	3027	2128	2009	15542
%	72.47	54.22	43.74	44.27	63.33	77.69	87.46	80.67	82.13	67.6
ELN	139	405	333	301	359	423	403	492	359	3214
%	19.04	15.96	11.20	11.74	14.59	13.25	11.64	18.65	14.68	14.0
Para	0	692	1269	1096	470	155	0	0	65	3747
%	0	27.27	42.70	42.75	19.11	4.86	0	0	2.66	16.3
Others	62	65	70	32	73	134	31	18	13	498
%	8.49	2.56	2.36	1.25	2.97	4.20	0.90	0.68	0.53	2.2
Total	730	2538	2972	2564	2460	3192	3461	2638	2446	23001

Table 4. Individual demobilisations 2002-2010 per group. Source: Ministry of Defence, statistics. 2015. Percentages mine.

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[79]Ministry of Defence, 2013. Statistics of Individual Demobilisations per year (2002-2012). PAHD. Available at www.defensa.gob.gov.co [Accessed on 12 June 2013]. Data on the individual demobilisations tends to factor in the number of ex-combatants plus their families. This is misleading as it is frequently interpreted as the total figure for deserters from guerrilla groups. The ACR does provide services for the family, but not to the same extent as for the ex-combatants.

[80] After the last collective demobilisation, in 2006, the government only recognised individual demobilisations which explains the increase in the numbers in 2007 and 2008.

Targeting deserters

The policy of individual demobilisations can be considered a turning point in the treatment of guerrilla deserters. On the one hand, the Policy of Democratic Security offered them status as demobilised, which entitled them to some form of protection from the death threat posed by their former comrades, as well as opportunities for employment and education (2003:7). On the other, within their own ranks, the police and the army promoted the idea that the protection and good treatment of the demobilised facilitated the process of gathering information useful to military operations, which would be translated into positive results against the guerrillas (CCJ, 2008:30). As a US report on the Colombia Plan stated:

> *[The Colombian] government, through its counternarcotics strategy, military and police actions, and other efforts (such as its demobilisation and deserter programmes) has degraded the finances of illegal armed groups and weakened their operational capabilities.[...] [T]he number of FARC combatants and its capabilities have been dramatically reduced by continuous assaults on its top leadership, the capture or killing of FARC members in conflictive zones, and a large number of desertions.*
>
> *(US, 2008:22, 25, emphasis mine)*

In addition, the contrast in bureaucratic procedure between the collective and the individual demobilisations shows that both responded to different strategies and institutions in the frame of the Policy of Democratic Security. The collective demobilisations of paramilitary groups were handled by civilian institutions: the Peace Commissioner Office was responsible for the negotiation and demobilisation, the Ministry of Interior (PRVC office) for providing reinsertion assistance, and the MAPP-OEA for monitoring the process, while an inter-institutional group was in charge of collecting and destroying the surrendered weapons. The individual demobilisations, conversely, were the responsibility of the military institutions, in particular the Ministry of Defence. After the demobilisation process had been exhausted, ex-combatants from both individual and collective processes were then transferred to the PRVC Office (Figure 2).

More significantly, the bureaucratic procedures to obtain status as demobilised requested former guerrillas to collaborate in intelligence-gathering against their group (OACP/ACR:102). Each deserter would receive a certificate from the Operative Committee to Laying Down Arms (CODA), which was part of the PAHD and formed by representatives of the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Peace Commissioner Office. CODA was responsible for verifying and certifying that the candidates were real guerrilla members: thus, during their time in the military compounds or in the shelters the former fighters were subject to a series of interviews to establish their status and activities inside the rebel group (Ministry of the Interior, 2006:11):

> [T*he ex-combatant should] collaborate with the authorities in the dismantling of the guerrilla group that he belongs to, or with the justice system in the investigation of crimes that he could have committed during his participation in the armed group.*[81]

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[81] Decree 1059/2008 about guerrilla members in prison.

Individual Demobilisation   **Collective Demobilisation**

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┌─────────────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Campaign to promote the      │          │       Negotiation            │
│ Demobilisation               │          │ PEACE COMMISSIONER OFFICE    │
│ MINISTRY OF DEFENSE          │          │       (OACP)                 │
└─────────────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────────────┘
            │                                          │
            ▼                                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│      DEMOBILISATION          │          │      DEMOBILISATION          │
│ Civil or Military Authorities│          │ PEACE COMMISSIONER OFFICE    │
│ or the Church                │          │       (OACP)                 │
└─────────────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────────────┘
            │                                          │
            ▼                                          ▼
┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Transfer to a    │   │    Minors    │   │   Concentration Zones        │
│ military compound │──▶│ COLOMBIAN    │◀──│        PEACE                 │
│ MINISTRY OF      │   │ INSTITUTE FOR │   │ COMMISSIONER AND             │
│ DEFENSE          │   │ FAMILY       │   │ MAPP-OEA                     │
└──────────────────┘   │ WELFARE       │   └─────────────────────────────┘
            │          │ (ICBF)       │               │
            ▼          └──────────────┘               ▼
┌──────────────────┐          │          ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Money allowance  │          ▼          │ Guidance and Humanitarian    │
│ and shelter.     │   ┌──────────────┐   │ help. Programme for          │
│ Programme of     │   │ Preclusion of │   │ Reincorporation into the     │
│ Humanitarian Help │   │ investigation │   │ Civil Life (PRVC)            │
│ to the Demobilised│   │ FISCAL OFFICE│   │ MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR     │
│ (PAHD).          │   └──────────────┘   └─────────────────────────────┘
│ MINISTRY OF      │          │                       │
│ DEFENSE and      │          │                       ▼
│ INTERIOR and OACP│          │          ┌─────────────────────────────┐
└──────────────────┘          │          │      DISARMAMENT             │
            │                 │          │ OACP, MAPP/OEA and           │
            ▼                 │          │ Inter-institutional          │
┌──────────────────┐          │          │ Antiterrorist group (GIATT)  │
│   Certificate    │          │          └─────────────────────────────┘
│ Operative        │          │                       │
│ Committee to     │          │                       ▼
│ Leave the Arms   │          │
│ (CODA)           │          │
│ MINISTRY OF      │          │
│ DEFENSE          │          │
└──────────────────┘          │
       │      ╲               │
       ▼       ╲              ▼
┌────────────┐  ╲   ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Monetary   │   ╲  │         REINTEGRATION                    │
│ Rewards    │    ▼ │ MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR - Programme for  │◀─
└────────────┘      │ Reincorporation into the Civil Life (PRVC)│
                    └─────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
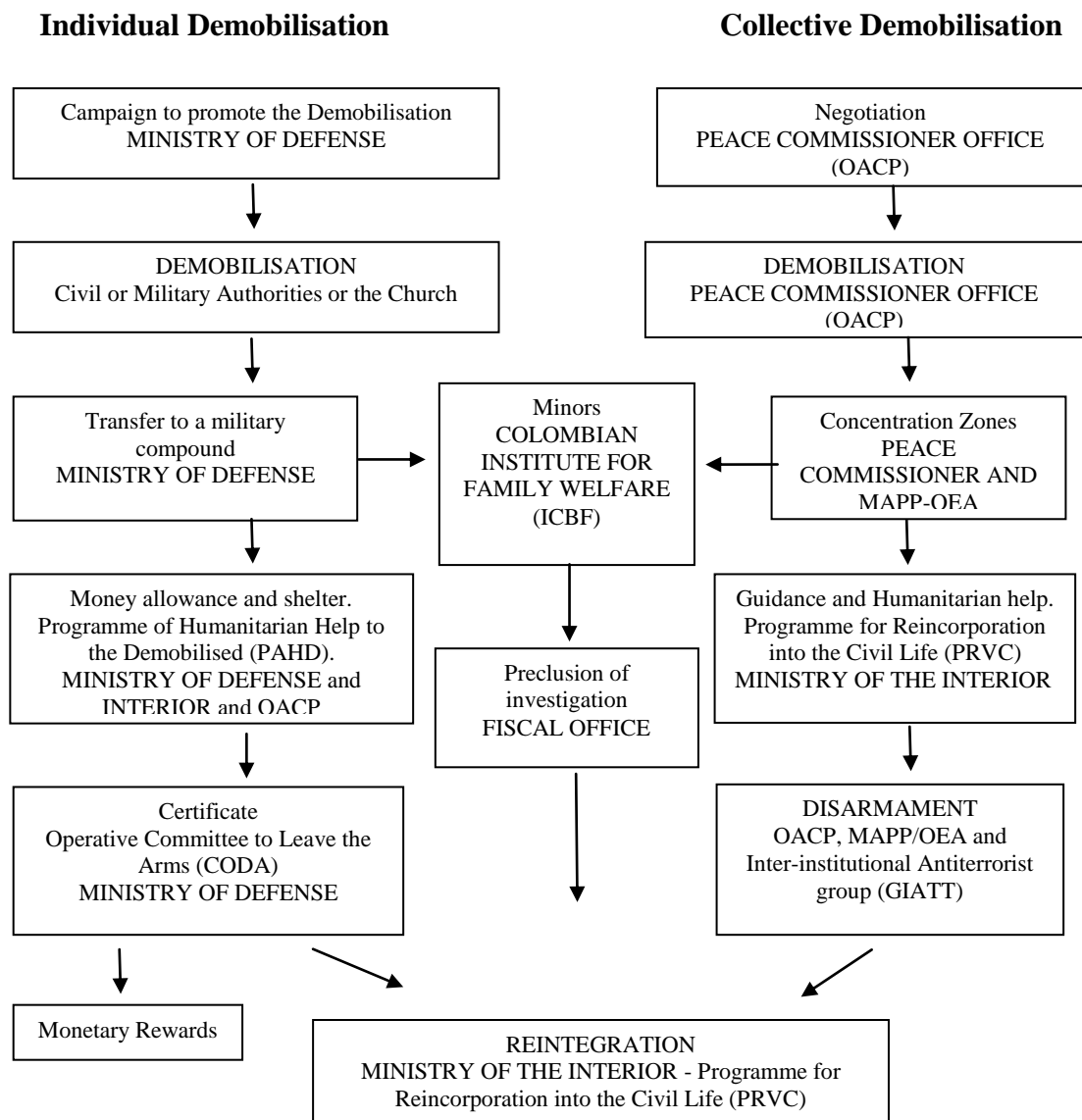
Figure 2. Comparison between the stages of individual and collective demobilisations. Source: My own based on Ministry of the Interior, 2006.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Defence was allowed to offer millions of pesos in monetary rewards to the demobilised for information that was effectively translated into military results, and for their participation in military operations (Ministry of the Interior, 2006:11)[82]. The reward amount could range from $US 750 to $US 35,000 for information that aided in the rescue of kidnapped military personnel or civilians, in capturing guerrilla commanders or in locating guerrilla camps (Árias and Guáqueta, 2008:24). Physical or psychological abuse in these interviews has not been reported, although some ex-combatants have complained of receiving pressure from their

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[82] Decree 2767, 31 August 2004; Decree 128/2003 and 395/2007.

interviewers, while others understood that the CODA certificate depended on their participation in military operations (Cardenas: 2005:44; Interview Cardenas; Procuraduría, 2006:31). Rosenau et al (2014) found more than 15,000 of these interviews conducted with ex-FARC members, containing personal information regarding the reasons behind their recruitment into and their desertion from the guerrillas, as well as intelligence information around the group's activities. Furthermore, the Army publicly stated that the demobilisation policy had resulted in:

> *1. Affecting the enemy: reducing its number of combatants, demoralising them and obtaining vital intelligence (logistics, mobility, strategy and military targets). The PAHD has provided: 1.1 intelligence to plan military operations fundamental for the success of the Policy of Democratic Security [...] and many other operations where the demobilised have been the only source of information. 1.2 the demobilisation has been fundamental in halting the military offensive by the guerrillas because it implies: sending less troops to the operations, in an effort to minimise the risk of desertion; the need to move more often due to the information provided by the demobilised; more time invested in recruiting [...]* [83].

However, the use of the demobilised population for military purposes has been heavily criticised by a host of different institutions: UN representatives criticised the desertion campaign by saying that, rather than as a marketing strategy, the Ministry of Defence could have used it to provide more accurate information about the rights of the demobilised and about the reinsertion programme, or to foster further trust and acceptance from the demobilised within the recipient communities (PNUD, 2003:148). Similarly, the General Inspector's Office and the Mayors of Bogotá and Medellín denounced military collaboration as too great a risk for the ex-combatants: first and foremost, they may be killed during their participation in military operations; second, rather than targeting every single deserter, the guerrillas retaliate heavily against those who released sensitive information or who took part in military operations; third, the monetary rewards became a source of corruption within the military, and reports emerged of payments that were delayed or never made, as well as cases of unlawful killing of ex-combatants by the military in order to claim their monetary rewards for

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[83] Webpage Colombian Army, accessed 7th June, 2015. Available at
http://www.ejercito.mil.co/wap//index.php?idcategoria=274415

collaboration (Cardenas, 2005:33,44, Procuraduria, 2006a:33; Villamizar, 2005:22). A report from the Defensoría and Unicef also flagged evidence that intelligence-gathering interviews were also carried out with child soldiers, and that some of them even received offers to participate in military operations, both practices are illegal under Colombian child law (Defensoría, 2006:45). More importantly for this thesis, the offering of money to shift loyalties runs contrary to an appropriate reintegration process: while the criminal world may extend offers millions of pesos to the former combatants, the ACR reintegration programme and officers aimed to introduce the ex-combatants to those basic skills needed for formal work and education, which privileged personal development rather than greed (Villarraga, 2013:90; Cárdenas, 2005:33; Árias and Guáqueta, 2008:24)[84].

Certainly, the policy of individual demobilisation addressed the phenomenon of an increasing number of deserters, but also promoted it for specific military ends. Ultimately, as the security aims were prioritised, any notions of pursuing further reintegration of ex-guerrilla combatants or development for the wider communities affected by the conflict were largely abandoned. This may have been a combatant-centred strategy from the outset, yet rather than focusing on wider concerns over the security risk the former combatants may have posed, the combatants themselves were targeted on the basis of their military worth as collaborators and providers of counterinsurgency intelligence.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has described how the DDR process evolved during the negotiation and demobilisation phases, analysing the politics behind the criteria over who could obtain demobilised status. The DDR process originated in a strategy of national security and targeted combatants selectively: its initial design could hence be categorised as security-oriented and combatant-centred. However, rather than the immediate concerns over the security threat posed by the former combatants, or the effectiveness of their reintegration aid, the negotiations revolved principally around who among them could obtain the judicial benefits from the new transitional legislation.

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[84] See also the debates in Foro Distrital, 2005 and Foro Bogotá, 2006

On the one hand, the collective negotiation and demobilisations took place in a context in which powerful drug-lords had allied with the paramilitaries and could potentially obtain the legal benefits of transitional justice for themselves. Demobilised status would have entitled them to lenient treatment by the national legal system, which could also block the enforcement of extradition to the US as well as international human rights laws. However, these drug-lords first needed to be considered as politically-motivated, and several strategies were developed to do so. Firstly, their political disguise was only workable through the elimination of those political leaders who, despite their strong links with drug-trafficking, opposed the drug-lords' take-over of the paramilitary cause. Secondly, close alliances with politicians encouraged support from Congress members during the lobbying process and the introduction of new bills. Finally, the demobilisation of troops was also used to gain trust in the system and thereby put pressure on Congress to adhere to its workings.

The demobilisation of paramilitary groups could have been completed within the legal framework of Law 782, but due to the military strategy of attacking civilians and their involvement in drug-trafficking, the paramilitary leaders were in need of a legal framework different from the one covering their foot-soldiers. The analysis above has highlighted the interplay between the negotiations, the demobilisations and the debates in Congress around the transitional laws: these three elements conspired to create a legal and political environment that favoured the relaxing of key criteria, including more lenient treatment of drug-trafficking crimes and grave human rights violations. In the same vein, child soldiers were systematically excluded from demobilised status in order to avoid accusations of crimes related to child recruitment, which fell outside the boundaries of the transitional legislation. It was undoubtedly the needs of the paramilitary leaders – rather than those of the fighters – that defined the who, how and when of the demobilisations. By contrast, any sense of coherent government strategy on DDR, or guidelines to deal with the combatants after their demobilisation, are conspicuous only by their absence.

On the other hand, the individual demobilisations formed part of a military strategy whose sole purpose was to weaken the guerrillas by fostering troop desertion and the subsequent acquisition of intelligence and collaboration in military operations. While the paramilitary leaders and war-lords negotiated and demobilised under the umbrella of

civilian institutions, deserters of guerrilla groups were processed by the military authorities. As such, rather than protecting the individually demobilised population, the military used them as part of its own counterinsurgency strategy.

In sum, none of the demobilisations outlined above were aimed towards development as it is understood by the international community or multilateral organisms: the sense of achieving the recovery of the economic and social welfare of war-torn societies. Although the demobilisation of low-ranking combatants proved instrumental for both the paramilitary leaders and the Colombian government, policies directly addressing the reintegration of ex-combatants back into society fell quickly and sharply down the list of priorities, and were largely overlooked throughout the DDR process.

Chapter 4

Ownership by Sub-national Institutions: the Role of the Bogotá and Medellín Municipalities

As the demobilisation and disarmament phases continued the DDR process started to crumble precisely because of the lack of a reintegration strategy. This chapter shows how the DDR process entered into a crisis, forcing the central government to shift its initial policy and turn its attention to the reintegration phase, which resulted in the belated creation of a national programme for reintegration. To do so, I will focus on the policies and actions of the Colombian authorities at two different levels: whereas the national government neglected the reintegration of ex-combatants, the municipalities of Bogotá and Medellín actively supported and contributed to it. This is followed by detailed analysis of the role of the Mayoral Offices of both cities in two main areas: how they urged the central government to reassess the DDR policy, and how they provided services to the former combatants from paramilitary groups and guerrillas.

This chapter addresses the issue of ownership and state-building by evidencing the role municipal authorities can take on a DDR programme. The first section describes the reinsertion strategy originally implemented by the central government, and the reasons for its failure. The second section presents the reintegration programmes developed by the Mayoral Offices of Medellín and Bogotá, explaining how these authorities played a key role in filling the gaps left by central government and navigating the various pitfalls inherent in implementing the DDR policy, and also in contributing to build the ACR and its reintegration programme. The third section analyses the challenges of the reintegration phase at the municipal and sub-national level. Crucially, given that municipal institutions are closer to their citizens than the central government, fostering coordination, communication and cooperation between national and sub-national authorities is integral to building sustainable state capacity from the bottom up. On the one hand, this encourages ownership and legitimacy, particularly in terms of the capacity to respond to security needs at the sub-national level, in tandem with national security requirements. On the other, and more importantly for this research, the action

of both Mayoral Offices underpinned the creation of the ACR Reintegration Programme and a sustained reintegration strategy, while also contesting central government policies and laying out the consequences of their deficiencies in governability. Finally, the fourth section describes the ACR programme in its final form.

Although there has been significant progress in the DDR literature in recognising local actors as the central players in policy-making, there is still a monolithic approach to the idea of "the local". Thus the question remains, then, over how best to articulate the different levels of authorities and institutions – international, national and sub-national – specifically regarding the degree of legitimacy and ownership that each authority is able to build in a post-conflict society. There is, however, no simple answer: as "the local" is a complex system of political, economic and social structures that is subject to continuous accommodations. Nevertheless, when it comes to the Reintegration phase, the DDR process needs to trickle down to the needs of these local authorities and communities by addressing the grievances of the victims, promoting reconciliation and establishing general human security. At this stage, whether they are prepared to or not, it is the responsibility of the municipal authorities to respond effectively to the long-term consequences of reintegrating ex-combatants into society by providing them with sustainable economic income and by fostering social inclusion.

4.1 The PRVC short-term reinsertion strategy

From the sub-national point of view, the negotiations, demobilisation and disarmament of the paramilitary groups took place without the participation or even consultation of the municipal authorities, even in decisions directly affecting local communities (Negrete, 2004:23, 32; Rivas and Mendez, 2008:12). For example, the creation of concentration zones in their territories was never broached with the local authorities. There were entire towns, such as Ralito, in which the inhabitants were compelled to live alongside the paramilitary soldiers awaiting their demobilisation ceremony, with no previous consultation or preparation. Therefore, the Mayors and other municipality authorities declared that the DDR process took them "by surprise", hence their reaction was one of reluctance to and rejection of the decisions taken by central government (Rivas and Mendez: 2008:12). This situation inevitably undermined the municipal

governments in terms of their capacity and legitimacy, and left them unprepared for the reintegration processes that were to take place in their territory.

During the cantonment in the concentration zones, the National Registry Office and the judicial courts then had the task of gathering personal data from all the combatants, including name, fingerprints and dental ID. After this phase of identification the ex-combatants received workshops on a variety of topics and were redirected to further services, mainly regarding their legal needs. Finally, the demobilised were given a citizenship ID. Following the demobilisation ceremony they would surrender their weapons and were free to go home[85] (OACP/ACR, 2010:85, 110, 131).

For the reinsertion phase, Uribe's strategy was to employ the same programmes, methods and infrastructure that had been in place since the 1990s: the Ministry of the Interior and the PRVC had been the institutions created to facilitate the reinsertion of guerrilla rebels into civil life, and their functions included coordinating the institutional offer of health, education, working skills and employment opportunities (Villarraga, 2006:31; OACP/ACR, 2010:133). Between 1990 and 1994 the total number of PRVC beneficiaries was 4,715 ex-rebels who demobilised collectively as part of peace settlements, while between 1998 and 2001 the programme provided services to 2,505 ex-combatants who had deserted from the active guerrillas (Pinto et al, 2002:1).

Under Uribe's government, however, the PRVC was appointed to provide reintegration services to both collective and individual demobilisations alike. In less than two years, the number of users skyrocketed: between December 2003 and August 2005, the PRVC was in charge of 16,596 ex-soldiers: 8,796 from collective demobilisations and 7,800 from individual demobilisations (Angel, 2005:197). The PRVC was no longer able to cope with this new level of demand – more than five times higher than previously –, simply because its budget and resources did not increase at the same rate. Such lack of resource and forward capacity was evident in the estimated ratio of around 1,500 to 2,000 ex-combatants for one social worker (Interview Villamizar; Reintegration Officers No. 73, 128, 141, 143; MAPP-10, 2007:6).

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[85] The ACR has made available videos documenting this process.

Moreover, the PRVC did not deliver reinsertion aid directly, but relied instead on its regional offices – Reference and Opportunity Centres – to coordinate with the sub-national authorities (Ministry of the Interior, 2006:23). By 2006, there were eight of these centres located in Bogotá, Medellín and four other mid-sized cities[86]. Additionally, there were three mobile units to provide services to other rural areas. It was expected that after the demobilisation phase, these centres would work as a form of walk-in service with the following functions: a) to facilitate bureaucratic procedures for requesting the judicial benefits, as well as obtaining IDs and other documents[87]; b) to establish links with other sub-national institutions in order to provide services in health, education, psychological aid, vocational training and legal advice; and c) to monitor and evaluate the reintegration process in general (Angel, 2005:201; Procuraduría, 2006b:43). However, by 2006 the MAPP reported that 35 per cent of the demobilised population had not received the services to which they were entitled (MAPP-7, 2006:9).

In sum, the reinsertion activities implemented from 2003 to 2006 were marred by a lack of planning and engagement from both the central government and the paramilitary leaders. Whether due to the under-estimation of combatant troop numbers, or their inflation by the paramilitary leaders, the strategy and resources dedicated to providing services to the demobilised proved limited and ineffective. Ultimately, the institutions that were in charge of ex-combatant reintegration collapsed, and the DDR process entered into a period of crisis.

4.2 Reintegration at the Sub-National Level

In 2007, the PRVC office was closed down and replaced by that of the ACR. However, in the interim between the first demobilisations in 2003 and the creation of the ACR, the Mayoral offices of Medellín and Bogotá developed programmes to provide services to the demobilised population migrating to or already living there (Table 5). The two cities are the largest and most economically significant in the country, thus the flow of demobilised occurred for several reasons: for one, the government purposely sent the demobilised there to facilitate the bureaucratic procedures and their physical protection. Secondly, the demobilised chose to migrate there voluntarily, drawn to the better

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[86] CROs. The centres in Bogotá and Medellín were called CRO-Z: Centros de Referencia Zonal.
[87] This included the routine checking of criminal records and the resolving of the military draft situation (the daft is compulsory in Colombia).

provision of and access to public services and employment opportunities, and by the prospect of maintaining one's privacy and anonymity more easily (Acosta et al, 2007:22, 64; FIP, 2005:3). Thirdly, compared to other cities, Medellín and Bogotá have more sub-national institutions that operate independent of the central state, a stronger economy and a broader proportion of the middle class. This translates into municipal authorities that can operate with real autonomy from both the national government and the unsettling dynamics of the conflict in the regions (Gutierrez et al, 2009:8). It is important to note, however, that although both cities have acted as recipients of the migrant demobilised population, the armed conflict had effected them differently, and consequently their security needs and approaches to reintegration also varied: Bogotá mainly hosted individually demobilised ex-guerrillas, while Medellín for the most part received the flow of the paramilitary collective demobilisations (Foro Bogota, 2006:17; Villamizar, 2005:15; Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a).

YEAR	PROGRAMME	INSTITUTION
1994-2003	Programme of Reincorporation to the Civil Life (PRVC)	Ministry of the Interior
1994-2003	Reincorporation into Civilian life	Mayoral Office of Medellín
2003	Peace and Reconciliation	
2004	Complementary Services to the Demobilised Population (PAPDRB)	Mayoral Office of Bogotá
2007-2012	High Commission for Reintegration (ACR)	Presidency
2012	Colombian Agency for Reintegration	

Table 5. Reinsertion and Reintegration Programmes in Colombia

The first democratic election of Mayors in 1988 and the new constitution in 1991 transformed the role of the Mayors by giving them political independence and greater powers. Specifically, in terms of security, there was a division of functions whereby the Mayors assumed the protection of the citizens, while central government became responsible principally for threats to national security. In practice, however, this division proved rather hazy and brought ambiguity into the chain of command of police forces at the municipal level, and has been subject for political negotiations ever since (Gutierrez et al., 2009:8). At the time of the demobilisation, Bogotá and Medellín had elected Mayors who contested Uribe's electoral majorities in the rest of the country[88].

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[88] The mayors had been elected for the period 2004-2007.

On the one hand, Sergio Fajardo claimed victory in Medellín by creating a centrist coalition including left-, centrist and right-wing politicians, disrupting the traditional bi-partisan electoral dynamic for the first time. The outgoing Mayor Luis Pérez, had been accused of corruption and tolerating the activity of the paramilitary groups in the city, and he had agreed with the central government that Medellín's Mayoralty would provide reinsertion services to the members of the Cacique Nutibara Bloc. On the other, Bogotá's Mayoral Office is considered to be the second most important political post in Colombia after the Presidency. In 2004, the electorate voted in a leftist union leader, Luis Eduardo Garzón[89], in a significant break from the trend of electing centrist Mayors that had begun in 1995.

The Fajardo-led coalition in Medellín, as well as the last three Mayors of Bogota[90], had a major impact on how local politics tackled urban security problems, namely by addressing public service provision and improving public institutions (Gutierrez et al, 2009:14). Although their governing styles varied greatly, these politicians brought about a new emphasis on creating more and better links between the municipal authorities and their citizens. While the former would improve the provision of services and the level of accountability, the latter would commit to using the mechanisms of democratic participation to flag their grievances. Through this process, the inhabitants would replace their expressions of violence with civic behaviours more conducive to caring for their city. The approach favoured by the Mayoral Offices of Bogotá and Medellín was therefore radically different from that of the Presidential Office: while national security placed the emphasis on dismantling the paramilitaries and defeating the guerrillas, at the local level the security problem was tackled in terms of coexistence and integration.

Against this political backdrop, during the demobilisation phase Medellín took over responsibilities to provide services of reintegration. Meanwhile, Bogotá provided an arena for sense-checking, contesting and redefining the policy passed down from the national government. It is also worth noting here that the activities of these municipal programmes had no constitutional mandate. Instead, they functioned as a form of social

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[89] His party was a new leftist coalition named Polo Democrático Alternativo.

[90] Antanas Mockus for the periods 1995-1997 and 2001-2003, Enrique Peñalosa for the period 1998-2001, and Luis Eduardo Garzón.

programme for a marginalised population, providing assistance to the demobilised in tandem with those services that, in principle, were the responsibility of the state and its central institutions.

Peace and Reconciliation Programme – Mayoral Office of Medellín

Medellín was one of the most violent cities in the world during the 1990s. Despite being the largest and most modernised city in the north-west of the country, it was the epicentre of the violence produced by the drug-cartels, paramilitaries and guerrilla groups. More broadly, Medellín is the capital of the department of Antioquia, a crucial stronghold for any group involved in illegal activities due to its strategic location: close to both oceans and connecting the centre of the country to the north coast and to Central America. Historically, too, the presence of large areas of cattle ranching, agribusiness plantations and factories of national companies and multinationals made Antioquia an important area for the guerrilla struggle in the 1980s. In the 1990s the region then witnessed a prolonged period of armed conflict between the EPL, ELN and FARC guerrillas, and between these groups and the paramilitaries, for the control of key territories and strategic corridors. By the 2000s the paramilitary groups had triumphed and conquered the city, but the violence continued in the form of internecine fighting until the alliance between Don Berna and the AUC gave the former the military support he needed to defeat his competitor, the Metro Block (Gutierrez and Jaramillo, 2004:28; Echandía, 2006:150; Arias and Guáqueta, 2008:15).

As the majority of the collective demobilisations took place in areas previously controlled by the paramilitary groups, i.e. the north and the north-west, Medellín's Mayor had a primary role to play in the reinsertion phase. Between 2003 and 2006, nine different paramilitary groups demobilised in Antioquia, two of them in Medellín itself: the Cacique Nutibara Bloc and Héroes de Granada Bloc. By 2006, 4,130 ex-paramilitaries were living in the city and 10,844 in Antioquia, constituting 13 per cent and 34 per cent respectively of all the collective demobilisations (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a:15). By 2008, only 10 per cent of ex-combatants living in Antioquia had demobilised individually (Aguirre, 2010:216). The city thus proved vitally important in providing services to the flow of demobilised who already lived in the city; and in receiving those ex-combatants migrating from Antioquia and other nearby less

developed states in which the paramilitaries operated, such as Córdoba, Sucre and Santander.

Moreover, Medellín's role went far beyond the number of people receiving services. The Mayor's Office took centre stage in the demobilisation and reintegration of the Cacique Nutibara. Although the signed La Ceja Agreement stated that the national government should take responsibility for reintegrating these troops, it also tasked the Municipality of Medellín with: developing a strategy of verification, monitoring and tracking of the status of the demobilised population and the recipient communities; overseeing the reintegration process as it developed; providing jobs to the ex-combatants by hiring them as temporary contractors (as city gardeners, street cleaners or traffic controllers); and delivering security and psychosocial services to the demobilised population. In reality, the Mayor's Office in Medellín transcended its initial support role, and effectively assumed responsibility for all the aforementioned functions before going on to create a reintegration model of its own.

When the demobilisation and disarmament phases began, Medellín already had a reintegration programme that had been implemented during the demobilisation of guerrillas and militia groups in the 1990s: the Reincorporation to Civility Programme. The new programme of demobilisation had already been arranged with the outgoing Mayor Luis Pérez, and then imposed on Fajardo's incoming administration, leaving him with no option but to implement a strategy for reintegration (Gutierrez and Jaramillo, 2004:28; Interview Officer No. 46). He thus replaced the former programme by creating "Peace and Reconciliation" to tackle coexistence problems and pursue development aims in regard to the demobilised and the victims of violence (Salazar, 2007:8).

Although no legal or formal agreement was signed, in practice, Peace and Reconciliation took over the reintegration of ex-soldiers who were the product of collective demobilisations, while the PRVC provided services to the individual ones (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a:9), alleviating the pressure created on the national programme due to the overflow of new users. Additionally, this informal division of work meant that Peace and Reconciliation was forced to deal with the pitfalls of the central administration's DDR policy, as well as the loopholes in the agreement between the paramilitary leaders and the national government. Consequently, the Mayor's Office

was compelled to find solutions and deliver services even though their procedures had not yet been clearly established.

Although the Ministry of the Interior transferred financial support to Peace and Reconciliation, Medellín also had to allocate important resources from its own local budget (Ministry of the Interior, 2006:24; Alcaldía de Medellin, 2006:141). In turn, Peace and Reconciliation took on further functions, such as giving legal advice regarding the status of the demobilised population, an activity that was beyond the Mayor's scope of action. To tackle this situation, Peace and Reconciliation assembled its own team of lawyers, but this initiative proved unsuccessful due to the political debates taking place in Congress over the legal framework for reintegration. Moreover, Medellín's programme designed a software for tracking the legal situation of each ex-combatant, and the services provided to them (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a:45).

The Mayor's Office was also faced with the problems and challenges of reintegrating ex-combatants into a specific community. This raised two main concerns: firstly, the immediate consequences of a sudden increase in inhabitants, which brought with it pressure to provide housing and jobs as well as health and education services. Secondly, there was the question of how to avoid perceptions of "preferences towards the perpetrators" and possible discrimination against the ex-combatants, while at the same time addressing the grievances of the many victims of the paramilitary groups (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a:11). Specifically, with this latter aim in mind, Medellín created a model for reintegration named "Return to Legality", whose mission was to contribute to the *reconciliation* process in the city by merging two previously separated areas of operation: the reintegration process of ex-combatants and the social care of victims of violence (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a:14; Salazar, 2007:8).

Peace and Reconciliation would now target both populations: the demobilised were entitled to services in psychology, education, employment skills training, income generation support and legal advice, while the victims of violence could also access psychological counselling and legal advice. Remarkably, the Mayor's Office adopted an integrated approach: creating an inter-institutional board on reintegration and fostering inter-administrative programmes seeking to address security problems in the city, for instance by promoting educational models of non-violence (MAPP-8, 2007:2). As such,

Peace and Reconciliation not only delivered services and activities but also coordinated with other institutions in the following areas: prevention of violence; social care for victims of violence and vulnerable communities; rehabilitation of perpetrators of violence; and, of course, achieving the reintegration of ex-combatants into society (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a).

There were seven direct lines of action regarding the reintegration of ex-combatants: psychosocial care, education, income generation, legal advice, security, research in urban conflict and mediation, and institutional strengthening (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a:14; Foro Bogota, 2006:38). On the educational front, the adult education institute CEPAR[91] was built in the downtown area to provide literacy, primary and high school education and other courses for adults (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2011a). For economic reintegration, Medellín was also able to make alliances with the private sector at the local level, offering access to employment skills workshops, internships and jobs (Procuraduría, 2011:70). Likewise, Peace and Reconciliation ensured its users were enrolled in the national health system and collaborated with other health institutions to offer a variety of workshops on issues such as nutrition, hygiene, stress management and recreation (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a:24). More significantly, Medellín extended its reintegration services beyond the 18-month scope initially established by central government, pointing to the need for a longer and more sustainable reintegration strategy (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a:8, 2007b:17; MAPP-8, 2007:13).

When the ACR started operating in 2007, it implemented Return to Legality as the reintegration model nationwide for two years (ACR, 2009:3; OACP/ACR, 2010:161). However, in 2009 the ACR decided to develop a strategy more suited to its needs as a national institution and underwent an internal reorganisation. In this transition, the director of Peace and Reconciliation assumed the simultaneous role of first director of the Social Reintegration Unit inside the ACR, whose main task was to design a new national reintegration model (OACP/ACR, 2010:168). It is also worthy of note here that the Mayor of Medellín provided resources to the MAPP Mission to hire six contractors working as observers in the city (MAPP-7, 2006:2); as one of the founding tasks of the

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[91] Acronym in Spanish. Centro de Formación para la Paz y la Reconciliación

Mission was to seek out sponsorship with which to carry out its mandate (MAPP-1, 2004:2), it paradoxically also included the budget of the Municipality of Medellín.

In sum, the Mayor's Office played an integral role in achieving the effective reintegration of a significant proportion of the ex-paramilitary soldiers in Medellín (Palou and Llorente, 2009:30). Using its own financial and human resources, the Municipality took over responsibility for providing services to many of the ex-soldiers in areas such as education, income generation and legal advice. These services were also extended to the receiving communities and to the victims of violence. More importantly, a local reintegration programme was created that came to lay the foundations for the psychological counselling and integrated services that are now implemented nationwide by the ACR programme.

Peace and Reconciliation arguably contributed to the sustainability of the peace agreements by supplementing the paramilitary leader's rationale of pursuing political aims by controlling violence in the area (Palou and Llorente, 2009:30). Certainly, after the demobilisation of the Cacique Nutibara Bloc, security in the city improved at an impressive speed: the homicide rate decreased from 98.2 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in 2004, to 29.4 in 2006 (MAPP-10, 2007:4). And whereas the reduction of violence does not necessarily mean that the drug trade have come to an end, it allowed the municipal authorities to address social inclusion and citizen welfare in the poorest areas. Finally, the services to the Cacique Nutibara members paved the way for further demobilisations. Should the reintegration process have failed in Medellín, demobilisation across the whole of Colombia could have experienced a knock-on effect, with paramilitary leaders and soldiers from other regions rejecting the process outright.

Programme of Services to the Process of Demobilisation and Reintegration in Bogotá D.C. – PAPDRB

In Bogotá, the reintegration took the form of internal migration. Mayor Garzón referred to the increasing inward migration of both the demobilised and the internal displaced population to Bogotá as a "time-bomb" for the security of the city (El Tiempo, 06/03/05b). By 2005, 85 per cent of the individual demobilised population was living in Bogotá, only 7 per cent of whom were born in the city (Santander and Villamizar, 2006:17; Foro Bogota, 2006:41). In contrast, only 347 people from the collective

demobilisations chose to live in the capital (Pretelt, 2006:29). By 2006 the Ministry of Defence reported that Bogotá hosted 1,513 individually demobilised people; 119 were living in Medellin and 60 in Cali[92] (Procuraduría, 2006b:29). In 2011, the number of ex-combatants living in the capital had reached 7,000, more than 80 per cent from individual demobilisations (PAPDRB, 2011).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the bureaucratic procedure post-desertion was designed to transfer the ex-combatants to military compounds mostly located in Bogotá. Thereafter they were housed in shelters for several months until they were able to rent a place of their own in the city in which they chose to live. The ex-combatant and his family could decide to remain in one of the shelters, but it was more common for them to live in independent homes, as the demobilised received an additional monthly allowance for each family member (OACP/ACR, 2010:102; ACR). It was then expected that they could achieve independence from the government's reinsertion aid.

Arguably, the ex-guerrilla members chose to remain in the anonymity of a metropolis of 7 million people for security reasons, namely to avoid being found by their former comrades:

It took me four years to escape, it was not easy. It was four years thinking about how to flee and avoid getting caught and killed. In many cases the ones who deserted were found and killed the very next day. I was trying to avoid that, because if I was in a rush I would not be able to leave, as it happened many times.

(Interview ex-combatant No. 21)

Bogotá has not suffered the effects of violence to the same extent as Medellín, since governability is stronger in the capital and drug-trafficking and armed conflict are less evident. DDR was hence initially perceived as something far removed from the everyday lives of Bogotá's inhabitants, and thus beyond the scope of action and responsibility of the municipal authorities. However, between 2004 and 2005 isolated incidents of violence raised awareness of the demobilised living in otherwise quiet neighbourhoods, bringing unwanted media attention and engendering uneasy feelings

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[92] Including their families, the total numbers of beneficiaries were 2,778 in Bogotá, 141 in Medellín and 110 in Cali.

towards these newcomers. At the root of these problems, the shelters strategy had itself entered a period of crisis.

The Peace Homes were shelters provided by the government to the demobilised and their families. Although these fell under the direct responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior, they were operated by private contractors who rented properties in the city. As fostering desertions from the guerrillas was crucial to the Policy of Democratic Security, the Ministry of the Interior had to open more shelters to receive the stream of newcomers. Seventy-six of these homes were created in Bogotá, three in Medellín and twelve in other cities (El Tiempo, 21/05/05; FIP, 2005:2; PAPRDB, 2010). The Bogotá Mayor's Office played no part in the PRVC and had little communication with the Ministry of the Interior in that respect; as a result, the creation or operation of these shelters were never subject to consultation with the municipal authorities (Interview Villamizar) or the wider community (El Tiempo, 20/02/05; 27/11/04). Furthermore, the PRVC did not follow any municipal protocol to authorise the functioning of the shelters, and there were 24 formal complaints from citizens asking for the closure of these homes (El Tiempo 11/04/05).

Apart from sporadic visits from officials or the police, living conditions and security within shelters were dependent on the contractor's will or logistical capacity (Interview Cárdenas). Some beneficiaries have mentioned positive experiences of these shelters as places of peace and reconciliation, but the majority of these homes were run according to a market-oriented logic (Ramirez, 2005:182). Designed to work according to demand, each private contractor had to provide the demobilised and his family with housing, food, clothes, toiletries and transport subsidies (Angel, 2006:208; OACP-ACR, 2010:164). In turn, the contractors were paid by the number of people receiving reintegration aid, which led to practices such as deliberate overcrowding of shelter buildings, lowering of the quality of food and services, and the allowing of poor, unhygienic living conditions (Interview Villamizar; Interview Cárdenas). Although these shelters were designed as temporary accommodation, stays were frequently extended by months at a time, most of which was spent idle since no education, jobs or other activities were provided by the PRVC (Reintegration Officer No. 28; Interview Cárdenas; Pax Christy, 2006:24).

Not surprisingly, the deteriorating conditions in the shelters resulted in increasing tensions between their inhabitants and the community and the authorities. To illustrate this point: the demobilised took to the streets of Bogotá in protest against the government on the basis of the poor living conditions in the shelters and delays to their cash payments (El Tiempo 29/06/05; 06/03/05), while the police received complaints regarding noise and public unrest in residential areas, which ended in clashes (El Tiempo 17/07/04; 16/08/04; 03/03/05; 29/06/05). More significantly, between 2004 and 2005 serious security problems became apparent when some shelters were attacked by gunmen (El Tiempo 18/02/04; 24/07/04); a woman was killed by three participants in the reintegration programme (El Tiempo 12/11/04); a murder was committed inside one of the shelters (El Tiempo 29/06/05); there was a grenade attack in another (El Tiempo 12/01/04); and a small bomb exploded in a Peace Home located in the central neighbourhood of Teusaquillo (El Tiempo 15/03/05).

This last event triggered a reaction from Bogotá's Mayor, who made a public appeal to the national government asking for immediate corrective actions. That night, in an emergency meeting between Mayor Garzón and President Uribe, other problems came to light: such as the fact that the Mayor's Office and the Ministry of the Interior had conflicting data on the number of shelters functioning in the capital (El Tiempo 16/03/05). Uribe recognised these failings and decided to close the homes located in the metropolitan area, transferring them to the countryside (Interview Villamizar; Foro Bogotá, 2006; El Tiempo 16/07/05, 30/11/05). However, critics pointed to the fact that isolating the demobilised would in no way contribute to their reintegration and, rather than solving the problem, merely shifted it into cities with fewer resources, jobs or education opportunities (FIP, 2005:2). As a result, this crisis prompted the revision and later dismantling of the housing scheme nationwide (Pretelt, 2006:27; El Tiempo, 18/07/05, 10/11/05), which would later result in the rewriting of the entire reinsertion strategy.

