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Demobilizing and Reintegrating Whom? Accounting for Diversity in DDR Processes: An Analysis of the Colombian case

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Demobilizing and Reintegrating Whom? Accounting for Diversity in DDR Processes: An Analysis of the Colombian case

Mia Schöb

M.A. in International Affairs | Specialized in Conflict Research, Peacebuilding and Gender

Abstract

This dissertation enquires how the Colombian Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) discourse addresses diversity among (ex-)combatants and how the DDR program reflects respective patterns of inclusion and exclusion. First, building on an extensive literature review and using a feminist approach to the securitization theory, I locate the Colombian case within global DDR trends and develop a diversity concept that goes beyond gender. Second, the critical discourse analysis of empirical data collected in Colombia finds a general de-securitization regarding all ex-combatants, however with different discursive logics along the lines of diversity. Revealing a nuanced strategy of male de-securitization in Colombian DDR discourse, the findings contest previous studies on gender and DDR. At the same time, this work demonstrates the added value of a more holistic approach to diversity.

Executive summary

With Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos' re-election in June 2014, peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the country's largest guerrilla group, the FARC, are expected to both continue and culminate in a peace agreement. Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) efforts, negotiated under agenda point four of five, would concern an estimated 37,000 active combatants, collaborators and urban militia (Mathieu 2014). Therewith, a prospective FARC DDR program would queue up in the list of attempts throughout Colombia's contemporary armed conflict to regain former combatants of non-state armed groups (NSAGs) for civilian life. Intrigued by shortcomings of former DDR programs and consequent questions arising for the putative design of FARC DDR, this M.A. dissertation takes a critical stance towards the potential patterns of inclusion and exclusion that state-led programs risk to introduce or perpetuate through DDR.

This research report suggests that, in order to avoid these problematics, it is crucial to account for diversity among ex-combatants in DDR processes – diversity being understood as the complex interplay of different 'identity markers'. It enquires how 'combatants' and 'ex-combatants', respectively, are perceived by those shaping the DDR discourse and thereby exerting leverage over policy design and implementation in Colombia. Inspired by scholarly work on gender and DDR in Sierra Leone, but critical of a one-sided focus on a single diversity category, I expand the gender focus to a diversity concept based on an extensive literature review. I use a feminist approach to the securitization theory as a heuristic tool for analyzing which categories of diversity are given importance in DDR discourse.

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In two rounds of empirical data collection in Geneva and Bogotá, I conduct a total of 55 interviews with 74 key informants from governmental and non-governmental, national and international institutions as well as from faculties and think tanks dedicated to DDR in Colombia. Their perception of the (ex-)combatant shapes the discourse legitimizing or delegitimizing patterns of inclusion and exclusion in DDR. Epistemologically situated in critical realism, the empirical analysis focuses on a critical discourse analysis of the conducted interviews and further data collected in the field.

The findings support the assumption that women are de-securitized because they are considered unable to make a difference, but extend this result for the Colombian case to minors and ethnic minorities as particular and disproportionately affected parts of the combatant population. Contrary to the expectation that men will be securitized in DDR, however, the analysis reveals a more nuanced discursive strategy regarding men, the visual stereotype of the combatant: securitized and de-humanized in public discourse beforehand and situated in an intermediate situation while undergoing D&D, the demobilized combatant is de-securitized in a neutralizing discourse about 'the participant' in reintegration – a strategy reinforced by the social construction of different gendered relationships, based on the idea of feminized, i.e. non-threatening, 'new masculinities'.

The theoretically established external categories of diversity are accounted for in this discourse, albeit differently than expected: on the one hand, 'negative discrimination' around the type of NSAG indirectly shapes a differential perception of (ex-)combatants according to former group affiliation; on the other hand, regional variations of machismo influence interviewees' perception of the combatant, however without translating into context-sensitive DDR implementation, given practical limitations on the local level.

The analysis further finds that diversity among ex-combatants is perceived by some interviewees, but hardly accounted for in programs due to a neutralizing individual-focus reintegration design. Notwithstanding the aim to construct 'new masculinities' as a first step in overall social demilitarization, the gendered patterns of exclusion are (unintendedly) reproduced through DDR in Colombia and extended to other diversity categories such as age and ethnicity. At the same time, the de-securitization of (ex-)combatants as a monolithic group introduces a different dynamic that withdraws attention from the risk of recidivism: treating ex-combatants' as 'normal citizens' and denying their identification with their past, i.e. their particular socialization within different armed groups.

Ideally, de-securitizing ex-combatants would enhance social acceptance as 'normal citizens', facilitate ex-combatants' reintegration into civilian life and thus effectively decrease the risk of recidivism. This strategy, however, neither resonates with the overall regional and cultural gender dynamics in Colombia nor does it pay due account to ex-combatants' concerns after demobilization. Accounting more thoroughly for diversity among ex-combatants in order to provide equitable opportunities through the reintegration program thus remains a challenge whose surmounting is crucial to avoid adverse impacts on the ex-combatant population already involved in DDR. Furthermore, the uncovered problematics cast doubt on whether including demobilized FARC members into the existing DDR program or creating a similar effort for them is desirable at all, and support the current discussion about decentralized, locally owned approaches to prospective FARC reintegration.

Resumen

La reelección del presidente colombiano Juan Manuel Santos en junio de 2014 ha despertado expectativas de que las negociaciones de paz entre el gobierno y el mayor movimiento guerrillero del país, las FARC, continúen y pronto culminen en un acuerdo de paz. Los esfuerzos de Desarme, Desmovilización y Reintegración (DDR) que se están negociando bajo punto cuatro de la agenda de paz en La Habana, incluirían aproximadamente 37.000 combatientes activos, colaboradores y milicianos (Mathieu 2014). El posible proceso de DDR con las FARC se alistaría a una larga fila de precedentes en la historia del conflicto armado contemporáneo: esfuerzos múltiples de recuperar los antiguos combatientes de los grupos armados al margen de la ley (NSAGs, del inglés non-state armed groups) para la vida civil. Debilidades y fallos de esos precedentes históricos exigen una reflexión critica acerca del diseño adecuado para un proceso de DDR de las FARC y de los esquemasde exclusión e inclusión potencialmente introducidos o perpetuados por los programas de DDR estatales.