Prior to the shelter crisis, Garzón had already planned to create an office to tackle the constant flow of demobilised into the city. The shelter crisis expedited this process, and on May 2005 the Mayor's Office launched the Programme of Complementary Services

to the Process of Demobilisation and Reintegration in Bogotá (PAPDRB)[93], under the administration of the Office of Security and Coexistence. To this day, the services provided by the PAPDRB have included legal advice, income generation support and community reconciliation activities. Additionally, other services in health and recreation have been provided in cooperation with other departments in the Mayor's Office (PAPRDB, 2010).

Apart from making direct improvements to the quality of life of the demobilised, the PAPRDB also aimed to achieve some readjustment in the national policies for reintegration. In its original design, then, the Bogotá programme intended to open up channels of communication and so bring together the three different, sometimes antagonistic, parties in the DDR process: the national government, the community and the demobilised population (Villamizar, 2005:18). Moreover, the PAPRDB cultivated a nationwide debate by helping to organise conciliatory meetings (El Tiempo 11/04/2005; 11/05/2005), as well as forums in Medellín (Foro Medellin, 2006) and in Bogotá (Foro Distrital, 2005; Foro Bogotá, 2006) to address reintegration problems at the municipal level.

Given the particular circumstances of the shelter crisis, the Bogotá authorities took on the role of critiquing the reintegration process, rather than enduring it as Medellín's Mayor had. Remarkably, the PAPDRB was in a position to illustrate the ex-combatant's perspective: its two directors were former guerrilla members who had demobilised in the 1990s. By 2012 it also included ex-FARC, ex-ELN and ex-paramilitaries on its working team (Reintegration Officer No. 30). Perhaps because of this, Bogotá has continued to play a critical oversight role, highlighting the pitfalls of the DDR policy, especially regarding the levels of improvisation in and the lack of planning before the reintegration phase. The PAPDRB helped to create space for discussion that, among other topics, strongly criticised the use of individual demobilisations as part of the counterinsurgency strategy pursued by Uribe's government (PAPDRB, 2010:22, 28; Foro Distrital, 2005 and Foro Bogotá, 2006). More broadly, the PAPRDB remains an important point of reference for both the demobilised and the local authorities, as it also runs joint activities with the ACR, although in many cases this is achieved through

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[93] Acronym in Spanish: Programa de Atención al Proceso de Desmovilización y Reinserción en Bogotá.

personal agreements among staff rather than institutional coordination (PAPDRB, 2011; Reintegration Officer No. 30, 31).

The Peace Homes remained as shelters, but they were reduced in number and returned to their original function as venues for short-term reinsertion activities immediately following demobilisation. Their renewed aim was "to re-signify the life experiences that the ex-combatant had inside the armed group, to develop skills for them to live in legality and civility, to educate the demobilised with regard to the national institutions and services whose aid they are entitled to during the reintegration process" (OACP/ACR, 2010:165). By 2010 there were 17 Peace Homes still operating in Bogotá, but all were placed under the close monitoring of the Mayor's Office[94] (PAPDRB, 2010:19).

From another perspective, it could be said that the security issues in Bogotá were not a threat to the state's monopoly of force, nor to the sovereignty of the national or sub-national administrations: the individual demobilised were deserters from the guerrillas who were highly unlikely to return to their groups, and whose involvement in criminality was relatively low. Furthermore, the think-tank Ideas Para La Paz concluded that the shelters did not necessarily pose a security problem for the city. They argued that armed groups had not targeted the deserters or the shelters as expected, as there had been no other violent episodes apart from those that occurred around the time of the shelter crisis. Indeed, by 2004, 55 per cent of the individually demobilised were living in independent homes rather than shelters, and only 31 of the 34,699 crimes committed in Bogotá that year involved ex-combatants under the supervision of the PRVC. Similarly, most of the complaints made were more applicable to coexistence and "inappropriate behaviours" rather than specific involvement in crime (FIP, 2005:3). Regardless, the failures in reintegration nationwide only became apparent when the consequences of flawed policy reached the capital city in the form of social protest and unrest. The Mayor's Office then fostered debates on a national scale and created an arena in which to redefine the institutions and policies of central government, a process that also prompted the creation of the ACR.

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[94] Agreement 195/2005, Resolution 667/2006, Resolution 0650/2006

4.3 Legitimacy, ownership and security at the sub-national level

There are three main challenges to successful reintegration at the municipal level. The first is the immediate overloading of municipal social services that result from the sudden population increase, and the subsequent surge in levels of poverty and unemployment. This reflects the fact that the municipalities were faced with reintegrating the low- and mid-ranking ex-combatants rather than the leaders and warlords who negotiated their own privileges with the national government (Foro Bogotá, 2006). To counter these problems, Peace and Reconciliation and PAPRDB provided extra services in income generation and employment, including recruitment advice, job allocation and training, as well as support for small and family businesses (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2011b; Interview Officer No.31). Both programmes also improved the economic situation of the demobilised population by entering into partnerships with the private sector to offer job placements and training in a variety of skills, targeted at the local level and specifically at the recipient communities.

The second challenge refers to the social rejection of the demobilised and to widespread discrimination against them as a whole. In response, Peace and Reconciliation and the PAPDRB carried out activities for integration as well as for reparation and forgiveness, which helped to reduce cases of discrimination and other grievances within the recipient communities (Alcaldía de Medellin, 2007a; PAPRDB, 2010). Most notably, the Mayors' Offices had more flexibility than the central government in providing services to people *outside* the targeted population, i.e. the families of ex-combatants and other vulnerable populations (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2011b; Reintegration Officer No.31). For example, aside from ex-paramilitary and ex-guerrilla members, the CEPAR in Medellín provides primary and high-school education to four different social programme groups: victims of violence; youth at risk of crime or prostitution; the homeless; and former prisoners (Reintegration Officer No.38; Alcadía de Medellín, 2011a:69). Contrary to what might be expected, no major incident or violent action has been reported on CEPAR premises. Although students come from a broad spectrum of marginalised groups, they share the premises in a peaceful manner, following the code of practice – a type of coexistence manual – that prescribes appropriate behaviour within the institution. During my fieldwork interviews, the board of directors and teaching staff working at CEPAR agreed that, although the process has been far from easy, considerable effort

has been made to preserve the neutrality of the institution and to encourage students to appreciate CEPAR as an opportunity to overcome poverty and marginalisation (Reintegration Officers No.38, No.46, No.58 and Interview Teachers CEPAR). Pursuing the same end but by different means, the PAPDRB did not create a separate institution for education provision but rather encouraged the use of pre-existing adult education and literacy programmes created for the entire Bogotá population. This encouraged the demobilised to take up this the offer of social care as any other citizen would (Interview Villamizar). In this way, both programmes have achieved some balance in attending to the needs of both demobilised and the non-combatant population.

The third key challenge lies in how to establish effective collaboration between municipal and national authorities. At the outset of the process, there were no channels of communication and cooperation between the sub-national authorities and the national government (Foro Bogotá, 2006:24; Interview Officer No. 141). Indeed, even in cities where the Reference and Opportunity Centres were located there was no legal or functional link with the municipal authorities (FSD, 2008:20). No Mayor's Office in the country had access to information on the number or status of the demobilised living in their cities, and as a result only recognised them when problems arose. Buenaventura's Mayor even declared that he thought the demobilised did not fall under his jurisdiction, and that he only became aware of this reality when they started to be killed in his city (Foro Bogotá, 2006:48).

Communication, coordination and decentralisation were therefore stressed by the Mayors as the crucial factors in their dialogues with the Ministry of the Interior. Garzón and other Mayors asked the national government to transfer resources and responsibilities for reintegration activities to the municipal authorities (Foro Bogotá, 2006). It was argued that delegating the implementation of the programme to the municipalities had the potential to strengthen their political commitment, leaving to the national offices the tasks of monitoring and control (FSD, 2008:20). Certainly, decentralisation would encourage a sense of ownership in the sub-national authorities by increasing their ability to respond to their own security needs, which in turn would help to reinforce the legitimacy of national policy. The Mayors also have a greater capacity to act at the street level, interacting with the existing social networks (Interview MAPP). On the down side, the municipal institutions run the risk of being appropriated

and manipulated by local illegal agents. To mitigate this possibility, the ACR decided to open more regional offices, thereby strengthening the lines of communication with the municipalities rather than delegating their functions to the Mayors (OACP, 2010).

The shelter crisis crystallised all of these grievances and brought them to the attention of central government. To tackle these issues, the National Department of Planning recommended several strategies: to create regional and local plans for reintegration; to strengthen communication and coordination between central offices and municipal governments; and to integrate the demobilised within local welfare programmes and social networks (DNP, 2006:33). More specifically, the sub-national authorities urged the creation of a revised and unified national reintegration policy with which they could themselves engage: although they were very critical of Uribe's approach to the DDR, both the Mayor of Bogotá (Garzón, 2006:18) and the Governor of Antioquia (Gaviria, 2005:27) declared the need for a reintegration strategy and their willingness to implement it. Likewise the Mayor of Medellín, Sergio Fajardo, stated:

> *Back to the beginning: from the financing to the detailed management of the process, national leadership is required. We urge the creation of an administrative structure, under the direction of a High Commission with political recognition, with broad powers to coordinate the local and the national governments, to channel international aid and to motivate the participation of Colombians. That is the only way we can make reintegration a unified national aim.*

> *(Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007b:12)*

Reporting on a workshop with the municipal authorities from cities with less political leverage than Bogotá and Medellín, Rivas and Mendez (2008:14) concluded that neglecting the municipal authorities directly influenced their resistance to the implementation of the national programme for reintegration. The Colombian government was seen to have acted ambiguously by ignoring the sub-national authorities during the negotiation and demobilisation phases, while still requesting their active participation in the reinsertion itself. Subsequently, the municipal authorities had little political motivation to implement the reinsertion policies, not only due to the initial confusion and lack of knowledge and resources, but also the fear of being seen as

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accomplices to the illegal activities of the paramilitary groups (Rivas and Mendez, 2008; Reintegration Officer No. 128). Similarly, as municipal authorities had neither a commitment to nor a role in the negotiation, demobilisation or disarmament phases, they felt utterly detached from the central policy of reintegration (FSD, 2008:17; Conpes 3554:24). In turn, providing services to the demobilised was perceived as an imposition from central government, and added source of financial, administrative and political strain on sub-national authorities (Acosta et al, 2007:48). In Cordoba, for instance, demobilisation took place in small towns that had officially been declared bankrupt [95] and that already played host to monumental social problems, such as receiving large numbers of the internal displaced population (Reintegration Officer No. 143).

Therefore, the approach taken by the municipalities of Medellín and Bogotá, working independently of the Presidential chain of command, favoured the contestation of the over-emphasis on security inherent in the Policy of Democratic Security and instead urged a reintegration strategy that also included the needs of the wider communities, mainly but not solely, with regard to the DDR.

4.4 The ACR programme

At its inception in 2007, the ACR had three main objectives: first, to develop a more sustainable and long-term strategy for the reintegration of ex-combatants; second, to include the communities in the process; and third, to achieve better and longer-term coordination between the national and sub-national authorities (OACP/ACR, 2010:11; Interview Officer No. 17; Interview Cárdenas). The ACR also took up the task of unifying the policies of collective and individual reintegration that had hitherto been divided and spread across different institutions (FIP, 2007:2). As a primary measure, the outsourcing of services was re-evaluated, as it was found to bring with it certain problems such as service variation and inconsistency, since each company operated autonomously and in accordance with their own approaches and techniques. Hence, in the transition from the PRVC to the ACR, one of the main challenges was to unify a host of concepts and practices, and create a strategy to provide the services in

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[95] Law 550/1990: a type of bankruptcy law for municipalities, under which the central government provides emergency bailouts.

psychology, education and vocational training to work in tandem with one another (OACP/ACR, 2010:163).

In its more regional work, the ACR extended the reintegration services to those areas where the ex-combatants were living, bringing the central institutions closer to local realities (OACP/ACR, 2010:272). A network of 29 regional offices was established, and with it a team of professionals in psychosocial, economic and community reintegration and legal advice (OACP/ACR, 2010:325-328). The demobilised were each assigned a personal tutor to lead them through the process of psychosocial reintegration, as well as monitoring their other activities in education, vocational training and family relations. The creation and training of local reintegration teams was based on the Dunbar[96] number, which yielded the average ratio of one psychologist per 120 ex-combatants, in stark contrast with the previous ratio of 1 social worker per thousands of demobilised (OACP/ACR, 2010:168). There were also three liaison officers: two in health and education, one in charge of enrolment, and the psychosocial liaison officer, responsible for communicating between the regional and central levels of administration, as well as coordinating the tutors. In 2009, the figure of godfather/godmother is added to the scheme: these were liaison officers in charge of improving the flow of communication between the central and regional offices (OACP/ACR, 2010:184).

These regional teams had the additional function of coordinating policies with the municipal authorities. This meant lobbying Mayors, Governors and other authorities to include the demobilised as a special population within their policies and budgets, in order to facilitate their access to sub-national institutions and local services, as well as engaging directly with the recipient communities. This articulation of local agents was crucial to the both reconciliation and the reintegration as a whole (OACP/ACR, 2010:273; Conpes 3554, 2008:10). As a result, by 2010, 17 departments and 132 municipalities had factored in the demobilised population as part of their local government programmes (OACP, 2010:4).

Internally, the ACR adopted a four-department structure: Social Reintegration Unit, Economic Reintegration Unit, Community Work Unit and Risk Prevention and

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[96] The anthropologist Robin Dunbar concluded that the maximum number with whom one can maintain a stable relationship is 120 people.

Attention Unit (OACP/ACR, 2010:145). The Social Reintegration Unit orchestrated the work of the other three around the psychosocial services (ACR, 2009:4). In 2008, the new National Policy of Social and Economic Reintegration (PRSE)[97] was enacted, with two main areas of action: the ex-combatants and the communities. The ACR thus became responsible for: a) unifying criteria within the regional reintegration programmes; b) coordinating with the sub-national authorities in the national implementation of the PRSE; c) evaluating and monitoring the demobilised living in the regions; and d) strengthening the channels of communication between sub-national and national institutions through the regional offices (Conpes 3554:61). During 2008 and 2009, additional support services were introduced to address specific needs for women, young people, the elderly (those aged 62 and over), the physically disabled and mid-ranking soldiers, as well as special emphasis being placed on mental health in cases of drug and alcohol abuse. New software (SIR) was developed to replace the SAME, and a model of education and literacy training was introduced by the Ministry of Education (OACP/ACR, 2010:182, 183). In 2009, after Restrepo left the Peace Office, the ACR director also temporarily assumed the portfolio of Peace Commissioner (OACP/ACR, 2010:11). In 2011 and under Santos' presidency, the internal structure of the ACR changed for a second time: the structure of the Units was dissolved and the tutors would no longer have divergent workloads. They were to work instead as integrated professionals, with each reintegration officer solely responsible for providing access to the health, education and psychological services to all the demobilised in their care (OACP/ACR, 2010:186; 2011:11).

Taken as a whole, then, this process – the reorganising of the PRVC, and the building of Peace and Reconciliation, the PAPDRB and the ACR – resulted in the creation of a bureaucracy that oversaw the direct provision of services to the demobilised. Furthermore, the creation of the ACR also defined which services could be sub-contracted and those that would be delivered directly by the national government. The psychosocial services and the reintegration officers depended on central government, while education and health services relied on the municipalities. Other services for

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[97] Acronym in Spanish: Política Nacional de Reintegración Social y Económica para personas y grupos armados ilegales (Conpes 3554), December 1st, 2008.

economic and community reintegration were monitored by the ACR, albeit by outsourcing them to third-party companies (Reintegration Officers No. 20, 31, 49-51).

It is also worth noting that the central government opted for a strategy of de-concentrating rather than de-centralising the reintegration policy, creating offices in the regions rather than simply transferring funds directly over to the existing regional and municipal authorities. However, this strategy also assumes that other sub-national authorities will provide services, when at times they may have no capacity to do so. For example, adult education should always, in theory, be provided by the Secretary of Education for each municipality, as it is a social service provided for a wider poor and marginalised population (OACP/ACR, 2010:174; Interview Officer No. 128), but in practice there are areas in which the demobilised have no access at all to education. Most of the municipalities in the Department of Córdoba, for instance, have no budget for this service. Likewise, in Antioquia, the situation may vary from town to town: some Mayors want to help but are simply devoid of capacity or resource; others simply offer no commitment to the demobilised whatsoever (Aguirre, 2010:110).

I would like to bring this section to a close by briefly mentioning the consequences that all the above changes had for the ex-combatants. In sum, the policies of reintegration changed three times. Firstly, all the demobilisations took place under Laws 782 and 975 before they underwent any legal modifications. Hence, the rank-and-file ex-combatants were promised an 18-month reintegration accompanied by a monthly allowance and other economic aid for housing and business planning. Secondly, in 2007 this initial 18-month limit was eradicated[98]; the monthly allowance was also extended but linked to compulsory attendance of psychological workshops and basic education and vocational courses (Conpes, 3554:5). However, although the demobilised could pursue and complete the ACR programme, the criminal investigations against them remained open.

Thirdly, the situation was finally broached by Law 1424, which declared no amnesty for the ex-paramilitaries. They would instead face trial for their political crimes, and their sentence could be lifted had they fulfilled certain requirements: confessing all their crimes, successfully completing the reintegration programme, contributing to the

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[98] Resolution 513/2005 and Decree 395/2007. Initially, the benefits were extend for two years, which was the time expected to achieve reintegration and complete the ACR programme, but this did not correspond to the legal status of the ex-combatants.

reconstruction of the history of the violence[99], and working 80 hours in community projects. In July 2012, and for the first time since 2003, the ex-combatants were finally allowed to culminate the ACR programme (El Tiempo, 19/06/2012), and since then 9,081 ex-combatants had graduated from it[100].

The creation of the ACR also brought several changes to the DDR process itself. Firstly, it consolidated a reintegration strategy by taking elements and lessons learned from previous institutions such as the PRVC, Peace and Reconciliation and the PAPDRB. Secondly, it unified and extended services to all the demobilised nationwide, managing the economic benefits in a way that was personalised to each ex-combatant. Thirdly, it sought to properly include the needs of the communities, either by also providing them with services or by offering workshops and activities tailored to reconciliation. Fourthly, it created a bureaucracy that was trained in full accordance to the ACR programme and devoted to coordinating and delivering services to the former combatants. Finally, it opened up vital channels of communication at various levels: between the national and sub-national authorities, and between the ACR central offices and their regional counterparts. The following chapters are dedicated to exploring how the demobilised themselves experienced the DDR process, including their own perceptions of the ACR programme.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how in the absence of an effective reintegration strategy from central government, the municipalities of Medellín and Bogotá were able to create their own local reintegration programmes that transcended the initially security-centred and combatant-based design of the DDR policy: addressing the needs of both the ex-combatants and the non-combatant population, as well as introducing policies for the welfare of the victims of violence and for the development of the recipient communities. It is also important to recall that the reintegration institutions themselves played no part in the demobilisation of ex-combatants: they were only able to provide services to those

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[99] The Centre for Historical Memory gathers all this information, but there are no legal consequences. On the contrary, any confession or declaration in front of the Fiscal Office will lead to a judicial investigation.
[100] ACR statistics 2015. Chart 2. Situation of the demobilised. http://www.reintegracion.gov.co/es/la-reintegracion/Paginas/cifras.aspx

ex-combatants who had been referred by the Ministry of Defence or the Peace Commissioner's Office.

Although municipal authorities do not face the challenges of achieving the monopoly of force to the same extent as the national government, their policies relating to the demobilised vary depending on local security needs and the impact of the conflict on each particular territory. As the Bogotá and Medellín municipal administrations were more immediately concerned with reconciliation and reconstruction of the social fabric, they forged ahead with creating viable conditions for ex-combatant reintegration. Furthermore, the sub-national authorities were also able to envisage overarching goals to promote stability and security in the country as a whole, contributing from the sub-national level to the building of state policies and institutions. This was an unexpected outcome of their response to the security problems created by the demobilisation at the municipal level.

The respective Mayor's Offices tasked themselves with addressing the three main challenges to the reintegration: the mounting pressures on municipal social services; the need to counteract widespread public rejection of the demobilised, balancing the provision of social care to ex-combatants, communities and victims alike; and the difficulty of forging strong collaborative links between the municipal and national authorities. In response, Peace and Reconciliation and PAPRDB provided extra services in income generation and employment to the demobilised, including recruitment advice, job allocation and training, as well as support for small and family businesses. Additionally, these services were extended to people from other marginalised demographics, making the process less combatant-centred and more in line with the needs of broader sections of the population. Remarkably, both Mayor's Offices surpassed their expected roles when the national government had itself failed in fulfilling its constitutional duty: they committed material and human resources as well as allocating budgets for a variety of activities for ex-combatants and their families. They also passed resources upwards from the sub-national to the national level, and even to international organisations such as the OAS.

The ACR, then, was built from the bottom up, and as such, took into account regional needs that had been overlooked until then by the DDR policy. The creation of regional

offices and the hiring and training of professionals to work directly with the demobilised, connected the ex-combatants directly to the central government to some extent. In addition, the development of a reintegration strategy defined the services that should be provided by the central government or by the municipalities and those that could be outsourced. As a result, the ACR has a more forceful role to play in terms of state presence and control in areas where municipal governments or other national institutions are often found wanting.

Chapter 5

Economic Reintegration: the real value of economic incentives

In the first chapter I argued that the academic studies and policy-making literature around war and political conflict tend to emphasise economic forms of analysis, and to overstate greediness, poverty or unemployment as the causes of violence. Accordingly, the literature on DDR assumes that ex-combatants are likely to return to arms or to slide into criminality as a means of earning a living following their demobilisation. Providing aid, money or income opportunities is forwarded then, as a security measure to prevent the security problems created by the former combatants during the post conflict. In turn, the debates around the economic dimension of reintegration typically focus on strategies to integrate the ex-combatants and their dependants in the job market: including the provision of cash hand-outs; the need for the creation of employment programmes; or the support for business start-ups or other forms of self-employment (IDDRS, 2006, 4.20:14; UNDPKO, 2010b:22). Such emphasis on the economic aspects of reintegration is illustrated in the following excerpt from the UN:

> At the end of a conflict there is often an abrupt release into the labour market of thousands of ex-combatants who compete with ordinary civilians for extremely scarce jobs and livelihood opportunities. In such circumstances, ex-combatants might attempt to _use violence to make a living_, _becoming involved in banditry, theft and other forms of illegal and harmful activity_. Providing support for the reintegration of ex-combatants is therefore vital to help develop _alternatives to violence-based livelihoods_. This support can have an immediate positive effect on security and contribute to the improvement of overall economic conditions. _Economic reintegration will be successful only if the reintegration support provides or encourages viable forms of economic activity and is socially productive_. All interventions must be sustainable to ensure that ex-combatants do not _turn to violence to earn a living_.

> _(UNDP, 2006, 4.30:27; emphasis mine)_

This chapter explores the strategies developed by the ACR reintegration programme to fulfill the short and long-term income generation needs of the demobilised. It aims to analyse the benefits and challenges of these strategies, and to show how the ACR programme was built upon the lessons learned from previous experiences – principally from Peace and Reconciliation and the PRVC. The first section describes the short-term reintegration aid (provision of cash hand-outs and monthly allowances), the long-term reintegration strategies (vocational training, education, and support for employment or creating businesses) and the appeal to the private sector. More importantly for this research, the second section highlights the fact that despite enormous institutional efforts, the majority of ex-combatants were reintegrated into low-income and informal work. Nonetheless, the demobilised in this case seem to challenge the common assumptions found in the DDR literature, and recidivism is not necessarily their preferred option. The final section explores in greater depth the reasons these ex-combatants expressed for not returning to the armed groups or enrolling into criminal bands.

5.1 Short- and long-term economic reintegration strategies

Short-term: cash hand-outs and monthly allowances

Short-term reinsertion assistance to the ex-combatants often takes the form of lump sums and monthly allowances, for a maximum of one year. However, doubts remain over how the money is spent: whether on buying essential items and providing economic stability for the ex-combatants and their families, or on buying alcohol and weapons. The UN does not provide clear guidance on this matter, and simply advises the DDR practitioners and policy-makers to examine the context before taking a decision (UNDP, 2006, 4.20:14).

The agreement reached between the Peace Commissioner and the paramilitary leaders in 2003 stated that each ex-combatant would receive a monthly payment of US$240 over the course of 18 months. Similarly, the policy for individual demobilisations stated that each ex-combatant would receive a monthly allowance of $265 plus $90 per family member, up to a maximum of around $450 (Pretelt, 2006:27). These amounts exceeded

the minimum wage in the country[101] and functioned as a monthly salary solely on the basis of their status as ex-combatants. It was not until 2005, two years after the first demobilisations, that compulsory enrolment in basic education and vocational training was introduced as a requirement to obtain economic support from the government[102] (Conpes 3554, 2008:5). However, this system of payments merely encouraged the demobilised to attend as many courses as they could: as there was no control over which courses they were taking, some simply attended courses at random or repeated the same course several times purely to obtain the resulting economic aid (Reintegration Officer No. 27, 49-51, 143, 159). In one interview, one tutor pointed out that, rather than lack of or insufficient education, the real problem of the demobilised was that of disparate education (Reintegration Officer No. 120). In other words, despite receiving many certificates of completion, the ex-combatants never really acquired the skills needed to find employment or to generate long-term income (Cartagena Contribution, 2009:69; Acosta et al, 2007:65; Reintegration Officer 18-19; Interview Negrete).

With the creation of the ACR in 2006, these economic stimuli were unified for collective and individual demobilisations, and the allowance was reduced to a maximum of US$140[103]. In addition, it was concluded that the ACR had to resolve the evident lack of planning for future economic and self-development projects in the demobilised's life as civilians (Conpes 3554, 2008:22). Hence, it was established that each demobilised had to figure out a personal life-project during counselling sessions with their tutors and, accordingly, to choose their options for education and vocational training, as well as their preferred aid for seeking employment or starting a business. From the reintegration officer's perspective, these adjustments to the policy prompted a change in attitude towards reintegration, as the ex-combatants focused more on personal development rather than purely on monetary reward. Also, as the economic support was now based on merits and achievements, it helped to develop responsibility, discipline and a sense of personal progress (Reintegration Officers No. 47, 73, 75-77, 109, 128). (Table 6)

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[101] The minimum salary for 2003 was US$166, for 2004 $180, for 2005 $190 and for 2006 $200 approx.
[102] Resolution 513/2005.
[103] Decree 395/2007.

YEAR	2003-2005	2005-2007	2007-2010
ECONOMIC BENEFITS	COLLECTIVE US$240/month INDIVIDUAL US$265 plus $90 per family member/month	COLLECTIVE US$240/month INDIVIDUAL US$265 plus $90 per family member/month	UNIFIED US$140
REQUIREMENTS	Demobilised status	Basic education and vocational training	Design of a life-project Basic education and vocational training
RESULT	Little long-term investment	Disparate education	Personal development

Table 6. Evolution of short-term economic aid for collective and individual demobilisations.

Therefore, these monetary incentives became more effective not only when the amount was reduced but also when they were more effectively organised around a strategy of reintegration. The ACR strategy brought in a process of counselling for each demobilised to properly plan out their future, while also giving them the opportunity to gain knowledge and evaluate their options through education and vocational training. Additionally, the ACR as an institution was forced to develop mechanisms of its own with which to guide, monitor and control the progress of each ex-combatant, and equally blur the differences set out by the initial DDR policy between former paramilitary and guerrilla members.

It can be concluded, then, that the singular provision of economic aid proves insufficient – and can be counter-productive – to reintegration, particularly in the absence of policies or programmes that define goals and limits for the demobilised, and which engender a genuine sense of personal development based on achievement and progress. Nevertheless, it remains essential to address the ex-combatants' basic need to gain a livelihood for themselves and their families. Yet while these initial payments may initially attract the demobilised into certain activities in the reintegration programme, the economic incentives should also lay the foundations for their *progressive* economic independence over time, as will be seen in the following section.

Long-term: vocational training, employment seeking and Business Plans

The UN has suggested that education and training are the two quintessential strategies to achieving a successful long-term economic reintegration (UNDP, 2006, 2.10:6; 4.20:1, 4.30:27):

> *Many ex-combatants have missed opportunities for basic and further education, and as a result are disadvantaged in the competition for jobs and opportunities. Provision of adult literacy classes, adult education, and technical and vocational training is important both to improve the skill sets of adult and young ex-combatants and provide opportunities for reorientation and demilitarisation.*
>
> *(UNDP, 2006, 4.30:27)*

Certainly, most of the low-ranking demobilised from both paramilitary and guerrilla groups belong to a demographic that has very limited access to land and economic capital, and thus suffer from significant shortcomings in education (Cartagena Contribution, 2009:61). Research has shown that while the majority of the guerrilla combatants are poor rural peasants with only primary levels of education, most of the paramilitaries lived in marginal urban areas and had incomplete secondary education (Gutierrez, 2008:12). At the time of their demobilisation, 60 per cent of the ex-paramilitaries and 71 per cent of the ex-guerrillas had only primary-school education or none whatsoever (Conpes 3554, 2008:16)[104]. Similarly, of those living in Medellín and Bogotá, 85 per cent never finished high school (Villegas, 2006:30; Cardenas, 2005:30).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Peace and Reconciliation developed certain strategies to provide training and work experience to the demobilised: vocational training, short-term employability schemes and income generation support. These different strategies were maintained by the ACR, albeit in adjusted forms (OACP, 2010:4; OACP/ACR, 2010:197). Likewise, the PAPDRB in Bogotá continued to

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[104] ACR statistics 2015. Chart 6. Educational level. When starting in the reintegration programme, 28.38 per cent of the ex-combatants participating in the had finished high school. September 2015. http://www.reintegracion.gov.co/es/la-reintegracion/Paginas/cifras.aspx

provide further support for Business Plans and employment seeking [105] (PAPDRB, 2010:62; 2011:30; Reintegration Officer No. 31).

First, the demobilised were enrolled to a massive extent in a variety of short vocational courses provided by the National Institute for Work Training (SENA)[106]. This offer of vocational training was maintained throughout the entire reintegration process and consisted of courses offered by SENA or by ACR contractors[107], although there was no funding for pursuing university degrees. Second, the short-term employability scheme – originally put in place by the Medellín Mayor's Office – hired ex-combatants on three- to six-month contracts to perform a variety of unskilled roles within public programmes[108] (OACP/ACR, 2010:194; Conpes 3554:48; Rodríguez, 2006:116). The scheme aimed to introduce the demobilised to the norms and schedules that make up everyday working life. As such, the ex-combatants received vocational and psychosocial training and were paid a small salary for working up to 80 hours (Conpes 3554:48; OACP, 2010:4; OACP/ACR, 2010:201). Their activities included assisting the Transit Police [109] or participating in community projects such as the building and maintenance of parks, schools and other public areas. Additionally, the demobilised were given the opportunity to get some work experience through internships as part of SENA vocational courses, or in private companies (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2011b:17).

Immediately after the demobilisation and during the reinsertion phase, it is vitally important to keep the demobilised occupied with short-term training courses and job creation (Reintegration Officer No. 128). However, this needs to be supported by policies and strategies that address the transition into long-term employment and more stable forms of income:

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[105] Programme to Strengthen the Business Projects of the Ex-combatants and their Families

[106] SENA is a public institution that provides short- and medium-length courses in a wide range of working skills.

[107] This service was mainly founded by USAid and the IOM.

[108] This included the Institute for Management Sports and Recreation (INDER), Institute for Management of Recreational Parks (METROPARQUES), the municipal TV channel (TELEMEDELLIN) and the local Secretary of State.

[109] The scheme was called Salvavías.

These initial, often short-term employment opportunities serve several functions. They provide demobilised fighters with sufficient income through the transitional phase, and provide evidence that they can survive within the civilian economy,

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(Cartagena Contribution, 2009:63)

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Training should generally be regarded as a tool for reintegration and not as reintegration itself. It should be practical, and should be designed mainly to respond to the requirements of the informal sector, which is where most microenterprises will start up.

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(UNDP, 2006, 4.30:27)

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The third strategy thus targeted more long-term income generation through two main activities: employment seeking and Business Plans. Employment seeking had three main aims: to broaden the working opportunities for the demobilised in both the private sector and self-employment; to facilitate the process of entering into the job market; and to reduce the cases of job desertion. The Business Plans, in turn, provided the ex-combatants with Seed Capital: a lump sum for buying machinery and raw products with which to start their own businesses (Conpes 3554:50; OACP, 2010:4). The DDR policy offered guerrilla deserters a Seed Capital of US$4,000, but for the paramilitaries was negotiated with the leaders that each combatant was entitled to US$1,000. When questioning the reintegration officers about the reasons for this difference, their response was simply that there was no clarity, and that the only reason they could think of was to compensate for the greater risk involved in deserting from the guerrillas (Reintegration Officers No. 31, 49-51, 109, 129, 131-132, 157).

However, in their initial forms, each of these strategies – providing vocational training, employment and business opportunities – failed in providing long-term employment or economic stability (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a; 2011b; Reintegration Officers No 46, 54, 47-51). Söderstrom has argued that more research is needed to understand the real need of education and training: she found that their relation to economic reintegration appears rather weak, whereas their impact in other areas such as personal development and political reintegration could be more evident (2011:53). Similarly, a report on Bosnia-Herzegovina concluded that rather than lack of training, the ethnic divisions and

authoritarian patterns of behaviour acquired during the military life caused psychological and behavioural shortcomings that inevitably had a negative impact on the economic reintegration of former combatants (BICC, 2003:34). One study in South Africa found that the ex-combatants were no less qualified than other civilians to compete in the labour market. There had indeed been high unemployment among the demobilised, but other factors were seen to have prevented their reintegration:

It could be that their psychological state and interpersonal skills make it difficult for them to find and maintain jobs; that employers are reluctant to take on or keep ex-combatants; or a combination of both

(Bandeira, 2008:19).

Prior to ACR, Peace and Reconciliation had witnessed a substantial rate of desertion from jobs and courses due to high illiteracy, and lack of skills and experience in non-military roles. More significantly, the demobilised also displayed a range of inappropriate workplace behaviours such as lack of punctuality, threatening superiors and co-workers, and severe incapacity to follow rules or respect civilian figures of authority (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2011a:16; Reintegration Officers No. 18-19, 48). An assessment of their work profiles concluded that the majority of the demobilised had low tolerance of frustration (75.4%); problems in dealing with authority and low valuing of social rules (74.7%), high levels of anxiety and low self-control (68.8%), as well as low self-esteem (51.3%) (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2011b:7). Furthermore, the ex-combatants were seen to be reproducing patterns of behaviour that were useful in the context of war, but highly inappropriate in the civilian life and the workplace (Reintegration Officers No. 49-51).

Equally, the demobilised lacked knowledge of or experience in accessing formal employment within the legal economy. Their shortcomings in education and social capital had a negative effect on their capacity to present the references or to certify the formal training required to compete in a normal job selection process (Conpes 3554, 2008:22; Acosta et al, 2007:66). Their unresolved legal status also resulted in a lack of identification and other legal documents, yet another impediment for them in finding long-term jobs outside the provision of state aid. This situation also impacted on other

aspects of the ex-combatants' lives, including their inability to rent a place of their own due to a lack of references and other requisite documentation (Foro Bogotá, 2005:182).

The Business Plans also proved to be a failed strategy. By 2006 the director of the PRVC calculated that there were around 474 Business Plans (Angel, 2006:12); however, during my fieldwork I found that no more than a dozen of these were still in place (Reintegration Officers No. 49-51, 53). One study concluded that 135 out of 157 business associations did not exist any longer by 2007 (ODDR, 2009:16). Similarly, in 2015 ACR data showed that despite more than 90 per cent of the economic benefits had been invested in Business Plans, only 27.11 per cent of the businesses were still functioning[110]. Such high level of failure can be attributed to three main factors: firstly, the Business Plans were originally addressed to the creation of microbusiness, which have a natural and general failure rate of more than 70 per cent (Pax Christy, 2006:49; Reintegration Officers 18-19, 49-51). Moreover, in the demobilisations of rebel groups during the 1990s this strategy had also been in place, with very little success, mainly due to the lack of training or vocational competence among the ex-combatants. More globally, developing business skills takes time and inevitably involves a process of trial and error; and ultimately not everyone is best suited to entrepreneurial commerce (Reintegration Officers No. 18- 19, 31, 49-51, 108, 131-132; Negrete and Andrade, 2006:176).

Secondly, there was a strong preference among the demobilised for pursuing agricultural enterprises: given that many of them come from peasant backgrounds, they consider themselves knowledgeable in rural activities (Reintegration Officers No. 18-19). However, it is precisely these types of agricultural activities that face complex structural problems such as the concentration of land in the countryside and long-term investments with low profit return (Aguirre, 2010:109; Reintegration Officers No. 49-51,128). More significantly, agrarian business may merely lead to the continued propagation of those social and economic structures that underpin poverty and exploitation in the rural areas, and which were the cause of the armed conflict in the first place. This, in turn, tends to reproduce social conditions that force people into the

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[110] Other forms of investment were to buy houses or in education. ACR statistics 2015. Chart 9 shows the areas of investment of the economic stimuli and in Chart 10 the current situation of the Business Plans. September 2015. http://www.reintegracion.gov.co/es/la-reintegracion/Paginas/cifras.aspx

cultivation of coca, and their subsequent involvement in drug-trafficking (Aguirre, 2010:114; Reintegration Officers No. 141, 115, 129; Interview Negrete).

Thirdly, and most crucially, both the Ministry for the Interior and the paramilitary leaders encouraged the creation of business associations. At the time it was argued that collecting together Seed Capital from a large group of ex-paramilitaries would provide enough money to develop larger businesses, which in turn would result in more posts to fill, and greater profits for the respective stakeholders (Reintegration Officer No. 53). Government representatives with their own agendas may also have supported this as a useful means of producing large increases in employment in the short term. However, many Business Plans would instead become scams for the sole benefit of certain leaders and mid-ranking paramilitaries (Reintegration Officers No. 31, 53, 128, 157, 144; Interview ex-combatant No. 104; Pax Christy, 2006:49). Ultimately, the aforementioned associations reproduced the vertical hierarchy from the paramilitaries: these businesses sometimes included hundreds of people whose Seed Capital was invested in projects that failed soon after due to reckless management or the theft of resources. Other dubious practices included the creation of a business with the sole purpose of looting it immediately after its own inauguration (Pax Christy, 2006:49, Reintegration Officer No. 31). By way of contrast, those ex-combatants who demobilised individually were granted an amount four times higher and encouraged not to enter into such associations; the businesses they created were instead mostly personal or family-based.

Remarkably, the difference in the amount given to the paramilitaries and the guerrillas may not be as relevant as it first appears. The officers assigned to economic reintegration considered that, although starting a business with US$4,000 rather than US$1,000 represents an obvious advantage, other elements such as personal motivation, family support and the appropriate choice of training played a greater part in its eventual success or failure (Reintegration Officers No. 18-19, 31, 49-51, 96, 108, 143, 144). Moreover, new requirements and procedures were established to make the Business Plans more viable and sustainable [111] (OACP/ACR, 2010:204, 355; Reintegration Officers No. 49-51, 96). In spite of the central government maintaining these differences in the Seed Capital, the ACR itself developed strategies to reduce the gap by

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[111] Resolutions 008/2009 and 163/2011.

making alliances with the OIM, thereby injecting further resources – around three million pesos – into the Business Plans, with priority given to the former paramilitaries (Reintegration Officer No. 91).

At its inception in 2011, Law 1424 aimed to retroactively resolve the problems created by the Business Plan scams. It was also decreed that those ex-combatants who had already received Seed Capital would no longer receive their monthly allowance. In spite of this, attendance of the psycho-social workshops (at least once per week) remained compulsory until satisfactory completion of the reintegration programme. Certainly, criticism of the Business Plans's failure was a constant topic in the focus groups and interviews with the demobilized: many argued that although they had been promised the Seed Capital, Law 1424 only served to take away the money that they were rightfully owed. It is also worthy of note here that – as most ex-combatants tend to find themselves in a very precarious economic situation – the sudden withdrawal of the monthly allowance would most likely have had substantial impact on their income overall.

In sum, initial attempts to provide training and education did not necessarily translate into long-term employment. Certainly, the precarious social and educational background of the ex-combatants meant they were far from ideal candidates for formal employment but there were also political problems that impeded their economic reintegration, such as their unsolved legal status. Moreover, the initial approach to the reinsertion of ex-combatants focused on providing economic incentives with no further control or requirements from the government, which may have facilitated – or even promoted – reckless practices from all involved: the scams in the Business Plans by the paramilitary leaders on the one hand, the idleness or money-grabbing attendance of courses by the rank-and-file combatants on the other. Fortunately, these problems were eventually overcome by the contestation of Uribe's DDR policy and the action of reintegration institutions such as the ACR, Peace and Reconciliation and the PAPDRB: basic education and vocational training were linked to compulsory counselling on economic and life-projects, as well as new requirements for obtaining the Seed Capital and further expert support for the Business Plans. As will be explained in the next section, such focus on the ex-combatants' economic behaviour and skills constitutes but

one half of the process of economic reintegration: the other lies in the opportunities provided to them by the formal economy.

The private sector

The ACR developed various strategies to attract support from the private sector as part of its training and employment schemes. These included lobbying companies to create job opportunities, learning contracts or internships for the ex-combatants or their families, providing tax breaks if a company hired ex-combatants, and appealing the Corporate Responsibility Programmes (CRP) of larger companies (OACP, 2010:5; ACR, 2008; OACP/ACR, 2010:204). For instance, the ACR partnered Time Bank on a project that used volunteers to provide training for marginalised demographics, including the demobilised[112] (OACP, 2010:4; Conpes 3554:50; Reintegration Officer No.148). Peace and Reconciliation and the PAPDRB created further strategies such as convincing companies to buy products from the Business Plans, or offering recruitment services to mid- and small-size companies that lacked selection schemes of their own[113] (Reintegration Officers No. 31, 49-51; PAPDRB, 2010:63; 2011:30; Alcaldía de Medellín, 2011b:45). Aside from improving their basic employability, these strategies aimed to provide the ex-combatants the experience of competing in the labour market in the same way as any other citizen would (Santander and Villamizar, 2006:35).

However, in general the private sector tends to be reluctant to employ demobilised people (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2011b:8; OACP/ACR, 2010:203, 354). While many companies did play an important role in providing vocational training and supporting the creation and maintenance of Business Plans, when it comes to employment there are still very few companies willing to hire ex-combatants. One example is the Grupo Exito, which runs a programme of corporate responsibility called 'Workplace Inclusion

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[112] The Time Bank was a private initiative run by the Foundation 'Colombia Presente' and supported by the Chambers of Commerce. In Medellín, the demobilised have access to the Opportunity Bank and the Zone Centres for Company Development (CEDEZO), which provides them with credits and technical support in both business and employability.

[113] After establishing the job vacancies for each particular company, the reintegration officers select candidates from a pool of CVs mainly made up of the demobilised and their families. The company then receives a short-list of candidates for interviewing. If one of the demobilised is eventually hired, the officers provide further support to both employer and employee in terms of monitoring the demobilised and mediating in case of problems.

for the Vulnerable Population', offering training and permanent jobs to forcibly displaced groups, the physically disabled, single mothers, the demobilised and victims of violence (Zuluaga, 2010:150). However, by 2009 this programme had only employed 236 ex-combatants, and in 2011 this figure was a mere 86 (OACP, 2010:10; ACR, 2011:10). Similarly, the Microsoft Group created the 'Mi Llave' initiative to build 11 technology centres in cities heavily effected by the conflict and to provide training to around 3,000 vulnerable people. Although it is claimed that 12 per cent of these trainees went on to find jobs (Silva, 2010:154), it is unclear exactly how many of them were demobilised. The ACR also tried to foster employment schemes in the regions, which gave direct employment to 53 ex-combatants (OACP, 2010:5). More successfully, the ACR worked in partnership with the National Institute for Road Construction (INVIAS) to include a compulsory quota of 10 per cent of jobs for the demobilised in their building contracts. Through this scheme the ACR achieved the direct employment of 822 ex-combatants by 2011 (ACR, 2011:10).

Taking into account the enormous institutional effort toward employment seeking, these results appear rather paltry. Previously, in 2005 the director of the PRVC had expressed concern about the low level of response from the private sector in hiring the demobilised population (Angel, 2006:12). More recently, in 2013 the director of the ACR issued a public appeal entreating companies to halt the rejection of ex-combatants from the workplace (El Tiempo 09/05/13). Furthermore, ACR officials are themselves conscious that the term "demobilised" carries with it negative associations, particularly as a label linked to criminality; there has hence been an institutional effort to phase out its usage and replace it with "participant"[114] to avoid the label that links them with criminality. Officials likewise aim for discretion when providing the services (Reintegration Officers No. 91, 131-132):

> [B]ut when they were there, they didn't want anybody to know that they are
> demobilised. […] during my visits to support the [economic] projects, I used to
> say "Hey, what's up?". But they told me: "When you are there, do not say hi to

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[114] The term 'participant' also aims to distinguish between the ex-combatants who have "active" status in the process and the paramilitaries who demobilised but never entered into the reintegration programme (OACP/ACR, 2010:325).

me, because they know you are working with the demobilised. They know [who]
you [are]. Do not say hi to me [there], only in the office, here."

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(Interview Officers No 132-131)

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Understandably, extortion and kidnapping is still a reality across the entire country, so the ex-combatants are still seen as a very real threat in this regard. In addition, as will be explained in the seventh chapter, at the beginning of the process some paramilitary leaders did not abandon the use of violence after their demobilisation, although their criminal activities were eventually halted. Indeed, a report by the ACR concluded that the strategies of employment seeking were less successful in places where the private sector had only a small footprint and/or had been heavily effected by the conflict (ACR, 2011:9; OACP/ACR, 2010:297). However, apart from the more typical problems of educational shortcomings and fear of the demobilised, it is clear that other intervening actors contributed to the sector's negative attitude. One study of the perceptions of the private sector towards the demobilised forwarded three key findings. Firstly, private companies felt rather overwhelmed by uncoordinated requests and proposals from various sections of the government, which in turn provoked a sense of confusion and overlap among the different reintegration institutions. Secondly, the ex-combatants had to compete with other vulnerable sections of society for jobs and resources within the companies' Corporate Responsibility Programmes. Companies thus tended to prioritise those people they considered to be victims over those they saw as perpetrators. Finally, incentives such as tax breaks are limited depending on the size of the companies involved: mid-sized companies are more likely to react positively, while larger companies can be rather indifferent as such a stimulus only represents a small return compared to their global income (Giha, 2010:21, 23).

Unsurprisingly, then, rejection and redundancy based only on one's status as demobilised is a frequent occurrence (Reintegration Officers No. 75-77; 143, 146). Hiring people who have a criminal record may understandably be a risk that many are not willing to take, but discrimination, lack of understanding of the reintegration process, and plain apathy or impassivity on the part of the private sector also greatly impacted on the economic opportunities available to the demobilised. As will be explained in the next section, this widespread rejection from formal employment has

important consequences on the ex-combatants' capacity to generate an income, pushing them into the informal sector and unemployment.

5.2 The ex-combatants' problems: reintegration into poverty?

When asking the ex-combatants about the problems they have faced during their reintegration (Figure 3, Annex G), unemployment was the most common response. As noted above, rejection – and redundancy – based solely on their status as demobilised is a frequent occurrence. Additionally, those I interviewed argued that attending the ACR workshops resulted in frequent job absences that were difficult to justify, especially since they were trying to conceal their demobilised status. Their unresolved legal situation and the subsequent lack of legal documentation also exacerbated these difficulties in finding or keeping work. Ironically, problems such as illiteracy or lack of education were mentioned only a few times; I will return to this point at the end of this section. Finally, some of the demobilised argued that their lack of employment was simply a marker of a poor economic situation within the country as a whole. As the ex-combatants explain:

There is a lot of discrimination. If you go to a company to ask for a job, they won't give you one because you are demobilised. We had a lot of problems with that. Very few accept us to work as demobilised. And if you start working, they fire you as soon as they realise.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 24)

I had the experience of being in a company where I was sacked because I asked for a permit [to leave early] because I had to go to the ACR workshop. So I arrived late because they didn't let me go earlier. Then, in order to catch up I had to speak again with the boss and he said: "Man, it was the same yesterday and again today". So I asked the psychologist to talk to him and after that [the boss] told me: "Here's your [severance] payment, goodbye".
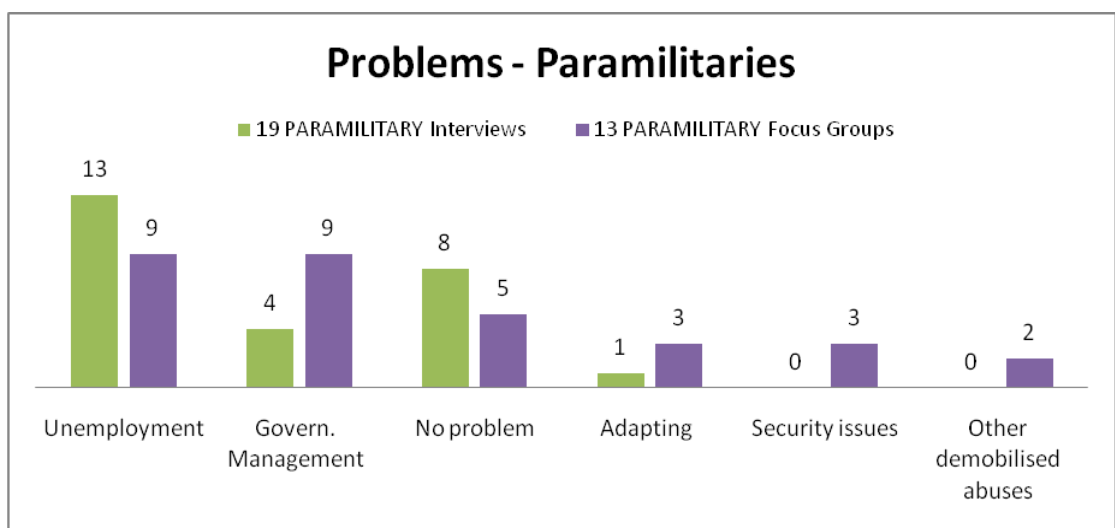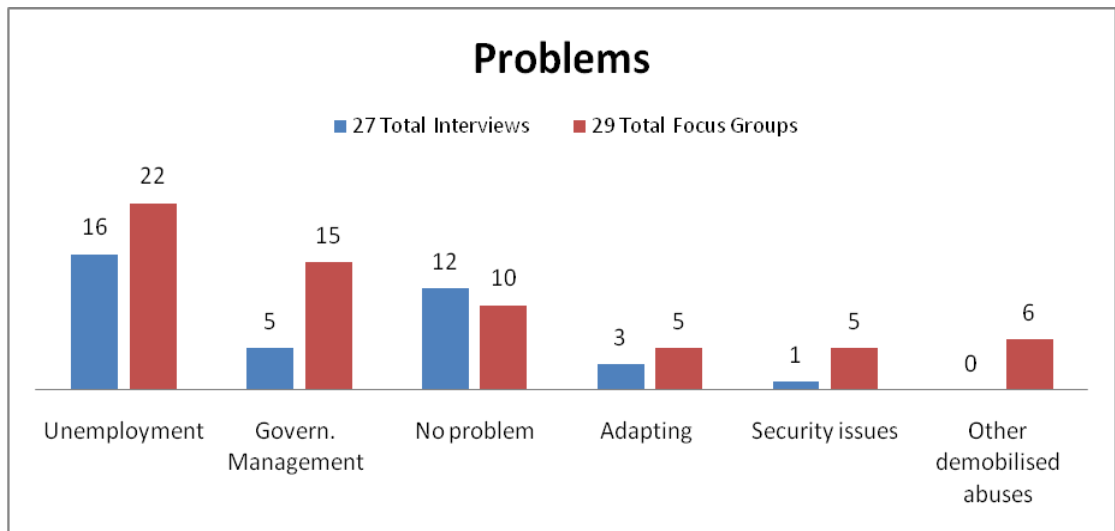
(Focus group ex-combatants No. 13)

Problems

■ 27 Total Interviews ■ 29 Total Focus Groups

	Unemployment	Govern. Management	No problem	Adapting	Security issues	Other demobilised abuses
27 Total Interviews	16	5	12	3	1	0
29 Total Focus Groups	22	15	10	5	5	6

Problems - Paramilitaries

■ 19 PARAMILITARY Interviews ■ 13 PARAMILITARY Focus Groups

	Unemployment	Govern. Management	No problem	Adapting	Security issues	Other demobilised abuses
19 PARAMILITARY Interviews	13	4	8	1	0	0
13 PARAMILITARY Focus Groups	9	9	5	3	3	2

Problems - Guerrillas

■ 8 GUERRILLA Interviews ■ 6 GUERRILLA Focus Groups

	Unemployment	Govern. Management	No problem	Adapting	Security issues	Other demobilised abuses
8 GUERRILLA Interviews	3	1	4	2	1	0
6 GUERRILLA Focus Groups	5	2	4	1	0	2

Figure 3. What kind of problems have you faced during the reintegration process?

The second-most common complaint was around operational issues and mismanagement of the reintegration programme. This seems to be a larger issue among the ex-paramilitaries, as it mainly referred to the government's unfulfilled promises regarding the Seed Capital: either because they lost money due to the initial lack of planning or control (or, indeed, due to the scams); because they found the money too little; or because the new requirements for the Business Plans are now more difficult to achieve. Some of the ex-combatants also complained about other bureaucratic and administrative problems with the ACR, such as the delay or loss of payments due to failures in recording their attendance of workshops and courses. Finally, a small proportion of ex-combatants complained about the low quality of the aid received in general, or of the services in education and health in particular. However, it is worth noting that both of these services are provided by other public institutions and shared by a broader part of the population living in the same area. Finally, some said that the government never fulfilled its promises on jobs, the Seed Capital or housing:

I told them about a project, and they told me there was no money [...] I had already completed [the workshops]; they told me to take a course in entrepreneurship, which I did and then I tried to propose a project and then nothing, they said there was no money. As simple as that.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 21)

I haven't claimed the Seed Capital. If it is two million [pesos] I can't get it. I studied to work in cattle ranch administration. Then they rejected the business project because [starting a business like that] was very expensive. So why did they ask me to study that? [...] They fooled me, if they hadn't fooled me like that I wouldn't have studied.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 17)

The third-most common group is made up of those ex-combatants who said that they had not encountered any problems at all during their personal reintegration process. Rather, they considered the ACR programme to be a real opportunity to break away from the armed group, to forget their negative experiences during the war, and to overcome their shortcomings in education. It is important to note here that this positive

perception appears more frequently among ex-guerrillas than ex-paramilitaries, who in turn tend to complain less about government mismanagement of the programme:

Well, I haven't found any problems; I have found benefits, yes [...] Benefits, education, the economic aid from the government, the services from the people who work here at the ACR.

(Interview ex-combatant No. 12)

In fourth place, a few demobilised talked about their problems in adapting to their new life, especially the culture shock experienced upon moving to the big cities:

The most difficult is to go to a place where you don't know anybody and they don't know you. And you have to start looking for a job and get used to that, get used to people that you did not live with before.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 13)

Finally, some of the demobilised recognised that the introduction of controls on and reductions of the economic benefits had been the direct result of the abuses that took place at the beginning of the process, and therefore lay the blame firmly at the feet of their former comrades for the controls and changes introduced by the government.

At the beginning of this programme there were opportunities and many demobilised received 25, 30 million pesos for buying houses. But they spent it on alcohol, cars, motorbikes, weapons, and they were still involved in criminal activities. And it's their fault that we are all suffering the consequences. But our interest is very different from theirs. There is no longer support to buy a house, and that's what we need now.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 30)

Remarkably, security issues were only mentioned a handful of times. Some ex-combatants said they had received death threats; others indicated that they could not travel to see their families who were still living in the conflict areas. One person also voiced his fears about the consequences if he was forced to confess his crimes under Law 1424. This is especially important given that, as will be shown in the seventh

chapter, the legal civil authorities and the police are not necessarily effective in providing protection against the death threats or the security risk that the demobilised face as part of their former activity in the armed groups.

The real economic outlook of the demobilised

By 2006, PRVC data showed that only 443 demobilised had formal jobs, while 1,820 were working in informal activities (Angel, 2006:12). In 2011, it was calculated that 55 per cent of them were working in informal jobs, 12 per cent had a formal job and 31 per cent were unemployed (ACR, 2011a:12)[115]. In 2007, Peace and Reconciliation claimed that the ex-combatants performed occupations such as taxi drivers, mechanics, builders and bus driver's helpers (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2011b: 9). Finally, a study in Antioquia concluded that, since the private sector is reluctant to hire the demobilised and the smaller municipalities have low capacity from job creation, the ex-combatants worked mostly in either agriculture or construction (Aguirre, 2010).

In line with previous studies, I found that only a few of the demobilised had formal jobs within a company, worked as freelance technicians, or ran their own business. Instead the majority work in informal jobs that require little education or training, and most of which are paid minimum wage, such as driving moto-taxis, or working in construction or as street vendors (Table 7).

FORMAL	INFORMAL	
In a company: a slaughterhouse, a shop, an oil well and a textile producer	Moto-taxis	Shovelling sand
Technicians in electricity and in roofing	Builders	Waiter and barman
Hairdressing business	Street vendors	Clay extractor (mining)
Security guards	Washing cars or motorcycles	Agriculture
	Buying/selling recycled material	Fixing motorcycles

Table 7. Jobs currently performed by the demobilised.

It is clear that, after their demobilisation, low-ranking ex-combatants tend to be unemployed or work in informal, low-income jobs. As a result, they remain entrenched in the poorest demographics in the country: for example, in Bogotá the majority of ex-

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[115] More recent data show small changes on this trend. The work in formal employment has increased to 17% and 26%. ACR statistics 2015. Chart 8. Occupation among the demobilised. September 2015. http://www.reintegracion.gov.co/es/la-reintegracion/Paginas/cifras.aspx

combatants were found to be living in the poorest and most marginalised neighbourhoods (Santander and Villamizar, 2006:16; PAPDRB, 2011). Furthermore, figures from 2005 show a 70 per cent rate of functional illiteracy among the demobilised, meaning that they had only developed sufficient skills for jobs where no more than basic or no literacy was required (Cartagena Contribution, 2009:68; UNPD, 2005). Arguably, then, those ex-combatants who are forced into informal employment may not perceive their shortcomings in education as an immediate problem in their reintegration. Rather, they have developed a means of generating income within social conditions that they share with about 45 per cent of the Colombian population.

Equally significant is the fact that very few of the demobilised have found work in the security sector: Law 782 forbids the demobilised from owning or handling weapons, preventing them from legally working as security guards. During the demobilisation phase, there had been an initial proposal to transform the paramilitary groups into security forces, but this did not proceed due to vehement contestation on the basis of their human rights violations. However, it could also be the case that the rank-and-file ex-combatants do not necessarily prefer activities in the security sector: in a survey conducted by Odenwald et al in Somalia, among the options for reintegration assistance, jobs in the private security sector were chosen by only between 1.7 per cent and 5.9 per cent of the sample (2007:114).

Ultimately, given the choice, it would appear that former combatants prefer to break completely with any war-related activity. As will be explored in the following section, despite the prospect of enormous economic and social disadvantage, the ex-combatants express powerful reasoning that deters them from returning to the armed struggle or entering into criminality.

5.3 Recidivism

By 2010, recidivism in the demobilised population was estimated at around 15 per cent: out of a total of 54,806 ex-combatants, 11.8 per cent had been captured and 4.3 per cent killed in actions linked to criminality (US, 2008:56; FIP, 2010:3; Policia, 2010; CNRR, 2010:156; Procuraduría, 2011:12). Other studies have shown that 17 per cent of the captured members of the criminal bands were former paramilitaries, amounting to around two per cent of the total number of collectively demobilised (Árias and

Guáqueta, 2008:5). In 2014, another study concluded that 76 per cent of the ex-paramilitaries had not fallen into criminality, and only 10 per cent of those demobilised who reported having received offers of this type felt inclined to accept them (FIP, 2014:6). In 2015, the ACR estimated that from the demobilised who took part in the reintegration process 8.8 per cent had relapsed into criminal activities, while 5.25 per cent has been murdered and 9.2 had reported security problems and threats to their lives[116]. These numbers, hence suggest that the former combatants have a similar possibility to become either perpetrators or victims after they demobilise.

One of the questions posed to the ex-combatants for this research was around their willingness to join either the paramilitary groups that did not demobilise or the BACRIM. Their responses fall into two categories: on the one hand, they talked about their personal reasons for not going back to the armed groups (Figure 4, Annex H); on the other, they gave the reasons they think other demobilised may have had for not doing so (Figure 5, Annex I).

According to the first group of answers, family is the most important motivation for staying away from the criminal world, as it makes the ex-combatants feel as though they have a purpose in life other than being in the armed groups. Likewise, the reintegration officers also agreed that the raising of a new family or the recovering of an existing one acted as a solid buffer against any return to illegal activities; it also served to strengthen their resolve and their commitment to the reintegration programme as a whole (Reintegration Officers No. 73, 109, 128, 143).

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[116]ACR statistics 2015. Chart 11. Security situation of the demobilised.
http://www.reintegracion.gov.co/es/la-reintegracion/Paginas/cifras.aspx
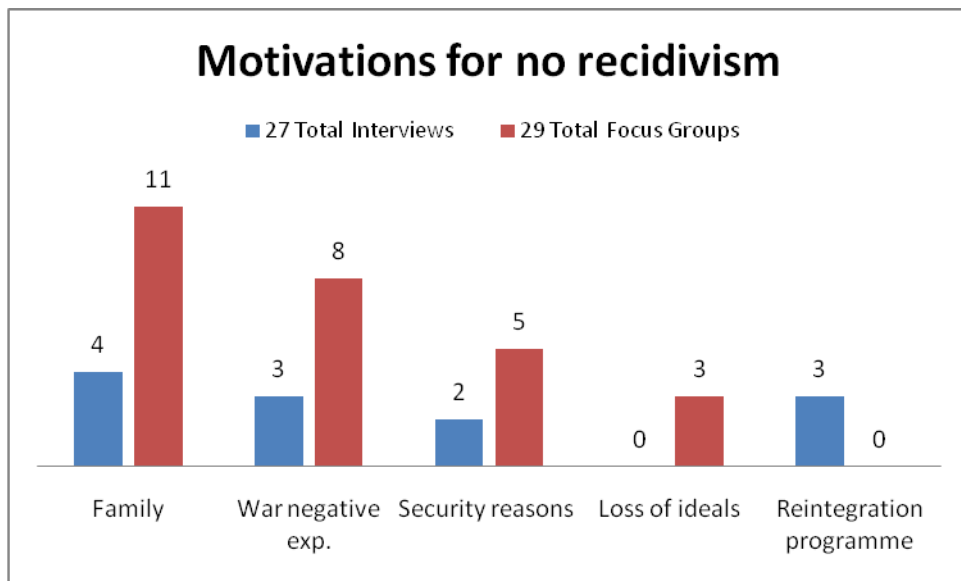
Figure 4. Motivation for no recidivism. (As the numbers are so low, I have not illustrated the difference between guerrillas and paramilitaries. Disagregated data in Annex H)

The second-most prevalent reason revolves around the ex-combatants' negative memories of the war and of life in the illegal armed groups. These included experiences of an oppressive military order, harsh living conditions and enduring physical activities. In stark contrast, their new life in the civil life symbolises freedom to do what they please, but more importantly to stay among family and friends:

The ones who go back are doing so because they don't want to study, they do not want to progress. Because being there brings you nothing. You will pay with your life, you'll find nothing else. I'm better off staying here, even if I have no money, rather than being so restricted. I am happy here, nobody will bother me, nobody will tell me what to do. Now I only have to obey my mum and God.

(Interview ex-combatant No. 17)

The third-most common response was one of fear for their own security upon returning to the illegal groups. On the one hand, their time as outlaws had made them critically aware of the risks involved, including being imprisoned or killed, as well as the attacks that their criminal activities may bring upon their families. On the other, Laws 782, 975 and 1424 were very clear in establishing strong legal ramifications for those involved in criminality post-demobilisation. It is also worth pointing out here that the Colombian judicial system does not distinguish between felony and crime. Hence, any form of legal

problem could bring still harsher consequences, making the demobilised lose any judicial favour and be processed by the criminal system rather than by the transitional law[117]. As I will explore further in the seventh chapter, the fear of legal action may also have contributed to the development of new behaviours of self-control:

I want to adapt completely. For me it is still difficult. I've already been [in the programme] for five years. Sometimes when the boss shouts at you [I think] about taking the shovel and hitting him in the face. But I have to control myself because of what might happen to you. They will not say "it was him" but "it was this guy because he used to be [a combatant]". They describe you like that. I mean, it seems we are [obligated] to never make mistakes again. Here we have to be like saints.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 16)

Fourth-most common was the argument that the group had lost its ideology, and so the ex-combatant no longer identified with it. This process may be more evident in the ex-guerrillas who had deserted from their groups, but it also takes place among ex-paramilitaries:

A: I almost said yes [to a criminal offer], but then I thought about my son. And I thought that the war is not like it used to be.
B: Me neither, I wouldn't do it.
A: The war before 2000... From 2005 or 2007 there are no more Self-Defenses: it became just a mess [of criminal bands]. They fight against each other [...] there aren't anymore Self-Defenses; there are only small groups, independent from each other. It's not the same as before.
C: They are mercenaries instead.
B: Or maybe it is the same person, but he is acting independently.
A: Before [...] the groups were united. If one group had problems the others came to help. But now it's not like that, they may send help just to kill the others. That's what I mean, the guerrillas are happy because the paramilitaries don't

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[117] For instance, failing to provide economic support for their children or problems of domestic violence are considered crimes. If they are found to be involved in this form of legal processes, they must forfeit their demobilised status.

fight with them anymore but among themselves. It is a war that no longer has any logic. I cannot find logic in it anymore.

D: It is a war with no purpose. The only outcome one may find is jail or death.

<div align="right">

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 22)

</div>

Finally, some ex-combatants recognised that it was the reintegration programme – or the advice they had received from reintegration officials – that had helped them in not returning to their groups. I will expand on this in the next chapter.

Moving onto the reasons the demobilised thought others might have for returning to the illegal armed groups (Figure 5, Annex I), the ex-combatants I interviewed saw unemployment as the primary cause of recidivism. However, they clarify, their own participation in the armed conflict serves as a warning that enrolling purely for money is not really worthwhile. Secondly, the argument was put forth that there are people who simply like the lifestyle offered by war and crime, or who do not want to make the effort required to embrace a new way of life, be it catching up with all the missed years of education or working for low salaries.
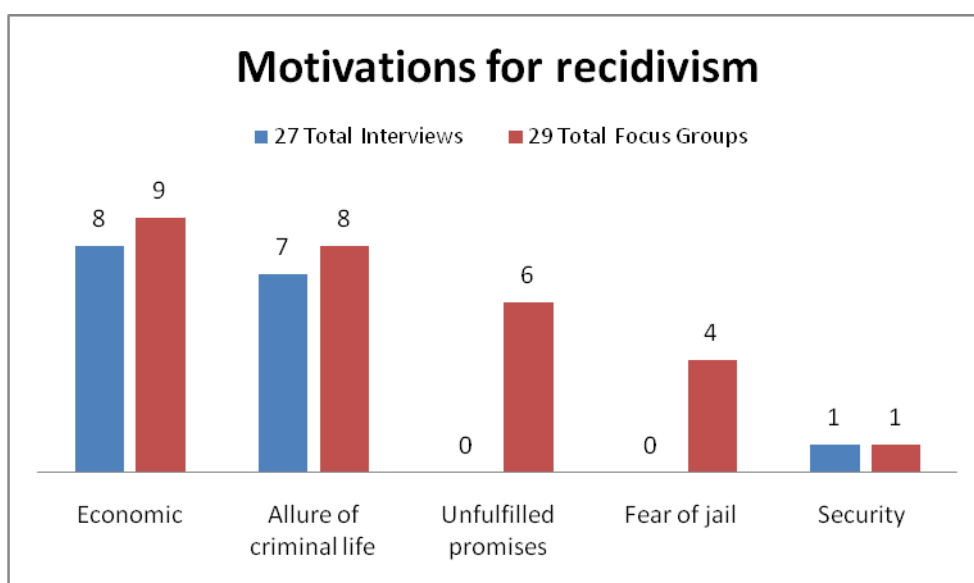
Figure 5. Motivation for recidivism. Disaggregated data in Annex I

Thirdly, the unfulfilled promises of the government were flagged as an influencing factor. In fourth place came the fear of imprisonment for not complying with the new requirements of Law 975 or of being caught up in the uncertainty created by the new

Law 1424. However, this could also be construed as a way of complaining to the government from those who find no other means of expressing their disappointment:

A: That's what I mean, all the laws create a lot of pressure on us. [...] One of these days we will go to jail and that is not what we negotiated with the government.

B: Now things are complicated like never before. It is complicated day by day. They are putting [us under] more pressure and one day we won't be able to take it anymore and we will have to go back [to the armed group].

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 24)

Finally, it was thought that some people may be looking for protection against revenge brought about by "unfinished business" in the criminal world or, the case of the ex-guerrillas, because they have collaborated with the Army. Clearly the ACR was never intended to act as an institution for protection. Nonetheless, it has developed strategies to tackle the security problems that the demobilised may encounter, such as the creation of a Risk Prevention and Attention Unit (RPAU[118]) or the collaboration with the National Police[119] to allocate one policeman to each regional office (Interview Police Liaison; Reintegration Officers 24-25). The RPAU has developed its own protocol in case of death threats against the demobilised, which consists of formulating a risk assessment of the situation in conjunction with other security institutions. If the authorities concur that there is a clear and present danger to the ex-combatant of being killed or injured, he will be transferred to another city and granted a supplementary money allowance for a period of three months[120] (Reintegration Officers No. 24-25). However, in reality the results of this assessment may take about a month or be subject to bureaucratic slowdown. For instance, some bureaucratic changes in 2011 caused delays for months before the results could be made known and acted upon (Reintegration Officer No. 154). Moreover, the infiltration of the Security Services by

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[118] Acronym in Spanish: Unidad de Prevención y Atención de Riesgos. It works in tandem with other security institutions – such as the police, the Ministry of Defense or the Ministry for the Interior – in activities around prevention of and protection against death threats against the ex-combatants and the ACR workforce.

[119] As part of a programme called the Communitarian Police, which addresses issues regarding coexistence and prevention of crime, as well as providing guidance in other bureaucratic procedures such as responses to robbery or loss of documents.

[120] Resolution 163/2011, Articles 20 and 29.

criminal elements was also a common occurrence, as mentioned in the introduction. Thus, given the government's lack of institutional powers to protect them, the demobilised may instead choose to return to the armed groups out of pure self-preservation, or they may decide to flee long before the institutions can act.

I also asked the ex-combatants if they had learned anything specific during their time in the group or if they missed anything from it (Figure 6, Annex J). A significant majority remembered their experience in the armed groups as wholly negative or in which nothing was learned; this was especially evident in the ex-paramilitary groups. They also talked about their lack of freedom under military rule and the impact of always being under the control of the group. As mentioned above, the hardship of military life at war is still very vivid for many of them:

A: It was an experience that you had, an experience, but nothing that…
B: I learned something there but I haven't used a thing afterwards. I haven't used
it and I never will. An experience like that is [something] to never repeat again.
C: An experience not to repeat.
B: It was a part of your life. It passed and you'll never forget it.
C: You know what it is useful for? To tell your kids: "Never go there", to explain
to them what it's like and [to say] "do not take that path". It was a horrible
experience.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 20)

I'm not proud of it, I'm embarrassed. I quit, I demobilised, I came here to be far
away from it, not to remember. I don't want my kids to be pointed at: "He's the
son of [an ex-combatant], he will be the same". That is what I want to avoid. I
got nothing from it.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 9)
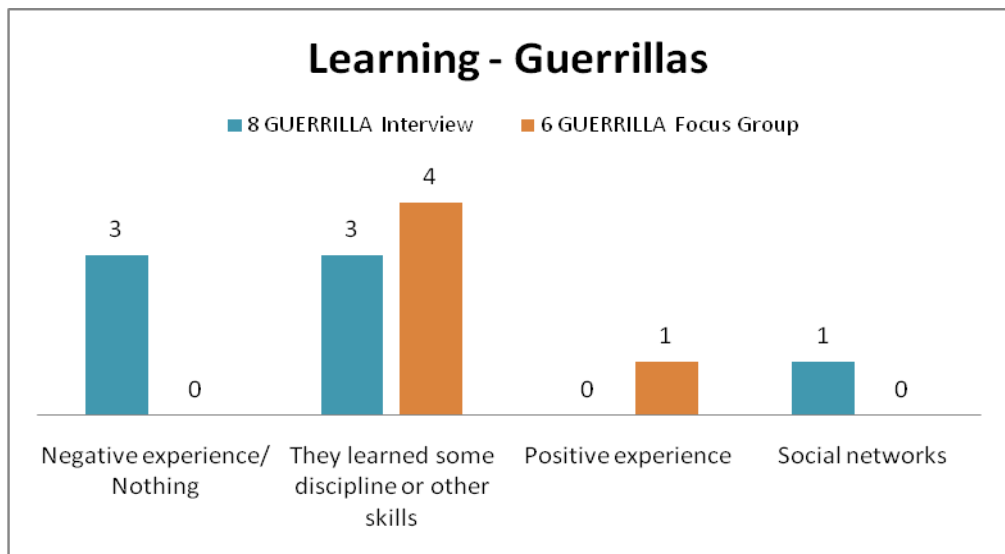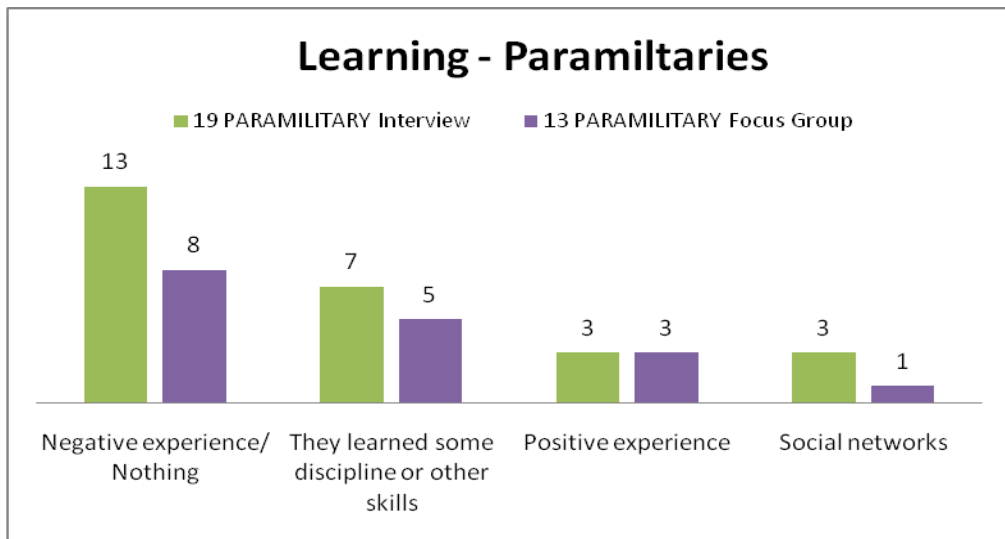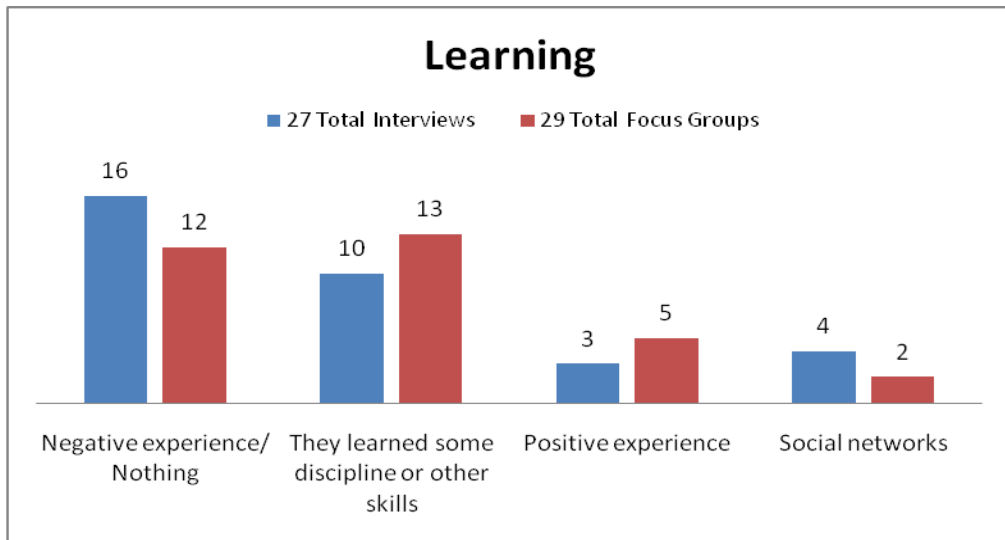
Figure 6. Did you learn something in the groups that is useful to you now? Is there anything you miss?

Secondly, there was a group who said they learned discipline or self-esteem, as well as certain skills. This was especially true of the guerrillas, where training within the group features a variety of activities including basic literacy, nursing or driving. Remarkably, learning to handle weapons was only mentioned twice.

Well, I don't miss [the group] that much but in any case I did have many options there, to learn things that I can use now. For instance, I learned to work with leather, to fix communication radios. I also learned a bit of nursing and I also studied political economy [the logistics of how to distribute the resources among the troops], which has helped me to organise [my domestic] budgeting and keep it in check.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 30)

I think the military life has been very useful for me: to look after myself, to work, to pursue my goals. Of course, the demobilisation process has helped me a lot to overcome that trauma, I mean, from that ideology that I used to have when I was in the illegal group, in criminality. I left those groups and right now I'm screwed in civilian life, but I feel good, because I have stopped seeing enemies everywhere who are trying to kill me.

(Interview ex-combatant No. 14)

A handful of the demobilised do remember their experience as positive: having a stable job or a salary in the case of the paramilitaries, or the fact that the group provided all their living expenses in the case of the guerrillas, could be seen as preferable to the economic hardship they were to face in civilian life. Only two people mentioned that they still had some sympathies with the ideology of the group. Additionally, some mid-ranking ex-combatants enjoyed privileges such as access to money and cars, but even for them the economic incentives were not necessarily worthwhile in comparison to their life as civilians:

I miss some things. I miss the group, the life. I had nice moments, had cars and money. Sometimes I miss that. Now I have to wake up every day at 5am to work Monday to Saturday and on Sunday to study. But I have left that life and I keep going.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 3)

To be honest my life was better there, because I had no worries. Here, if I do not have a job and I have no money to pay rent, it's a problem. If I don't have money to pay for transport, it's a problem. Even if you work, the money is not enough. Paying the bills, those are the problems. Everything is money. You don't eat properly. Here is not the same as being there. Even if some people say that they were hungry, it's lies. Nobody goes by force. If you are capable you can progress, to become mid-ranking. You can collect taxes [extortion] or organise the community. [There] life is easier, here it is very complicated.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 35)

Lastly, a few respondents said that they missed friends that they had made in the group:

The most difficult thing was to leave them there. Coming here and thinking that they will remain there, waiting to be killed [...] Because during the time you spend with them you come to love them, like a family [...] Because there you find a father, a mother, siblings. So it is very hard to know that you go out one day and leave them there.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 4)

During the fieldwork, some ex-combatants talked about offers they had received from the armed groups. According to them, the salary for leading a small racket gang could reach as high as one to three million pesos [US$2,000] per month (Interview grass-roots No. 6, Focus group ex-combatants No. 31). However, they do not feel keen in accepting these offers:

A: I want the Colombian government to take into account what we are doing because now things are difficult with the armed groups. Here in Medellín, there are all these opportunities [for recidivism]. All the time they are telling you: "We'll give you money to join us".

B: A million, 1.2 million pesos per month.

A: And they [the government] do not realise that. We are here and we want to keep going. They do not realise that. On the contrary, they want to screw us. That's wrong from the government.

B: It is because we have a goal now, a place to go. But if [the criminal bands] talk to someone that is in trouble, like one of our mates, and they convince him, he will go back. And many have returned because of that.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 3)

A: I don't regret deserting from the group, never. The government has not fulfilled its promises, and I know it never will but I have no regrets. I am here and I have a son. […] I will never go back to an armed group, and I have received offers [of joining criminality]. But I am out of that now, I only want to work, to make a living for me and my family.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 3)

This section has explored what the demobilised believe about potentially joining an armed group or a criminal band. It can be concluded that there are three key elements that prevent their recidivism: first and foremost, participating in war is something that most people are not willing to do twice. Furthermore, having experienced the risks of war, the economic offers that initially proved highly attractive simply lose their value as incentives. Secondly, the emotional links provided by raising or restarting a family are of immense value, and provide an important incentive to enter and remain dedicated to the reintegration process. Finally, and as consequence of the first two, the demobilisation itself is perceived as a once-in-life opportunity to break the shackles of the armed group.

The demobilised are keenly aware that going back to the armed groups or joining criminal bands will most likely result in imprisonment or death for themselves or their families. The reintegration officers were also conscious that neither the ACR nor the

government is capable of competing with the economic incentives offered by illegal armed groups. Yet they also understand that these incentives have lost their value to the demobilised, and that there are other elements that play a more crucial role, be it their families or the sense of freedom from the military life (Reintegration Officer No. 109; 154). Although the money that comes with criminality is far higher than the incentives offered by the government and the minimum wage salaries they are likely to obtain in their civilian jobs, far from behaving as greedy or utility-maximising individuals, the economic offers for returning to the armed groups would appear to have lost their attraction.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has reassessed the emphasis on achieving a successful economic reintegration to prevent recidivism among ex-combatants. Certainly, the economic dimension has an important role to play in the dynamics of war and political conflict; it is not, however, sufficient to explain the success or failure of reintegration into society.

On the one hand, the real value of the economic aid provided to the former fighters is not predicated on its amount or frequency, but on how these stimuli are used as a tool for facilitating and encouraging active participation in reintegration activities. More than a mere provider of economic rewards, the ACR was critical in defining goals and limits for the reintegration policy, as well as establishing a unified and organised set of activities for the personal development of the former combatants. However, and despite substantial institutional effort, the social background of the demobilised – and the political terms on which their demobilisation was negotiated – represent critical barriers to their access to jobs and stable income. As a result, the ex-combatants remain tied to conditions of poverty and marginality: their educational and social background, along with the rejection of their job prospects by the private sector, pushes them further towards informal jobs, unemployment and deeper poverty. In spite of this, they still share the same economic conditions with almost half of the country's population.

On the other, bearing in mind the gigantic economic profits produced by criminality and drug-trafficking, the Colombian government is simply unable to compete with the financial incentives on offer to those who take part in illegal activities. Nevertheless,

for the demobilised, war and life within the armed group is remembered as an intense and highly negative experience, and one that is simply not worth the money. Ultimately, although many of them have received offers of millions of pesos from the criminal world to create or lead new illegal armed groups, there remains a strong tendency to reject these proposals out of awareness of its consequences: imprisonment or death.

Reintegration, therefore goes beyond the like-for-like replacement of economic stimulus obtained in war-related activities with legal alternatives in the civilian life. Without doubt, gaining employment or a stable income is an important indicator of the success or failure of the reintegration process (Reintegration Officer No. 31, 154). But the experience of the Colombian reintegration institutions has shown that this economic dimension is not the starting point but the final element in the reintegration process (Alcaldía de Medellin, 2006:129). No different from any other type of educative curve, the productive life is the result of a socialisation process that creates mutually reinforcing relationships between individuals and their *social* milieu.

Chapter 6

Social Reintegration: Psychosocial Services and Community Programmes

The literature on DDR has assumed that breaking down the military structures is a natural and effective means of reducing the security risk that ex-combatants may pose were they to relapse into violence. Subsequently, the role of the communities in replacing the military milieu of the demobilised and in providing support for their reintegration has been stressed in the form of community-based approaches. However, I have argued that this approach shifts the responsibility for reintegrating firmly onto the ex-combatants or the communities, while the role of the state in creating social fabric and democratic relations with the ex-combatants is often neglected. This chapter shows how DDR programmes may play a major role in the fostering of new social and political interactions to replace both those social tensions that ignited the war in the first place and those ties that were created during the war.

The ACR adopted psychosocial reintegration as the model around which the economic and political dimensions would be organised. In turn, these psychosocial services adopted an approach that opposed the schools of thought based on methodological individualism, and thus engaged more in the construction of social links than in ex-combatant's behavioural change. Supported by certain community-based activities, this brought a renewed emphasis on strengthening the ex-combatants' capacity to forge social relationships, as well as helping them to overcome their disadvantages and shortcomings in education and social capital.