Aspirando a evitar dichas problemáticas, esta tesis asume la importancia fundamental de tomar en cuenta la diversidad entre los excombatientes de los NSAGs en los programas de DDR. Entendiendo la diversidad como una interacción compleja de diferentes 'marcadores de identidad', este trabajo examina como personas claves en el discurso sobre DDR perciben el

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'combatiente' y, consecuentemente, el 'excombatiente', y cómo influyen con ello tanto el discurso en sí como el diseño y la implementación de los programas de DDR. Inspirada por trabajos académicos sobre género y DDR en Sierra Leona, pero a la vez critica del enfoque unilateral en una sola categoría de diversidad, desarrollo sobre esa base un concepto de diversidad comprehensivo. Utilizo como herramienta heurística un acercamiento a la teoría de securitización* para analizar las categorías de diversidad consideradas como importantes para el contexto colombiano.
Durante dos sesiones de recogida de datos en Ginebra y Bogotá conduje 55 entrevistas con un total de 74 personas claves quienes ocupan puestos importantes en relación con DDR, tanto en instituciones nacionales o internacionales como en facultades universitarias o think tanks. Es la percepción del excombatiente reflexionada en su(s) discurso(s) que legitima o deslegitima la inclusión o exclusión en el DDR colombiano. El trabajo presente se halla epistemológicamente en el realismo crítico y utiliza el análisis critico de discurso (CDA del inglés critical discourse analysis) para examinar las entrevistas y otros datos reunidos.
Los resultados del análisis apoyan la suposiciónde que las mujeres sean "desecuritizadas" en el discurso de DDR pero expanden ese hallazgo a menores y minorías étnicas, dos grupos particular y desproporcionalmente afectados por el conflicto armado y el reclutamiento a los NSAGs. En vez de apoyar la simple suposición de que los hombre sean "securitizados", el presente análisis demuestra una estrategia más matizada respecto a los excombatientes masculinos, los que visualmente incorporan el estereotipo del combatiente o guerrero: siendo combatientes activos aún, se presentan en el discurso público como un riesgo para la seguridad; luego, durante las fases D&D, se encuentran en un lugar intermedio; y al final, durante la fase de reintegración, son "desecuritizados" por medio de un discurso neutralizante como 'participantes'. Esa estrategia se refuerza con diversas normas de género basadas en la noción de 'nuevas masculinidades' feminizadas y, por consiguiente, inofensivas.
El discurso de los entrevistados toma en cuenta las categorías de diversidad preestablecidas a base teórica, sin embargo de forma distinta a la presumida: por un lado, la 'discriminación negativa' alrededor del tipo de NSAG ejerce una influencia indirecta sobre la percepción diferencial del (ex)combatiente, según su previa afiliación de grupo; por otro lado, variedades regionales del machismo moldean la percepción de los entrevistados de quién es el combatiente (y quién debería ser), empero sin traducirse en una implementación sensitiva al contexto, debido a limitaciones practicas a nivel local.

Aunque algunos de los entrevistados estén conscientes de la diversidad entre los (ex)combatientes, esa diversidad apenas se toma en cuenta en los programas de DDR a causa del diseño de reintegración neutralizante, enfocado sobre el individuo. A pesar del objetivo de construir 'nuevas masculinidades' como un primer paso hacia la desmilitarización social en general, los gendered esquemas de exclusión se reproducen (involuntariamente) en el DDR colombiano e incluso abarcan otras categorías de diversidad, como por ejemplo edad y etnia. A la vez, tanto la "desecuritización" de excombatientes como un grupo monolítico como su tratamiento como 'ciudadanos normales' no solo distraen del riesgo de reincidencia a delinquir, sino también les niegan la identificación con y el acceso a su pasado, es decir, su socialización específica dentro de grupos armados distintos.
Idealmente, la desecuritización de los excombatientes colombianos favorecería que sean acogidos a la sociedad como 'ciudadanos normales', facilitaría su reintegración a la vida civil y, por consiguiente, reduciría efectivamente su riesgo de reincidencia. Sin embargo, esa estrategia corre el riesgo de no coincidir con las dinámicas de género regionales y culturales en Colombia y de pasar por alto las preocupaciones de los excombatientes mismos después de haberse desmovilizado. Por ello, tomar en consideración la diversidad entre excombatientes de manera más comprensiva para garantizar más equidad de oportunidades en el programa de reintegración permanece un desafío importante cuya superación será clave para evitar los impactos adversos en la población de excombatientes ya involucrados en los programas de reintegración. Las problemáticas descubiertas también siembran dudas sobre la conveniencia de la presunta inclusión de las FARC, una vez desmovilizados colectivamente, en el programa de DDR existente o de la creación de un proceso similar. Esas consideraciones van de la mano de la discusión actual sobre estrategias descentralizadas y locales hacia la posible desmovilización de las FARC en el futuro cercano.

* Del substantivo inglés "desecuritization" se deducen los verbos "to securitize" (destacar un fenómeno como riesgo extraordinario para la seguridad) y "to de-securitize" (no destacarlo o destacarlo como no inofensivo para la seguridad).