This chapter is organised as follows: first, it presents the motivations that the former fighters expressed for demobilising, highlighting that there were indeed more important reasons cited for breaking away from the group, other than those economic promises made by the Colombian government during the negotiation. Second, it analyses the different social bonds made by the ex-combatants on two different levels: with their families and with the recipient communities. Third, it explores the social relationships formed by the ex-combatants with the reintegration officers, and the tutors in particular. These interactions with the ACR bureaucracy seem to be especially salient to the ex-combatants, despite their being altogether neglected by the DDR literature. For the

former combatants, the reintegration officers represent important figures who can explain, organise and mediate their complex and contested legal, social and political contexts.

6.1 Breaking away from the armed group

When asking the ex-combatants about the reasons behind their demobilisation (Figure 7, Annex K), many paramilitaries claimed that it was the result of orders received from their leaders; some reported receiving death threats for not doing so. Certainly, maintaining hierarchy and order within troops during the cantonment and demobilisation phases was crucial to preventing mass disorganised desertions. It is also worth bearing in mind that the leaders needed to sustain high numbers of demobilised:

> *A: [T]he commanders gave the order. I didn't want to and the commander didn't pay us salary for four months. He didn't want to pay that money because he knew what was going to happen. I told him to give me the money so I could leave but he said no, because then the people would take up arms again. So I had to.*
>
> *B: I didn't want to either but we had to. There were some people who didn't want to and they were killed. So we had to.*
>
> *(Focus group ex-combatants No. 19)*
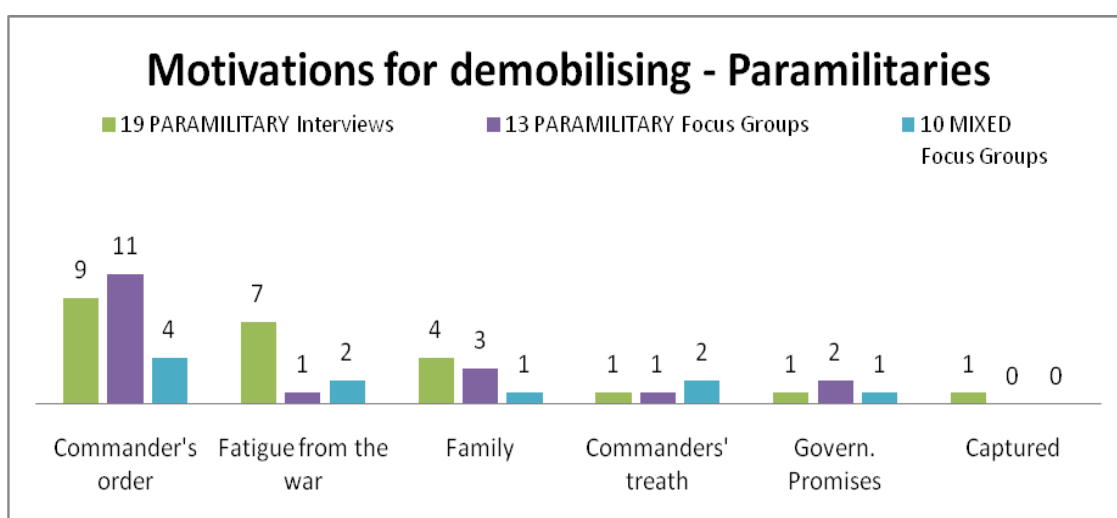
Figure 7. Motivations for demobilising (Paramilitaries).

Equally, the demobilisation of paramilitary groups was seen by many as the opportunity they were looking for to leave the group. As mentioned above, fatigue and disillusionment may develop among the combatants through their experiences within the group and during the war. Clearly, any display of such feelings in front of their comrades represents a huge risk and could be interpreted as a sign of betrayal. As such, when the demobilisation was ordered by the commanders, many fighters were already looking forward to it, amid feelings of fatigue towards the war:

I saw the opportunity to leave and reintegrate into normal life. It was the only opportunity I had, and I took it straight away. Otherwise it would not have been possible, because once you are inside you die there, you never leave. If you leave they'll look for you at your house, they'll visit you several times and if you don't go back they'll kill you, so you don't speak here or there.

(Interview ex-combatant No. 15)

I wanted to leave. I was able to send money to my parents, my children, 1.2 million pesos, but I was tired. I prayed to God to give me the opportunity to leave.

(Interview ex-combatant No. 1)

Tiredness from the war or disenchantment with the group also served as primary motivation for desertion among the ex-guerrillas. Evidently, the FARC and the ELN operate within the most isolated areas of the country, so the rebels must endure the most difficult geographical conditions, along with the constant threat of attacks from the Army and the paramilitary groups. Some ex-combatants also voiced that they had problems with their commander or fellow rebels, which in some cases may result in punishment or even in the death sentence. For guerrilla women, too, being forced to have an abortion is a common cause for desertion: the group enforces a strict policy for regulating the love life of its members, whereby the creation of permanent couples must be authorised by the commanders and the use of contraception is compulsory[121]. In the case of unwanted pregnancy, both the man and woman involved will receive sanctions and the woman will be forced to have an abortion (Interview ex-combatants No. 2 and

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[121] The FARC Disciplinary Code regulates the behaviour of its members. It states rules for the creation of couples and bans unauthorised couples and pregnancy.

21; Focus group ex-combatants No. 2 and 4). There was also one person who decided to leave based on ill health (Figure 8, Annex L).
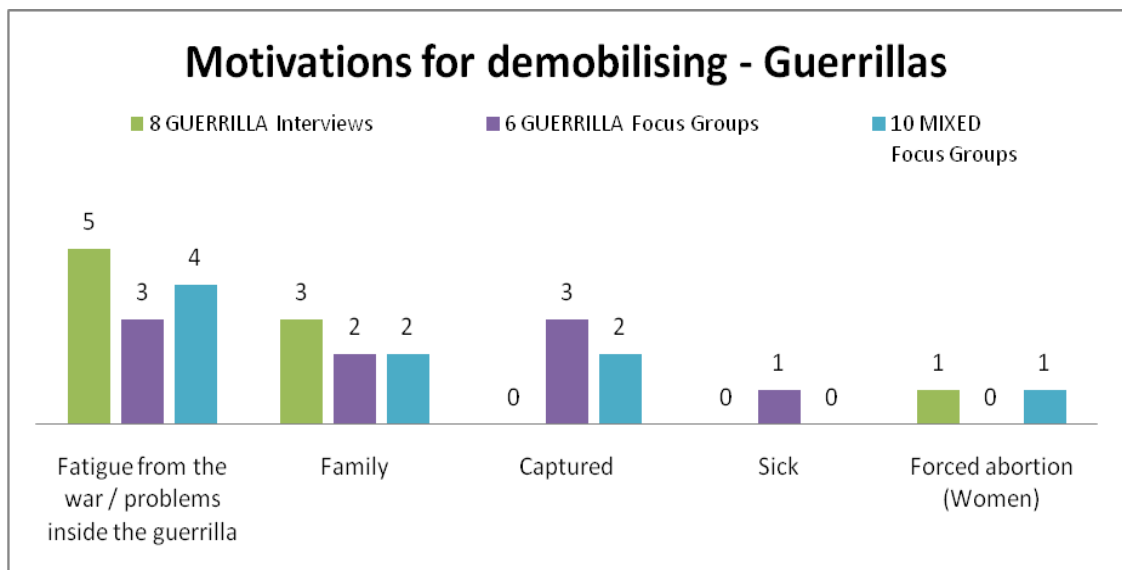

Figure 8. Motivations for demobilising (Guerrillas).

As the tables above show, family was another important factor in the decision to demobilise for both ex-guerrillas and ex-paramilitaries. For security reasons, the guerrillas strictly regulate any communication between the rebels and their families: to avoid desertions, to prevent information leaks or to maintain discipline within the troops (Gutierrez, 2008:17; Ferro and Uribe, 2002:78). In the paramilitary groups this rule is more relaxed and sporadic visits to the family are permitted. However, in the midst of war, maintaining any level of contact is both difficult and filled with risk. Additionally, I also heard of some ex-combatants who had been captured by the Army and given the option of taking part in the reintegration process by ACR, rather than going to prison.

Perhaps surprisingly, the promises made by the government at the beginning of the demobilisation was the reason least frequently mentioned as a contributing factor to the paramilitaries' decision to lay down their arms, and was not mentioned at all by the ex-guerrillas. I will return to this point in the seventh chapter, suffice it to say for now that money, education and employment and housing aid promised by the government, appear to have played only a minimal role in the decision to break away from the groups, and in the reintegration process as a whole.

These responses described above underline that, while at the macro-level the paramilitary leaders and government officials were negotiating critical political issues, at the micro-level many combatants from both the paramilitaries and the guerrillas were simply tired of the war and yearning to abandon the group and the military life altogether. Research has shown that the armed groups employ a variety of strategies to attract new recruits, such as offering money or a regular salary, or opportunities for social mobility and escape from oppressive social conditions. However, these incentives are not necessarily realised post-recruitment. The economic promises, in particular, are likely to be a deception. For example, in the case of paramilitaries, the salary promised may be delayed or dependent on further commitment to the cause. Similarly, in the FARC guerrillas new recruits are stripped of their personal possessions and any economic profit for individual purposes is strictly controlled (Gutierrez, 2008:13, 23; 2008:17; Ferro and Uribe, 2002:88; Arjona and Kalyvas, 2011:155):

When I started working for the self-defenses, I joined because I had financial problems. I thought that it would solve my issues, to improve my quality of life. I thought that, but when I was there I realised that it was all lies, a deceit.

(Interview ex-combatant No. 22)

Furthermore, joining the armed groups is a decision that tends to become a life-commitment, a reality of which the new recruits are not necessarily aware. In turn, both guerrillas and paramilitaries have developed strategies to prevent mass desertion through the combination of the use of force – by killing any person who attempts to leave the group – and the offer of other incentives to replace those that attracted the recruits in the first place (Gutierrez, 2008:29; Medina, 2008:27).

Subsequently, the ex-combatants do not necessarily expect any sense of continuity of the social order – such as status and income – to which they had been accustomed within the armed group, but rather may see the demobilisation as an opportunity to break away from it. The horrifying experience of being at war should not be underestimated, and very few rank-and-file combatants seem to have benefited from it in any meaningful way. For both, ex-guerrillas and ex-paramilitaries alike, fatigue from the military order, from the precarious living conditions and from war itself, as well as the fear of being killed or imprisoned, proved to be a fundamental deterrent to retaining

their roles in the conflict. Additionally, as was made apparent in the previous chapter, the desire to see family – or to create their own – constituted another strong incentive for the ex-combatants to break away from the armed group and attempt to reintegrate into civilian life.

6.2 Creating family and community relationships

Family, personal development, freedom and the value of life

On the question of what they valued the most about their new life outside of the armed group (Figure 9, Annex M), a significant majority of respondents (both from the interviews and the focus groups) reaffirmed that starting or recovering a family was the most prized of all. In second place, the ex-combatants valued their own personal development in terms of having been able to access education and training, as well as improving their self-esteem, self-control and discipline:

> *A: [I value] many things: family, friends, everything.*
> *B: One stops being rude.*
> *A: You learn to value the shoes that you are able to buy with a lot of effort.*
> *B: But also [in the group] you had little money.*
> *A: But you could have a lot. Then you would spend it on drinking, women. Now I also spend it with women, but the ones from your home.*
> *B: If you received three months' salary, you spent it in four days, drinking. I used to get 2,360,000 pesos for three months, and in four days I would waste it all.*
>
> *(Focus group ex-combatants No. 20)*
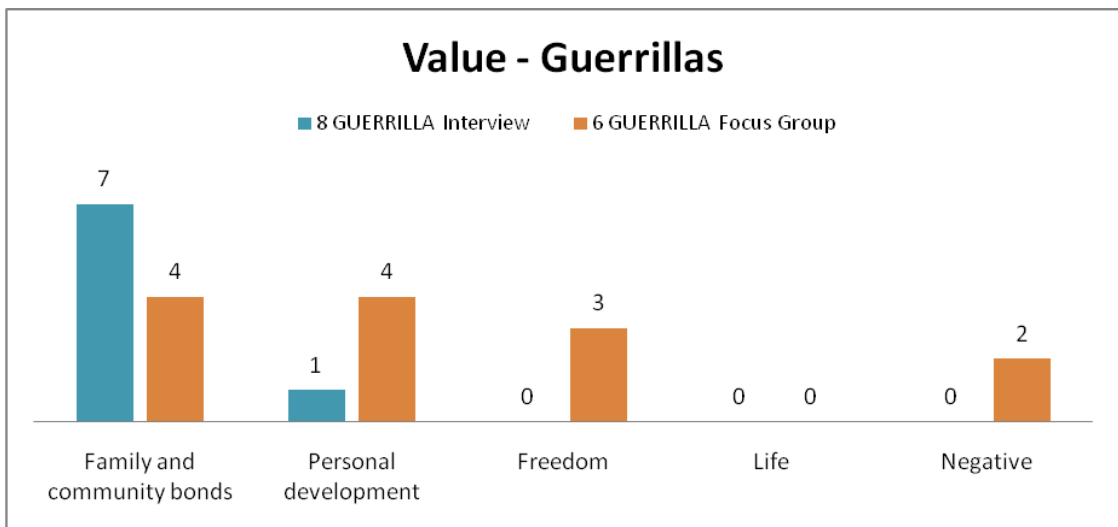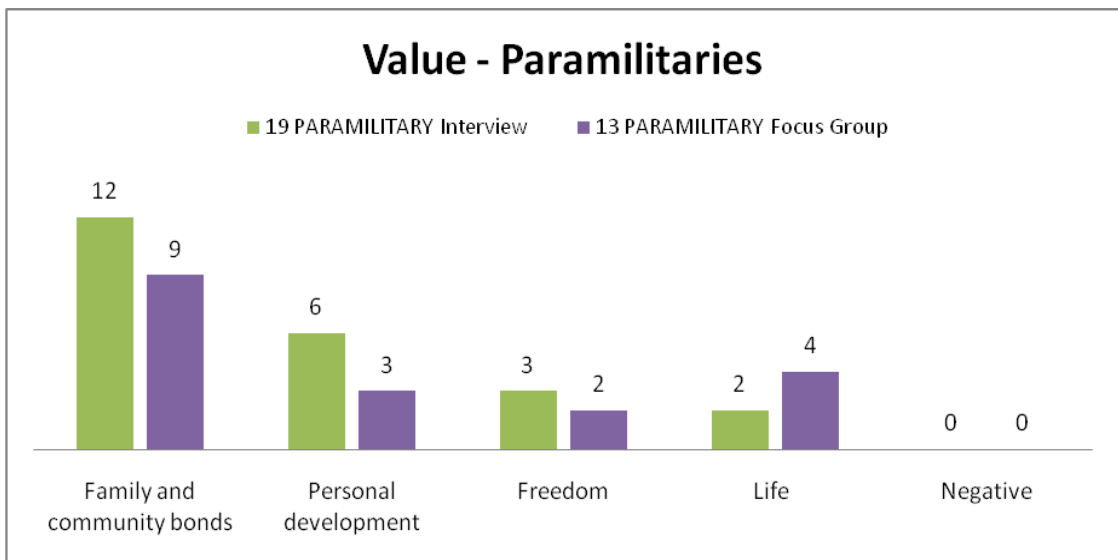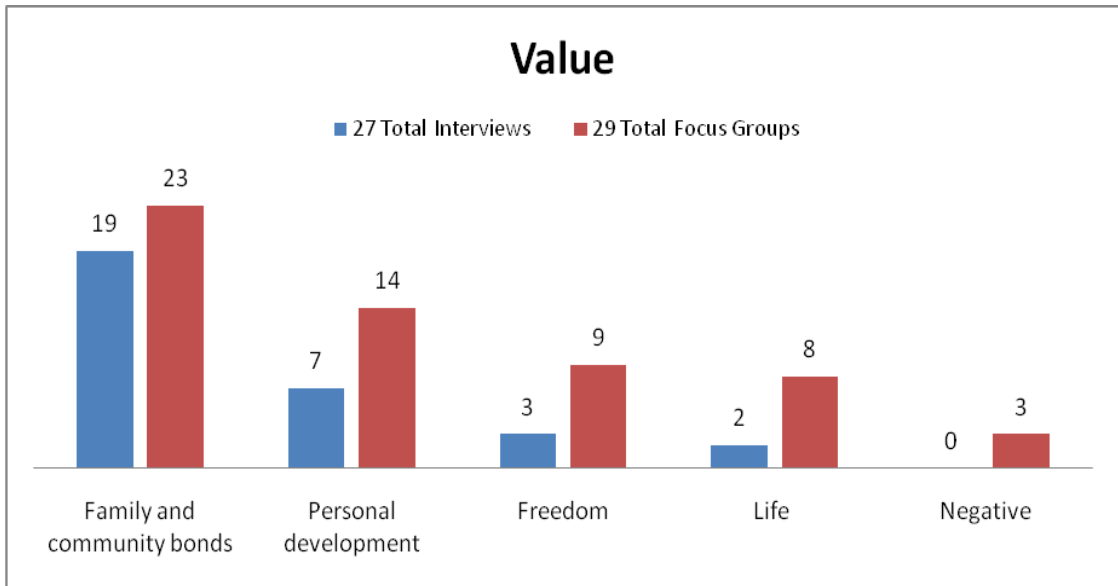
Figure 9. What do you value the most?

Thirdly, those interviewed also felt a sense of freedom from the burden of the military order and the harsh conditions of being at war. In fourth place, some also said that during their reintegration process they had learned the value of their own life and the lives of others:

> *The most important value: my life and the life of the others. Respect for others, we are equal. In the armed groups all values are lost. You are commanded by someone and you follow orders. There are no values there. There nobody respects your way of thinking or your ideals. Orders must be fulfilled. Instead here, you take your own decisions and you know what's better for you, what's good and bad. Here you [can] think.*
>
> *(Focus group ex-combatants No. 3)*

Finally, there were some negative responses aimed at the unfulfilled promises from the government, and the expected money and the economic benefits that never arrived. Yet again, though, this does not seem to have been a determining factor in their reintegration experience.

As mentioned above, the armed groups restrict family contact for security and strategic reasons. Arguably, emotional social bonds run contrary to the vertical hierarchy and military order of the armed groups. Moreover, the military strategy depends on the cohesiveness of the troops and their willingness to place the collective benefit over the individual's life and wellbeing. By contrast, for the demobilised the dismantling of hierarchies within the group equates to putting their personal and family needs above everything else:

> *When people ask me "Do you think the demobilisation was [a] good [idea]?", I tell them "From whose point of view? Are you asking me as a person or as an ex-combatant?". Because there is a difference: as an ex-combatant, as part of an organisation with an ideology, it was bad, the worst. It makes no sense; we were in the best place, we owned more than half of the country. The authorities recognised us as "they're the ones who give the orders". The guerrilla was decimated economically, in weapons, in men, etc. We were superior and we simply turned the machine off and gave the keys to the government. However, as*

a person, it was the best option. As a human being, as a person, there is a moment when all the money, power or status cannot help with the burden on your shoulders, the problems. You can have power and money, but you are in the forest at night, your family is somewhere else, you have only two ways out: you get killed or get caught, [either way] you are not going to receive a pension. No one can say "I offer my resignation", that does not exist in the group. You have no life of your own, you live only for the group. But then you have the opportunity of living with your family. You have a difficult life – you are stigmatised, humiliated – but you are with your wife and children, because even your siblings reject you. That is worth everything. That is the only thing we've got from the demobilisation process, and it is hard to keep going, but it is worth it.

(Interview grass-roots No. 6)

Furthermore, in the absence of a reintegration programme (or problems in the access to it), the combatants are most likely to rely on their family and community networks (Karamé, 2009:506). These bases of support, in turn, may have a significant positive impact on their economic reintegration. For instance, ex-combatant businesses overseen by the Medellín Mayoralty tend to be more successful when there is a level of support provided by the family network (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007:29; Reintegration Officers No. 31, 49-51). One should, however, be wary of idealising these relationships: on the other side of the coin, both families and communities can also become a compelling reason for enrolment in the armed groups. The family may itself be collaborating with one of the warring factions or, in areas effected by the conflict, young people may decide to sign up as an alternative to their oppressive social and family conditions, such as poverty or domestic violence. Additionally, where there is some form of payment associated with participation in the armed groups, family relations may become strained when the ex-combatants return home unemployed after their demobilisation and family members expect the same money and lifestyle they previously enjoyed (Reintegration Officers No. 58 and 93). Therefore, although family plays an integral role in the development of citizen identity and acts as a strong incentive not to return to crime (Özerdem, 2012: 55), its networks are also caught up and influenced by those same social and political conditions in which the activities of war are embedded.

Community: invisibility, acceptance and rejection

As explained in the third chapter, the Colombian DDR process originated as a security-oriented strategy with a focus on providing benefits for the demobilised, thereby ignoring the needs of other sections of the wider population. Thus, although the PRVC encountered strong resistance to the demobilised in the recipient communities (OACP/ACR, 2010:139), there was no strategy to tackle these issues. It was Peace and Reconciliation that first addressed community needs by fostering reconciliation and providing services to both ex-combatants and victims of violence through actions of collective reparation (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a:14; Salazar, 2007:8). Conceptually, channelling resources and economic projects to the recipient communities was seen as a way of preventing the relapse of violence, and four strategies were developed for doing so: a) implementing projects for social benefit and cultural and artistic activities to promote integration; b) preventing recruitment into illegal armed groups, and promotion of non-violent conflict resolution; c) institutional strengthening to foster articulation and awareness across different sections of society, including politics and academia; and d) prevention and control of the causes of violence (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a). Likewise, the PAPDRB developed projects for communities to facilitate reconciliation and inclusion, cultivating awareness in the community of the importance of integrating ex-combatants and encouraging coexistence[122] (Villamizar, 2005:18). This included installing a library in a marginalised area, some recreational and artistic activities, and talks from the demobilised in public schools (PAPDRB, 2010:46, 58).

Similarly, the ACR found that the equal distribution of benefits between the demobilised and the community contributed to the reconciliation process (OACP/ACR, 2010:350). The Community Work Unit (CWU) coordinated three types of projects (citizenship formation, citizen initiatives and symbolic actions) and two strategies (preventing illegal recruitment and prioritising the communities) (OACP/ACR, 2010: 213; Reintegration Officer No. 20). These activities sought "to strengthen the social fabric and to promote reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. In these activities, the ex-soldiers, their families and the wider community receive training in peaceful

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[122] Coordinated Plan to Attend the Receiving Communities; Peace and Development in the Capital (PAPDRB, 2010:56-60).

coexistence and leadership, citizenship and legality, peaceful problem-solving and human rights" (OACP, 2010:6). In 2008, the CWU launched a national policy of community reintegration financed by the European Union, whose purpose was to "create and strengthen the relationship between the social actors by starting public affair debates that allow the restoration of trust, coexistence and reconciliation among the members of the community and at the same time create legitimacy for the state" (Conpes 3607, 2009:3). This policy also broached the prospect of producing active and autonomous citizens and of conflict resolution by peaceful means. Between 2007 and 2009 there were 68 community interventions in 57 municipalities (OACP/ACR, 2010:217). These activities aimed to benefit the community by improving public spaces such as parks and schools (Reintegration Officer No. 20).

However, a report from the MAPP concluded that these community-based reintegration projects and activities suffered from low levels of participation among the demobilised, due to factors such as project location and the time and money required to travel there, stigmatisation, security problems, or general lack of interest on the part of the demobilised (MAPP-14, 2010). As one former fighter said:

> *I don't want to take part in the activities of the ACR, because we, the demobilised, are always singled out. So, as soon as a demobilised does something, makes a mistake or does something [bad], the people say "all the demobilised are the same". So I try not to let the people know, because then my clients would leave. Or the neighbour would say "that person is demobilised" and then you are marked out [...]*
>
> *(Interview ex-combatant No.21)*

A question mark remains, then, over the extent to which these community interventions facilitate a long-term relationship between the ex-combatants and the communities, and between both parties and the national institutions. The responses given by the former combatants around feelings of acceptance by the community shed some light on this matter: specifically they show that dynamics of acceptance or rejection are not necessarily linked to the implementation of community-based activities, but more so to the social conditions into which they are placed (Figure 10, Annex N).

Most often, the ex-combatants choose to systematically hide their past in the armed groups from the immediate community, and sometimes even from their own family. There may also be differences based on the type of demobilisation: those who demobilised collectively may have chosen to live in areas already under paramilitary control – where the community had to accept them, by conviction or by force – while the ex-guerrillas were given no option but to migrate to an entirely new community (Reintegration Officers No. 47, 90, 95, 107). However, a government study in 2008 revealed that the demobilised tend either to move to the larger cities (51.7%) or to remain in very poor ones (33.6%) (Conpes 3554, 2008:14). Previously, in 2005 Peace Commissioner Restrepo calculated that 70 per cent of the demobilised wanted to migrate into the cities (2005:204). This because the potential for better access to institutions and opportunities for social mobility via education and employment for themselves and their families. As a result, on arriving in a new place, they prefer to hide their previous identity as members of the illegal armed group. In doing so, they feel a sense of rejection, and in many cases this came as an unexpected shock to those who took part in the collective demobilisations:
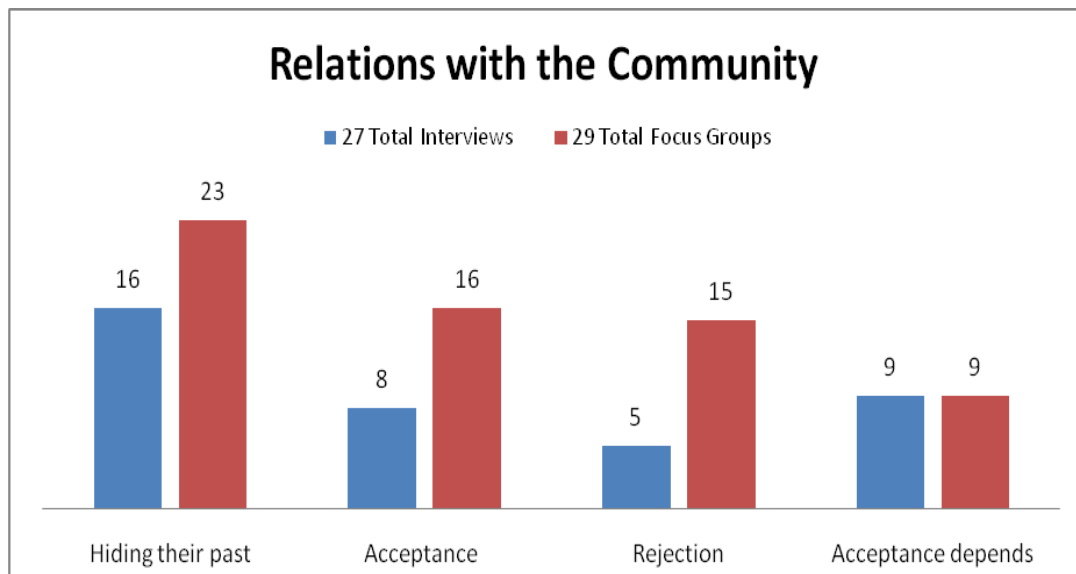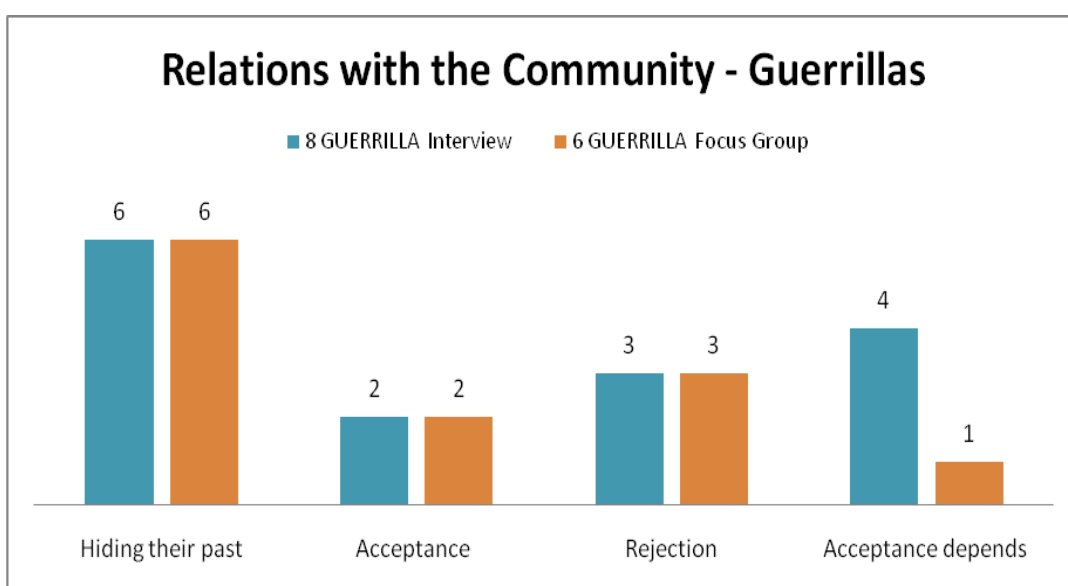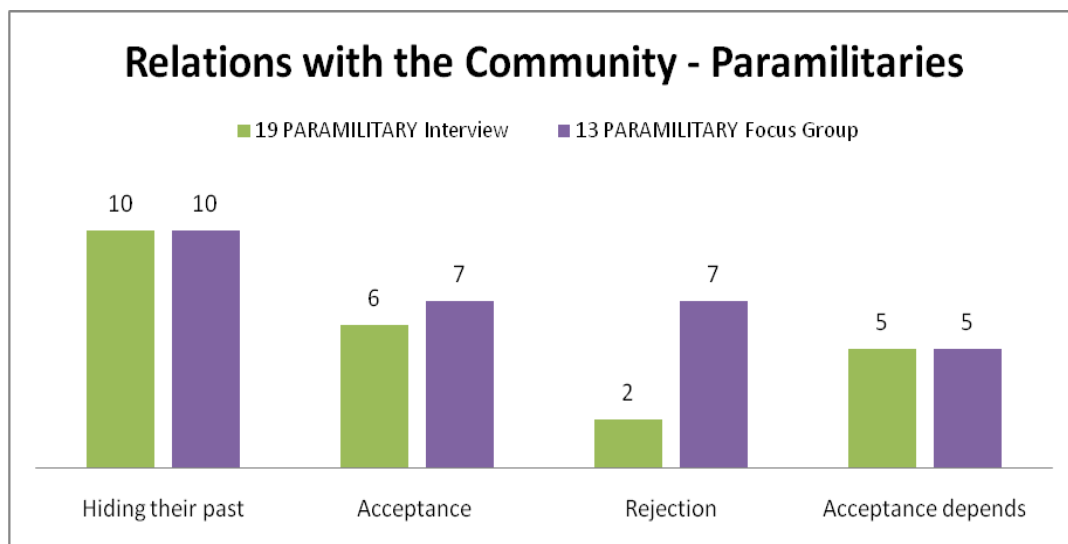
Figure 10. Do you feel accepted by the recipient communities?

A: In my case, where I live, I worked there when I was in the group and everybody knew who I was. People there show their appreciation. Everybody knows that I am demobilised and that I worked with the group and I haven't had any problem.

B: Because you are in the same area. You are in the same area where everybody knows you, so it is not so strange. However, if you live in a big city and say "I am demobilised", everybody would look at you and uchhhh!! [rejects you].

(Focus Group ex-combatants No. 29)

In addition, the ex-guerrillas may face security problems if they disclose their past. During the demobilisations of rebel groups in the 1990s, many ex-fighters were systematically killed by spoilers of the process or by their former enemies (Villarraga, 2006). During this particular DDR process, of a total of 46,296 demobilised who participated in the ACR programme, 1,676 had been killed by 2008 (4%) (Conpes 3554, 2008:17), a figure that increased to 2,552 by 2015 (5.25%)[123]. Allegedly, these murders were linked to the action of criminal groups created after the demobilisation, but it is difficult to establish whether the demobilised were victimised for their refusal to join these criminal bands or because they took an active role in them. Moreover, as the armed conflict continues and other armed groups are still operational, there remain entire rural areas and even neighbourhoods in the cities that are very violent (Group Interview teachers CEPAR; Focus Group ex-combatants No. 5 and 31), meaning that the ex-combatants' security and that of their family are inextricability linked to their capacity to hide their past:

> *In my case, nobody knows that I am demobilised. Nobody knows and I am not interested in them knowing because it is a 'hot' neighbourhood. There are still many active [members of the guerrilla].*
>
> *(Focus Group ex-combatants No. 31)*

> *Had I said that I am demobilised I would be dead already.*
>
> *(Focus group ex-combatants No. 5)*

Conversely, in second and third place, feelings of acceptance and rejection seem to be more or less equally present. On the one hand, as the majority of ex-combatants belong to the poorest and most marginalised sections of society, in many cases victims and perpetrators belong to the same community. For example, victims of forced displacement might have a son or nephew who serves with the guerrillas or the paramilitaries (Reintegration Officer No. 143). As the Colombian conflict does not follow ethnical lines, it is common to find members of the same family fighting for opposing armed groups. On the other hand, victims' associations may act in contrasting

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[123] ACR statistics 2015. Chart 11. Security situation of the demobilised.
http://www.reintegracion.gov.co/es/la-reintegracion/Paginas/cifras.aspx

ways when it comes to social reintegration. Some are seen to reject and isolate the demobilised (Reintegration Officer No. 90), but it does appear as though there is a stronger tendency to understand the reintegration of ex-combatants as a process that contributes to the general peace (Reintegration Officers No. 23, 30, 66, 73, 143, 158, 159; Aguirre, 2010:62).

Finally, in the last group of responses, the demobilised expressed that their acceptance in the community was dependent on a variety of factors: in some cases, for example, it is the individual's behaviour that determines whether they are accepted or not.

> *It all depends on the behaviour. If you behave badly, people will treat you badly. If you behave well, people will treat you well.*
>
> *(Focus Group ex-combatants No. 23)*

> *Well, I have seen [rejection], but I don't know, you bring the reputation on to yourself, because there are some demobilised who are rude, so that if someone looks at them, they immediately insult people, swearing. So people reject them for that.*
>
> *(Interview ex-combatant No. 2)*

It is therefore important to differentiate between specific sections of the community in order to understand exactly where the rejection is most prevalent. For instance, the ex-combatants may encounter rejection when looking for a job, but then they may also find acceptance from their immediate community (Interview Negrete). More crucially, there is an evident belief among the demobilised that rejection comes not necessarily from the communities, nor from the victims, but from other sections of society that do not interact with them on an everyday basis:

> *Q/ Do you feel that you have been discriminated against?*
> *R/ Yes, but not by the community who are poor like us, but by those who believe that they are better than us, those that have the power. They discriminate against us. But the lay people don't: they are supportive. Some victims have even said "you [the demobilised] are facing more problems than us". [..] Supportive, truly*

[...] yes, the victims are supportive, respectful, without shouting at us, without pointing their fingers, without offending us.

Q/ So which parts of society do discriminate against you?

R/ The entrepreneurs, the institutions, the NGOs that claim to talk about peace. They do point their fingers; they do not investigate if there is one murder, if there is one crime [they rush to say] "it was them". But the lay people do not do that.

(Interview grass-roots No. 3)

Q/ Have you told people [in the community] that you are demobilised?

R/ No, I never told them. But I told some co-workers, because they were from the area [I used to live in]; they were forcibly displaced. Then you discover people from the same area you come from and [you trust them]... these are people who are escaping from the same situation.

(Interview ex-combatant No. 2)

Historically, too, despite successful reintegration of many ex-combatants into the civilian life during the peace processes of the 1990s, the Mayors of Bogotá has said that the demobilised were still stigmatised by citizens and even by public servants (Garzón, 2006:18, 19). In addition, as will be explained in the next chapter, at beginning of the process, the wrongdoings of paramilitary leaders in Medellín created a negative image of all the demobilised. The demobilised also feel that the press has had an especially significant role in creating and propagating negative stereotypes: with news reports choosing to focus on cases of recidivism rather than on successful reintegrations (Interview ex-combatant No. 18; Focus group ex-combatants No. 8):

[A]nyway, the damage done to society was very great and society does not understand that we want to compensate for that. Society has been very harsh to us. Here we had a problem with the press. At the beginning they stigmatised us a lot and this influenced society not accepting us as we had expected.

(Interview ex-combatant No. 18)

Some reintegration officers said that this fear on the part of the demobilised to appear in front of the community seems to be more powerful than the fear the community itself

holds of entering into contact with the demobilised population (Reintegration Officers No. 93, 117, 119, 120, 143). Clearly, then, the activities for social reintegration need to find a balance between this very real fear of being exposed and the desire to diminish discrimination by informing communities that there are demobilised living among them (Reintegration Officers No. 20 and 23). Furthermore, self-concealment could be more beneficial to the demobilised, especially in areas where the conflict rages on and the state's capacity to protect its citizens is weak (Aguirre, 2010:190). Equally, disclosing their past to their communities may jeopardise their achievements in their new life (Reintegration Officers No. 20 and 120), thus invisibility can also be understood as an earned right of the demobilised (Reintegration Officer No. 50).

At the same time, however, such tactics of subterfuge hinder society's ability to prepare for having the demobilised in its midst (Morales, 2005:87, Nussio, 2012): these tactics may instead result in the creation of a functional coexistence that does not necessarily translate into the construction of solid social links (Reintegration Officer No. 154). Nonetheless, achieving a straightforward level of coexistence between victims and perpetrators may only represent the first step in a longer process of reconciliation: "It might be counterproductive to press on with reconciliation when the wounds are still open" (Cartagena Contribution, 2009:79). Ultimately, working towards a pacific coexistence in the first instance could be a more realistic goal.

In sum, the reintegration of combatants into the communities needs to be analysed on several different levels. Most pressingly, it is important to identify those social groups that reject the demobilised and design intervention activities most appropriate for them. On this point, community workshops do not seem to have yielded significant positive or long-lasting results, especially if the precarious security and employment situation of the demobilised remains unresolved and they need or prefer to conceal their past as fighters in the armed groups. A further, recalibrating approach to the reconciliation and creation of community links would be to address services to the demobilised not as individuals but as part of a family and of a community.

6.3 Psychosocial reintegration

The UN has recognised that reintegration also includes psychological transformation at the individual level, which in turn mirrors the transformation of the wider society:

Demobilisation, as a component of the DDR process, officially certifies an individual's change of status from military to civilian. Demobilisation is generally a lengthier process than disarmament, and involves the psychological transformation from military to civilian. As such, it lays the groundwork that is essential for the reintegration of the individual into civilian life.

(UNDP, 2006, 4.20:2)

However, and as a result of the wide variety of approaches and psychological schools of thought, there is an overly disparate understanding of what psychosocial reintegration should be. Martín-Baró had already forewarned that psychological services might be reduced to trivial activities such as group work or relaxing massages (1983:4). In South Africa, for instance, the Trauma and Transition Programme hired contractors for services that included the following: "individual counselling; telephonic crisis; body mapping; massage therapy; story telling; psychological assessment; and personal support from other ex-combatants. Some [contractors] offered interventions at a group level like group work; soft skills workshops; and self-development workshops" (Bandeira, 2008:49). In Liberia, the various reintegration programmes hired psychologists to deal with "health issues, HIV/AIDS, violence, gender issues, drugs and to engage in recreational games"; however, these services were of poor quality as the activities were rarely performed by a trained counsellor (Söderström, 2011:96).

Bandeira has shown that most of the literature and research on psychological counselling for war veterans is aimed at supporting soldiers of wars fought by developed countries on foreign soil (2008:22). In the case of DDR programmes, the UN has noted that psychosocial support and counselling should address issues of post-war trauma and mental illness, alcohol or drug abuse and domestic violence (UNDP, 2006, 4.30:23). Similarly, Gleichmann et al warn that the consequences of trauma in ex-combatants may take the form of anxiety, paranoid delusions, drug abuse, psychosis

and psychosomatic disorders (2004:89). Certainly, the resulting research has tended to focus on the study of mental pathology, disabilities or illnesses such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD), drug abuse, interpersonal violence or psychosis (see LeBeau, 2005:34; Odenwald et al, 2007:110).

Conversely, other evidence suggests that the presence of mental illness among former combatants is not significant. One survey reported an incidence rate for serious mental health problems of 16 per cent among ex-combatants in Somalia, and five per cent in Somaliland (Odenwald et al, 2007:119). In their comparison of DDR processes, Colletta, Kostner and Wiederhofer found no evidence of relevant psychological problems in Ethiopia and Uganda, whereas in Namibia there were a low number of cases of, in their words, "dependency syndrome" or "severe mental stress" (1996:55). In another study, of ex-guerrilla members in El Salvador suffering long-term physical disabilities, 18 per cent were diagnosed with PTSD but only a minority of them required psychological treatment (Hume and Summerfield, 1994:19).

In a similar vein, the psychologists involved in the Colombian DDR found that the majority of ex-combatants had not been left traumatised by their experiences (Cartagena Contribution, 2009:49). Problems related to alcohol dependency were calculated at 0.59 per cent and drug-addiction at 2 per cent (ACR, 2011a:12). The problem, rather, lay in how their wartime experiences and their background in poverty impinged on and limited their potential for establishing viable social relationships in non-war situations. Additionally, the authoritarian systems and vertical hierarchies that were in place during the war contrasted sharply with levels of responsibility and autonomy required for their lives as civilians (Conpes 3554, 2008:20; Reintegration Officer No. 48). A survey conducted by the IOM found the foremost reasons for requesting psychological counselling to be, in the following order: domestic violence; partner relationship issues; bereavement; drug and alcohol abuse; psychological breakdown; uncertainty around raising children; and family relationship issues (ACR, 2009:282). Similarly, reports from the Peace Homes reiterated that the most common psychological problems were caused by: abuse suffered inside the armed groups; frustration and disenchantment with the civilian life; discrimination from communities towards the demobilised; problems in dealing with family relationships; and the lack of a life-project after the war

(OACP/ACR, 2010:134). The problems mentioned above, rather than originating from mental pathology or illness, were instead grounded in questions of how to deal with their past, how to interact with their partner and children, and how to reorganise their lives around new patterns of behaviour and social conventions. As one reintegration officer stated:

> *We realised that they had participated not in the classical model of socialisation – that we assumed all people have experienced – but in another socialisation through which they have learned different things. This is not to judge these things as good or bad, but they have learned other things.*
>
> *(Reintegration Officer No. 48)*

Although the Colombian DDR process endured critical changes in its political and judicial framework, there was nevertheless a workable sense of stability with regard to the psychosocial approach, and the emphasis on the creation of social bonds rather than focus on purely individual preferences, personality traits or mental pathologies. This included the key question of how best to help the demobilised to address the problems they faced in interacting with their social environment and with starting and managing social relationships. In the following sections I will show how the ACR programme and the work of the reintegration officers contributed to measurable behavioural change in the former combatants. From the outset, the development of psychological models brought in a framework that was then implemented through workshops and counselling. These became the main ACR activity and were compulsory to all the demobilised. Furthermore, punctual attendance of these activities was subject to strict controls and defined both the type and amount of economic aid provided in return. Subsequently, the tutors charged with implementing the psychological models, and with perpetuating the reintegration policy more broadly, became especially important figures for the ex-combatants in their care.

Psycho-social models for ex-combatant reintegration

It is worth remembering at this point that Peace Commissioner Restrepo himself was a trained psychiatrist and philosopher. His own approach to negotiating with and demobilising combatants was based on principles from psycho-pedagogy and clinical psychology that work on the social realm to produce a change in individual behaviours (Restrepo, 2006:317; Restrepo and Álvarez, 2006:333). During the collective demobilisation ceremonies, for example, a psychosocial team supervised orientation for the ex-combatants. They debriefed the demobilised in what was expected of them: motivation and good attitude towards the process, and the renouncing of feelings of revenge or of the use of violence as a means to an end:

> *The government is giving you an opportunity to move from the illegal world to the legal life, and for you to obtain citizenship in the full sense of the word, so that you can get all the rights of a normal citizen, as well as all the responsibilities that it entails[124].*

As a result, the PRVC included psychological counselling to help ex-combatants to overcome their experience in the conflict and in the armed groups, with the aim of providing emotional stability and support during the transitional period in which they would adopt legal and civil behaviours (Angel, 2005:217; OACP/ACR, 2010:141). This counselling was rooted in the change of behaviours and attitudes, conflict resolution in a peaceful manner, creation of social bonds, managing emotions and the creation of healthy life-habits (Rodríguez, 2005:348). Each CRO (PRVC regional office) was assigned one psychologist to provide the following services: citizenship education workshops, intervention in crisis, and counselling in educational and personal development, as well as the creation of institutional and social supporting networks (Angel, 2005:205). Similarly, the Peace Homes had to provide psychological services as part of their contract with the government; in reality, however, due to a lack of

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[124] Álvarez (2006:398), psychosocial team representative and assessor for the Peace Commissioner's Office. 'One opportunity for change'. Recording of the speech given at the demobilisation ceremony of AUC's Vencedores de Arauca Block on 21st December 2005.

guidelines their approach was dependent on each contractor's own arrangements (Reintegration Officer No. 28; Pax Christy, 2006:33).

More importantly, Peace and Reconciliation in Medellín introduced Return to Legality as a model for psychosocial intervention based on the assumption that restoring or creating healthy and resilient social fabric in their civilian lives would bolster the ex-combatants' mental health and reintegration (Reintegration Officer No. 48). Equally, it targeted the transformation of the militaristic and authoritarian behaviour of the ex-combatants by strengthening family bonds and the social fabric, as well as changing their roles within their family dynamics so as to transcend their role as mere money providers. Return to Legality assumed that developing new forms of socialisation, leadership and commitment to the civilian life would allow the demobilised to limit their aggressive behaviour, as well as their abuse of drugs and alcohol (Alcaldía de Medellín 2007a:22; 2007b:17, 281). It aimed to "provide services in psychology as well as family and community counselling, create and strengthen trust, promote the development of the community and establish a process of reparation and reconciliation" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a:13).

This would operate at three different levels: a) the individual, providing support in health, education, recreational activities and prevention of recidivism; b) the family, including counselling services in partner relationships, family therapy and domestic violence; and c) the community, fostering social organisation and participation (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2006:128). Moreover, an initial diagnosis of each combatant helped the tutors to design strategies for providing support within the broader purview of a life-project, as well as planning personalised outlines for their social and economic future. This diagnosis also aimed to identify those ex-combatants suffering from PTSD or addiction problems, which would require further and more specialised therapy (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a:78; 2011b:22). In Return to Legality, then, the psychosocial services constituted the keystone around which all other services were built, by helping the demobilised to construct their personal needs and preferences in education, training and working life, but also taking into account the context they were living in (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a:25). However, in practice these services were implemented locally in Medellín and were only voluntary for the demobilised.

In 2008, the ACR developed a new psychosocial model – MAPAZ[125] – which maintained some continuity with Return to Legality but also had a distinctive approach of its own: placing further emphasis on the measurable individual and social competencies acquired by the demobilised. On the one hand, MAPAZ assumed that the treatment of aggressive or criminal behaviour should take into account the characteristics of the social context in which the demobilised lived (ACR, 2011a:4). As such, it aimed to counteract the problems created by the interaction between the demobilised and their new environment: family, community, working place and education institutions (ACR, 2011a:21; Conpes 3554, 2008:27). On the other, MAPAZ intended to develop four specific personal competencies: assertiveness, non-violent conflict resolution, responsibility and capacity in planning, and achievement of goals (ACR, 2011a: 16; OACP, 2010:4; OACP/ACR, 2010:177).

The MAPAZ model proceeded as follows: based on a series of tests and interviews, the tutor would assign each participant a personalised set of services based on a) level of skills: basic, intermediate I, intermediate II or advanced (ACR, 2011a:13); and b) any specific circumstance: gender, youth, the elderly (those aged 62 and over), the physically disabled, mid-ranking soldiers or therapy when drug and alcohol abuse is present (ACR, 2011a:12; Reintegration Officer No. 16). Additional protocols were put in place to provide tailored services to those demobilised living in remote areas or facing security problems (ACR, 2011b:11). The majority of psychosocial services took the form of workshops, but tutors would also make visits to the homes of the demobilised as well as other family and social activities. Once the ex-combatants had reached the advanced level, their progress would be assessed by a test of psychosocial competencies (ACR, 2011a:42).

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[125] Acronym in Spanish: Modelo de Atención Psicosocial para la Paz.

Institution	Peace Commissioner Office	Peace and Reconciliation	ACR
Psychosocial model	Clinical psychology and psycho-pedagogy	Return to Legality	MAPAZ
Principles	Articulated individual counselling and social actions would change individual behaviours	Restoring or creating healthy and strong social fabric would underpin the ex-combatants', mental health and reintegration	The need to address the interaction between the demobilised and their new environment
Aims at the individual level	- Change of behaviours and attitudes - Conflict resolution in a peaceful manner - Creation of social bonds - Managing emotions - Creation of healthy life-habits	- Design of a life-project - Diagnosis of mental illness and addictions - Support in health, education, recreational activities and prevention of recidivism	To develop social competencies in: - Responsibility and capacity for planning - Achievement of goals - Assertiveness - Non-violent conflict resolution
Support to family and communities	None	- Family counselling for partner relationships and prevention of domestic violence - Support in social organisation and participation - Services to other vulnerable groups	- Community-based workshops - Projects to benefit the community
Measurement	None	None	Test of psychosocial competencies

Table 8. Comparison between the different psychosocial reintegration models.

Although ranging in emphasis, the different models outlined above (Table 8) adopted a shared approach from social psychology, one which fundamentally opposes the traditional schools of thought based on methodological individualism. Their priorities lay instead in the links between the individual and his social context, rather than encouraging mere changes in individual behaviour. However, a report from the Colombian government noted that, in practice outsourcing services might bring with it certain problems, including service variation and inconsistency, with each company operating autonomously and according to their own approaches and techniques (Rodríguez, 2006:113). Subsequently, in the transition from the PRVC to the ACR in 2007, one of the main challenges was to unify concepts and practices in the psychological services, as well as coordinating the services of psychology, education and vocational training to work in tandem with one another. The ACR programme, then, had a defining role to play in establishing a reintegration strategy that was coherent and compulsory for the demobilised nationwide and which approached the combatants as composite part of their social environment, not wholly separate from it.

Furthermore, the implementation of the ACR programme also prompted the development of an overarching reintegration bureaucracy. Provided that the psychosocial services articulated all the other required activities and benefits, the hiring and training of those who would implement the MAPAZ was made at the central office in Bogotá, but they were to deliver services at the 29 ACR regional centres.

The role of the tutors

By 2008, the ACR had a staff of around 700 people, 70.8 per cent of whom worked in the regions and 79.9 per cent of whom directly provided services to the demobilised as reintegration officers (ACR 2008; 2011b). The psychosocial tutors constituted roughly one quarter of the reintegration officers and were tasked with providing support in establishing and strengthening socio-affective links through personalised and direct attention to the individual (ACR, 2009:17). As a result they became the most important link between the demobilised and the ACR, and represented a crucial point of reference in the ex-combatants' everyday lives.

During the fieldwork it quickly became apparent that the tutors played a fundamental role in the reintegration process of each combatant. When I asked the ex-combatants to whom they would go with any complaint about the programme (Figure 11, Annex O), the tutor was the most frequent response. Second to this, they said that the regional offices were their best point of reference in case of problems. Both answers may at first glance seem obvious, since any bureaucratic process of this type is channelled through either of these two parties. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, in certain cases, the demobilised display a positive appreciation of the tutors and the regional offices, but a negative opinion of the ACR National Offices or other national institutions:

> *I do not believe in what those people say, [they tell] many lies. The previous programme [PRVC] and this one [ACR] are the same. The only nice thing, I reckon, is the tutors: they can be good or bad but they always give you advice.*
>
> *(Focus group ex-combatants No. 27)*

The only people who listen to us are the psychologists, the psychosocial officers. Because at the ACR [regional office] most of the time they do not even listen to us: '[The manager] is not here, he hasn't arrived yet'. Always excuses. The same with complaining to Bogotá: to phone them is a problem.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 15)

I don't complain to anyone. At the beginning the service was good: they listened to us. Now there is no solution to anything: "you'll have to come back later" or "we are just starting [the activities] again". Well, lots of excuses. And maybe they are not the ones to blame because they are employees. It's down to the ACR, to Bogotá; that's why the programme is getting worse.

(Focus Group ex-combatants No. 11)

There were also two other contrasting opinions. On the one hand, a group of demobilised said that thus far they had had no complaints or problems at all with the process. This can be interpreted as a positive evaluation of the reintegration process. On the other, some demobilised held onto the belief that there was no point in complaining: since nobody listens or solves their problems, they have developed an unfixable distrust towards the reintegration institutions. Finally, a participant in a focus group mentioned having had problems with the security services in a case of corruption, and that they had filed a complaint with the Fiscal Office.
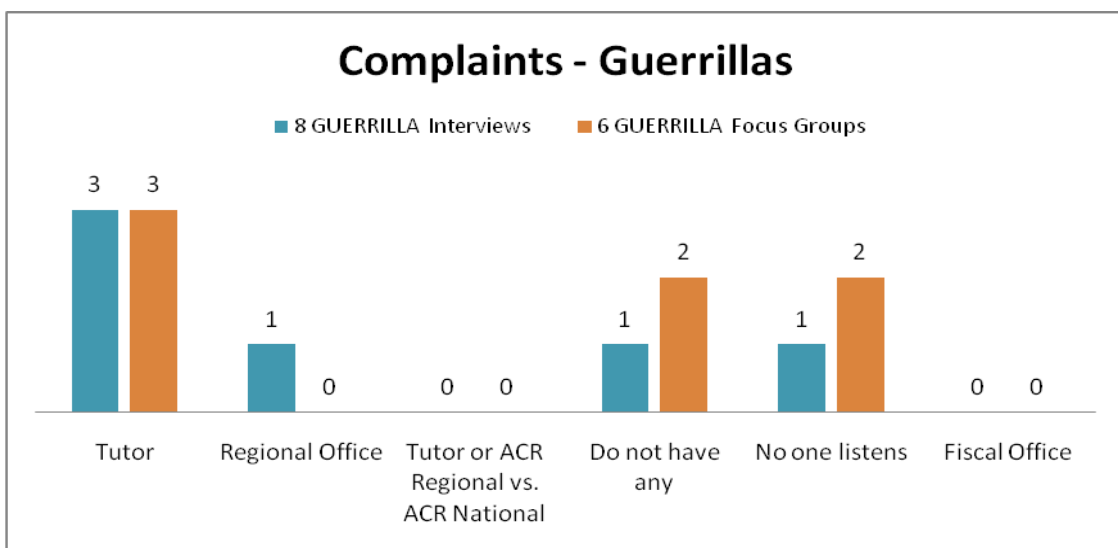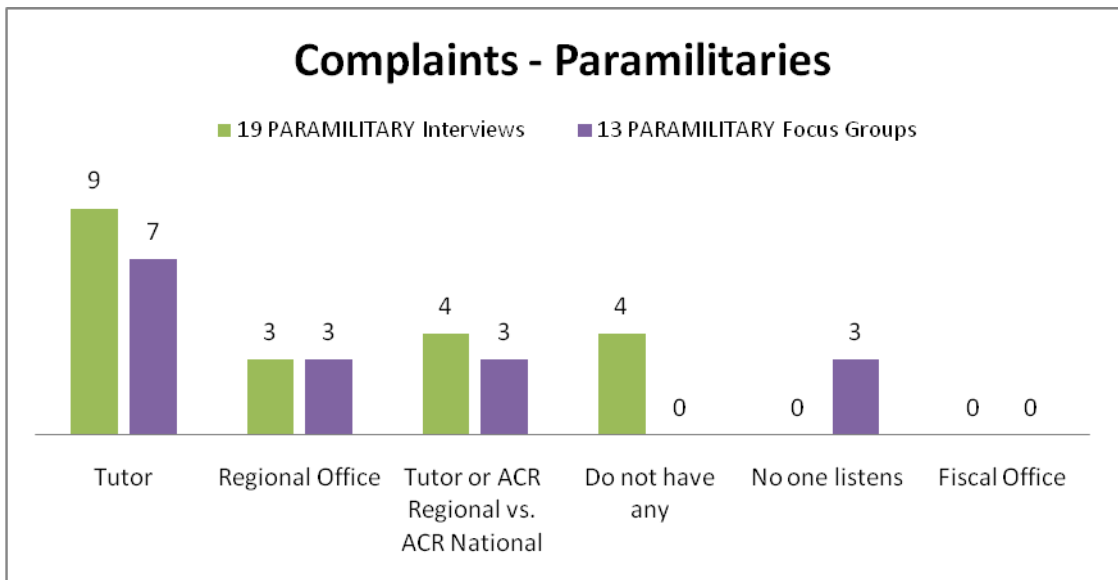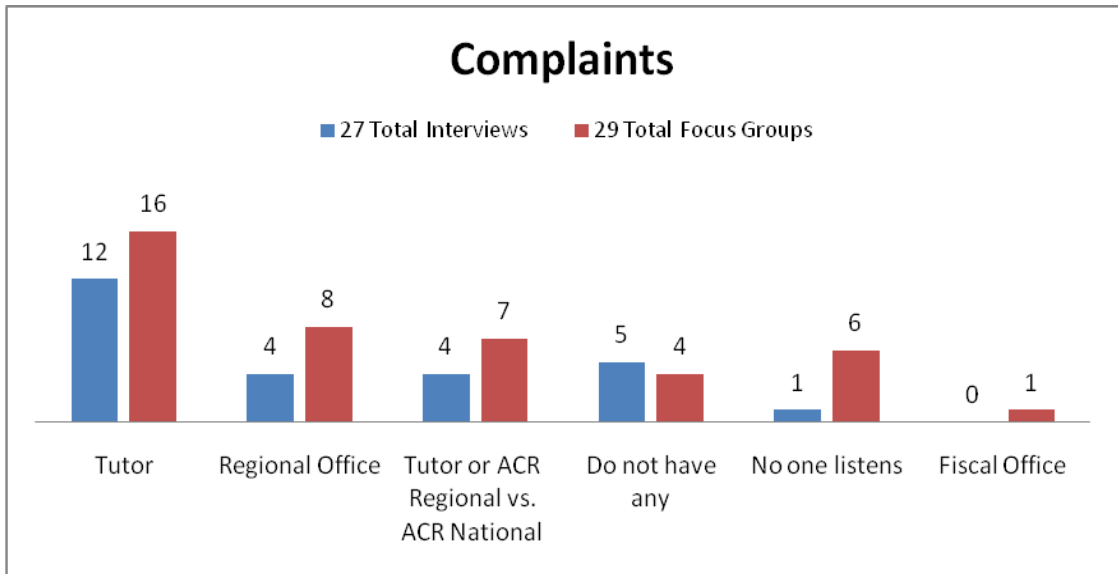
Figure 11. When you have a complaint about the reintegration programme, who do you talk to?

Most significantly, when asking for their opinion of the psychosocial services (Figure 12, Annex P), in almost all of the interviews and focus groups there was a positive evaluation of them. The demobilised claimed that the tutors had helped in the following ways: changing their previous mentality and/or modifying their aggressive behaviour; improving their sociability skills with both family and immediate community; orientating them in their new life as citizens, or telling them how to comport themselves on a day-to-day basis. Conversely, references to psychology in the more traditional sense of overcoming post-traumatic stress or mental illness were present but minimal.

Yes, they have helped me. When I was there [in the group] I was very aggressive. And now I have changed, it is not like before. I had another face there, here the face it is different. I mean that I changed a lot, thanks to the psychologists who are always attentive to us.

(Interview ex-combatant No. 24)

For me [the psychologists] are a good thing. Because, again, had there been no psychosocial workshops we would be worse, crazy. Because that's where we can find out about all [the services] from the government. Even how to ask for membership to the health service; had the psychological workshops not existed, I would not know how to get [those services]. When you get closer to the psychologist, you ask for family counselling, and although they won't give you an appointment [for personal counselling] they try to give you some advice on the problems that you may have at home.

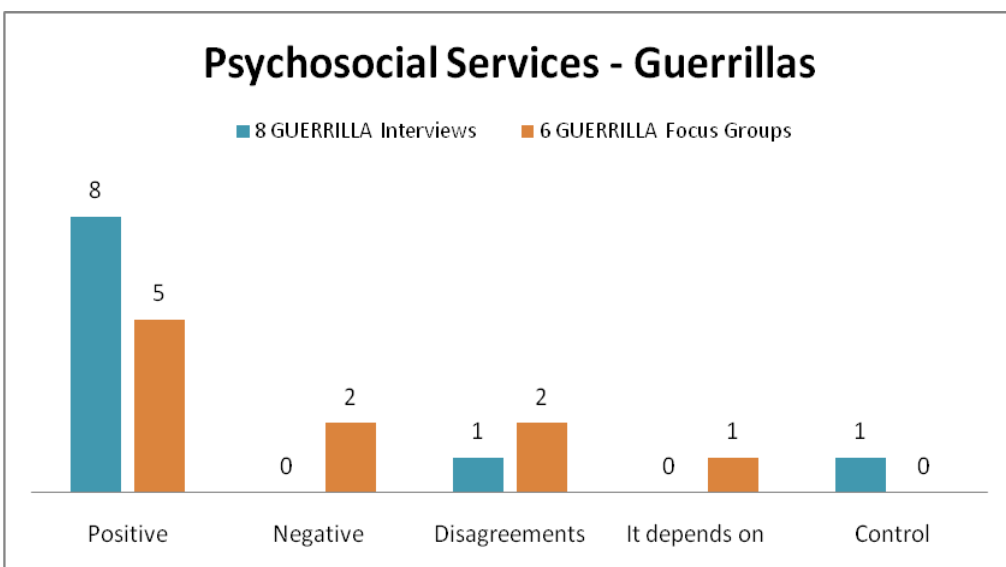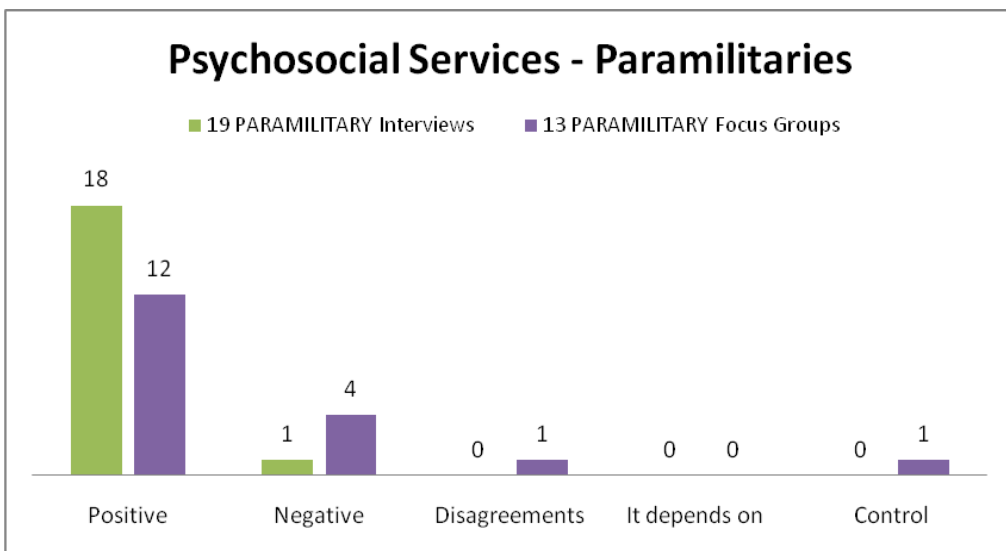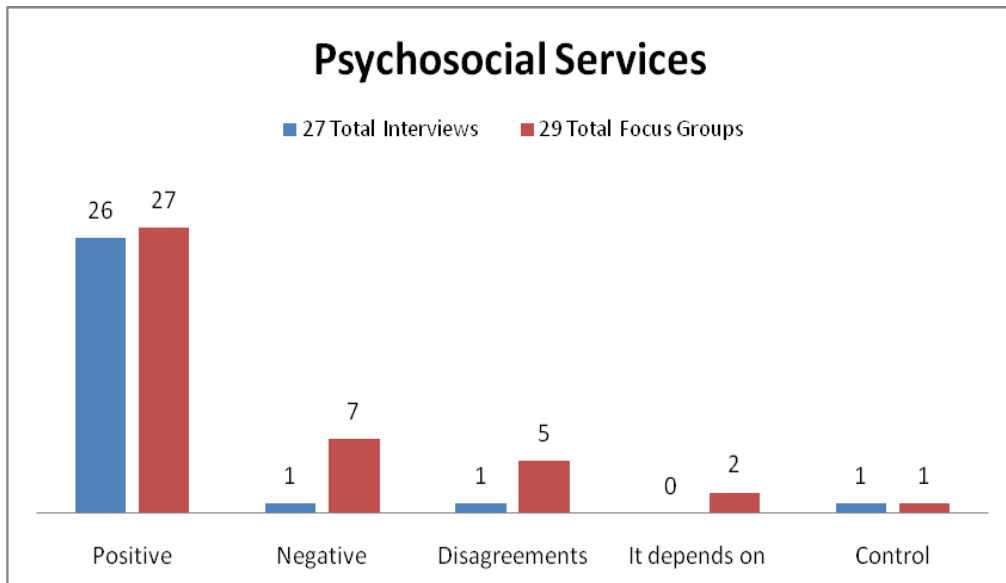*(Focus group ex-combatants No. 8)*

Figure 12. How do you find the psychosocial services?

Negative opinions were relatively few, and included those demobilised who found the psychological workshops boring, child-like or useless. It is worth noting here that due to the changes in the laws or because they had moved from one city to another, some demobilised had attended the workshops over a long period of time without being able to progress in the programme, and consequently had been made to attend repeated workshops:

We have done this for years. I find it boring, it is the same as what I saw when I started the [reintegration] process. I am doing it [all over] again: "here you have some ping-pong balls, put them in the basket, find out how".

<div align="right">

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 14)

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I have to be honest, the psychosocial [service] has done no good, because yes, you gain knowledge of many things [...], about the city. But we go to play, because they make you play. I am an adult, I don't play games, I am a serious person. Teach me how to work in something that I don't know, teach me a craft, to make tapestry, something. I would like for the people to learn something [...]. But going to play for two hours in a psychosocial workshop – personally – I don't find it helpful at all. [It's] pure recreation.

<div align="right">

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 31)

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A third group of demobilised talked about having disagreed with the psychologist on a personal basis or in the way they ran the workshops. Rather than a negative opinion of the service, this corresponds to a process of accommodation on both sides:

The thing is that some tutors… sometimes we get topics that are too complicated and we start to debate, then they do not let you give your opinion. So I told the tutor: "so you think that you are too good [for us] and we have to come and listen to your opinions? No, we are not here for a political diatribe. We all have the right to say something" [...] But thank God the tutor understood and we were able to move on..

<div align="right">

(Interview ex-combatant No. 28)

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I have learned a lot from the psychologist, but I have also had my problems with her. I've made mistakes and I tell her "Doc, I have been here for eight years". When she started, at the beginning she wanted to manipulate us and at the time we had already been in the process for four years [...]. So she finally realised. Because many psychologists think that working with the ACR means that [they are more important than the demobilised]… but no, everyone should be equal. We should learn to respect people, love people.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 28)

In two of the focus groups it was also mentioned that the effectiveness of the psychosocial workshops depended not on the tutors but on "the attitude you come with" or on "your relationship with the tutors". Finally, it is significant that on only two occasions the demobilised mentioned the control and surveillance functions of the workshops. According to the new regulations introduced by Law 1424, in order to receive their monthly allowance participants needed to achieve a 90 per cent attendance rate for the compulsory activities, or a minimum of four sessions per month for the workshops and educational courses[126] (Reintegration Officer No. 47). Both the tutors and the ACR also keep detailed records for each ex-combatant, including their personal, family and employment status. Failing to attend the compulsory workshops or courses has severe consequences, whether they be expulsion from the programme; loss of benefits; or the subsequent opening of criminal legal proceedings. Indeed, although "they have been framed" (Aguirre, 2010:66), only a few of the ex-combatants I spoke to seemed outwardly concerned with this aspect of their psychosocial activities:

This is not easy. Maybe our life at this moment is harder than the life of the other citizens because they are not being monitored. Whether we like it or not, we are being monitored. I said to the tutor, if we say "I want to withdraw", [the answer is] "no, you must carry on or else you go to jail". They tell you that in different terms, but that is the reality. "Even if I didn't kill or participate in…?"; "no, you have to [attend], because this is a process". Unfortunately life is like that.

(Interview ex-combatant No. 16)

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[126] Resolution 163/2011 Art. 18

[I want] to improve what we have now. Before they used to give us 480,000 pesos, then they lowered it to 400, 300 and 160. [...] I want to withdraw from the programme, not to come to workshops. I know I won't get the 160.000 pesos, but I can just come to sign or call [the psychologists]. But the tutor tells me that I can't, that I will have a legal issue.

(Focus Group ex-combatants No. 28)

In his research in Sudan, Baas (2012:201) questions the efficacy of the international DDR bureaucracy in achieving the reintegration of ex-combatants and preventing the relapse of war. He argues that, in reality, the actions of local agents are essential to resolving the everyday social and political issues on the ground. Certainly, the ACR programme in Colombia developed precisely this form of local bureaucracy, one which operated primarily through the regional offices with oversight from their headquarters in Bogotá.

Weber has proposed that bureaucracy is created whenever the state needs to impose the rule of law over a larger territory, and that the legal administration of a state becomes more complex, impersonal and rational in a democratic political system and capitalist economic system (1920:956). This allows for the disruption of hierarchies based on patrimonial privilege and bestowals of political favour, and a movement towards a system that instead bases its authority on people appointed according to their expert qualifications and applies rules that go beyond any sense of personal volition (1920:958). Weber also ventures that bureaucracy develops towards "dehumanising" the administrative relations, "eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation" (Weber, 1920:975). By contrast, the role of the psychologists as bureaucrats was deeply related to the expert management of emotions. Their function was mainly therapeutic rather than technical, and required the systematic social and emotional engagement with the demobilised themselves (Reintegration Officer No. 154, 129).

Through a therapeutic intervention the aim is that the participant can re-signify his/her life, solve personal problems and reduce the discomfort produced by past and present experiences; this is achieved by a professional in psychology who supports the process through activities [...] which are offered as a differentiated set of services for each participant.

(ACR, 2009:12)

In turn, the ostensible changes to individual behaviour are made possible by the therapeutic relationship forged between tutors and ex-combatants:

[For] the people who at some point have had problems with drug abuse, some of them are alone and that does not help the process. Because they need to feel stimulated, motivated by their families, so that [they feel that] the family does not abandon them in the process. So sometimes we have to take over that role and say "don't worry, I will be here, I will help you, you won't be alone", because it is our responsibility that the ex-combatant progresses in the process. This goes beyond our duty, but looking at it from the point of view of our responsibility, we want that person to progress and to benefit from the programme, meaning that they can be stable and keep the balance [...]

(Reintegration Officer No. 129)

We understand something that psychology has known for a long time: the possibilities for transformation in the [therapeutic] work with the other person exist – there are many names for it – in transference (as psychoanalysis would call it), in empathy (from humanist and also cognitive psychology), in interaction (from social psychology). I mean, it is in the relationship with the other that there lies a real possibility that the link one establishes can make for something transformative.

(Reintegration Officer No. 48)

Ultimately, then, the on-going work of officers – and in the case of Medellín, also of the CEPAR teachers – devoted to socialising the demobilised in capacities other than their

military skills, seems to have worked in favour of ex-combatant reintegration. Crucially, tutors were not restricted to technical roles but to forming a therapeutic relationship with the demobilised. Despite the difference in the approaches between the PRVC, Return to Legality and MAPAZ, the psychosocial services formalised an institutional setting that allowed and prompted the fostering of social connections different to those entrenched in the armed group. At the same time, the psychologists were successful in prescribing and controlling behaviours that are more suitable and desirable to their new life as civilians. Arguably, the contradictions and ambiguities inherent in the national policies – caused by a shifting legal framework and an unpredictable political landscape – were resolved or mitigated by the psychologists and social workers in their everyday work with the demobilised. The tutors themselves took on the task of communicating changes in legislation to the ex-combatants, and explaining the implications for each individual. For instance, during the fieldwork, the tutors were directly responsible for contacting the demobilised and guiding them through the recent changes to the implementation of Law 1424. Moreover, rather than simple one-way communication, the tutors endeavoured to provide orientation and a therapeutic space in which the demobilised could re-signify their lives as civilians and sustain emotional stability and cognitive equilibrium in the face of their highly contested and unsettled legal context. Furthermore, as will be explained in the next chapter, these reintegration bureaucrats proved to be the lynchpin in creating functional links between the demobilised and the state, and in transforming patrimonial and hierarchical relations into egalitarian and democratic ones.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the progressive destruction and creation of social links. For the literature on DDR, breaking down the embedded military ties and hierarchies constitutes the quintessential stage in the DDR process. Yet, for the demobilised, it could be the social fabric into which they are returned that proves more important.

In the case of the paramilitaries, many ex-combatants claimed that they demobilised purely based on orders received from their commanders. Some of them were forced into it, but a significant number said that they were tired of the war and already wanted to leave. For the guerrillas, tiredness from the war and problems with their comrades or

commanders forced them to risk their lives and desert from the ranks. It can be concluded, then, at least for the rank-and-file ex-combatants, more than expecting the continuation of the military order after their demobilisation, many were actively looking to escape the groups and abandon the war. In addition, two key elements have been identified but with contrasting value: on the one hand, the desire to reconnect with or raise a family play a vital role in the decision to leave the group; on the other, government promises and incentives in terms of money, education and employment were mentioned only a handful of times, and would thus appear not to have played a decisive role in abandoning the armed activity.

The creation of social links has been flagged as an integral part of the reintegration experience. First and foremost, family is a primary motivation for demobilising and for their perseverance outside of military or criminal activities. Family clearly represents the most important social relationship for the demobilised as a source of mental and emotional stability. However, it is also important to bear in mind that families are not immune to the implications of the wider social and political context, to the extent that they could also be a causal factor for involvement in the armed groups or in criminality.

Turning to the community aspect of reintegration, rejection of the demobilised is very common, but paradoxically does not necessarily come from the direct victims of violence. As the armed groups in the Colombian conflict are not created along ethnical lines, family and community members may, indeed, belong to opposing sides. Victims may also choose to proactively support the demobilised in their transition to the civil life as a contribution to the broader peace. Meanwhile, the tide of rejection is felt stronger among other sections of society, especially in the private sector and the workplace. As a result, the ex-combatants tend to hide their past and their demobilised status to avoid problems in obtaining employment or dangers to their personal security. In turn, although the literature on DDR has assumed that the reintegration of ex-combatants takes place at the community level, it is also important to account for those specific elements of society that tend to either impede the reintegration of the former fighters or reject them altogether. The receiving communities themselves seem for the most part to accept the demobilised, either because they sympathised with the armed group, or on the contrary they are unaware of the ex-combatants' true identities.

Finally, this chapter has shown that, in the ACR programme, the psychosocial was introduced as the founding dimension around which all the other elements of the reintegration process were organised. This approach addressed the former combatants as part of their social environment, rather than as isolated individuals. The models of psychosocial reintegration implemented by ACR placed a firm emphasis on the creation of robust social fabric. This further prompted the creation and up-skilling of a reintegration bureaucracy that, rather than assuming merely technocratic role, actively served to establish a functional, two-way therapeutic relationship with the demobilised.

Chapter 7

Political Reintegration: Building Citizens

Söderström (2011:53) has claimed that research around political reintegration has focused on three main areas: the general political consequences of DDR programmes; the transformation of armed groups into political parties; and the individual level of political engagement. Her research is devoted to the last of this, and specifically how ex-combatants relate to politics through the development of mechanisms for improving access to and interpretation of the democratic process (2011:20). Similarly, Mitton has argued that the success of political reintegration should be assessed beyond the group's ability to become a political party or to share power. Instead, other elements should be taken into account such as the participation of the demobilised in civil society groups or public discussions, as well as their interaction with political institutions (Mitton, 2008:217).

Moreover, Schulhofer-Wohl and Sambanis have claimed that DDR programmes can influence political participation at three different levels: the legitimisation of the post-war political order at the macro-level; the transformation of armed groups into political organisations at the meso-level; and creation of resources and skills development for individual ex-combatants and civilians at the micro-level (2012:13-14). This chapter explores the meso- and micro-levels in depth to argue that DDR bureaucracy does indeed have a role to play in the political reintegration of the demobilised at the personal level: as citizens. The first section explains how the transformation of paramilitary leaders into political parties did not succeed for a variety of reasons. In turn, the second section explores how, although some grass-roots organisations were established, they failed to congregate the demobilised and to effectively channel their grievances. As a result, the ex-combatants reintegrate politically at the individual level, rather than with a common political or civic project. Thirdly, a brief account of the three different levels of political participation at the micro-level evidences that the ex-combatants show little interest in the standard approaches to political participation, in the sense of forming grass-roots organisations or voting and participating in elections. The fourth section looks more closely at the expectations of the former combatants in regard to DDR: both in terms of their own personal process and their perspective on the

authorities. Paradoxically, while there is a highly negative perception of the authorities, the DDR process has proved to be a positive experience at the personal level. The fifth section underlines how the ACR programme enabled mechanisms for the access to and interpretation of democracy by the ex-combatants, which have consequently brought about the development of behaviours to replace those of a combatant, and more proper to a fully-fledged citizen.

7.1 The (failed) political project of the paramilitary leaders

Carlos Castaño had originally formed the National Movement of Demobilised Self-Defenses (NMDS) in 2002, as an attempt to create a political organisation that could engage in direct negotiations with US representatives, and to separate the AUC's political project from the influence of the drug-traffickers (Semana 29/07/02). As noted in the introduction, the paramilitary groups have a history of entering into alliances with politicians and achieving enormous influence over the democratic institutions of the country. Hence, the expectation of some of their leaders post-demobilisation was to directly transpose their military power into the political arena. As Mancuso declared for instance:

I am already there [in the political arena]. My current activities will inevitably take me to an election post as soon as the law allows it.

(Interview in Semana, 18 April, 2005)

However, the transformation of the paramilitary leaders into politicians proved less successful than their initial expectations. On the one hand, their efforts in being recognised as political figureheads during the negotiations with the government revolved principally around avoiding extradition to the US. On the other, they lacked an ideology and political agenda, although Carlos Castaño made several attempts to articulate one[127].

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[127] Letter from Carlos Castaño to the Red Cross International Committee, the Commission of National Reconciliation and Cambio 16 Journal. In Observatorio para la Paz (2002). Annex 22:326-341.

After the demobilisations took place, a few paramilitary leaders[128] stood as candidates in electoral posts for the 2006 and 2007 elections (Semana 12/02/06). The failure of their political project will be explained below: suffice it now to say that they only constituted a small proportion of the paramilitary population, whose aspirations were quickly halted by the democratic institutions of the country. More significant was the creation of NGOs and civil organisations as a strategy for the continuation of their power. Specifically, as part of the Ralito Agreement, the paramilitary leaders created the NGO Corporation Democracy, whose main function was to support the reinsertion and reintegration of troops from the two groups that demobilised in Medellín – the Cacique Nutibara Bloc in 2003 and Héroes de Granada two years later:

> *The government recognises the NGO 'Corporation Democracy' as the organisation that represents the demobilised from the Cacique Nutibara Bloc. [The government and BCN] will work in tandem to support, implement and monitor the process of reincorporation. The national government, the Medellín Mayoralty and Corporation Democracy will design any programme needed for the support, development and monitoring of the reinsertion phase.*
>
> *(La Ceja Agreement, 2003)*

Corporation Democracy thus assumed the function of providing support and orientating the ex-combatants during the different stages of the process, as well as informing them of the benefits and services they were entitled to receive, including the creation of Business Plans. It also maintained some semblance of order among the demobilised, and encouraged their participation in the activities offered by Peace and Reconciliation. Additionally, Corporation Democracy coordinated another fifteen or so small NGOs with similar functions (ODDR, 2009:19). As part of the DDR policy, some of these NGOs were rewarded with contracts from the national and municipal authorities for projects based around ex-combatant reinsertion activities, as well as others for the benefit of the communities. This scheme also granted preferential treatment to those larger construction companies that voluntarily included job quotas for ex-combatants associated with these NGOs in their contracts with public institutions (Árias and Guáqueta, 2008:17; Verdad Abierta 10/02/10).

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[128] Jairo Angarita and Giovanni Marín. Marín participated in the political campaign of Congresswoman Rocio Arias.

However, Corporation Democracy was also accused of being a façade for the continuation of the social order created by the paramilitaries in Medellín: particularly as it was headed by drug-trafficker Don Berna, who was still in the process of negotiating his political status with the government. Allegedly, Corporation Democracy was involved in criminal networks: the social controls imposed by the Envigado Office were often perpetuated through the participation of ex-combatants in vigilante groups; this was also true of their political control over the Juntas de Acción Local (JAL) and Juntas de Acción Comunal (JAC) (Personeria, 2005:18; ICG, 2004:14). JALs and JACs are local and important institutions for citizen agency in neighbourhoods and small rural communities[129]. Additionally, some of the demobilised from the Cacique Nutibara Bloc were found to have stolen money and resources from those construction firms that offered them employment (Verdad Abierta, 10/02/10; 23/03/11). Reports also emerged of local convenience store-owners falling victim to extortion, forced into buying products from certain ex-combatants' Business Plans (Reintegration Officer No. 53).

In August 2006, one week after he was inaugurated for his second presidential term, Uribe announced that the paramilitary leaders would be imprisoned, supposedly because of the continuation of criminal activities after the demobilisation. The legal imposition used was not an arrest warrant but a voluntary confinement, yet most of the leaders complied voluntarily and were jailed in a former recreational centre in La Ceja, Antioquia. In November that year they were then transferred to a high-security prison in Itagui, Antioquia (Semana 01/12/06). The leaders reacted by inciting protest riots in areas under their control, in Medellín in particular (Pardo, 2007:160), but they remained in prison. Consequently, they tried to revive the NMDS in 2007: the paramilitary leader and former director of Corporation Democracy, Severo Antonio López, became its first director and ex-Congress member Rocío Arias was named as its civil representative (ODDR, 2009a). López, however, was assasinated months later as part of internecine clashes (Semana 28/07/08) and Arias was later heavily implicated in the para-politics scandal and the criminal enquiries that followed.

In parallel to this, the Colombian legal system was reacting against the apparent impunity of the paramilitary demobilisations. On 18th May 2006, the Supreme Court of

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[129] JAC and JAL are committees that are elected by each community in the rural areas or groups of neighbors in the cities.

Justice enacted the first of several amendments to Law 975. In 2007, Decree 128 was modified to establish that "the benefits cannot be given to [those demobilised] who have been charged with or sentenced to crimes governed by the Constitution, the law, or international treaties signed by Colombia"[130]. The Constitutional Court likewise ruled that electoral activity on the part of the demobilised was not permitted until they had completed their reintegration process[131] (ICG, 2006:6). In addition, other institutions such as the Defense of the People and the Inspector General's Office formally opened legal investigations against those ex-combatants still involved in criminal activities. Ultimately, under the new regulations of Law 975 the ex-paramilitary leaders were forced to confess their crimes and to reveal information that unravelled the web of para-politics.

By 2008, having remained in prison for around two years, the paramilitary leaders had already lost much of their power. Uribe then decided to extradite twelve of those leaders held in Itagui[132], it was argued that they were not truly committed to the DDR and had continued in drug-trafficking. As a consequence, Corporation Democracy began to fall apart, a process exacerbated by its own internal criminal dynamics: in 2009 four of its leaders were killed in internecine struggles for power while other leaders were arrested for their involvement in criminal activities after the demobilization[133].

This brief account of the NMDS and Corporation Democracy highlights the difficulties that the paramilitaries faced in consolidating a political proposition. Firstly, the systematic killing of their own political leaders rebounded on them, producing yet more fragmentation within the paramilitaries and making it harder for drug-traffickers to disguise their illegal activities behind a political façade. Secondly, the paramilitary phenomenon never achieved a political identity aside from its counterinsurgency aims,

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[130] Decree 395/2007.

[131] Sentence C-1153/05.

[132] Between 2002 and 2010, there 1,221 people were extradited, 93 per cent of them to the US (CEJ, 2011).

[133] Severo Antonio López (aka Job), John Jairo Hidalgo, Ruby Liliana Suaza Arango and Ubaldo Ayala were murdered and the Fiscal Office arrested Giovanni Marín and Fabio Orlando Acevedo (aka Don Fabio), who had led the demobilisation of the BCN, accusing them of heading up the Los Paisas criminal band (Semana 24/06/09). John William Lopez Echavarria – the only ex-combatant to be democratically elected to one of the JALs – was arrested and sentenced to 22 years in prison because he continued in criminality (Verdad Abierta 19/11/09).

thus impeding any formal transition into a political party[134]. Thirdly, the transformation of an illegal army into a legal political entity is by no means straightforward. For example, Gutierrez and Jaramillo have argued that the leftist militias that demobilised in Medellín in 1994 failed to recast their military power into electoral support: their internal military organisation and dynamics contrasted sharply with those needed to stand as a political party and to take part in elections (2004:24). Fourthly, the high levels of rejection felt in the community towards ex-combatants undermined the possibility of their ever achieving broad electoral support (Reintegration Officer No. 66). Guáqueta, for one, has claimed that the widespread territorial and electoral control of the paramilitaries over one third of the country did not translate into viable long-term support due to their rejection by the electorate in the cities and amid international context intolerant to drug-trafficking (2009:34). Finally, the judicial system, and in particular the High Courts of Justice, impeded the direct participation of paramilitary leaders and drug-traffickers in the political arena, and further undermined their influence in politics through criminal investigations of para-politics. Already beset by this combination of factors, the extraditions ordered by Uribe finally destroyed any remaining potential for political organisation.