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Introduction

Any violent situation has as its ultimate cause exclusion from political, cultural, economic and social life. Therefore, any peace process must widen inclusivity in the aforementioned dimensions.
(Grabe and Patiño 2014, 18, my translation)

Exclusion, considered as a root cause of conflict, remains a dominant justification for the creation and *raison d'être* of Colombian guerrilla groups. Ending Colombia's half-century-long civil conflict thus requires more than disbanding armed groups: it requires "positive peace" (Galtung 1969, 183), the (perceived) absence of structural violence, expressed in the abovementioned "exclusion from political, cultural, economic and social life".[1] Since exclusionary practices affect different people differently according to their characteristics as individuals and members of social groups,[2]inclusiveness implies accounting for these differences and guaranteeing equitable access to opportunities.

Contemporary Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) as part of larger peacebuilding efforts therefore faces a challenge beyond the mere disbanding of non-state armed groups: guaranteeing equitable opportunities for (ex-)combatants in DDR in a way that is mindful of and sensitive to any form of exclusion its design and implementation could foster or form for different groups of (ex-)combatants.[3] Depending on DDR designers', implementers' and evaluators' perceptions of diversity among ex-combatants, their discursive construction of the 'combatant' may vary and determine whom the DDR program addresses, how it is designed and who among the (ex-)combatants is explicitly or implicitly excluded thereby.

Understanding patterns of inclusion and exclusion and their underlying logic in historical and present DDR processes is crucial not only to improve these processes and mitigate the root causes of conflict, but also to better design prospective DDR programs. This is relevant for current peace negotiations with Colombia's largest remaining guerrilla movement, *Fuerzas Armadas de Colombia* (FARC). Notwithstanding the existence of academic studies focusing on specific combatant groups in Colombian DDR, such as women, children or ethnic groups (CNMH 2013a), there is a research gap with regard to a comprehensive concept of diversity, embracing a range of different diversity categories: to my knowledge, no diversity-sensitive study exists that analyzes the discursive construction of the (ex-)combatant in the Colombian DDR process.

The present dissertation aims to fill this research gap by gaining an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of diversity: I ask how those shaping the discourse around DDR in Colombia construct the image of the (ex-)combatant differently and how this construction is reflected in the design and implementation of DDR. I further explore the overarching securitizing and de-securitizing logic behind these discourses. Apart from my *intrinsic interest* (Stake 2005, 445) in Colombia's longstanding DDR history and the self-proclaimed "best reintegration process in the world" (ACR 2014a, 11), this research is highly relevant and topical due to its potential to identify exclusionary patterns and point to problematics in past and contemporary Colombian DDR, to be mitigated in current programs and avoided in a prospective FARC demobilization, still under negotiation in Havana, Cuba.

Acknowledging the importance of diversity-sensitivity for meaningful reintegration, I aim to speak to both academic and practice-oriented audiences: first and foremost, I purport to contribute to raising intra and inter institutional awareness about diversity among ex-combatants in the Colombian institutions involved in the DDR process, either as designers, implementers or evaluators of these processes; second, I speak to the literature on gender

[1] This research report was originally presented as a dissertation in fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in International Affairs at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Jorge Restrepo and the CERAC staff for their support in making this document publicly available, to Keith Krause and Oliver Jütersonke for their supervision, and to Dyan Mazurana, Elizabeth Prügl and Roxanne Krystallifor their academic advice in the initial phase of this research. All interviewees who dedicated their time, love and energy to share their knowledge and opinions with me deserve my deepest and humble gratefulness – they know who they are. I sincerely thank you for the lessons you taught me, the stories you shared with me, the new perspectives you opened my mind for and the questions you incited me to think harder about.

[2] In the following, I refer to 'categories of diversity' rather than 'social groups'. A range of international law documents identify gender, age, ethnicity and disability as relevant categories, with these populations requiring specific treatment to guarantee their equality of opportunities (Serrano Murcia 2013a, 38–40). Other factors of diversity might be equally important and highly context-specific, such as regional differences or religion.

[3] I refer to 'combatants' as all members of an NSAG, including the non-armed support structure around the NSAG. This is apt for the Colombian case because disarmament is no precondition for demobilization and reintegration.

and DDR with the objective to unpack the complex interplay between different categories of diversity and reveal potential adverse effects of focusing only on one "identity marker" (Myrttinen, Naujoks, and El-Bushra 2014, 5), such as gender.

While I distance from gender research in that I reject the presupposition of a hierarchy among diversity categories, my theoretical framework mainly draws from feminist security studies, for the following reasons:[4] first, the gender perspective and a theoretical background in feminist security studies provide useful tools for understanding and analyzing diversity in general; second, a range of studies on gender and DDR in different countries provide a solid reference for preliminary assumptions about the Colombian case; and third, because the UN Security Council (UNSC) urged for research "on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000)" (UNSC 2013, OP 4), which *"[e]ncourage[d]* all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents" (UNSC 2000, OP 13); fourth, because female combatants have largely been excluded or marginalized from DDR on the global scale (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 2013, articles 66–68); and fifth, because "[g]ender equality is a pre-requisite for development and a fundamental question of human rights and social justice" (UNDP Colombia 2007, 3, my translation).

Feminist security studies explain exclusion from DDR with a gendered perception of security: those who are not perceived as a security threat, i.e. who are not armed men considered able to make a difference, remain at the margins of DDR – rather through a lack of attention and (consequent) discriminating design or implementation than through explicit exclusion. While feminists focus on gender, the logic applies to other distinctions among the combatant population as well, e.g. age or ethnicity. One important study that inspires my theoretical framework is Megan MacKenzie's (2009a) analysis of the Sierra Leonean DDR process. She uses a feminist approach to the Copenhagen School's securitization theory to find that DDR discourse and consequent program design "construct males as securitized subjects in contrast to desecuritized female victims" (MacKenzie 2009a, 247). Such a design denies women's agency as combatants and largely excludes them from the DDR program. This results in severe repercussions on female ex-combatants' opportunities to reintegrate into civilian society due to reinforced social stigma for being an outlier to the stereotype of female peacefulness and victimhood, as opposed to men's status as warriors.

Inspired by MacKenzie's approach, I enquire (de-)securitization in the Colombian DDR process and ask how the (de-)securitizing discourse is related to the perception of diversity among (ex-)combatants and patterns of exclusion in DDR. An extensive review of different bodies of literature on separate diversity categories and DDR provides a set of preliminary assumptions for the empirical analysis: that those discursively constructed as a security threat, i.e. securitized, are addressed by DDR; that ignoring or silencing a part of the combatant population de-securitizes them; that DDR addressees are likely to be men of the dominant ethnicity; that women, children and ethnic minority groups are likely to be marginalized in or excluded from DDR; that a range of categories of diversity stand in a complex relationship and need to be accounted for equally, among them categories *external* to the person – such as regional differences in terms of culture or conflict dynamics and the type of non-state armed group (NSAG) from which a person demobilizes – and categories *internal* to the combatant, addressing his or her human condition, such as gender, age, ethnicity or physical capacity.

The present research report is structured in two large chapters, a theoretical and an empirical part. The theoretical chapter includes an introduction of the Colombian country case and conflict history, a revision of relevant DDR literature on the global level and the Colombian DDR history specifically, the theoretical framework encompassing feminist security studies and a feminist approach to the securitization theory, as well as an extensive literature review to conceptualize diversity, as relevant for the Colombian case.[5]

The empirical chapter explores theoretically established categories of diversity while finding new, emerging themes in the data. I conduct a critical discourse analysis

[4] The aim is not to ‚verify' or ‚falsify' these assumptions, but to use them as an initial guideline for an abductive process (Wodak 2004, 200), a dialogue between theory and empirical data throughout the research.

[5] Where appropriate, I complement the history of DDR in Colombia, generally based on secondary literature, with details provided by the interviewees.

(CDA)[6] of 55 semi-structured interviews and two public events with a total of 74 key informants who shape the Colombian DDR discoursethrough their positions in national and international, governmental and non-governmental institutions, think tanks and academia – thereby becoming active ‚social constructors' of ‚the combatant' and its transformation in DDR. Appendix A contains a list of interviews with their respective codes, as used for in-text citations throughout the research report.[7] The analysis is complemented by illustrations and documents on DDR policies of public and intra-institutional use, as well as participant observation in the city reintegration program *Proyecto 840* and a local service center of the Colombian Reintegration Agency (ACR). All empirical data is analyzed as discourse. For the sake of brevity and fluidity, I refrain from detailed methodological considerations in the research report and attach them separately in Appendix B. In a concluding section, I reflect about findings and their relevance for prospective DDR processes.

DDR and the Colombian case

The Colombian context and conflict history

The Republic of Colombia (in the following Colombia) is located in northern South America, bordering the Central American isthmus. With approximately 1.4 million square kilometers, it is almost 28 times the size of Switzerland. Three mountain chains divide the country, creating a multitude of different climates and rendering communication and transportation as well as effective state control difficult (Romero 2000, 67). Colombian society is multi-ethnic, with its minorities – Afro-Colombian and indigenous peoples – enjoying legal autonomy status in the Colombian Constitution (1991). Colombia experienced rapid urbanization in the 20th century: while less than half of the Colombian population was urban in 1938 (Murad Rivera 2003, 17), about 75 percent of today's 45.7 million inhabitants live in urban centers (Central Intelligence Agency 2014). The Colombian economy has been steadily growing in recent years, with a four percent increase in gross domestic product (GDP) per annum (Central Intelligence Agency 2014). This growth, however, does not translate in a balanced manner to the Colombian population: in 2012, Colombia was the seventh country in the world with most unequally distributed income (Moller 2012). Corruption and weak state presence in some areas of the country furthermore remain a serious challenge to democratization, conflict resolution and social justice promotion.[8]

Brief history of the contemporary conflict

What began in Colombia in the aftermath of *La Violencia* as a peasant insurgency against a highly exclusive and elitist bipartisan political systemsoon converted into today's ongoing complex armed conflict that cost the lives of over 220,000 Colombians between 1958 and 2012 (CNMH 2013b, 20) and internally displaced an estimated 4.87 million persons (IDPs) in the past three decades alone (HRW 2013, 4), about ten percent of the Colombian population.[9] The myriad of actors involved in Colombia's armed conflict – left-wing guerrilla groups, right-wing paramilitaries and state armed forces –, their intermingling with organized drug crime since the 1980s and a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual population, marked by a stark urban-rural divide and a large-estate owner elite controlling the political sphere render the contemporary conflict situation highly complex and opaque.

In the course of *La Violencia,* a civil war waged by Conservatives and Liberals with outstanding accounts of violence (Uribe 2004) and approximately 200,000 deaths between 1949 and 1957 (Arjona and Kalyvas 2012, 145; see also Pécaut 1997, 900),liberal and communist self-defense peasant groups formed against conservative aggression (Sánchez, Díaz, and Formisano 2003, 4).[10] They are the predecessors of today's largest remaining guerrilla movement, the FARC: in response to a military offensive against communist peasant communities in Marquetalia, Tolima in 1964, the communist self-defense group headed by Pedro Antonio Marín alias Manuel

[6] Sharing the epistemological assumptions of critical realism, I refer to Norman Fairclough (2010) as a primary guideline for CDA.

[7] For reasons of confidentiality and coherence, all interviewees' anonymity is preserved.

[8] Colombia's Failed States Index (FSI) has improved slightly from 95.0 (2005) to 82.5 (2013), with Colombia still at risk of becoming a failed state (Failed States Index 2013). Despite recent improvement, corruption remains a considerable problem (Corruption Perception Index 2014).

[9] The OAS Verification Mission to the Colombian DDR process, MAPP-OEA, speaks of 4,790,317 IDPs registered with the Victims' Unit in Colombia until 30 April 2013 (MAPP-OEA 2014, 2).