Certainly, fears around the continuation of the hierarchy and power of armed groups can be applied to the paramilitary experience: the NGOs and civil associations created by them followed the structures and rationales from both their military and criminal precedents. However, these dynamics are very poorly suited to democratic practice, and hence have a low probability of succeeding in the long-term. More importantly, as will be explained in the last section of this chapter, any move towards accepting state authority and the rule of law implies a critical break with the vertical military hierarchies, and the embracing of a more horizontal relationship among and between fellow citizens.

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[134] Carlos Alonso Lucio, in the proceedings of the Forum Paramilitarism and Politics. September 21, 2005:43.
http://www.pnud.org.co/img_upload/9056f18133669868e1cc381983d50faa/foro_paramilitarismo_y_pol%C3%ADtica.pdf

7.2 Grass-roots organisations

Associations and grass-roots organisations formed by ex-combatants were another potential source of political pressure on the government. In the US, for instance, World War II veterans campaigned for the enactment of the GI Bill, which brought with it for the very first time extended and special welfare benefits for ex-combatants (Söderström, 2011:43; Mcmullin, 2012:59). In more recent times, demostrations in Namibia, Mozambique and Liberia have forced the respective governments to comply with promises made during the demobilisation (Mcmullin, 2012:230). However, in Colombia, apart from the street protests mentioned in the fourth chapter, these grass-roots organisations failed in their attempts to congregate the demobilised and provide an effective, collective platform for their grievances.

In interviews with the leaders of six of these grass-roots associations, it was clearly apparent that they were formed of very few members and held little political leverage at both national and regional levels (Grass-roots No 1-6). Similarly, in Antioquia, Aguirre (2010) found that the demobilised themselves had only minimal influence within the municipalities, and little capacity to bring together associations among ex-combatants.

At the beginning of the reintegration phase, Peace and Reconciliation had in fact encouraged the organisation of small units of political participation among ex-combatants (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007a). However, these efforts were halted to prevent the continuation of the social and political structures that underpinned the strength of the drug-traffickers in Medellín. The ACR would also support the creation of grass-roots groups and civil organisations to assist the demobilised in speaking up. For example, the ACR regional offices held elections of representatives to form Regional Working Groups[135], whose main function was to represent the ex-combatants before the ACR or other institutions. Yet once again this process was brought to a premature end by the presidential elections in 2010 and the subsequent enactment of Law 1424. During the fieldwork in 2012, I found that some of these working groups were attempting to start up again (Reintegration Officers No. 93, 154; Interview ex-combatant No. 18, Interview grass-roots No. 3 and 4), but they had encountered little

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[135] During my research, I found evidence of one in Antioquia, one in Bucaramanga, and one in Barrancabermeja.

interest among the majority of the demobilised in engaging in any of these social or political movements. As will be expanded in the next section, there was hardly any capacity or willingness whatsoever among the former combatants to organize themselves around this type of association.

7.3 Levels of political participation

Around the time of the fieldwork for this thesis, a former member of the M-19 guerrilla, Gustavo Petro, was democratically elected as Mayor of Bogotá for the first time[136]. Although this was a topic for discussion in the interviews and focus groups (Figure 13, Annex Q), the majority of ex-combatants expressed little interest in participating in democratic elections, especially given the widespread perception of corruption in the political arena. During their own experiences inside of the armed groups, they had personally paid witness to the activities at the root of the para-politics scandal, and the subsequent deals made between criminal agents and corrupt politicians:

> *We [the paramilitaries] were the puppets of Congress members and politicians, and we lost out to them. But if we get to elect people who have principles, there would not be so much corruption and the public money would be [distributed evenly] among everybody. There are many thieves, a lot of corruption. All the politicians want is to fill their pockets.*
>
> *(Focus group ex-combatants No. 4)*

Furthermore, the ex-combatants argued that standing as leaders or members of political or activist groups would undermine their efforts at concealing their status as demobilised. Taking on a political role in this way may force the public disclosure of their previous wrongdoings, and increase the related risks of falling foul of internecine power struggles. Some of the demobilised, equally, were conscious that their unresolved legal situation forms a further barrier to their participation in the political arena. Finally, the ex-combatants also felt that they lacked a figurehead capable of taking on the leadership of their associations and of voicing their grievances in public.

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[136] Petro was one of the leaders of the M-19 guerrilla that demobilised in the 1990s. He was elected for the period 2012-2015.
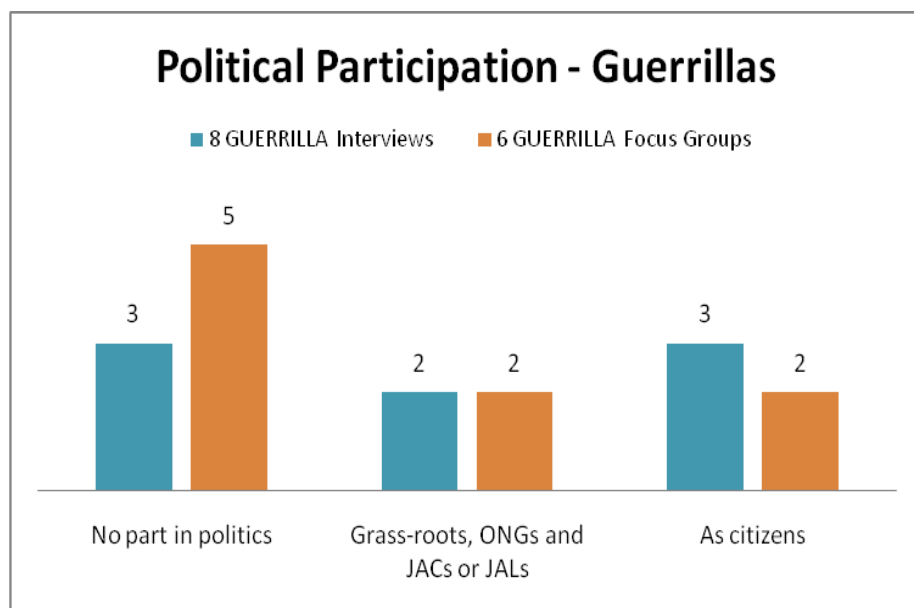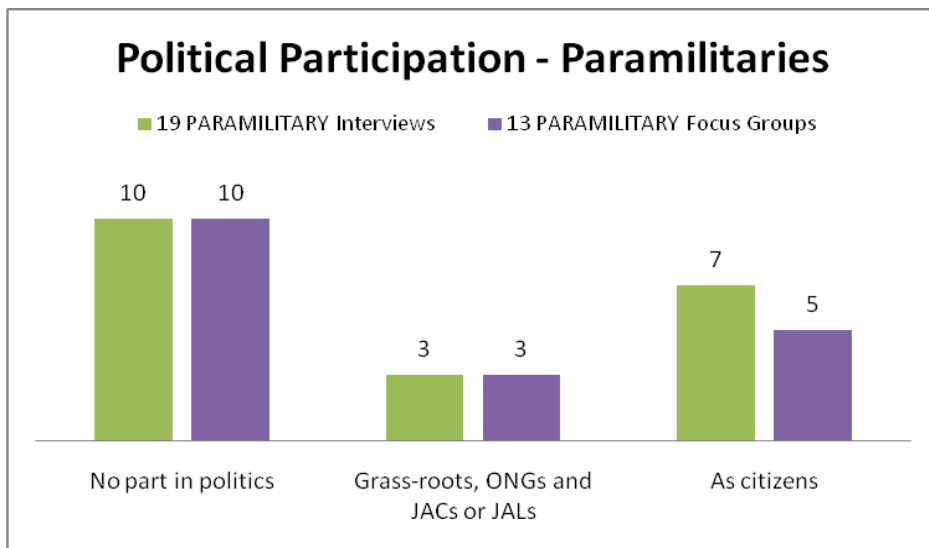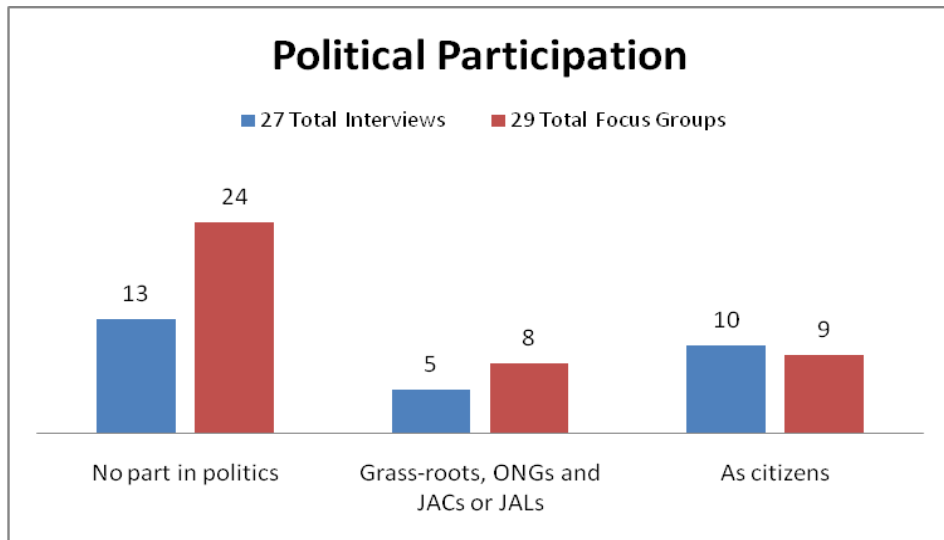
Figure 13. Have you had any form of political participation?

For those ex-combatants who did express a desire to participate in politics, the JALs and JACs are their preferred option. It is worth noting here that this represents a different situation than the one mentioned above in which the paramilitary leaders saw in these organisations the chance to continue and prolong their power. In this case, the ex-combatants' aim is to be elected as part of the community to which they now belong, rather than within the schematics of paramilitary power. Indeed, one person said that he would like to play a part in politics through the grass-roots organisation that he had created along with some victims of the conflict:

> I would like to participate in politics. I am living in a slum. I want to work with the finances of the JAC that we want to create; it hasn't been formalised [yet], but we are in the process [of legalising it]. [I have participated] in the meetings with the community and all of that.
>
> *(Interview ex-combatant No. 15)*

Finally, a group of participants stated that they took part in politics just as any other citizen would: either by voting or by attending certain activities during electoral campaigns. However, they tend to avoid any further engagement due to lack of time, knowledge or interest. And yet again, their unsolved legal status or their efforts at invisibilise mean that they prefer to keep a low profile rather than becoming public figures or speaking out for the demobilised. In sum, the following exchange neatly summarises the various positions uncovered on the theme of political participation:

> A: By law we can't [take part in politics].
> B: The jobs for politicians are all taken. [...]
> A: Petro [Bogota's Mayor], if we're talking about the M-19, there are a few people who are still alive [...] Most of them were killed.
> C: Out of 100 there are still around 20. That was the fear for all of us at the beginning [to be killed].
> A: I would like to participate, let's say as President of the JAC, in order to make things happen. I like living in the countryside and I have my Business Plan for the countryside. Why then can't I take part in politics within my community if there are things that effect me and my Business Plan?
>
> *(Focus group ex-combatants No. 16)*

Nevertheless, other forms of political engagement were identified in the interviews and focus groups on a range of levels: for example, responding to both the authorities and the broader legal and political contexts they represent, and to their own personal reintegration. In turn, further analysis of their relationship with the tutors allows us to better understand how the transformation of ex-combatants into *political subjects* operated, and how the ACR programme fostered the creation of a social contract and a citizen identity.

7.4 Expectations on the authorities versus personal expectations

Nussio's research with Colombian ex-paramilitaries also found a low level of political interest or engagement among the demobilized (2012:243), but concluded that the relationship between the ex-combatants and the state proved to be a far more salient topic (2012:241). As such, he identified three key components that favoured the creation of a social contract with the state: fulfilled promises by government; positive interactions with state officers and institutions; and the existence of sanctions for those who relapse into violence or criminality. Conversely, unfulfilled promises, a negative experience with the officers, and a lack of active state presence tend to weaken their trust in state institutions (2012:175-177).

When asking the demobilised about their expectations regarding the authorities, the government's failings to fulfill its promises was the most common response (Figure 14, Annex R, see also Figure 3. As explored in the fifth chapter, it is important to remember that these expectations revolved around judicial benefits, but this time they mentioned more the economic aid: aside from direct monetary stimulus, the Seed Capital and basic education and training for working skills, the ex-combatants repeatedly insisted that they had been promised housing. However, there is no official record of this promise, and it was not until Law 1424 that the reintegration aid was made available for investment in the form of down-deposits for buying property. Arguably, although the government provided most of the help it promised, the level of expectation created was relatively high; by contrast, the economic and employment situation faced by the majority of the demobilised remained precarious, which may only have fuelled the perception that the reintegration aid was not good enough:

I think that what we deserve is a house – and we don't have it –, [we deserve] help, jobs to be able to at least pay the rent, because we are paying rent. I'm short in paying the rent and I don't know what to do.

(Interview ex-combatant No.14)

[What we need is] support. So that if they ask you "what do you need" and then "well, I need a house", then they give you a project for you to get your house. Or [if] another person [says] "I want to keep studying" then they create a project or training according to that person's needs.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 29)

The expectation for their judicial situation to be resolved was the second most frequent response to this question. Not surprisingly, and particularly for those ex-paramilitaries who had been promised full amnesty within 18 months, the reality of several years of obligatory workshop attendance and diminishing economic incentives has resulted in feelings of fatigue and apathy toward the reintegration programme as a whole. Additionally, although most of the rank-and-file ex-paramilitaries participating in the reintegration process would not face jail under Law 1424[137], the possibility of losing any legal favour remained real if further criminal investigations pointed to their involvement in human rights abuses:

[I wish] that they [the government] would comply with their promises. They told us that it [the process] would take one or two years and that we would be free, but no, we are still here.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 19)

So before, they [the government] told us that those who hadn't committed crimes against humanity would go clean, I mean, [be treated] like a normal civilian. But this didn't happen. We are still treated like criminals, terrorists […], like accomplices. And we were told that [after] signing a piece of paper we would be free of all that.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 9)

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[137] If they are seen to declare, in front of the Fiscal Office, that their only crimes were those relating to their membership of the armed group
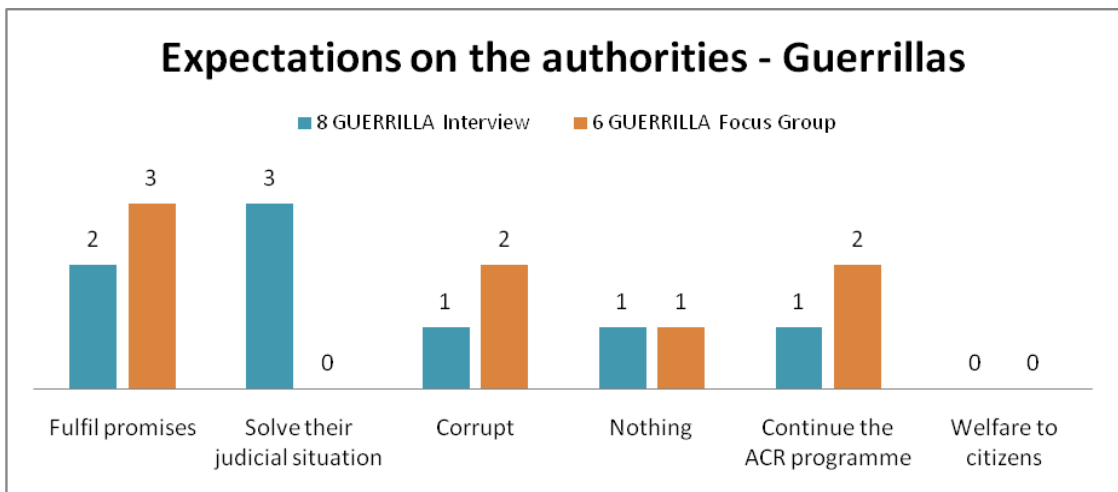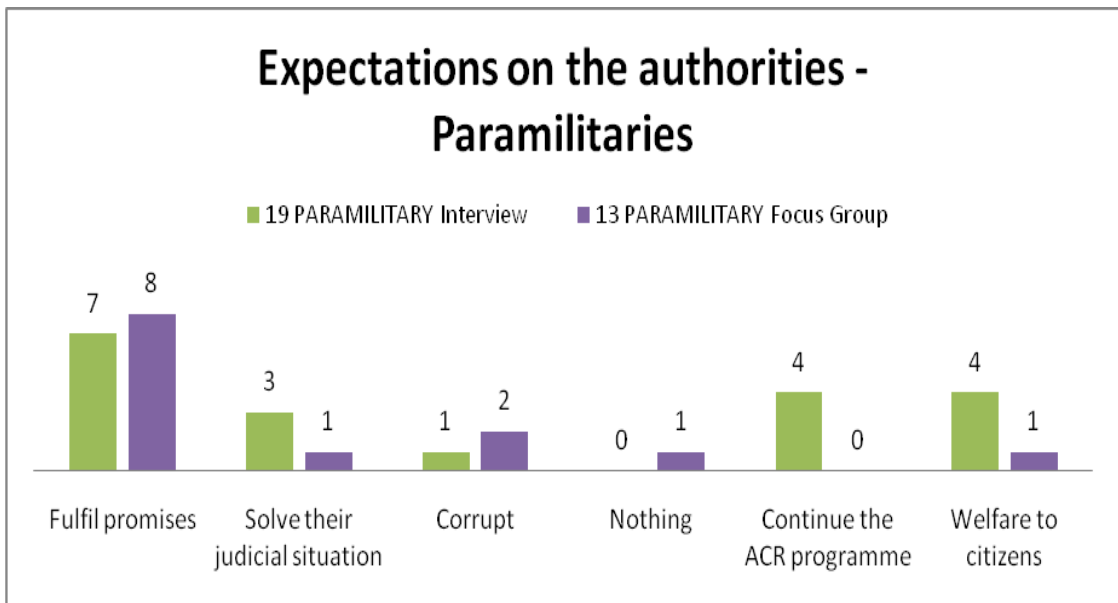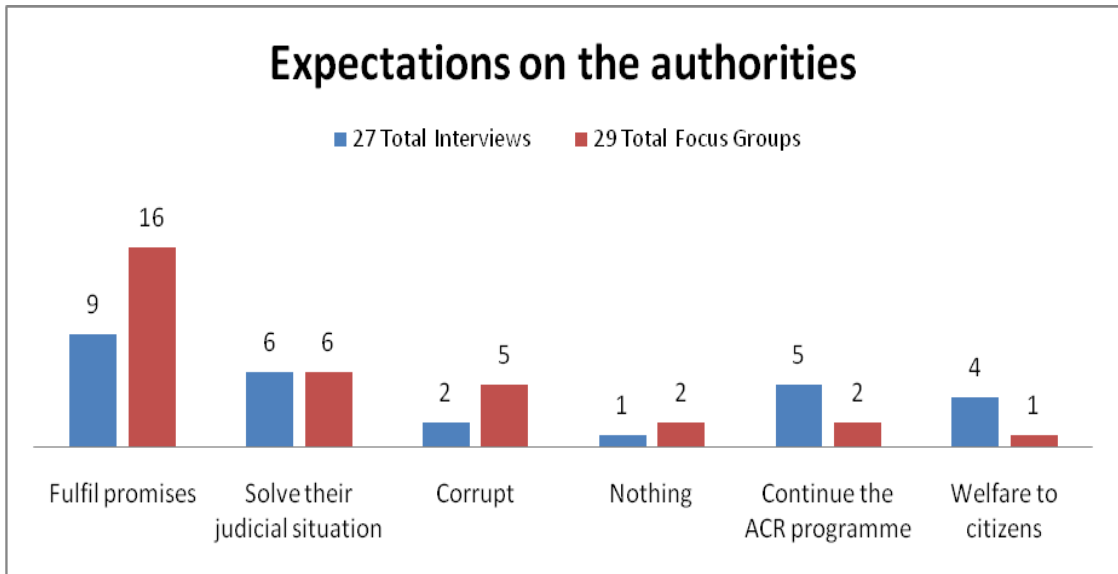
Figure 14. What expectations do you have of the authorities

Corruption on behalf of the authorities was the third-most given response: either because some demobilised have had problems with the police or other public servants, or simply because they have no trust in them:

> *Here it's up to the army to get the control of the city, and send the police away. Because they are the most corrupt: the police [...]*
>
> *(Interview ex-combatants No. 17)*
>
> *As they [the authorities] caught the mafia, they should also put in jail corrupt people.*
>
> *(Focus group ex-combatants No. 4)*

In fourth place, some of the demobilised retained a positive perception of the reintegration programme, considering it to have brought benefits to them personally or to the country as a whole. As such, they expect the authorities to keep the ACR programme running:

> *For me, [I hope] that they continue supporting this programme, because it is needed. Through this programme the war has lessened, because people go out and don't get involved in another group, but come here instead. And many have benefited from it, [so] that people change their mentality and create a family to achieve something in life.*
>
> *(Focus group ex-combatants No. 2)*

Finally, some demobilised envisages the authorities as providers of welfare to citizens in general, a group to which they now belong. Security in particular was mentioned several times, as the areas in which they live in the cities may suffer from high levels of petty or organised crime:

> *[We need] more security for the city, because there are a lot of rapists who target women and children. [There is a need] they [the government] provide more security in the city.*
>
> *(Interview ex-combatant No. 1)*

In sum, in spite of the fact that government promises did not play a major role as incentives to demobilise (as shown in the previous chapter), the level of expectation created by the government in terms of economic aid and judicial favour were to prove critical in how the ex-combatants perceived the authorities. On the one hand, their precarious economic situation and their problems in securing formal employment spawned their negative perceptions of the authorities. On the other, the creation of sanctions for those who did relapse into violence or criminality also impacted in the legal uncertainties surrounding those who had complied with their reintegration.

By contrast, when asking the demobilised about what expectations they had for their own reintegration process (Figure 15, Annex S), the responses highlighted other factors. Concerns regarding the unfulfilled government promises and their unresolved judicial situation were repeated, especially on the part of the paramilitaries, which reinforces the point that they were worse effected by the changes to the legal situation of the ex-combatants than their counterparts from the guerrillas. However, a significant majority also said that they aimed to improve their own quality of life, which in turn was directly contingent on their finding a permanent job or a more secure source of income.

My expectations are to get a permanent job so I can change my personal situation, more so than when I was in the group. Here, thank God that I have a job and at least I am not hungry.

(Interview ex-combatant No. 28)

What I expect is to finish my studies and to have some support for improving our situation, not so much in studying but in having a job on your own. That way I can improve the situation of my family with the help of the government.

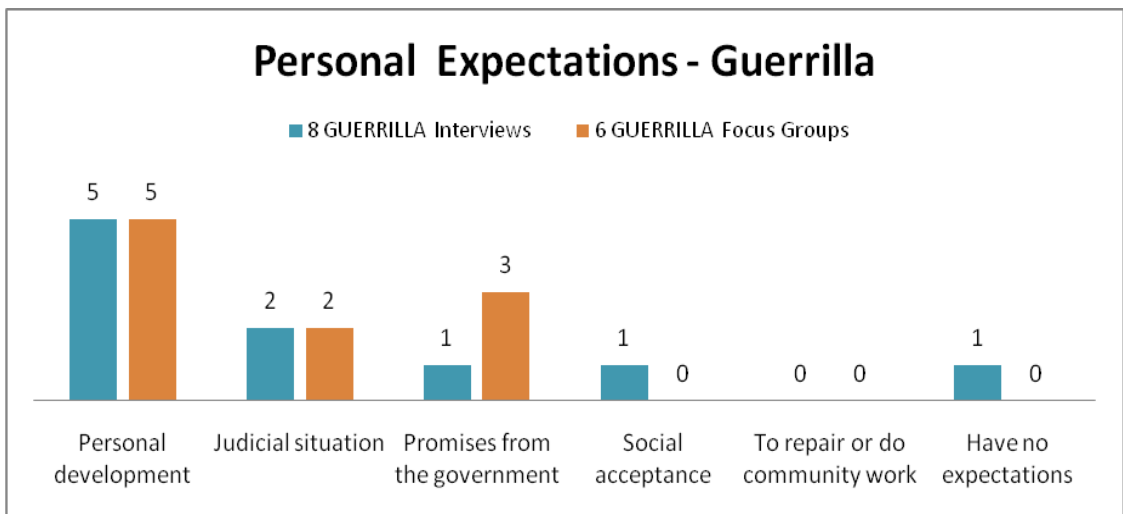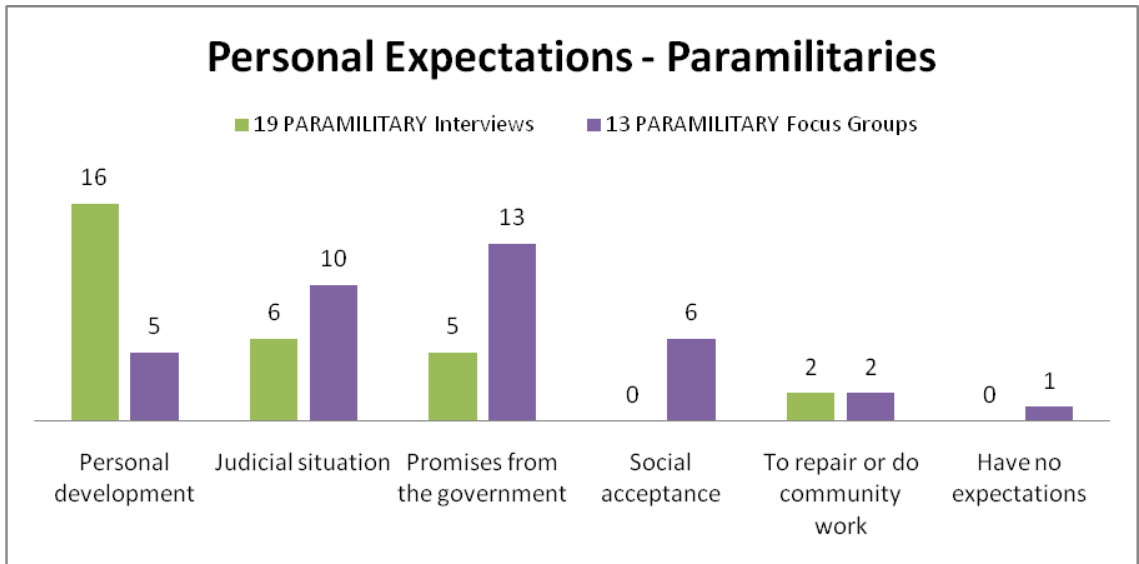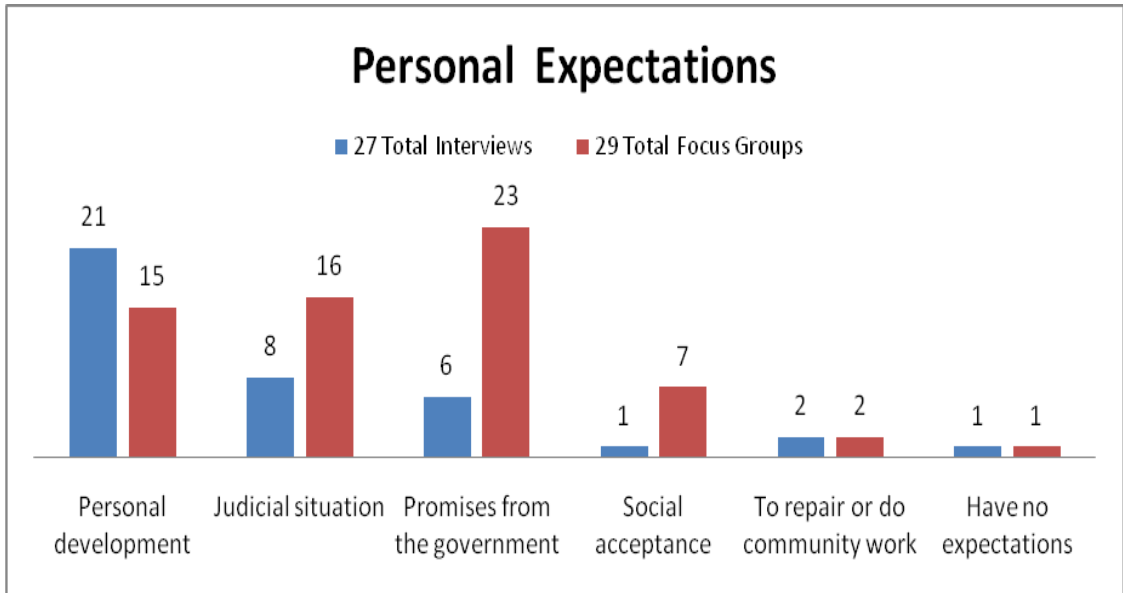*(Focus group ex-combatants No. 3)*

Figure 15. What do you expect from this reintegration process?.

Achieving social acceptance was another important factor, underlining the problems the demobilised face in adapting to their new life or fitting in with the wider community. Within the same group of answers it was the desire for equality and to become a fully accepted member of the community, as opposed to receiving privileges for the wrong reasons:

> *I hope that people treat us like the human beings that we are, that they do not see us as many people still do. We are already out of the groups, but there are a lot of people who look at us strangely, they treat us… I hope to be treated normally, like any human being.*

> *(Focus group ex-combatants No. 16)*

> *Where I used to live, I arrived and they welcomed me, but behind my back they spoke about me. Why? Because it is like that, they do not have respect but fear. Now, I want a normal life, normal means normal. […] That I can meet with my neighbour and he has the guts to tell me off, to tell me anything: "Look what your children are doing". But where I was, they wouldn't dare tell me, they could see my children doing something wrong and they wouldn't tell me. Why? Because they were afraid. I want a normal life, normal, where one can have problems with a neighbour, a dispute, and they can make any complaint with no fear. Not that they don't say anything for being scared.*

> *(Interview ex-combatant No. 9)*

Interestingly, several of the demobilised also mentioned that their expectation was to pursue community work and activities to support the victims of the conflict. In one case, a group of ex-paramilitary members had organised a public event specifically to ask for forgiveness from the community. Although small, the group is very active in terms of social participation; as a result, both the municipality and the local police supported the event. Despite being in the minority, examples of this kind showcase the role that ex-combatants can potentially take in bringing reconciliation and reparation to victims, as they may sow the seeds for spontaneous initiatives in social participation:

I expect the [ACR] programme to continue. [We go] wherever they want to take us as long as they can help us. I never committed crimes against humanity but [I want to] help other people. Reparation to victims, reparation, even though I didn't do [any wrongdoing], I would like to take part, to do something, because we reintegrated. There are many people who committed those crimes, I don't have those crimes [against me] but I did participate [in the group].

(Interview ex-combatant No. 1)

Now, with the guy I'm working with, who is also demobilised, we have been looking in many places and we are going to start a business. We have it all ready and we are working very hard and people are surprised at how far we have progressed. [...] Our aim is to create at least 20 jobs [for the demobilised] so they will be able to work and finish their [reintegration] programme without any problems. That's my goal.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 31)

Finally, only in two cases, the demobilised were pessimistic in the face of their precarious economic outlook, and held no expectations in terms of enhancing their quality of life:

It's not that I don't want to learn but I have seen many [of my] peers who study, make things. Many people study and take one course [...] because they want to get a better job and improve their lives. And many have done so, they completed [school] but they have not been able to get a job, so there is no solution.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 20)

Overall, I found that the demobilised talked more positively than negatively about their personal reintegration process (Figure 16, Annex T). Despite frequent complaints around the government's broken promises, a significant majority of the ex-combatants felt that the process of reintegration has offered them an opportunity to overcome not only a harsh existence inside the illegal armed group, but also the conditions of poverty or marginalisation that brought them there in the first place:

That is what you want, to have a resolved legal status, so you can be with your family. The process has helped because it has changed your mind. Arms, you have left the arms, you now have a psychological component, like being with your family, your parents, your children. That is the big change compared with what we had there [in the group]. It was a change from being aggressive all the time, also among fellow combatants [...] I studied, [now] I am a technician. There are things that you don't adapt to, but you have to… like you adapted to life in the forest, one also has to make the effort and adapt again.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 16)

[In the guerrilla] it's hard, you suffer, you're starving, and you have to walk. You know that there is no payment, you know. You are there because of the ideals, supposedly, to achieve their political project. But from the moment that you decide to surrender to the Army you start seeing the change, despite [the fact that they] offered you things that were never fulfilled. Look at the difference. For instance, I am studying, I will finish high school soon. [In the guerrilla] they also study [...] but life there is very hard compared to life here.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 8)

Negative references to the process, meanwhile, are centered on how the government handled the process rather than their own reintegration as such: they reaffirm that government promises were never fully realised, or the high level of rejection that confronts the demobilised in general. In five of the focus groups, respondents claimed that they were aware of the problems they would face they would have preferred self-reintegration to pursuing the official DDR process and the ACR programme:
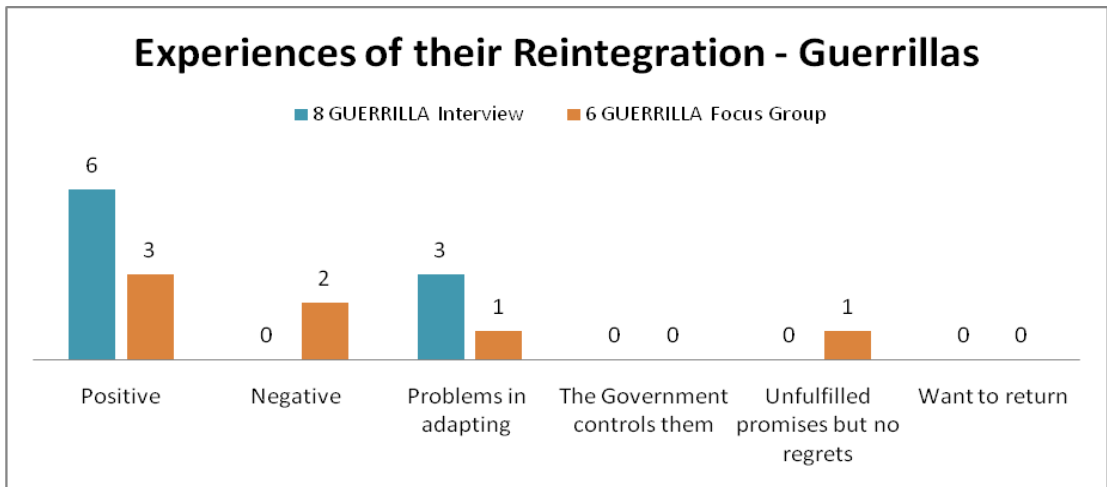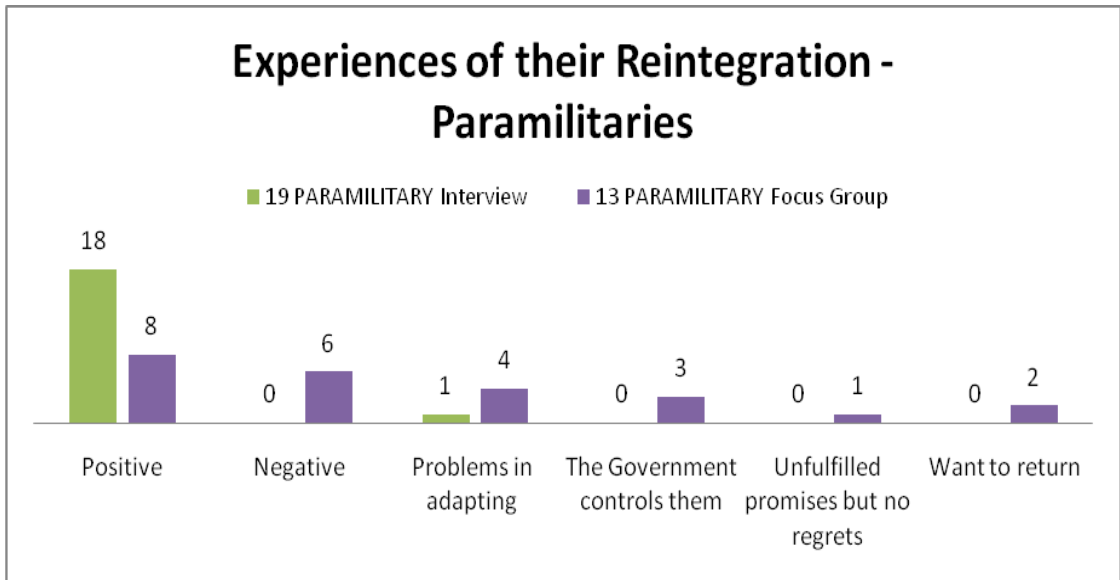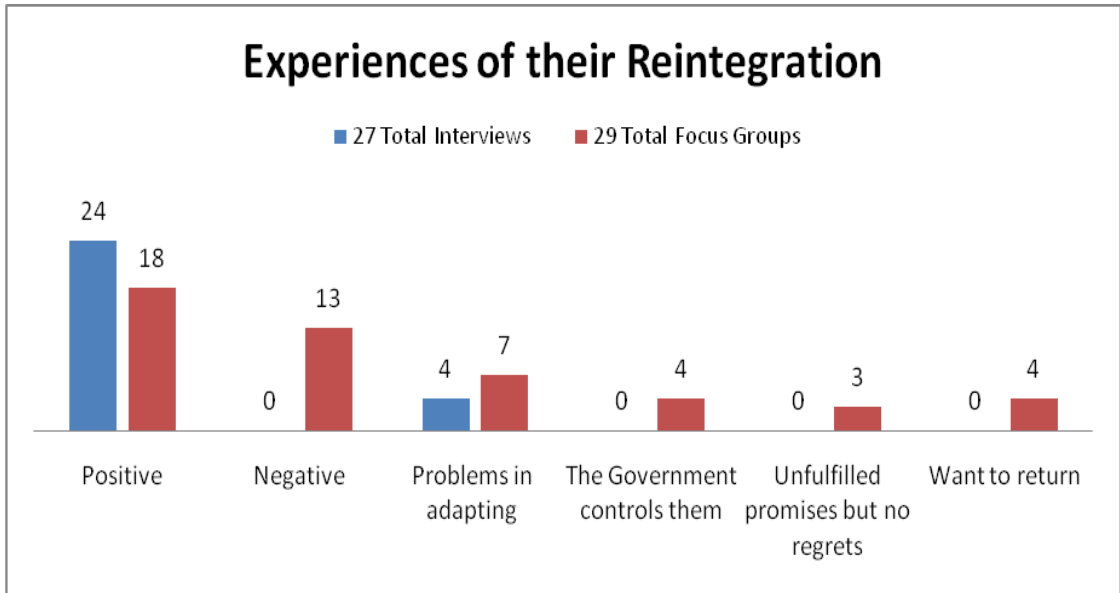
Figure 16. Their experience on the reintegration process has been….

A: Had I known that the government would not fulfill its promises, I wouldn't have demobilised. I wouldn't have screwed up my CV.

B: I wouldn't have demobilised.

C: Me neither.

A: Because I have worked in companies and I have damaged my CV.

C: They lied.

A: I worked as a security guard, but I was fired because they found out that I was demobilised. Then I came to this city and the boss fired me because I could not open a bank account because I am demobilised. So what are the benefits?

<div align="right">

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 22)

</div>

A: Society still distrusts us, as we are still [seen as] criminals. Reintegration is to become a civilian like anybody else. But people do not accept us like that [...] They always feel distrust: "that man will steal, what is he gonna do?", things are not like that.

B: Or "who are they gonna kill?". They think of us like that.

A: The programme is [a] good [one], but demobilising was a mistake. Because you screw up your CV and then you have problems because of that.

<div align="right">

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 3)

</div>

Thirdly, some excombatants mentioned having had problems in adapting to the civil life, while in fourth place others mentioned that they felt as though the ACR programme was a means of controlling their activities. In fifth place, one group of respondents had come to the conclusion that despite their disappointment with the government they did not regret their decision to leave the group. Finally, some demobilised intimated – or threatened – that they may return to their armed group.

Paradoxically, then, despite the ex-combatants' recurrent complaints of being misled by the government and concerns for their own judicial and economic situation, a significant number of demobilised respond positively to their own experience of reintegration, particularly as an opportunity for personal development. Contrary to what Nussio has argued, these broken expectations have not had a conclusive role to play in the creation of a social contract. Arguably, the work of the tutors in defining each participant's

personal needs, preferences and future life-projects may also have contributed to the demobilised becoming more capable of distinguishing between a larger institutional process and their own personal experience of it.

The ex-combatant's interactions with state officers will be explored in more depth in the next section. Nussio has argued that these interactions in the implementation of DDR programmes may represent a window of opportunity, as it could be the first positive contact between ex-combatants and state institutions (2012:227). In the previous chapter it was shown that the relationship with the tutors was positively perceived by the demobilised; I will now turn the ways in which the provision of psychological services to the demobilised may also have had a transformative effect on their relationship with the state, and as a result, on their own behaviours.

7.5 Building citizens

Söderström has claimed that DDR programmes can shape the ex-combatants' relationship with politics through the enabling of access and interpretive mechanisms that define their practice in a democratic system (2011:43). Access mechanisms refer to the provision of material and cognitive resources that expand access to political participation, while interpretive mechanisms are structures of meaning, norms and values that are internalised by individuals. Thus, the creation of resources and point of contact with public institutions is beneficial to the emergence of a social contract between the ex-combatants and the state (Schulhofer-Wohl and Sambanis, 2012; Mitton, 2012). Using Tilly's and Turner's definition, citizenship is a category that establishes mutual rights and obligations in relation to the state, at the expense of any other authority, and takes form in a set of practices that defines a person as a competent member of society (Tilly, 1996:8; Turner, 2000:ix). The literature on DDR, meanwhile, has been largely devoted to the process of transforming combatants into apolitical civilians while at the same time emphasising the importance of building democratic institutions. My contention is that both processes are deeply entangled with one another and that more attention needs to be paid to the problem of transforming the combatants, through their direct inter-relationship with the democratic institutions. Thus, going beyond the concept of "civilianization" proposed by Berdal (1996:45) and Duclos (2012:3), the combatants need to develop not just a civilian identity, but a citizen one.

Access Mechanisms: Citizenship Education

As most ex-combatants hail from peasant backgrounds and from isolated rural areas or marginalised areas in the cities, they lack basic knowledge of social dynamics typical of modern cities, such as traffic laws or how to pay utility bills (Group Interview teachers CEPAR; Interview Police Liaison; Pax Christy, 2006:37). In some cases, their first meaningful contact with the modern world occurs after they demobilise:

A: When I first arrived in [the city] I didn't know what a traffic light was.
B: The same with me. I had only seen escalators and lifts in movies. The first time I got onto an escalator I got on it, up and down again and again, until the security guard stopped me.