[10] *La Violencia* lasted from the assassination of the Liberal leader Eliécer Gaitán on 9 April 1948 to the establishment of the *Frente National* in 1957, an agreement to end the civil conflict and alter power between Conservatives and Liberals. Some scholars extend the period to 1965 (e.g. Sánchez 1985, 792).

Marulanda Vélez or 'Tirofijo' transformed into the mobile guerrilla movement that became the FARC in 1965 (CNMH 2013b, 123).

During the 1960s, other guerrilla organizations emerged, among them the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) in 1965 and the *Ejército Polular de Liberación* (EPL) in 1967 (Gómez Alcaraz and García Suárez 2006, 100). Both groups operated in rural areas but were founded by urban, well-educated youth inspired by the Cuban Revolution and liberation theology – the priest and sociology professor Camilo Torres became the icon of the ELN (CNMH 2013b, 123–124). Throughout the 1960s, the guerrilla groups remained small and marginal organizations with low budget and activity (Gutiérrez Sanín 2007, 9). The founding of the *Movimiento 19 abril* (M-19) in response to alleged electoral fraud in 1970 introduced a new form of guerrilla violence, urban in character and with a more moderate ideology and strong symbolic actions of targeted violence (Guáqueta 2009, 16).

It was only in the late 1970s that the components of the contemporary conflict assembled in a complex "war system" (Richani 1997, 38): the guerrilla groups grew in number, scale and scope of actions, and became increasingly intermingled with the growing drug business (Gutiérrez Sanín 2007, 9–10). Drug cartels waged a 'terrorist war' against the state and each other. Drug barons and large-estate owners, often the same persons, armed their own paramilitary groups against increasing guerrilla attacks (Gutiérrez Sanín 2012a, 182–183). Paramilitary presence rapidly expanded all over the country and the different paramilitary blocs joined under the umbrella organization *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) in 1997 (Guáqueta 2009, 10).[11] During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the paramilitary groups became the major perpetrators of political violence and violence against civilians, including large-scale massacres and massive displacement (Sánchez, Díaz, and Formisano 2003, 14; Tate 2001, 169). Their collective demobilization between 2003 and 2006 is the most recent of a chain of NSAG demobilization processes carried out within the ongoing armed conflict, which will be examined in the following section, after reviewing global trends in the DDR literature.

Section One: Situating the Colombian DDR experience in global trends

Literature review: DDR

Dismantling armed groups and "ensuring the transition of combatants to civilian life" (Muggah 2005, 242) has been a longstanding practice in transitional periods after conflict.[12] More than 60 DDR operations have taken place worldwide since 1990, two thirds of them on the African continent (Muggah 2010, 1-3). As of today, the UN consider DDR as an integral component for "both the initial stabilization of war-torn societies as well as their long-term development" (United Nations Peacekeeping 2013). Despite the longstanding practice of DDR, the *UN Integrated DDR Standards* (IDDRS) evolved only recently in 2006 as a guide for both individual states applying DDR (like Colombia) and the UN.[13] They reflect both lessons learned and the effort to develop more sophisticated and comprehensive approaches to DDR. Another important document on DDR is the *Stockholm Initiative on DDR* (SIDDR) (Colletta and Muggah 2009, 340).[14] In their concept of 'integrated missions', DDR is understood as one component of a set of mechanisms to prevent recidivism into insecurity and war (Muggah 2010, 5), i.e. to promote security.

With the changing nature of wars and the merger of security and development in the 1990s (Duffield 2001; Muggah and Krause 2009, 139), DDR underwent a shift

[11] Supported and legalized by Law 48 (1968), the status of paramilitary self-defense groups has been shifting between legal and illegal (Tate 2001, 164-66). Francisco Gutiérrerz Sanín (2012b, 118) demonstrates for the *Convivir* – as the paramilitary self-defense groups were called under *Decreto 356* (1994a) – that client-based politics culminated in the privatization of security in the form of *paramilitarism* between the 1980s and 2002.

[12] 'Conflict' here refers to armed conflict between acknowledged conflict parties. In 'post-conflict' settings, non-violent conflict can persist, and at the same time, levels of armed violence (e.g. homicide levels) can exceed violence levels during 'conflict' (Muggah and Krause 2009, 141–142), given that this violence is exerted by armed actors considered outside the conflict. We must thus ask whether the labeling of a violent actor as 'conflict party' or 'criminal' makes any change to the persistence of the violence exerted, and acknowledge that the artificial dichotomy of 'conflict' versus 'post-conflict' obscures the complex realities of violence (Cohn 2013, 21). Lacking more precise and less exclusive terminology and out of academic necessity to work within defined categories, I will nonetheless use the terms 'conflict' and 'post-conflict'. The aforementioned considerations, however, apply at all times.

[13] United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre 2014.

[14] Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sweden 2014.

from "minimalist (security-first) interventions" to "maximalist (development-oriented) activities" (Muggah 2010, abstract). While UN initiatives since the 1970s focused on disarmament and demobilization (D&D), i.e. on the elimination of spoilers' capacity to destabilize and the re-establishment of the Weberian state monopoly on the use of force (Muggah 2005, 248; Muggah 2009, 2), social and economic reintegration (R) as an "opportunity for long-term development" (Muggah 2005, 248) became part of the agenda during the 1990s, composing DDR in the contemporary sense (Muggah and Krause 2009, 138-139). While remaining linked to security policies through D&D, the R component embeds DDR into larger development goals, the latter aspiring the absence of both direct and structural violence (e.g. Krause and Jütersonke 2005, 454). This human security approach ties human development to security responsibilities of the state towards its citizens (Schnabel 2008, 88). Continuing this logic, exclusion in any form, as underlined in the introduction, is a form of human insecurity that may foster other forms of violence.

Critical scholars like Mark Duffield, Nat Colletta, Keith Krause, and Robert Muggah question the merger of development and security in general and point to serious challenges arising for DDR programs under these expanding expectations. The "disarmament bias", for example, denotes the conventional measurement of success in number of weapons collected as opposed to the growing human security and development objectives of DDR – and the consequent under-funding of reintegration programs (Muggah 2005, 246–247; Muggah 2006, 197–198). A small evidence-base about the (in)effectiveness of DDR programs in providing security and development (Muggah and Krause 2009, 137; Muggah 2009, 3, 15); the technical, top-down implementation of guidelines despite the acknowledged need for context-sensitive, tailored DDR programs (Colletta and Muggah 2009, 427, 431); or the inability of DDR programs to address 'post-conflict' violence beyond armed conflict-related violence, which contributes but a small part of lethal violence perpetrated by a myriad of actors (Muggah and Krause 2009, 141-142);[15] or hybrid forms of violence that (re-)emerge in 'post-conflict' situations (Krause 2012, 41) are further challenges to DDR.

Acknowledging that conventional initiatives such as DDR provide "no magic bullet" (Muggah 2005) for 'post-conflict' violence reduction and reacting to the doubt as to whether DDR can live up to their *raison d'être* at all,more holistic alternative approaches – interim stabilization and second-generation DDR – have evolved that envision broader community security provision (Colletta and Muggah 2009; Muggah and Krause 2009, 144-145; Department of Peacekeeping Operations 2010). While complementary, these alternative bottom-up approaches haven't replaced conventional DDR yet, which remains an integral part of post-conflict reconstruction (Muggah 2005, 243). As such, DDR has received attention from a "nascent epistemic community" (Muggah 2010, 12) of academics from various disciplines as well as from practitioners.[16] DDR is further being interrelated with other 'post-conflict' approaches, such as transitional justice (Patel 2009; Laplante and Theidon 2006), security sector reform (SSR) (Bastick 2008, 165; Bryden and Scherrer 2012; Colletta and Muggah 2009) or peace negotiations (Muggah 2010, 2).

Anthropological studies cast doubt on who the beneficiaries of DDR are and should be, given the blurry line between 'combatants' and 'civilians', 'perpetrators' and 'victims' in civil conflicts (Jensen and Stepputat 2001, cited in Muggah 2009, 23; Slim 2008, cited in Cohn 2013, 25). In line with the introductory citation, some scholars criticize that, by focusing on 'combatants' as originators of 'direct violence', DDR programs fail to address 'structural violence' within society, such as economic deprivation, persistent levels of lethal violence and a lack of opportunities and risk to indirectly perpetuate the core causes of conflict (Bøås and Hatløy 2008, 47–48; see also Galtung 1969). Other scholars explore the political economy of DDR (Torjensen 2006) or the importance of local ownership of DDR initiatives (Edmonds, Mills, and McNamee 2009). Robert Muggah (2010, 8-9) furthermore identifies the targeting of DDR

[15] In Colombia, conflict-related violence accounts for a small part of violent deaths. At the beginning of the 21st century, one third of homicides were registered as conflict-related (Gómez Alcaraz and García Suárez 2006, 99), whereas today, only an estimated 8 percent are (Interview BC5G, see Appendix A).

[16] The extensive body of (interdisciplinary) literature covers issues like the failure of DDR programs to promote reintegration (Paes 2005), the (consequent) re-mobilization of demobilized combatants (Christensen and Utas 2008), or operational questions regarding the different steps of the DDR process, such as the counterproductive effect of cantonment camps (Knight and Özerdem 2004) and the interplay of monetary and non-monetary benefits for the demobilized (Knight and Özerdem 2004; Willibald 2006), including the risk of DDR functioning unintendedly as an incentivizing "rewards program" (Muggah 2005, 247).

as a key topic, with the trend shifting from individual combatants to collectives, the recipient communities. Further criticism regards DDR eligibility criteria of "one person, one gun" (Mazurana and Eckerbom Cole 2013, 205), like initially in the Sierra Leonean DDR program (MacKenzie 2009a, 250), as lacking context-sensitivity, given the common use of weapons other than guns in civil wars (Mazurana and Eckerbom Cole 2013, 205).[17] The next section situates Colombia within this larger picture by outlining the Colombian DDR history and drawing comparisons to international trends.

The Colombian DDR experience from a historical perspective

The Colombian history of NSAG demobilizations is as old as the armed conflict itself. Before the end of *La Violencia,* General Rojas Pinilla (1953-1957) offered amnesties to liberal and communist self-defense groups if they demobilized and returned to civilian life. Given the partial rejection of this offer and channeling of self-defense groups into full-fledged guerrilla movements, this was the first of a range of (partial) collective and individual demobilizations in the historical record of the contemporary armed conflict (Koth 2005, 9).[18] Besides the distinction between collective and individual demobilizations, different governing logics of collective demobilizations add complexity to Colombian DDR: while the collective demobilizations of guerrilla groups in the 20th century were part of peace agreements and included amnesties and political participation arrangements, paramilitary groups collectively demobilized between 2003 and 2006 in the framework of a transitional justice (TJ) process. The R component of Colombian DDR developed from reinsertion to full-fledged reintegration during the past decade, following the global trend towards more developmental approaches.

Collective demobilizations since the 1980s: political participation

Facilitated through Law 35 (1982), which introduced provisions for bilateral negotiations with guerrilla groups and the possibility to grant amnesties to 'rebels', the government of President Belisario Betancur (1982-86) achieved bilateral ceasefire agreements with the M-19, the FARC and the EPL. Consequently, 1,423 guerrilla members from these groups as well as from the ELN and the Bogotá-based urban *Movimiento Autodefensa Obrera* (ADO) demobilized. No weapons were collected at that time. As a reinsertion package, ex-combatants received land titles, credits and social benefits, e.g. skills training through the National Education Service SENA or access to health services. No security guarantees for the demobilized were included (Villarraga 2013a, 111–116), however, a shortcoming that resulted in the "political genocide" (Cepeda Castro 2006, 101) of the *Unión Patriótica* (UP).