(Focus group ex-combatants No. 13)

That is what we want, working experience we have [already], what we don't know is the city. If you tell me "move that car", or "move that plane", I won't be able to do that, because I never learned [how to do] that. I never lived among those machines. But if they tell me "one hectare [of land], go and cultivate it", I know [how], because I made a living from that for a long time; I was born in the countryside. That is what we want, working experience we do have, we just do not know the city.

(Interview ex-combatant No. 28)

More significantly for this research, the demobilised had encountered problems in accessing public services, due to their shortcomings in basic education, or simply because they did not know (or were not accustomed to) the relevant procedures and requirements. Complex and bureaucratic paperwork, for instance, may prove challenging, but so may queuing or waiting to be served, especially when bearing in mind that the weapons they carried previously gave them a sense of power and privilege over the general population (Reintegration Officers No. 93, 94, 119, 129, 143).

To address these problems, the PRVC designed a training course called Module Zero to provide citizenship education [138] and assist the demobilised in understanding and complying with both general bureaucratic procedures and basic rules for coexistence

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[138] Resolution 513/2005, Articles 15-16.

(OACP/ACR, 2010:162). Module Zero informed the ex-combatants about the services available to them, while also introducing them to topics such as democratic participation, everyday life in the city, and peaceful conflict resolution (Pax Christy, 2006:43). Similarly, the PAPDRB incorporated activities to welcome the ex-combatants as new citizens, including a sightseeing tour around Bogotá and a symbolic oath of commitment to the city (Interview Villamizar).

By the same token, the National Policy for Reintegration enacted in 2008 set out to educate the demobilised in responsibility and autonomy. In turn, the ACR assumed the task of providing courses to inform and train ex-combatants in the mechanisms of citizen participation, accountability and control[139] and to encourage the exercising of active citizenship (ACR, 2011:16; Conpes 3554, 2008:40; OACP/ACR, 2010:9). The syllabus of the psychological workshops therefore featured knowledge of and practice in citizenship rights and duties (Reintegration Officers 20, 27, 47, 90, 94, 95, 97, 120, 116, 117, 141, 143, 146, 149, 157):

> *[…] They know that here the benefits are the same for everybody. And if someone thinks that we are not providing a good service, that we are failing them, who feels that the State is not… [I tell them]: "Guys, even if I am sacked, it does not matter, make use of the mechanisms of participation that we have studied in class." […] Because it would be wrong, if a person demobilises, [...] that now you are a Colombian citizen and I deny your citizen rights. [I tell them]: "Those are the rights that you acquired or recovered after the demobilisation: use them, apply them". And in fact some of them have filed complaints.*

> *(Reintegration Officers No. 75-77)*

It would appear, then, that the ACR reintegration programme may have facilitated access to democratic mechanisms in two ways: on the one hand, improving their literacy and education skills has eased the ex-combatant's transition into recognising, understanding and using the appropiate mechanisms for participation and accountability. On the other, compulsory courses and training in citizenship encouraged the

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[139] These include the Ombudsman's Office, the General Inspector's Office and other control institutions that have been created over the last 30 years.

demobilised to know their rights as well as duties, while at the same time providing those material and cognitive resources needed to properly participate in democracy.

However, bearing in mind the tendency among the demobilised to migrate to the cities, and that the fieldwork for this research was conducted in the capital cities, it is worth investigating the extent to which these access mechanisms were linked to, and therefore dependent on, the ex-combatants' migration (or capacity to travel to) the urban centres. Arguably, urban life improves access to government services in general, and to the democratic mechanisms of participation and accountability in particular. Concurrently, the barriers to accessing these same mechanisms remain strong in those rural areas and city slums where the armed groups still operate in force.

Interpretative Mechanisms: Changing Hierarchies

Some of the reintegration officers interviewed highlighted the change they had witnessed in the behaviour of the demobilised when making a complaint. At the beginning of the process, for example, resorting to verbal aggression and threats was a common occurrence among the ex-combatants. Yet these behaviours have been progressively replaced by alternatives that have been emphasised by the tutors in the workshops [140] (Reintegration Officers No. 75-77, 95, 128, 129, 143, 147, 159). Moreover, the tutors recognised the ability of the demobilised to use legally established mechanisms to present complaints as a positive indicator of their advancement in the reintegration process (Reintegration Officer No. 75-77, 117, 154):

There has been a lot of progress. Before, a participant used to come here, kicking, shouting, and threatening to break the computer because: "I haven't been served". Now the participant says: "I will call customer services and file a complaint". Or they write down a complaint in the office. For me that's nice, because it has been worth it. At this stage of the process, to have participants who I've found out have called and made a complaint against me, that's nice. […] They know that it's through communication, through other institutions […]. Nowadays, they threaten you to go to the Ombudsman. But it is nice when they

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[140] 'Tutelas' and 'Derechos de petición', in particular, are mechanisms available to any citizen, consisting of filing requests or complaints against public institutions.

say "I am going to the Ombudsman" rather than "I'm gonna break your a… and I will shoot you three times".

<div align="right">

(Reintegration Officer No. 117)

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I used to be aggressive, very aggressive and I solved everything [by] shouting. But now… I had a tutor last year who helped me with calming down. Now I am transformed completely […] I used to tell her my problems, that I used to blow up really quickly and then I wanted to kill someone. I looked for her advice and she told me: "when you have those problems, count from 1 to 10". And I do so. I can't recognise myself.

<div align="right">

(Interview demobilised No. 13)

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Similarly, in Medellín, Peace and Reconciliation had also approached behavioural through education in the CEPAR. Aside from providing adult education, the teachers also played a vital role in creating environments that re-signified the reintegration process and subsequently led to the acceptance of basic coexistence rules and new authority figures. The CEPAR also instigated the role of Coexistence Officer, whose responsibility was to deal with any coexistence problems by enacting and enforcing a new system of protocols (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2011a:17-21):

Saying that the people inside the armed groups had no rules is inaccurate. The people who belonged to the armed groups had rules and hierarchies. The role of the CEPAR is to introduce respect and communication into the relationships and regulations of a group, renouncing the use of the force.

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(Alcaldía de Medellín, 2011a:21)

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As described in the fifth chapter, during the demobilisation and reinsertion phases, maintaining a sense of vertical hierarchy was crucial to avoiding a disorganised demobilisation or mass desertions. Similarly, as witnessed in the case of Corporation Democracy, the control exercised by the paramilitary leaders was key to maintaining discipline among the ex-combatants, and to forcing them to attend the workshops in the early stages of the DDR process. However, the leaders progressively relinquished these powers of leadership, and their control over their former troops faded away

(Reintegration Officer No. 66). Nonetheless, in the beginning the reintegration officers had little choice but to work within rather than against these entrenched hierarchies in order to transform them:

It was like that in the small towns. When I arrived there was nobody [in the classroom]. Then the commander phoned them: "Miss [...] is here, you all have to come here". Then I had to work with the commander and tell him: "I am the psychosocial worker here, so I am the one that has to call them. I am the person that draws the boundaries... although you can help by bringing them to the workshops". One had to use them as leaders, at the beginning it had to be like that, but different from [the leadership] they were used to. That leadership had to be understood from another point of view.

(Reintegration Officer No. 146)

When asking the reintegration officers about the methods they employed in their attempts to break down the existing hierarchies, they claimed that they were strict in respect of basic rules and the egalitarian treatment of all ex-combatants, regardless of their previous armed group or ranking (Reintegration Officers No. 47, 49-51, 54, 66, 73, 75-77, 94, 106, 116, 120, 146). It is worth recalling at this point that, when the ACR was created, one of its core tasks was to unify the treatment of the collectively and individually demobilised and to disrupt their vertical hierarchies (OACP/ACR, 2010). As a result, there was an institutional effort to avoid any differential treatment:

Q/ How have you achieved the change of hierarchies?
R/ It is [achieved] through interacting with them and by understanding the other person as equal [...] For instance, in the workshops they have to interact with anybody, with whoever they have to, as in everyday life. And we work with that: before they used to respect because there was a commander, [from whom] they received orders. Now they need to respect because there is a norm. It is not only one person but the voices of many that are telling you that things should not be like that.

(Reintegration Officer No. 94)

What you have to do is to unify those behaviours. Here at CEPAR nobody is paramilitary, guerrilla or victim. Here all are students and there is a manual for coexistence. You have to follow it [...] the rule is for one and for all. So here we try to homogenise discipline: no one will impose things on their group [...]. It really helps, to homogenise. In the end the teachers know that there are some particularities within the population, but that cannot constitute a benchmark to give to the class or to deal with the group or to talk to them.

(Reintegration Officer No. 54)

To give a further example, initially the CEPAR in Medellín had to schedule separate days for providing educational services to each group – guerrillas, paramilitary, victims of violence and vulnerable groups – in an effort to avoid conflicts. Then, at a later date, the groups were mixed together, forcing the ex-combatants from different groups to coexist and interact with other civilians. As a result of this approach, social links emerged spontaneously between them (Group Interview teachers CEPAR). Similarly, in spite of the security problems in the shelters in Bogotá, the coexistence between ex-paramilitaries and ex-guerrillas did not reported incidents, but rather to the forging of demonstrable links of solidarity (Pax Christy, 2006:25; Villamizar, 2006). It is equally worth remembering that the taskforce of the PAPDBR also mixed together ex-combatants, from guerrillas and paramilitaries alike, as part of their daily activities. Furthermore, despite the substantial economic differences in the amounts allocated to the individually and the collectively demobilised (be it in the Seed Plan and the monthly monetary allowances), the ex-combatants themselves view progress through the process as a product of personal effort or commitment, rather than it being associated with privileges for a specific group:

We are all equal, all of us have the right to study. There are people who have finished primary school, then high school, and then obtained their degree as technicians. They completed three processes. Some others haven't finished primary or high school. [...] Those that made progress are people who took advantage of the process, the Business Plan, all that. Since the beginning we have

been committed to this, we have studied. More importantly, [we don't] to get in
troubles again, we walk the line.

Certainly, the transformation of vertical and patrimonial hierarchies into horizontal and equal relations constitutes the most crucial tenet of democratic rule. Political philosophers such as Hobbes, Spinosa and Rousseau have pointed towards equality and freedom as the central factors that make possible the individual's embracement of the rule of law. In the historical construction of the concept of citizenship, equality came to be considered as a natural right and a fundamental element of sovereignty, replacing membership of a religion or loyalty to a monarchy. Equality thus became the means to an end, and that end was security: "[…] in all kind of Government whatsoever, there ought to be a supreme and equall power" (Hobbes, 2010:43). Or to quote Spinoza, "[…] in the civil order, all men fear the same things, and all have the same ground of security, the same way of life" (2000:§3.3). Similarly, the Social Contract theory invokes a tacit agreement, not between people and their sovereign but among equal citizens:

[A] form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common
force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting
himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before.

(Rousseau, 1923:§I.6,43)

Therefore, if breaking the military hierarchies is one of the main aims of a DDR process, the question remains over how DDR programmes can then introduce the combatants into new democratic structures. First and foremost, these structures need to already be in place: arguably, the Colombian state has sustained its democratic institutions over many years, but its lack of a monopoly of force has left a broad array of marginalised groups without the means to access them. The Human Development Report for 2011, for example, found that the rural population in Colombia suffers a "deficit of citizenship": finding itself in a generalised situation of poverty, and faced with a lack of labour rights and access to land ownership, as well as very limited possibilities for political participation (UNDP, 2011:28). The ACR programme, in turn, opened up access and interpretive mechanisms to the demobilised population, extending the rights of

citizenship to those that had lost or never had a positive political relationship with the Colombian state.

Secondly, as explored in chapters five and six, the demobilised valued to a high degree their freedom from the military order and those vertical hierarchies to which they deferred during the conflict (Figures 4, 5 and 9). Thirdly, the equality of citizen rights inherently defines the role of a person with regard to the wider political order. Arguably, during the war, being able to differentiate between friends and foes, loyalists and traitors, is a matter of life and death; likewise, maintaining the military hierarchy is essential to the survival of the group and of each of its members. However, once war comes to an end and the armies are dismantled, this polarisation loses its critical function and the differences between armed groups, or between military hierarchies, become blurred. Thus, the institutional effort to minimise the differences among ex-combatants, and between them and other citizens, resulted in the forging of social links on two important levels. On one level, it reified their relationship with the Colombian state as the provider of services and opportunities otherwise inaccessible in their condition as peasants or as combatants. On the other, their nascent equality is borne out of the creation of social fabric that binds them together with other people, with whom they might share the status of equal citizens.

It is also important to recognise here that this equality of approach does not infer the total elimination of social hierarchies. On the contrary, reintegration programmes should also take into account the leaderships that inevitably emerge within any social group. Indeed, the tutors encourage the creation and active participation of new leaders, while making clear that equality of rights for ex-combatants and other civilians should be respected (Group Interview teachers CEPAR; Reintegration Officers No. 129, 131-132, 146, 158, 159). When it comes to the emergence of negative leaders, rather than marginalising them, the tutors recommend their participation in additional courses or activities, a process which in general seems to have proved successful in re-orienting their leadership into something more positive (Reintegration Officer No. 54, 109; Group Interview teachers CEPAR).

Remarkably, other differentiating factors in the situation of ex-paramilitaries and ex-guerrillas – their social background, the internal organisation of the group, the process

of demobilisation – do not seem to define the outcome of the reintegration programme. When asking the reintegration officers about the differences they perceived between the collectively and the individually demobilised, or between ex-guerrillas and ex-paramilitaries, they argued that these features informed the starting point of the process, but not necessarily its result (Reintegration Officers No. 16, 20, 66, 120). On the one hand, the deserters from the guerrillas had already gone through the emotional and psychological process of severing their social ties to the group. As a result, the tutors found it easier for them to commit to the reintegration and to establish a new plan for their future lives. On the other, the ex-paramilitaries demobilised under the assumption that they were part of an anti-subversive project, and hence expected to find acceptance – and gratitude – from society as a whole. In this case, then, the tutors had to make extra efforts to show them that they had also harmed innocent people in the process:

> *[...] I was a soldier, I was in the war. They [the tutors] have helped me to understand that I got out of that and that life should be seen in a different light. And that one cannot keep thinking about harming other people. Life is not like that. [...] We demobilised with lies [from the government]. But now we recognise… how did we realise the harm that we had caused?. Through the psychosocial services that we had here, when we had to interact with the victims [...]*

> *(Interview ex-combatant No. 10)*

Finally, Rousseau brings into the discussion the role of identity and self-control, arguing that the social contract takes shape at the level of the individual personality: "each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will" (1923:§I.6,43). Thus, the result of the social contract at the individual level is the development of behaviours that are socially prescribed and legally established, and internalised in the form of the individual's self-control:

> *I think it [the process] was good. When you leave those groups you have the wrong mentality: you want everything [to come] easily [...] But when you hear what the psychologist told us, that you should behave like a citizen, in telling you how to work, how to raise your children, treat your wife, and things like that.*

> *(Interview ex-combatant No. 11)*

On the one hand, therefore, a reintegration programme can establish or resurrect links between national institutions and ex-combatants, achieved through the systematic training of the demobilised in the use of public services and participatory mechanisms that were unknown or inaccessible to them while serving within the military structure. On the other, the introduction of the demobilised to new social and political roles results in the development of new social and political behaviours in which the use of violence is no longer accepted or tolerated.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has evaluated the different pathways for political reintegration. The transformation of the paramilitary groups into political parties failed for a variety of reasons: first, their incapacity to consolidate a political proposition; second, the continuation of criminal activities and the internecine power struggles that followed; third, high levels of rejection at the national and international level; and finally the actions of the judicial system in blocking their promised amnesty, and the subsequent extradition of their leaders. Hence, despite the infiltration of paramilitary leaders into the political system and its democratic institutions, their attempts to become politicians were doomed to fail in the long term.

In a similar vein, grass-roots organisations also fell short in their attempts to organise the ex-combatants, and in particular to channel and convey their political grievances or proposals. Furthermore, despite efforts on the part of the reintegration institutions – like Peace and Reconciliation and the ACR – to foster some form of social organisation among the demobilised, the forming of associations was confronted by two major problems: the lack of interest and willingness among the demobilised, and the attempts of the leaders to maintain their paramilitary power by instrumentalising these organisations.

The use of traditional citizenship mechanisms such as voting or participating in political campaigns was only mentioned on a few occasions, and thus would not appear to represent a salient form of political participation for the ex-combatants either. However, other forms of political reintegration were identified in the interviews and focus groups: beginning with the largely negative response to their expectations on the role of the authorities, especially in regard to the unfulfilled promises made by the government,

and their on-going, unresolved legal situation. As a result, many ex-combatants argued that the aid offered by the authorities was insufficient or underpowered, especially in respect of their aims to get out of poverty, to find a stable job or income, or to buy a house.

In stark contrast to this, the individual experience of reintegration is largely perceived as positive, having provided them with a real sense of personal development. It can be argued, then, that the specific efforts on the part of the reintegration officers to scope out a programme based on their present needs and future plans may also have helped the ex-combatants to develop their competence and confidence in distinguishing between an overarching institutional process and their own personal experience of it. Therefore, the different levels of analysis of DDR (macro, meso and micro) may not mirror each other; on the contrary, they may lead to different – even opposite – outcomes.

Finally, the positive relationships witnessed in the ACR programme between ex-combatants and their reintegration officers, in turn, have had significant ramifications for the creation of a social contract and a citizen identity, through the enabling of access and interpretive democratic mechanisms (Söderström, 2011). On the one hand, the improvement in literacy and educational skills and the emphasis placed on civic education have bolstered the level of access to government services in general, and to the democratic mechanisms of participation and accountability in particular. However, more research is required to gauge the extent to which this access has been limited to the cities and not extended as far as those demobilised living in more isolated rural areas. On the other, the interpretive mechanisms have facilitated the transition between the military estructure (vertical and patrimonial hierarchies) and modern-day democracy (horizontal, egalitarian relationships based on the rule of law). Subsequently, the ex-combatants learned not only to respect but also to internalise these rules, which in turn find their expression in the development of individual behaviours of self-control.

The sense of equality, in particular, has been raised as a crucial contributor to identity transformation: despite coming from divergent groups and demobilisation processes, the ACR programme and its officers purposely encouraged and applied egalitarian treatment to the demobilised. This may explain why the reintegration officers did not find any obvious differences between ex-combatants from guerrilla and paramilitary

groups during the reintegration process. In the same vein, the responses collected in the interviews and focus groups presented no obvious patterns (or were not skewed) based on which group they came from, as may initially have been expected.

The literature on DDR has understood the political reintegration of former combatants in the light of a social contract. As such, it has two dimensions: on the one hand, the creation of institutions that reinforce the rule of law, and on the other the creation of moral codes and a common identity. While there has been a certain amount of analysis of the ownership and building of democratic institutions, if the ultimate objective of the DDR is to transform combatants into citizens, the inculcation of a political subjectivity needs to no longer be ignored. I would contend that, in reality, both of these processes are deeply entangled with one another: the existence or building of democratic institutions with which the ex-combatants can interact, their freedom from the military order and its associated vertical hierarchies, and their equality of rights with their fellow citizens are of the utmost importance in socialising the demoblised into the democratic system. This process of integration also coincides with the development of behaviours more suitable to democracy and the rule of law. Therefore, more so than placing the responsibility of reintegration wholly on the shoulders of the ex-combatants or their recipient communities, security and stability in a post-conflict setting is contingent on the form of political system into which they are being reintegrated, and whether this system favours or hinders the development of their political identity as citizens.

Conclusions and findings

The central question of this research is how the ACR programme in Colombia contributed to the reintegration of ex-combatants. The first part of the thesis aimed to show the DDR programme design not merely as a technocratic activity, but as the byproduct of political dynamics in the negotiation between the warring factions. The second part presented the experiences of the demobilised across three different dimensions in the reintegration: economic, social and political.

The analysis of DDR programme design revolved around four debates in the literature over the emphasis of security versus development goals. The two first debates refer to the scope of the programmes – between security-oriented and development-oriented approaches – and who best to target with reintegration assistance – inclusive or exclusive of the recipient communities. The scholarly and policy-making literature has highlighted the importance of going beyond standard security goals to address developmental aims and provide wellbeing for the receiving communities. The Colombian DDR initially ran contrary to this requirement and its original design was wholly security-oriented and combatant-based. This was caused by the demobilisations running as part of two different security strategies to deal with the guerrillas and the paramilitary, and therefore targeted the various ex-combatants in different ways.

For one, President Uribe decided to enter into peace negotiations with the paramilitary groups. These groups had achieved territorial control over a third of the country, while also gaining important political leverage and control over central democratic institutions. However, these groups were faced with the threat of punishment by international law: the International Criminal Court could have prosecuted them for gross human rights violations, while the US requested the extradition of some of their leaders for their involvement in drug-trafficking. In turn, the negotiations between the paramilitaries and the government, the demobilisation of troops and the approval of transitional laws all became deeply entangled processes, and overtly contingent on the eligibility of paramilitary leaders to the judicial benefits that would provide them with legal amnesty or leniency. Decisions on the recipients of demobilised status thus, included drug-traffickers while at the same time excluding child soldiers to avoid charges related to child recruitment.

In a parallel process, the Uribe government bestowed demobilised status on deserters from the guerrillas. This was a deliberate strategy to weaken the FARC and the ELN by diminishing their troop numbers and obtaining intelligence and collaboration with the military as part of their counterinsurgency campaign. Therefore, while the collective demobilisations of paramilitary groups were handled by civilian institutions, the desertion of guerrillas and their later treatment as demobilised depended on the security needs of the military institutions.

In sum, the decision-making process around who would gain status as demobilised was driven by the debates on the political and legal situation of the paramilitary leaders and drug-traffickers or by the military needs of the army. The judicial benefits inherent to demobilised status hence became more important than the economic incentives. Conversely, the legal situation and reintegration of the rank-and-file combatants, as well as further development goals or benefits to the receiving communities, were largely ignored.

Rather than assuming a proclivity towards the use of violence, this study has explored the challenges and difficulties combatants may face in their process of reintegrating into post-conflict society and adopting a new identity as citizens. It can be concluded that the political battles created around the status of the paramilitary leaders – and the emphasis on the applicability of judicial benefits – swallowed up with it the attention or interest needed for the planning of a sustainable reintegration strategy for the rank-and-file troops. Equally, these political clashes sparked uncertain legal situation for the former fighters that would last for nine years, and which also directly impacted on their everyday lives, including their ability to find jobs in the formal sector or a place to live. Finally, the lack of a unified reintegration strategy also subjected the ex-combatants to a period of trial and error of different reinsertion stimuli and activities by uncoordinated institutions.

The third debate examined in this thesis refers to aspects of ownership and state-building in the DDR policies and programmes. In spite of its initial design, the DDR process has been seen to evolve towards a process that included a clear reintegration strategy, complete with development opportunities and benefits for the wider community. The existence of strong institutions at the national and the sub-national

level permitted the contestation of Uribe's policy: on the one hand, the judicial system altered the legal framework under which the paramilitary leaders demobilised; on the other, the Mayoralties of Bogotá and Medellín stepped in to create reintegration strategies of their own to compensate for the pitfalls and shortcomings of national DDR policy. Both Mayoral Offices addressed the needs of the rank-and-file combatants head-on, and urged the creation of a national programme of reintegration that would go far beyond the weak and short-termist reinsertion strategy first proposed by central government. Remarkably, in the absence of a formal reintegration strategy, the municipal programme designed by Medellín's Mayoral Office was ultimately adopted and implemented nationwide. At the same time, the Mayoral Office of Bogotá fiercely contested the DDR policy, organising public debates and flagging the problems created for the recipient communities. Together this process resulted in the creation of the ACR and its formal, national and unified programme for reintegration.

It can be concluded that although the DDR literature has highlighted the need of ownership and state-building, more attention needs to be paid to the role that municipalities – and other sub-national authorities – may play in building state capacity from the bottom-up. The challenges that the municipal authorities face in reintegrating ex-combatants, as occurred in two of the country's major cities, may also propel them into creating strategies to deal with the demobilised, and which in turn may inform and contribute directly to DDR policy-making at the national level.

The fourth debate revolves around the relevance given to the reintegration phase of the process. For reasons explained above, in the Colombian DDR, this phase was not included in the original design and would only begin three years later with the inception of the ACR. The analysis of the ACR has shown that it certainly contributed to the reintegration of former combatants, but in capacities outside the expected ones. Crucially, although the literature on DDR tends to emphasise the incentives for economic reintegration, its impact in this research does not seem to be significant. On the one hand, the offers made by the government in terms of money and benefits appear only to have played a small part in the decision to lay down arms. On the other, despite enormous institutional effort, the demobilised tend to be reintegrated into poverty. Although the ACR developed strategies for both the short- and long-term economic reintegration, including initiatives targeting the private sector, unemployment or

informal economic activities remained the common lot of the demobilised. In combination, their educational disadvantages, their widespread rejection from workplaces and their unresolved legal position conspired to push them deeper into the poorest and most marginalised communities.

Contrary to the economic incentives or the generation of income, there are other elements that seem more critical to preventing ex-combatant recidivism. First and foremost, participating in war is something that most people are not willing to do twice, given the risk it entails. Secondly, the emotional links inherent in raising or recovering a family are immensely valued and represent a more important incentive to enter and remain in the reintegration programme than money alone. Thirdly, demobilisation itself is perceived as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be freed from the military order of the armed group. Some of the demobilised even reported receiving potentially offers of millions of pesos against which the monetary incentives offered by the state could scarcely compete – but weighed up against their experiences of belonging to an armed group, these economic offers were adjudged to lose their subjective value when compared to the creation of social and emotional bonds.

Reintegration hence goes beyond the need to simply replace the economic reward obtained in war-related activities with others in the legal civilian life. A DDR programme may, of course, offer money and other financial aid, but to effectively contribute to the reintegration it is of the utmost importance that they be properly linked to a clear strategy that defines goals and limits for the demobilised, as well a markers of personal achievement and progress. Remarkably, the standard technocratic approach, which focuses on the provision of educational and vocational training with which to secure a livelihood as civilians, does not necessarily have a substantial effect on their economic reintegration. As the ex-combatants tend to work into the informal sectors of the economy, their social and educational shortcomings are shared with the country's abundant poor and marginalised population.

In analysing the links between the different dimensions of reintegration, it can be concluded that, rather than standing separate from other socialising processes, economic reintegration could act as an indicator of how competent the ex-combatant has become as a member of the society, whether democratic or not. However, as the Mayoralty of

Medellín has noted the economic dimension is not the starting point but the final element in the reintegration process (Alcaldía de Medellin, 2006:129). Alternatively, the social dimension of reintegration can be singled out as the organising element of the economic and political dimensions.

The literature on DDR tends to understand this social dimension in terms of the dismantling of the military structures and the acceptance of the ex-combatants by their families and recipient communities. Certainly, family relationships invert the priorities once ensconced in the military order: emphasising personal and family wellbeing over the collective aims of the armed group. For both ex-guerrillas and ex-paramilitaries alike, tiredness of the war and the desire to reunite with or start a family were the primary motivation behind their demobilisation.

Moreover, the relationships with the receiving communities are defined by the efforts of the demobilised to hide their status and their past in the armed groups. Although some community workshops and activities were implemented by the ACR, their effectiveness in addressing the problems of integration and acceptance by the communities requires further evaluation. It was found that the demobilised tend not to take part in these activities for a variety of reasons, including lack of time and interest, and for fearing of being identified as ex-combatants. Invisibilisation, then, is a strategy to avoid security problems and rejection by the society, especially in the workplace. However, for those who have disclosed their situation, there is an equal possibility of being accepted or rejected. Strikingly, the demobilised feel accepted by their receiving communities or the victims of violence but rejected by wealthier sections of society and by employers. Ultimately, both victims and perpetrators tend to belong to the same communities that share experiences of poverty and marginalisation, thus they end up living in the same deprived areas and requesting the same services from the government. Given the fact that the Colombian conflict does not follow ethnic or racial lines, it is also frequent to witness family links between them. As a consequence, when designing a DDR programme it is important to recognise that this problem of rejection is not spread evenly. There are sections of society that may reject the demobilised, but there are communities and people who are keen to accept them and even help them. It is also worthy of mention that, in the Colombian case, this rejection seems to be stronger

among areas of society that could potentially provide them with jobs, which has a direct effect on their capacity to secure formal, stable income.

The ACR programme contributed to the creation and strengthening of these family and community links through its focus on psychological models that specifically addressed the cultivation of social fabric. Certainly, it could be argued that the former combatants will naturally seek out these family and community relationships, with or without the intervention of any state institution. It is important to bear in mind, too, that families and communities inevitably respond to their social and political context, and thus could be equally embedded in social relations that drive the individuals to accept or reject enrolment in or collaboration with the armed groups. Accordingly, it has been argued that the literature on DDR has placed too much of the responsibility for social reintegration on the willingness or capacity of the ex-combatants or the recipient communities. However, what clearly does trickle down from the state institutions is the critical responsibility for establishing democratic institutions and providing access and participation to the ex-combatants and the communities to which they belong.

The demobilised also reported a third type of relationship developed with their reintegration officers and psychosocial tutors. Although in the DDR literature these psychological services typically address mental health problems, in the ACR reintegration programme the psychosocial approach foregrounded the social as the key to unlocking perceptible changes in the individuals' behaviours. The therapeutic bonds forged with their tutors were positively valued for the majority of the demobilised, thanks to their support in a range of topics such as personal development, the creation of life-projects, family relationship-building and problem-solving in their everyday and domestic lives. In addition, the psychosocial services may have helped the ex-combatants to maintain stability and focus on their own personal social and psychological process of reintegration, particularly in the midst of a contested and uncertain political and legal context.

The creation of the ACR brought about the development of a unified model of reintegration and an adjoining bureaucracy trained to implement it nationwide. Although the construction of social ties between the demobilised and the ACR bureaucracy – and the latter's capacity to establish links of its own with state

institutions – has been largely overlooked, this research has instead highlighted it as a an area of foremost importance. More to the point, the design of the DDR should also include questions over who will be in charge of its implementation and its real capacity to transform the ways in which the demobilised relate to other people and to the state institutions. This is not to say that an army of psychologists should be summoned in all cases, but simply that more attention should be paid to the quality of the relationships between the DDR officials and the ex-combatants.

Finally, it was argued that the political dimension of reintegration has been largely neglected in the DDR literature. On the contrary, the political order is the essence of human nature: ultimately, we are "sempiternal citizens" (Spinoza, 2000:§2.15; Barbone and Rice, 2000:10). In this research, the usual approaches that highlight macro-level politics were found to have little relevance to this particular group of ex-combatants. Firstly, the transformation of paramilitary groups into political parties, or the incursion of paramilitary leaders into politics, proved unsuccessful due to a number of factors: their incapacity to consolidate a political platform; the continuation of criminal activities and the subsequent internecine struggles for power; their rejection at the national and international level due to the violence perpetrated against civilians; and the reaction of the judicial system against their criminal activities and their infiltration of the democratic institutions. In the case of the individually demobilised guerrillas, their position as deserters from the group left them with few possibilities of creating a macro-political project. Similarly, the ex-combatants were reluctant to create or participate in grass-roots organisations, which inhibited their ability to voice or represent their needs as a group. Finally, there were only a few mentions of traditional participation in democracy such as voting or collaborating with political campaigns, such channels would not seem to have defined their political reintegration either.

More significantly, political reintegration at the micro-level constitutes a crucial element in recalibrating loyalties to the armed group and shifting them towards the creation of links with the democratic institutions. Although there was widespread disappointment with the national authorities and near-constant complaints around the unfulfilled promises made by the government during the negotiation and demobilisation phases, the ex-combatants nonetheless retain a positive sense of their own personal reintegration process as well as high expectations regarding their own personal

development. Following Söderström's theory (2011), it was found that the ACR programme contributed to the creation of political subjectivity as citizens through the enabling of access to and interpretive mechanisms for democracy. On the one hand, the introduction of citizenship education as part of the workshops informed and trained the ex-combatants in a variety of democratic mechanisms and institutions that had not been previously available to them. In addition, their improvement in literacy and educational skills, and their migration to the cities, have also had a positive effect on their access to democracy. On the other, the replacement of vertical military hierarchies with horizontal and egalitarian relationships directly correlates to the internalization of social rules and the development of behaviours of self-control appropriate to a citizen identity.

The practice of multilateral organisms – and their implementation of DDR programmes in the context of international relations – has too often taken precedence over the political nature of DDR processes in the field. It is assumed that combatants should be transformed into *civilians* (with a certain level of social and economic capacity for non-military action), while the components needed to transform them into *citizens* (especially their building a workable relationship with the state) is often overlooked. If DDR programmes intend to contribute to the transformation of societies into democratic ones, the development of social and political links with the state must be prioritised. By contrast, in the absence of a democratic state that can guarantee the equality and protection of its citizens, the ex-combatants and their receiving communities are left with little option but to align themselves with the political and military forces that control the areas in which they live.

This research has questioned the common assumption in DDR literature that the ex-combatants have an innate tendency towards violence, as witnessed in their returning to the groups or in their entering into criminality. It has been argued that this assumption stems from the methodological individualism and the liberal doctrines that underpin the practice of the UN and the World Bank in their implementation of DDR programmes. Consequently, the former fighters are depicted as economically-motivated and utility-maximising individuals who are likely to turn to violence and criminality as a means of making a living.

In the Colombian DDR process, the ex-combatants do not necessarily pose a direct security risk. In reality, the rate of recidivism among the demobilised seems relatively low by comparison: around 15 per cent by official data (US, 2008:56; FIP, 2010:3; Procuraduría, 2011:12; Policía, 2010; CNRR, 2010:156). Similarly, their involvement in BACRIM is estimated at 17 per cent, which makes up for only 2 per cent of the total number of collectively demobilised troops (Árias and Guáqueta, 2008:5). Furthermore, when Law 1424 made it compulsory to activate their status as participants in the ACR programme – nine years after the demobilisations started – 24,643 (93 per cent) of the expected ex-combatants voluntarily approached the regional officers to do so (El Tiempo 29/12/11).

There are myriad reasons for people choosing to join paramilitary or rebel groups: including promises of money and employment; the allure of military life; and the prospect of social mobility, escaping from poverty and/or oppressive family structures[141]. However, once inside the group, these initial motivations may quickly fade away when confronted by the reality of the military life: the risk involved, the appalling living conditions and the strict military hierarchies. Withdrawal, however, is not an option as the armed groups have developed strategies to prevent mass desertion, threatening potential deserters and punishing those that do with death. In turn, although it is often assumed that the demobilised may look for a sense of continuity in the privileges enjoyed as a bearer of arms and power in front of the communities, this research posits, rather, that many ex-combatants perceived the demobilisations as a much sought-after opportunity to break away from the paramilitary or guerrilla structures and abandon the military life once and for all.

Although the debate around whether or not the BACRIM constitutes the continuation of the paramilitary structures post-demobilisation remains open, there is a further need to analyse the creation of criminal groups by those paramilitary leaders who did not demobilise and their subsequent recruitment of new combatants (CNRR, 2007). It is worthy of note, indeed, that Los Urabeños, one of the largest and most dangerous of the BACRIM was actually led by two former EPL guerrillas: the Úsuga brothers. On the one hand, when the EPL demobilised in 1991, most of its leaders took an active role in

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[141] For research on recruitment see Gutierrez (2004), Kalyvas and Arjona (2011), Ferro and Uribe (2002).

the democratic reforms that followed, and founded NGOs and think-tanks that have remained openly critical of the Colombian government for more than two decades[142]. On the other, however, in the area of Urabá the EPL entered into armed conflict with the FARC to gain power through the seizure of electoral positions and the mutual killing of members of the legal political parties formed by each group. In seeking protection against FARC military superiority, a number of EPL combatants chose not to demobilise and were instead recruited by the paramilitary groups formed at the time (Romero, 2004; Semana, 01/02/12). In particular, the Úsuga brothers held considerable sway over the paramilitary leadership, forging close ties to the drug barons from the Envigado Office in Medellín. They were also later involved in the internecine clashes among paramilitary groups, so that when the collective demobilisations began, they seized this opportunity to take control of those key drug-trafficking areas and corridors abandoned by their former allies.

As explored in the introduction, Colombia has a tradition of successful demobilisation processes that nevertheless have not brought the conflict to an end. Further research is required to gather more accurate data and to analyse the dynamics of recidivism. The evidence is clear around some combatants who demobilize but relapsed into other armed groups or criminal bands, or those who still refuse to demobilise altogether. Nonetheless, the example of the Úsuga brothers, rather than encapsulating the security risk posed by a substantial proportion of ex-combatants, points more specifically to the continuation of specific individuals moving across a variety of outlawed groups – first the guerrillas, then the paramilitaries and finally in criminality – who participate in a cycle of creation and demobilisation of armed groups across the country.

The analysis presented above casts a critical eye over the common assumptions in DDR literature and practice, which stem from principles rooted in economic models. Following the principles of social constructivism, this thesis has analysed DDR from the point of view of social and political relations, and has thus approached the problem of reintegration from the perspective of building a citizen identity. Rather than assuming the ex-combatants to be a source of insecurity in a post-conflict society, this thesis has

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[142] Remarkably these include Álvaro Villarraga and his foundation Democratic Culture; León Valencia has headed two important think-tanks, New Rainbow and Peace and Reconciliation. In 2005 New Rainbow research uncovered the para-politics scandal.

tried to understand the challenges they may face in becoming a member of a political community. It has found that the established "usual suspects" reasoning for the failure of reintegration – ex-combatant greed, rejection by the receiving communities – appears less significant when compared to the barriers imposed by the economic and political contexts that have traditionally marginalised the communities into which these fighters are born. Moreover, it is also important to reflect on the role that international organisations may themselves play in the perceived failure of reintegration, or of the DDR altogether: beneath their assumed technocratic facade there is in fact an element of entrenched political self-interest in the bargaining process of DDR design and implementation.

Further research will be needed to understand the dynamics of recidivism in at least two areas: firstly the real participation of former combatants in the creation or continuation of political groups or criminality, and secondly the non-economic motivations for recruitment into the armed groups. Another area for further analysis is the dynamics of rejection, and differentiating the groups that reject the demobilised from those that are willing to accept them. A third crucial point is the creation of a political relationship between the government and the ex-combatants, and defining what role the DDR bureaucracy would play within it. Finally, further comparative studies may focus on the differences of reintegration between members of different groups, such as the guerrillas and the paramilitaries in the case of Colombia. Among the people who participated in this research, for instance, the differences in their answers were not obviously linked to one group or the other.

Recommendations for the FARC peace process

A matter of days before this thesis was completed, the Colombian government and the FARC guerrilla negotiated a resolution to the armed conflict in the country. The final peace settlement includes six points that address a wide range of problems, including both security and development goals. The first point responds to the agrarian issue and the appalling living conditions of the peasantry in rural areas, which also includes questions over land reform and land restitution. The second examines issues of political participation, not restricted to FARC members but open to an array of grass-roots

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organisations and leaders from marginalised communities that have traditionally been targeted and killed for voicing their grievances. The third point – one of the last to be discussed – has three sections: the bilateral ceasing of hostilities and subsequent disarmament; the reincorporation to FARC members into civil life; and the guarantees of security, with particular reference to the fight against those criminal and paramilitary organisations responsible for attacks on human rights activists, political movements or social organisations. The fourth point looks at the drug-trafficking problem and the need to seek out alternatives to the prohibition policies that have thus far proved highly ineffective. The fifth explores how to recompense or mete out some form of justice to the victims from all sides of the conflict. The sixth point states the mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the agreements (Agreement, 2016). Returning to point three, this section presents recommendations specific to the reincorporation of the guerrillas into civil life.

Two components of the final peace settlement are of particular significance in light of this thesis. Firstly, although the director of the ACR was always present around the negotiating table on the part of the government, the ACR has played no part at all in the settlement. Secondly, throughout the final document the term "reincorporation" has been preferred over "reintegration" or "reinsertion", to the extent that a new institution – the National Council for Reincorporation (CNR)[143] – will be formed, bringing together two representatives of the government and two of the FARC. The function of the CNR will be to define the schedule and activities of the reincorporation, as well as monitoring it for both minors and adults alike (point 3.2.2.3). At this time there is no clarity on the extent to which the CNR will replace or collaborate with the ACR, or if it will recognise the experience and knowledge base of the antecedent reintegration institutions: in education, vocational training and psychological intervention. Arguably, this reflects FARC's outright rejection of an institution and programme that, in their opinion, was designed for the benefit of the paramilitary groups[144]. Certainly, the FARC and the paramilitaries were opposing groups, and their negotiation process was completely different. Nevertheless, the experience and expertise of the ACR and its personnel

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[143] Consejo Nacional de Reincorporación.

[144] This issue arose in a conversation I held with Francisco Gutierrez, a close advisor to the negotiating table.

should not be ignored, especially bearing in mind its extensive work in reintegrating former guerrilla members.

It is estimated that the FARC has less than 10,000 members. By contrast, the ACR has developed the capacity to attend to over 30,000 ex-combatants across 29 different regional offices. Clearly, then, the ACR has the resources and capacity to provide reintegration services to every FARC ex-combatant. Such nascent capability could readily be harnessed by the CNR, as the regional offices of the ACR retain their potential to make the state present in areas where other national and subnational institutions are absent or weak. Of course, the geography of the demobilisations would require some adjustment: while the paramilitary groups demobilised in the north-west, the traditional FARC strongholds are located in the south-east[145]. Nonetheless, the ACR could doubtless facilitate the opening of new regional offices, and train new staff, in those areas that have long stood at the margins of the state and in those communities that have long lived under FARC control.

As another example, in May this year the FARC announced that they would demobilise all minors belonging to its troops[146]. The total number of minors given, however, was only 21. Though clearly an underestimation, and despite widespread criticism and a request for confirmation from the ICBF director (El Espectador 27/08/16), the FARC have rigidly stuck to this figure. Equally concerning, on the point of the reincorporation of minors (3.2.2.5), there has been no mention whatsoever of the ICBF or its reintegration programme. Hence, in spite of their efforts to differentiate themselves and their negotiation process from the prior experiences of the ex-paramilitaries, the FARC is repeating the same mistake of denying the existence of children and young people within their troops. It is now the responsibility of the government, and the relevant national and international institutions, to increase the pressure on the FARC to include these minors in their records, and to officially demobilise them.

In addition, although the Mayoral Offices and other sub-national authorities are taking some part in the implementation of the agreements, more needs to be done to avoid the problems created by the demobilisations that took place during Uribe's government. In

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[145] Departments of Arauca, Casanare, Meta, Caquetá, Putumayo, Cauca, Nariño, Huila and Tolima.
[146] Public Statement No. 70. May 15 2016. https://www.mesadeconversaciones.com.co/

the long term, it is essential that these institutions are seen to articulate, collaborate and coordinate with the FARC leadership and central government in the reintegration of former combatants.