This political party, founded to fill the political space conceded to the FARC in the *Acuerdos de La Uribe* of 1984, integrated throusands of demobilized FARC members (Cepeda Castro 2006, 101; Verdad Abierta 2014) and had considerable success in the 1986 local and presidential elections (Colectivo de Abogados 2006).[19] However, with paramilitary groups mobilizing against the UP and the state failing to provide security guarantees, over 3,000 UP members, among them two presidential candidates and 13 parliamentarians, were assassinated in the subsequent two decades (Verdad Abierta 2014). This experience sowed deep mistrust between the government and the FARC that became a key obstacle to a political solution to the conflict (Cepeda Castro 2006, 111; see also Gutiérrez Sanín 2012a, 183).

Despite the traumatic experience of the UP, over 5,000 combatants of different guerrilla, milicia and self-defense groups collectively demobilized during the 1990s (Guáqueta 2009, 10; Villarraga 2013a, 132). The M-19 was the first guerrilla group to negotiate collective demobilization and political reintegration. It converted into the political party *Alianza Democrática* (AD) M-19, which had important leverage in the Constitutional Assembly in 1991 (Chernick 1996, 6; Guáqueta 2009, 12). Although the AD M-19's political success was short-lived and it ceased to exist in 1998, some of today's key political figures emerged from the AD M-19, such as Gustavo Petro (Guáqueta 2009, 18, 10), elected mayor of Bogotá. The AD M-19 integrated further ex-

[17] Paramilitaries in Colombia, for example, perpetrated 42 massacres in the Montes de María region between 1999 and 2001 with all kinds of weapons, including knives, machetes, and chainsaws (Grupo de Memoria Histórica 2009, 9).

[18] According to one interviewee (BC3P), amnesties have constituted a historical means to reincorporate Colombian ex-combatants into civilian life, at least since the Thousand Days War (1899-1902).

[19] With 10 percent of votes, presidential candidate Jaime Pardo Real won the best result for an independent party in the Colombian history (Colectivo de Abogados 2006).

combatants from the subsequently collectively demobilized EPL and the *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* (PRT) (Guáqueta 2009, 12).

Further NSAGs demobilized collectively until 1994, among them the indigenous *Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame* (MAQL) that formed the political party *Alianza Social Indígena* (Villarraga 2013a, 119), the *Corriente de Revolución Socialista* (CRS), the Medellín Militias, Metropolitan Militias, Militias of the Valle de Aburrá, Francisco Garnica Front, Ernesto Rojas Front and the *Movimiento Independiente Revolucionario Comandos Armados* (MIR COAR) (Arjona and Kalyvas 2012, 168–169; Villarraga 2013a, 116-117). By 1999, about 6,500 persons were registered in the Reintegration Program, approximately 1,000 of them individually demobilized guerrilla members (Villarraga 2013a, 117).

During the 1990s, political participation was given priority over social and economic reintegration, though reinsertion benefits included amnesty, short-term assistance, education, health care and access to credits and technical assistance for productive projects.[20] Security of the demobilized was neglected again, permitting over 1,000 assassinations of demobilized guerrilla members in the 1990s (Villarraga 2013a, 120–123). Counting on the demobilization and political reintegration experience of the early 1990s, the Pastrana Administration (1998-2002) resumed peace talks with the FARC, providing the group with a 'safe zone' the size of Switzerland to prepare negotiations. However, the FARC re-mobilized within that zone and no agreement was reached (Koth 2005, 12).

Individual demobilizations since 1994: inciting desertion from NSAGs

Decreto 1385 (1994b) introduced the possibility of individual demobilization for guerrilla members as part of a broader counterinsurgency strategy. The Operative Committee for the Abandonment of Weapons (CODA) was created as an instrument to verify the circumstances of voluntary demobilization and to issue 'the CODA certification' as a basis for access to amnesty and reinsertion benefits. This mechanism, maintained until today, was expanded to paramilitary deserters in 2002 but restricted to guerrilla deserters again in 2006 by court decisions establishing the criminal character of the paramilitaries and prohibiting their collective political and social organization (Villarraga 2013a, 124-126).

Collective and individual demobilizations in the 21st century: adding the R component

Peace negotiations had focused exclusively on the guerrilla groups thus far, due to the assumption that paramilitaries had formed as a consequence of insurgency and therefore their existence remained contingent on peace with the guerrilla movements (Theidon 2007, 72). State passivity towards their actions gave the paramilitaries a status of "impunity and intangibility" (Gutiérrez Sanín 2012b, 114). This changed in 2002, when the government of president Alvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2010) started negotiating a TJ agreement with AUC commanders – an act criticized as "an attempt to 'deparamilitarize' the Colombian state" (Theidon 2007, 72).

Between 2003 and 2006, 37 paramilitary blocs incorporating 31,671 persons sequentially disarmed, turning in 18,051 weapons, and demobilized (CNRR 2010, 35; Nussio 2011a, 89) – more than double the expected number (Villarraga 2013a, 120-123). Besides these collective demobilizations, an estimated 20,000 combatants from different NSAGs individually demobilized during this period (Arjona and Kalyvas 2012, 147). Embedding DDR within a larger TJ framework, the social and economic reintegration of former combatants was strengthened and expandedduring this period, with the creation of the national ACR and two district-based programs in the major cities Bogotá (*Proyecto 840*) and Medellín (the Peace and Reconciliation Program).