Regarding economic reintegration, it was established that a socioeconomic census will be conducted during the cantonment phase. It is hoped that the information gathered during the census will lead to improved business plans and more productive projects in future. In addition, each of the demobilised will be entitled to eight million pesos, to be invested either in a collective project (business associations) or in an individual project such as a small business or a house purchase (point 3.2.2.6). For the financial aid, a type of cooperative entitled ECOMUN will be created to foster economies based on solidarity and cooperation (point 3.2.2.1). Each ex-combatant will receive a lump sum of two million pesos immediately after the cantonment phase, and will be entitled to a monthly allowance – 90 per cent of the minimum wage – for a period of twelve months, after which the allowances will depend on their enrolment in and attendance of education courses (point 3.2.2.7). At first glance, then, these schemes resemble the financial management of the paramilitary economic reintegration; thus, the collective schemes need to be closely monitored and evaluated if they are to avoid the same problems that beset the Business Plans and the loss of Seed Capital that ensued.

For social reintegration, development work with the families and the communities will be required in the traditional FARC strongholds. However, it is also important to remember that the FARC has a long history of regulating social relationships at many levels, including acting as the judiciary in small community problems, marriages and divorces, as well as the control of hunting and fishing to prevent the exhausting of resources. The state will therefore need to systematically replace traditional FARC regulation with democratic action from its institutions. Moreover, these are remote locations with significant security problems, and a chronic lack of state institutional representation. The founding of public offices to provide a broad range of public services, then, is of the utmost importance to bringing successful reintegration and long-lasting peace to these areas. FARC members will also have to contend with strong attitudes of rejection, not necessarily from their communities of origin but from the middle and metropolitan classes. More work needs to be done to better connect the

demobilised with these sections of society, particularly with the private sector to mitigate their rejection from potential formal employment.

The FARC has announced that it will hold its tenth and final Conference as a rebel group in mid-September. The Conference agenda includes their transformation into a political party (FARC webpage). In exchange, the government has committed to providing financial support and security guarantees to aid the FARC's participation in legitimate politics. Amid much controversy, the settlement states that FARC leaders will receive five seats in the Senate and five in the Chamber of Representatives, spanning two Congress periods from 2018 onwards. There is no doubt, then, that the FARC will be demobilising as a group with a strong political agenda, and a clear intention of formally entering into Colombian politics. Furthermore, the FARC appears determined to maintain their vertical hierarchy throughout the proposed transition to democracy, even refusing to use the term "demobilisation" to describe the process. As explained earlier, this model of military organisation does not sit well within an electoral democratic system. As a result, although the social relationships that emerge from the military structure may be critical in providing support to the ex-combatants during their reintegration, both the FARC and the government should foresee that many of the combatants may want to fully break away from the group, rather than retaining their links with it. The CNR must also contemplate the provision of access on an individual level to the interpretive mechanisms for democracy. Courses on citizenship education – together with an overarching emphasis on equality among citizens – could be implemented, but failing to learn from the recent experiences of the ACR in that regard would be a missed opportunity at best.

Finally, although the peace settlement establishes a National Commission to Guarantee Security, and a corresponding scheme of security will be put in place (point 3.4.2), the security dilemma represents an important on-going issue specific to the demobilised. FARC demobilisation will inevitably change the balance of the political and military order in the areas in which they currently operate. As in the 1990s, protection for the demobilised requires a robust level of resource and capacity, both in the institutions and on the ground. Such an undertaking is also dependent on a full-bore shift in attitude by the armed forces in their commitment to provide security to those countrymen who were formerly their enemies.

Annex A. Interviews with reintegration officers

REINTEGRATION OFFICER	INSTITUTION	DATE	PLACE
Villamizar, Dario	PAPDRB former director	15/05/2012; 15/06/2012	Bogotá
Interview No. 16	ACR – SRU	21/10/2011	Bogotá
Interview No. 17	ACR	09/11/2011	Bogotá
Group Interview No. 18-19*	ACR – ERU	23/11/2011	Bogotá
Interview No. 20	ACR – CWU	28/11/2011	Bogotá
Interview No. 23	ACR	04/01/2012	Bogotá
Group Interview No. 24-25*	ACR – RPAU	13/02/2012	Bogotá
Police Liaison	Communitarian police	23/02/2012	Bogotá
Interview No. 27	PAPDRB	10/11/2011	Bogotá
Interview No. 28	PAPDRB	24/11/2011	Bogotá
Interview No. 30	Director PAPDRB	22/12/2011	Bogotá
Interview No. 31	PAPDRB	04/07/2012	Bogotá
Interview No. 46	Peace and Reconciliation	12/01/2012	Medellín
Interview No. 47	Peace and Reconciliation	19/01/2012	Medellín
Interview No. 48	Peace and Reconciliation	16/01/2012	Medellín
Group Interview No. 49-51*	Peace and Reconciliation	20/01/2012	Medellín
Interview No. 53	Peace and Reconciliation	20/01/2012	Medellín
Interview No. 54	Peace and Reconciliation	24/01/2012	Medellín
Group Interview Teachers (x3)*	CEPAR	22/01/2012	Medellín
Interview No. 66	CEPAR	26/01/2012	Medellín
Interview No. 73	Regional Office Cúcuta	14/03/2012	Cúcuta
Group Interview No. 75-77*	Regional Office Cúcuta	14/03/2012	Cúcuta
Interview No. 90	Regional Office Bucaramanga	19/04/2012	Bucaramanga
Interview No. 93	Regional Office Bucaramanga	18/04/2012	Bucaramanga
Interview No. 94	Regional Office Bucaramanga	17/04/2012	Bucaramanga
Interview No. 95	Regional Office Bucaramanga	20/04/2012	Bucaramanga
Interview No. 96	Regional Office Bucaramanga	20/04/2012	Bucaramanga
Interview No. 97	Regional Office Bucaramanga	19/04/2012	Bucaramanga

Interview No. 106	Regional Office Cartagena	07/05/2012	Cartagena
Interview No. 107	Regional Office Cartagena	07/05/2012	Cartagena
Interview No. 108	Regional Office Cartagena	09/05/2012	Cartagena
Interview No. 109	Regional Office Cartagena	08/05/2012	Cartagena
Interview No. 119	Regional Office Barranquilla	11/05/2012	Barranquilla
Interview No. 120	Regional Office Barranquilla	10/05/2012	Barranquilla
Interview No. 121	Regional Office Barranquilla	10/05/2012	Barranquilla
Interview No. 122	Regional Office Barranquilla	10/05/2012	Barranquilla
Interview No. 128	Regional Office Sincelejo	04/06/2012	Sincelejo
Interview No. 129	Regional Office Sincelejo	05/06/2012	Sincelejo
Interview No. 130	Regional Office Sincelejo	06/06/2012	Sincelejo
Interview No. 131	Regional Office Sincelejo	04/06/2012	Sincelejo
Interview No. 132	Regional Office Sincelejo	04/06/2012	Sincelejo
Interview No. 141	Regional Office Montería	21/06/2012	Montería
Interview No. 143	Regional Office Montería	21/06/2012	Montería
Interview No. 144	Regional Office Montería	19/06/2012	Montería
Interview No. 145	Regional Office Montería	19/06/2012	Montería
Interview No. 146	Regional Office Montería	21/06/2012	Montería
Interview No. 147	Regional Office Montería	21/06/2012	Montería
Interview No. 148	Regional Office Montería	19/06/2012	Montería
Interview No. 154	Regional Office Yopal	16/07/2012	Yopal
Interview No. 155	Regional Office Yopal	17/07/2012	Yopal
Interview No. 156	Regional Office Yopal	16/07/2012	Yopal
Interview No. 157	Regional Office Yopal	16/07/2012	Yopal
Interview No. 158	Regional Office Yopal	17/07/2012	Yopal
Interview No. 159	Regional Office Yopal	17/07/2012	Yopal

* The officers requested to answer my interview in group.

Annex B. Interviews and focus groups with the ex-combatants

METHOD	DATE	PLACE	MEN	WOMEN
Interview No. 1	09/07/2012	Bogotá	1	0
Interview No. 2	11/07/2012	Bogotá	0	1
Interview No. 28	14/07/2012	Bogotá	1	0
Focus Group No. 30	07/07/2012	Bogotá	1	1
Focus Group No. 31	11/07/2012	Bogotá	2	0
Focus Group No. 32	07/07/2012	Bogotá	5	0
Focus Group No. 1	19/01/2012	Medellín	4	0
Focus Group No. 2	22/01/2012	Medellín	0	2
Focus Group No. 3	22/01/2012	Medellín	3	0
Focus Group No. 4	22/01/2012	Medellín	4	0
Focus Group No. 5	22/01/2012	Medellín	5	0
Interview No. 3	20/01/2012	Medellín	0	1
Interview No. 4	26/01/2012	Medellín	0	1
Focus Group No. 8	14/03/2012	Cúcuta	3	1
Interview No. 5 *False demobilised	15/03/2012	Cúcuta	1	0
Focus Group No. 9	15/03/2012	Cúcuta	3	0
Focus Group No. 10	15/03/2012	Cúcuta	2	1
Interview No. 6	15/03/2012	Cúcuta	0	1
Interview No. 7	16/03/2012	Cúcuta	1	0
Interview No. 8	16/03/2012	Cúcuta	1	0
Interview No. 9	16/03/2012	Cúcuta	1	0
Focus Group No. 11	16/03/2012	Cúcuta	3	0
Focus Group No. 13	16/04/2012	Bucaramanga	3	1
Focus Group No. 14	17/04/2012	Bucaramanga	5	0
Focus Group No. 15	18/04/2012	Bucaramanga	1	0
Focus Group No. 30	16/04/2012	Bucaramanga	2	0
Focus Group No. 16	19/04/2012	Bucaramanga	4	0
Interview No. 10	07/05/2012	Cartagena	1	0
Interview No. 11	07/05/2012	Cartagena	1	0
Interview No. 12	07/05/2012	Cartagena	1	1
Interview No. 13	07/05/2012	Cartagena	0	1
Focus Group No. 17	08/05/2012	Cartagena	2	1
Focus Group No. 18	08/05/2012	Cartagena	3	1
Interview No. 14	08/05/2012	Cartagena	1	0
Interview No. 15	08/05/2012	Cartagena	1	0
Focus Group No. 19	10/05/2012	Barranquilla	3	1

Focus Group No. 20	11/05/2012	Barranquilla	4	0
Interview No. 16	11/05/2012	Barranquilla	1	0
Focus Group No. 21	11/05/2012	Barranquilla	3	0
Interview No. 17	11/05/2012	Barranquilla	1	0
Interview No. 18	04/06/2012	Sincelejo	1	0
Interview No. 19	04/06/2012	Sincelejo	1	0
Interview No. 20	04/06/2012	Sincelejo	0	1
Interview No. 21	04/06/2012	Sincelejo	0	1
Interview No. 22	04/06/2012	Sincelejo	1	0
Interview No. 23	04/06/2012	Sincelejo	0	1
Focus Group No. 22	05/06/2012	Sincelejo	6	0
Focus Group No. 23	05/06/2012	Sincelejo	9	0
Interview No. 24	19/06/2012	Montería	1	0
Interview No. 25	20/06/2012	Montería	1	0
Focus Group No. 24	20/06/2012	Montería	5	0
Focus Group No. 25	21/06/2012	Montería	3	0
Focus Group No. 26	21/06/2012	Montería	2	0
Focus Group No. 27	16/07/2012	Yopal	2	0
Interview No. 26	17/07/2012	Yopal	0	1
Interview No. 27	18/07/2012	Yopal	1	0
Focus Group No. 28	18/07/2012	Yopal	4	2
Focus Group No. 29	18/07/2012	Yopal	7	0
Grass-roots No. 1 Líderes de Paz	27/02/2012	Bogotá	1	0
Grass-roots No. 2 Fundacion Andes	04/07/2012	Bogotá	1	0
Grass-roots No. 3 Mesa de Trabajo	04/07/2012	Bogotá	1	0
Grass-roots No. 4 Mesa de Trabajo	09/07/2012	Bogotá	0	1
Grass-roots No. 5 Escuela Deportiva	19/04/2012	Bucaramanga	1	0
Grass-roots No. 6 Semillas de Paz	18/04/2012	Bucaramanga	1	0
Total			131	22

* Interview No. 5 not included in the total or in the analysis

Annex C. Interviews with IOM contractors and experts

CONTRACTOR/ EXPERT	INSTITUTION	DATE	PLACE
Interview No. 87	IOM	16/03/2012	Cúcuta
Interview No. 88	IOM	11/04/2012	Bogotá
Interview No. 91	IOM	17/04/2012	Bucaramanga
Interview No. 92	IOM	17/04/2012	Bucaramanga
Luis Miranda	MAPP	11/04/2012	Bogotá
Arturo Zea	CNRR	09/05/2012	Cartagena
Markus Schultze	Sussex University	15/08/2011	UK
Camilo Echandía	Externado University	06/03/2012	Bogotá
Álvaro Villarraga	Democratic Culture Foundation	04/07/2012	Bogotá
José Armando Cárdenas	Independent Researcher	15/07/2012	Bogotá
Víctor Negrete	Sinu University	07/06/2012	Montería

Annex D. Instruments.

Focus groups and interviews of ex-combatants

Date:

Place:

Type of Demobilisation: Individual   Collective

Gender:

1. Personally, what do you expect from the reintegration process?
2. What kind of problems have you faced during the reintegration process?
3. What is your opinion of the psycho-social workshops?
4. What is your opinion of other workshops (economic or community-based)?
5. Have you participated in any associations of demobilised?
6. Have you had any political participation? Are you interested in taking part in politics?
7. When you have a complaint about the reintegration programme, who do you talk to?
8. Why did you decided to demobilise?
9. What was the reason you joined that particular group in the first place?
10. Why do you think other people, or you yourself, would rejoin an armed group?
11. What do you expect from the authorities (municipal or national) regarding the reintegration process?
12. Have you received any help from other institutions, such as NGOs?
13. Do you feel accepted by the recipient communities? Have you had any problems?
14. Have you faced any security issues due to the demobilisation?
15. What do you value the most about your new life as a civilian?
16. Did you learn something in the groups that is useful to you now? Is there anything you miss?

Interview of reintegration officers

Date:

Place:

To/from:

Position:

1. What is the formal process you follow to provide services to the ex-combatants?
2. What problems do you find are more common among the demobilised?
   *Focusing on your field of expertise (psycho-social, economic, community reintegration)
3. How do you assess the progress of the ex-combatants in the programme?
4. Of the people you have worked with, how many would you estimate have had a successful reintegration process, and what factors have you found contributed to their success?
5. How do you deal with the hierarchies the demobilised had in the armed groups?
6. Do you find differences in the reintegration process between collective and individual demobilisations?
7. What is the level of political participation among ex-combatants?
8. Do they participate in political parties? Or grass-root organisations?
9. How does the ACR promote the use of citizen rights or democratic mechanisms?
10. Do the recipient communities accept or reject the demobilised?
11. Does this Regional Office outsource work to third parties to provide services to the demobilised?
12. How are the relations between this Regional Office and other public offices (Mayor's or Governor's Offices)?
13. How are the relations between this Regional Office and the ACR central office?
14. How do you deal with those who are not real combatants, or those from the false demobilisations?
15. How do you deal with the security problems that come with the demobilised?

Annex E. Timeline of the negotiations and the demobilisation process.

DATE	EVENT
May 2001	Carlos Castaño resigns from the AUC (but this is only made known in June).
10/09/2001	AUC is included in the list of "foreign terrorist organisations" by the US.
07/02/2002	Letter from the AUC to the presidential candidates asking to negotiate with the winner of the presidential elections.
03/05/2002	AUC is included in the list of terrorist organisations by the European Union.
July 2002	Carlos Castaño resigns from the AUC for the second time.
05/08/2002	Colombia signs the Rome Treaty. However, it will not be implemented for another seven years.
07/08/2002	Alvaro Uribe takes the oath as President.
01/09/2002	Extradition orders by the US for Carlos Castaño and Salvatore Mancuso.
04/09/2002	The AUC is re-established in order to negotiate with government. Letter from the AUC to Luis Carlos Restrepo, Monseñor Pedro Rubiano, Ann Paterson, Kofi Annan.
16/10/2002	Military Operation Orion in Medellín, Comuna 13.
October 2002	Agreement to start dialogues between the Colombian government and the paramilitary leaders.
November 2002	Beginning of the negotiations.
29/11/2002	Letter by the AUC announcing the cessation of hostilities, to start on 1st December, 2002.
December 2002	Central Bolivar Bloc announces hostilities will cease as of 5th December, 2002.
08/12/2002	The Western Alliance calls halt to hostilities from December 2002. This includes the Peasant Self-Defenses of Casanare and of Meta and Vichada.
23/12/2002	Law 782 is enacted. Rules to allow the government to pursue dialogues and agreements with illegal armed groups in order to achieve their demobilisation and reconciliation and peace among Colombians.
23/12/2002	The government appoints the Exploratory Commission.
22/01/2003	First meeting between government and paramilitary leaders. Elmer Cárdenas Bloc withdraws from the negotiating table.
13/02/2003	The paramilitary leaders sign an agreement of mutual enforcement to not abandon the negotiations, for fear the other leaders will gain control over their territory and troops.
21/03/2003	End of the third round of dialogs. Public Communicate.
03 to 27/06/2003	Paramiltary groups demobilise 69 minor combatants and hand them over to the ICBF.
25/06/2003	The Exploratory Commission publishes a report recommending the pursuit of negotiations with the paramilitary groups. The exploratory phase finishes and the negotiation phase starts.

15/07/2003	Ralito Agreement (Ralito I). Demobilisation of Cacique Nutibara Bloc.
21/08/2003	Bill of Alternative Penalty is introduced by the government to Congress.
08/11/2003	Central Bolivar Bloc and Vencedores de Arauca Bloc agree to demobilise and concentrate their troops.
25/11/2003	Cacique Nutibara Bloc demobilises.
04/12/2003	Peasant Self-Defenses of Magdalena Medio agree to concentrate their troops.
07/12/2003	Ortega Peasant Self-Defenses demobilise.
10/12/2003	La Ceja Agreement sets out the rules for the reinsertion of Cacique Nutibara Bloc.
23/01/2004	The OAE and the Colombian government sign the agreement for the creation of the Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP/OEA).
29/01/2004	Agreement with the Western Alliance, named the "South Casanare Agreement".
31/03/2004	The four negotiating tables are unified.
16/04/2004	Carlos Castaño disappears.
13/05/2004	Fátima Agreement defines the Concentration Zones as of 15 June 2004; also known as Ralito II.
28/05/2004	Carlos Fernández (aka Double 0; aka Rodrigo Franco), leader of Metro Bloc, is murdered.
01/06/2004	Senator Jorge Gnecco is kidnapped by Rodrigo Tovar Pupo (aka Jorge 40).
15/06/2004	Bill of Alternative Penalty is withdrawn.
15/06/2004	The negotiations are enacted.
01/07/2004	Opening of the Concentration Zone in Ralito. The negotiations formally begin.
29/07/2004	Speech before Congress by the paramiltiary leaders Salvatore Mancuso, Iván Duque and Ramon Isaza.
30/07/2004	Last negotiation with the Western Alliance finishes in no agreement.
12/08/2004	Letter by the AUC announcing the demobilisation of the Western Plains and the North and Bananero Blocs.
08/09/2005	Elmer Cárdenas Bloc declares ceasefire and accepts the negotiation.
01/09/2004	New rules for the economic benefits given to the demobilised.
16/09/2004	The Supreme Court authorises the extradition to the US of paramilitary leader Juan Carlos Sierra.
19/09/2004	Miguel Arroyave, leader of Centauros Bloc, is murdered.
25/09/2004	Secret recordings of the negotiations are leaked by the political journal _Semana_.
26/09/2004	Uribe authorises the extradition of Juan Carlos Sierra.
07/10/2004	Public Letter by the AUC, "An act of faith in the peace", announcing future demobilisations.
24/11/2004	The Supreme Court authorises the extradition of paramiltiary leaders Carlos Castaño, Salvatore Mancuso and guerrilla leader Simon Trinidad.

25/11/2004	Bananero Bloc demobilises.
10/12/2004	Catatumbo Bloc demobilises, led by Salvatore Mancuso.
01/11/2004	Congress members visit Ralito.
25/11 to 18/12/2004	Demobilisation of five structures: Bananero Bloc, Self-Defenses of Magdalena e Islas de San Fernando, Cundinamarca Bloc, Catatumbo Bloc and Calima Bloc.
03/02/2005	Bill of Truth, Justice and Reparation introduced by members of Congress.
09/02/2005	Bill of Justice, Peace and Reparation introduced by the government.
18/01 to 23/12/2005	Demobilisation of 16 paramilitary structures.
18/02/2005	Bill of Restorative Justice introduced by Congress members.
11/04/2005	Politician Orlando Benitez is murdered close to Ralito.
22/05/2005	Warrant of arrest for Don Berna. He surrenders to the authorities on 27 May.
15/06/2005	Héroes de Tolová Bloc demobilises, led by Don Berna.
22/06/2005	Law 975 of Justice and Peace is approved by Congress.
16/11/2005	FARC structure Front Milicias Urbanas Norma Patricia Galeano demobilises (24 members).
20/01 to 15/08/2006	Demobilisation of 14 paramilitary structures.
07/03/2006	False FARC structure Compañia Cacica Gaitana demobilises (the group was not discovered to be false until 2011).
12/04/2006	Elmer Cárdenas Bloc demobilises.
18/05/2006	The Supreme Court declares Law 975 constitutional, but makes significant amendments.
07/08/2006	Alvaro Uribe takes the oath for his second term as President.
14/08/2006	Uribe orders the paramilitary leaders to surrender to prison sentences.
15/08/2006	Last paramilitary demobilisations of Elmer Cárdenas Bloc troops.
16/08/2006	Paramilitary leaders enter a recreational centre adapted as a jail in La Ceja, Antioquia.
September 2006	High Commission for Reintegration is created (ACR).
23/11/2006	Paramilitary leaders request a Truth Commission.
01/12/2006	Paramilitary leaders are transferred from La Ceja to a high-security prison in Itagui.
14/02/2007	The reintegration process is extended, but no time limits are established.
04/06/2007	FARC members in jail demobilise.
24/08/2007	Paramilitary leaders Don Berna and aka Macaco are transferred to Cómbita jail.
20/09/2007	FARC structure Milicias Urbanas de Florida demobilises.
13/05/2008	14 paramilitary leaders are extradited to the US.

Annex F. Present situation of the paramilitary leaders

NAME	AKA	DEMOBILISED STRUCTURE	DATE OF DEMOBILISATION	PRESENT SITUATION
Carlos Castaño		None		Killed
Giovanni Jesús Marín Zapata	Comandante R	Bloc Cacique Nutibara	25/11/2003	Jail
Fabio Orlando Acevedo	Don Fabio	Bloc Cacique Nutibara	25/11/2003	Jail
Ruvinder and Lizardo Jair Becoche		Peasant Self-Defenses of Ortega	07/12/2003	Law 975
Ever Veloza García	HH	Bloc Bananero, Bloc Calima	25/11/2004	Extradited
José María Barrera Ortíz	Chepe Barrera	Self-Defenses of South Magdalena and San Fernando Island	04/12/2004	Extradited
Luis Eduardo Cifuentes	El Aguila	Bloc Cundinamarca	09/12/2004	Law 975
Salvatore Mancuso	Triple 0	Bloc Catatumbo, Bloc Córdoba	10/12/2004	Extradited
Alcides de Jesús Durango	Rene	Bloc South-East Antioquia	30/01/2005	Jail
Eder Pedraza Peña	Ramon Mojana	Bloc Mojana	02/02/2005	Extradited
Diego Fernando Murillo Bejarano	Don Berna, Adolfo Paz	Bloc Héroes de Tolová; Bloc Libertadores del Sur	15/06/2005	Extradited
Édwar Cobos Téllez	Diego Vecino	Bloc Montes de María	14/07/2005	Law 975
Carlos Mario Jiménez Naranjo	Javier Montañez, Macaco	Bloc Central Bolivar	30/07/2005	Extradited
Rodrigo Pérez Alzate	Julian Bolivar	Bloc Libertadores del Sur, Front Vichada del BCB	30/07/2005	Law 975
Daniel Alberto Mejía Ángel	Danielito	Bloc Héroes de Granada	30/07/2005	Law 975
José Baldomero Linares	Guillermo Torres	Peasant Self-Defenses of Meta and Vichada	01/08/2005	Law 975
Luis Eduardo Echavarria Durango	Jhonatan	Bloc Pacific	23/08/2005	Killed
José Vicente Castaño Gil	El Profe	Bloc Centauros	03/09/2005	Killed
Luis Arnulfo Tuberquia	Memin	Bloc North-East Antioquia	11/09/2005	Jail
Diego José Martínez Goyeneche	Daniel	Bloc Tolima	22/10/2005	Killed
Miguel Mejía Múnera	El Mellizo, Pablo Arauca	Bloc Vencedores de Arauca	23/12/2005	Extradited
Ramiro Vanoy Murillo	Cuco Vanoy	Bloc Mineros	20/01/2006	Extradited

Arnubio Triana Mahecha	Botalón	Peasant Self-Defenses of Puerto Boyacá	28/01/2006	Law 975
Hernán Giraldo Serna	El Patrón	Front Resistencia Tayrona	03/02/2006	Extradited
Ramón Isaza Arango	El Viejo	Peasant Self-Defenses of Magdalena Medio	07/02/2006	Law 975
Juan Francisco Prada	Juancho Prada	Front Julio Peinado Becerra	04/03/2006	Law 975
Rodrigo Tovar Pupo	Jorge 40	Bloc North	08/03/2006	Extradited
Manuel de Jesús Piraban	Pirata	Fronts Héroes del Llano and Héroes del Guaviare	11/04/2006	Law 975
Pedro Oliverio Guerrero Castillo	Cuchillo	Fronts Héroes del Llano and Héroes del Guaviare	11/04/2006	Killed
Fredy Rendón Herrera	El Alemán	Front Costanero; Fronts Pavarandó and Dabeiba; Front Norte Medio Salaquí	12/04/2006	Law 975

*Those in jail are being judged by criminal law, meaning they will not be released in the near future

Annex G. What kind of problems have you faced during the reintegration process?

What kind of problems have you faced during the reintegration process?	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
Unemployment	16	13	3	2	0	2	na	2	4	4	1	1	22	9	5	8	3	3	3	3	2	1	2	2	3
Government's Management of the Reintegration	5	4	1	1	0	1	na	0	2	1	0	0	15	9	2	4	2	1	1	3	2	1	2	2	1
No problem	12	8	4	1	0	4	na	0	2	3	1	1	10	5	4	1	1	3	3	0	1	0	0	2	0
Problems in adapting	1	0	1	0	1	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	0	2	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	0
Security issues	0	0	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	2	2	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Other demobilized have abused of the aid	3	1	2	1	0	0	na	1	0	1	0	0	5	3	1	1	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	0

What kind of problems have you faced during the reintegration process?	ANSWERS
Unemployment	Clashes with attending the ACR workshops.
	Rejection and discrimination in the workplace.
	Unresolved judicial situation or lack of legal documents.
	Low levels of education. Lack of training.
	Poor general economic situation.
Government's Management of the Reintegration Programme	Seed Capital: they lost the money in the scams; the money was too little; the new requirements are impediments; there was constant change in the policy.
	Administrative or bureaucratic problems with the ACR.
	Low standards in the aid given.
	Low standards in healthcare.
	The government never fulfilled its promises of jobs, the Seed Plan and housing.
No problem	They have never encountered any problems.
Problems in adapting	Getting used to life in the city is difficult.
Abuses from ex-combatants	There were abuses from other demobilised in the use of reintegration aid.
Security issues	They have received death threats.
	Their families live in unsafe areas, so they cannot meet.
	May be in risk of be killed if confessing crimes

Annex H. Motivation for no recidivism

They do not want to join again an armed group because…	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
Family	4	4	0	1	0	1	na	0	1	1	0	0	11	5	1	5	1	1	2	0	3	1	1	1	1
War was a negative experience	3	3	0	1	0	0	na	1	1	0	0	0	8	5	0	3	0	1	2	1	2	0	1	1	0
Security reasons	2	2	0	0	0	0	na	0	1	0	0	1	5	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0
Group loss of ideals	0	0	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Reintegration Programme has helped	3	3	0	0	0	3	na	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

They do not want to join again an armed group because…	ANSWERS
Family	They want to stay with their families.
War was a negative experience	War was a negative experience and they wanted a change.
	They do not want to lose their freedom.
	Being a combatant is a hard life.
Security reasons	They can be killed or imprisoned.
	Their families may be targeted by their enemies.
	They do not want to go to jail for breaking the law, they know they will lose any legal favour.
Group loss of ideals	The group lost its ideology and became a purely economic enterprise.
Reintegration programme	The psicosocial workshops or the ACR have convinced them of not going back.

Annex I. Motivation for recidivism

Other people may join back the armed group because…	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
Unemployment or economic reasons	8	7	1	1	0	2	na	0	2	3	0	0	9	6	1	2	0	1	1	3	0	0	2	1	1
Allure of criminal life	7	6	1	0	0	1	na	1	2	2	1	0	8	5	0	3	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	2	1
The government made promises that were never fulfilled	0	0	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	6	3	0	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	1
Fear of going to jail under law 1424	0	0	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	2	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0
Security reasons	1	1	0	0	0	1	na	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Other demobilised may join back the armed group because…	ANSWERS
Unemployment or Economic reasons	Unemployment or economic needs drive people back to the armed groups.
Allure of criminal life	They like the lifestyle in the criminal groups.
	They do not want to make the effort to change their way of life.
Unfulfilled promises	The government made promises that were never fulfilled.
Law 1424	Fear of going to jail under law 1424.
Security reasons	They may have death threats due to "unfinished business", thus laying down arms puts them at risk .

Annex J. Did you learn something in the groups that is useful to you now? Is there anything you miss?

	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
Did you learn something in the groups that is useful to you now? Is there anything you miss?	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barrranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barrranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
Negative experience/ Nothing	16	13	3	1	0	3	na	0	4	6	2	0	12	8	0	4	0	0	1	2	2	1	2	1	3
They learned some discipline or other skills	10	7	3	2	1	3	na	1	1	1	0	1	13	5	4	4	3	1	1	1	0	2	2	2	1
Positive experience	3	3	0	1	0	1	na	1	0	0	0	0	5	3	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Social networks	4	3	1	0	0	1	na	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0

Did you learn something in the groups that is useful to you now? Is there anything you miss?	ANSWERS
Negative experience/ Nothing	It was a negative experience. They learned nothing that can be used in their life as civilians.
	They feel better out of the group, they enjoy freedom and prefer their new style of life.
They learned some discipline or other skills.	They learned some discipline or other skills.
	They learned to handle weapons.
Positive experience	They had some privileges or did not have to worry about their daily expenditure.
	They had a salary or some privilieges.
	They still sympathise to a degree with the ideology.
Social networks	They miss people who they meet in the group.

Annex K. Motivations for demobilising (Paramilitaries).

Why did you decided to demobilize? (Paramilitaries)	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
Commander's order	9	9	0	1	0	0	na	1	3	3	1	0	15	11	0	4	0	0	2	4	2	2	2	3	0
Fatigue from the war	7	7	0	1	0	2	na	0	1	3	0	0	3	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Family	4	4	0	0	0	2	na	0	2	0	0	0	4	3	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
Commanders' treath	1	1	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
Government Promises	1	1	0	0	0	0	na	0	1	0	0	0	3	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Captured	1	1	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Why did you decided to demobilise?.	ANSWERS
Commander's orders	The commanders gave them the order.
Fatigue from the war	Commanders gave them the order, but they also were tired of the war, they already wanted to leave.
Family	They wanted to settle down and stay with their families.
	They wanted to create a family.
	They missed a family member .
Commander's threat	The commanders threatened them and made demobilise.
Government promises	The government promised jobs, money and houses.
Captured	They were captured and opted for the reintegration programme to avoid jail.

Annex L. Motivations for demobilizing (Guerrillas)

Why did you decided to demobilize?. Individual demobilization guerrillas	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barrranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barrranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
Fatigue from the war/ problems inside the guerrilla	5	0	5	1	1	0	na	0	0	2	0	1	8	1	3	4	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Family	3	0	3	1	1	0	na	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Captured	0	0	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	3	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Sick	0	0	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forced abortion	1	0	1	0	1	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

Why did you decided to demobilise?.	ANSWERS
Tiredness of the war	Disappointment from the group or problems inside the guerrilla.
Family	They wanted to settle down and stay with their families.
	They wanted to create a family.
	They missed a family member .
Sick	He was ill and decided to demobilise.
Captured	They were captured and opted for the reintegration programme to avoid jail.
Women – Forced abortion	Forced abortions for unauthorised pregnancies

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Annex M. What do you value the most?

What do you value the most about your new life as civilian?	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
Family and community bonds	19	12	7	3	2	2	na	1	4	4	1	2	23	9	4	10	1	4	4	3	3	2	1	2	3
Personal development	7	6	1	1	0	1	na	2	2	0	1	0	14	3	4	7	2	2	3	2	1	1	0	1	2
Freedom	3	3	0	0	0	1	na	0	2	0	0	0	9	2	3	4	1	3	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
Life	2	2	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	2	0	0	8	4	0	4	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	1
Negative. Unfulfilled promises from the government	0	0	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

What do you value the most about your new life as civilian?	ANSWERS
Family and community bonds	They have created a family or established community bonds. They have learned to respect other people.
	They have re-connected with family.
Personal development	They have improved their quality of life or achieved education and woking skills.
	They have learned self-control and self-esteem.
	They are grateful for having the opportunity to change their lives.
Freedom	They are now free from the rules and hierarchies of the group.
	Free from the harshness of life in the forest.
Life	They are grateful to be alive.
	They value the lives of other people.
Negative	Unfulfilled promises from the government: they were promised jobs, the Seed Plan and housing that never came to reality.

	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
Do you feel accepted by the recipient communities? Have you had any problems with them?	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
Hiding their past	16	10	6	2	2	2	na	1	5	2	1	1	23	10	6	7	3	3	4	4	2	1	2	2	2
Acceptance	8	6	2	1	0	1	na	0	1	2	1	2	16	7	2	7	1	1	4	1	2	1	1	2	3
Rejection	5	2	3	0	0	0	na	1	0	4	0	0	15	7	3	5	1	2	2	3	1	2	2	1	1
Acceptance depends	9	5	4	2	1	2	na	1	1	2	0	0	9	5	1	3	0	1	2	0	1	1	2	0	2

Do you feel accepted by the recipient communities? Have you had any problems with them?	ANSWERS
Hiding their past	They hide their past for security reasons or to avoid being fired at work.
	They feel accepted by their immediate community, but people are unaware they are ex-combatants.
Acceptance	They feel accepted by their immediate community and people know they are ex-combatants.
Rejection	They feel rejected by their immediate community because they are ex-combatants.
Acceptance depends on	Depends on their own behaviour.
	Some people accept them knowing their past in the armed groups, others do not.
	Depends on their location: acceptance comes differently in the countryside to cities and non-immediate communities.
Forgiveness iniatives	They have organized public events to ask for forgiveness.

Annex O. When you have a complaint about the reintegration programme, who do you talk to?

When you have a complaint about the reintegration programme, who do you talk to?	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
Tutor	12	9	3	1	0	2	na	1	2	3	2	1	16	7	3	6	1	2	1	3	3	2	1	1	2
Regional Office	4	3	1	0	0	0	na	0	1	3	0	0	8	3	0	5	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	1	2
Tutor or ACR Regional Office vs. ACR national office	4	4	0	0	0	0	na	0	2	1	1	0	7	3	0	4	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	2
Do not have any	5	4	1	1	1	1	na	0	2	0	0	0	4	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
No one listens	1	0	1	0	0	0	na	1	0	0	0	0	6	3	2	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
Fiscal Office	0	0	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

When you have a complaint about the reintegration programme, who do you talk to?	ANSWERS
The tutor	Talk to the tutor
Regional Office	Go to the ACR regional office
Tutor or ACR Regional Office vs. ACR national office	Positive perception of the tutor, negative perception of the Regional Office
	Positive perception of the Regional Office, negative of the ACR
Do not have any	Does not have any complaint so far
No one listens	There is no point in complaining.
Fiscal Office	They filed a complaint with the Fiscal Office

Annex P. How do you find the psychosocial services?

How do you find the psycho-social services?	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
Positive	26	18	8	3	2	4	na	2	5	6	2	2	27	12	5	10	2	4	4	4	3	2	2	3	3
Negative	1	1	0	0	0	0	na	0	1	0	0	0	7	4	2	1	2	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0
Disagreements	1	0	1	1	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
It depends on	0	0	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Control	1	0	1	0	0	0	na	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

How do you find the psychosocial services?	ANSWERS
Positive	Changing mentality.
	Improving socialising skills.
	Providing guidance in their new life experience and help them in improving their personal situation.
	Telling them how to behave.
	Overcoming PSTD or mental illness.
Negative	Are boring.
	Did not help.
	There was a lack of empathy or they had problems with the psychologist.
Disagreements	Had discussions or disagreements with the psychologist.
It depends on	On the attitude you have or on the personal relationship with the tutors.
Control	Attendance of the workshops is compulsory in order to control them.

Annex Q. Have you had any political participation?

Have you had any political participation? Are you interested in taking part in politics?	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
They do not want to participate in politics at the national level	13	10	3	2	1	2	na	1	3	2	1	1	24	10	5	9	2	4	3	4	3	2	2	2	2
There is some participation at the grass-roots level, ONGs or in JACs or JALs	5	3	2	1	0	0	na	1	1	2	0	0	8	3	2	3	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
They participate as citizens	10	7	3	0	1	3	na	0	2	2	1	1	9	5	2	2	0	3	2	2	0	0	0	2	0

Have you had any political participation? Are you interested in taking part in politics?	ANSWERS
They do not want to participate in politics at the national level	Politics is corrupt.
	Better to avoid being visible.
	Unresolved legal situation.
	Lack of leadership.
There is some participation at the grass-roots level or in JACs or JALs	In Local or Community Committees (JACs or JALs).
	Association of demobilised population.
They participate as citizens	Demonstrate some interest in citizenship mechanisms and voting.
	Participating in political campaigns.

Annex R. What expectations do you have of the authorities?

	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
What expectations do you have of the authorities	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
To fulfil the promises made	9	7	2	2	0	0	na	0	3	2	1	1	16	8	3	5	2	2	1	2	2	0	2	3	2
Solve their judicial situation	6	3	3	0	1	1	na	0	0	3	1	0	6	1	0	5	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	2
Corrupt	2	1	1	0	0	0	na	2	0	0	0	0	5	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Nothing	1	0	1	0	1	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
To continue the reintegration programme	5	4	1	1	0	2	na	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
To provide welfare to the citizens	4	4	0	1	0	2	na	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

What expectations do you have of the authorities?	ANSWERS
Promises from the government	The government did not satisfy the expectations created for obtaining economic aid, the productive projects and the Seed Capital.
	They were promised more help to get houses and jobs.
Judicial situation	They want the government to solve their legal situation so they can finish the reintegration process and be freed from attending the ACR.
Negative perception	The authorities are corrupt.
	They have had problems with the authorities or they have a negative perception.
	They expect nothing from the authorities
To continue the reintegration programme	They ask the authorities to continue helping them and other demobilised with the programme reintegration.
To provide welfare to the citizens	Authorities should provide health, education and security to the citizens

Annex S. What do you expect from the reintegration process?

What do you expect from the reintegration process?	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
Personal development	21	16	5	3	1	4	na	1	6	4	1	1	15	5	5	5	2	4	3	3	2	0	1	0	0
Judicial situation	8	6	2	0	1	1	na	1	0	3	1	1	16	10	2	4	2	0	3	4	2	0	1	2	2
Promises from the government	6	5	1	1	0	0	na	1	1	1	2	0	23	13	3	7	2	2	3	4	3	2	2	3	2
Social acceptance	1	0	1	0	0	0	na	0	0	1	0	0	7	6	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	2	1
To repair or do community work	2	2	0	1	0	0	na	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Have no expectations	1	0	1	1	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

What do you expect from the reintegration process?	ANSWERS
Personal development	To improve the quality of life for them and their families.
Promises from the government	Aid to get jobs or education.
	Aid from the government in buying a house.
	Increase in the money of the monthly payments.
	To obtain Seed Capital.
Judicial situation	To resolve their legal issues and gain independence from the ACR.
Social acceptance	To achieve acceptance from the community or from society in general.
To repair or do community work	They have participated or want to participate in activities regarding reparation to victims or social and community work.
Have no expectations	No hope in improving their quality of life.

Annex T. Their experience on the reintegration process has been…

Their experience on the reintegration process has been	INTERVIEWS												FOCUS GROUPS												
	27	19	8	3	2	4	0	2	6	6	2	2	29	13	6	10	3	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	3
	Total Interviews	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal	Total Focus Groups	PARAMILITARY	GUERRILLA	MIXED GROUP	Bogota	Medellin	Cucuta	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Cartagena	Sincelejo	Monteria	Yopal
Positive	24	18	6	3	1	4	na	1	5	6	2	2	18	8	3	7	1	2	4	2	3	1	1	2	2
Negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	13	6	2	5	1	2	1	4	0	0	2	1	2
Problems in adapting	4	1	3	1	1	0	na	2	0	0	0	0	7	4	1	2	0	1	1	3	2	0	0	0	0
The Government controls them	0	0	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
I don't regret it but the government do not fulfilled	0	0	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
They want to return to the group	0	0	0	0	0	0	na	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0

Their experience on the reintegration process has been	ANSWERS
Positive	Their mentality has changed.
	They have gained freedom.
	They were able to study or pursue further training.
	They are grateful to the ACR for the reintegration programme.
	It meant a second opportunity in life.
Negative	The government lied to them.
	Self-reintegration was better than being part of the programme.
	It was better inside the group, they may want to go back.
Problems in adapting	They have had problems adapting to civilian life or to the city.
Government controls them	The ACR programme is a form to control the ex-combatant's life.
The government did not fulfill its promises but…	The government did not fulfill its promises but they do not regret their reintegration or they will not go back to their groups.

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24/07/2004	Frustran Atentado contra reinsertados
29/07/2004	Paras: 120 minutos en el Congreso
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06/03/2005b Los reinsertados son una bomba de tiempo
15/03/2005   Uribe-Garzón, a desactivar bomba de tiempo
16/03/2005   Uribe y Garzón acuerdan consejo comunal sobre reinsertados
11/04/2005   Hay 24 querellas para cerrar albergues de reinsertados en
             Teusaquillo
21/05/2005   Empezó Descongestión de Albergues de Reinsertados
27/05/2005   El Poder de Berna en Medellin
29/06/2005   Otro incidente con los reinsertados
16/07/2005   Sacan albergues de reinsertados de Bogota
18/07/2005   Cierre de Albergues será en todo el país
10/11/2005   Albergues de reinsertados
30/11/2005   Se acaban los albergues de desmovilizados en Teusaquillo
12/07/2008   Paramilitares escondieron a los niños que tenían en sus filas
29/12/ 2011 El 93% de ex 'paras' se acogió a norma que los salva de la cárcel
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