Legally, both collective and individual demobilization are covered by Law 418 (1997) (Pinto, Vergara, and Lahuerta 2002, 3), prorrogated every four years and currently Law 1421 (2010).[21] The so-called Justice and Peace Law, Law 975 (2005) and its reformed version Law 1592 (2012), regulates judicial mechanisms under the TJ agreement.[22] Law 1424 (2010) further complements the Justice and Peace framework with mandatory contributions to the truth-collection of the

[20] These entrepreneurial projects, financed with the so-called *capital semilla*, a start-up capital, have been part of reinsertion benefits since the 1990s, but failed in their majority due to a lack of know-how and coherent strategy (Thorsell 2013, 189-190; Villarraga 2013a, 120-123).

[21] These laws establish 'rebellion' (carrying a non-state military uniform and a weapon) as an amnestiable crime and regulate provisions for demobilization. They are the basis for demobilization under the Justice and Peace Law and regulate contemporary DDR measures (BC5G).

[22] According to one interviewee, DDR is part of the guarantees of non-repetition of violence in the Colombian TJ framework (BC12P).

National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH) and obligatory social service. Art. 17 of Law 418 furthermore created a specific reintegration unit in the Colombian Institute for Family Well-Being (ICBF) for demobilized minors (Pinto, Vergara, and Lahuerta 2002, 3).

Compared to former collective guerrilla demobilizations, different internal and external conditions in the 21st century rendered direct political participation and amnesties for AUC members inacceptable and required different measures for paramilitary DDR. Among these conditions figure decreasing popular acceptance of armed conflict as "a legitimate expression of social grievances" (Guáqueta 2009, 14) and of the negotiation with the paramilitary in general (Guáqueta 2009, 32), the appalling human rights record of the paramilitaries combined with greater national and international legal capacities to prosecute them (Guáqueta 2009, 26–28; Laplante and Theidon 2006, 52) as well as growing international pressure on and monitoring of the nationally-owned process (Guáqueta 2009, 29–32; Nussio and Oppenheim 2013, 3).

Evaluations of the TJ process criticize partial demobilization and high recidivism rates through re-armament of about 15 percent of demobilized paramilitaries into neo-paramilitary structures (CNRR 2007; CNRR 2010, 157), insufficient institutional capacities to conduct the judicial prosecutions established by Law 975 and to adequately administer the reintegration programs at the regional level (e.g., Morgenstein 2008). Others underline successes, such as an average decrease in homicide rates of 13 percent in former paramilitary strongholds following the AUC demobilization, though acknowledging a shift to other forms of violence (Restrepo and Muggah 2009, 43).

While DDR agreements have reduced the number of acknowledged parties to the "internal armed conflict […] [to] the FARC and the ELN, and […] nobody else" (Jaramillo 2013, my translation), *insecurity* as an immediate *(perceived) threat* remains a core challenge for the long-term developmental goals of reintegration: on the one hand, and in line with the historical experiences of ex-combatants' assassinations, "perceived [state] failure to provide security and economic opportunity" is found to undermine ex-combatants' trust in the state and thereby hamper reintegration efforts (Nussio and Oppenheim 2013, 23). On the other hand, a vicious circle of mutual fear and mistrust maintains ex-combatants isolated from receiving communities, thereby inhibiting social and economic reintegration (Theidon 2007, 83-84).

Neither study enquires, however, whom the fear-inspiring image of the 'ex-combatant' actually includes and thus portrays as a security threat. A more nuanced understanding is necessary to address current reintegration problematics and to avoid repeating them in the prospective design of some kind of DDR for the FARC – the critical and temporarily postponed third point in the current peace negotiations: the abandonment of weapons and reincorporation of FARC members into civilian life, on which preliminary agreements on the first and second agenda points, namely integral agrarian development policy and political participation, remain contingent (Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz 2014).

Trends in Colombian DDR and the normative turn to diversity

A number of parallels and contrasts stand out between the international trend and Colombian DDR processes:*Disarmament* and weapons collection never played a key role in Colombia historically and, contrary to the global DDR literature, is hardly discussed in the literature on the Colombian DDR processes. The average of 0.59 collected weapons per person (Nussio 2011a, 89) is low in international comparison of DDR programs conducted between 1997 and 2007 (Muggah 2009, 8–11), which indicates that unarmed support structures of demobilizing NSAGs are included in all steps of DDR and underlines the primarily symbolic character of disarmament.[23]*Demobilization*, including basic reinsertion measures for demobilized persons, constitutes the core of Colombian collective processes during the 20th century, paired with negotiated access to political participation for demobilized guerrilla groups (Chernick 1996; Guáqueta 2009).[24] The shift from state-security-oriented (D)&D to development-oriented (D)DR took place in the early 21st century with the expansion of basic reinsertion programs to full-fledged *Reintegration*: the 2002 *Programa de Reintegración a la Vida Civil* (PRVC) under the Ministry of Interior and Justice was replaced in

[23] Testimonies of ex-AUC provide anecdotal evidence about the actual weapons being exchanged for old ones before disarmament (Molano 2009, 31), which casts doubt on the effectiveness of the disarmament component. An interviewee who was part of the negotiation and DDR team confirmed the symbolic character of AUC disarmament (BC10P).

[24] According to the UN, reinsertion is part of the demobilization phase (United Nations Peacekeeping 2014).

2006 by the *Alta Consejería para la Reintegración* (ACR) under the Presidency of the Republic, which turned into thefull-fledged and autonomous *Agencia Colombiana para la Reintegración* (ACR) in 2011 (Villarraga 2013a, 133).

Despite the longstanding DDR history, attention to *diversity* among ex-combatants was normatively introduced only in 2008 by 'CONPES 3554', the national policy guideline for DDR.[25] The document focuses on *age* primarily, given the institutional separation of reintegration for minors and adults, but further mentions *gender,* with a basic understanding of 'gender equity' and 'masculinity'; *ethnicity*, though limited to ex-combatants' right to signal their ethnic belonging to the authorities and receive ethnicity-sensitive reintegration in cooperation with their ethnic community; and *disability*, to be guaranteed equal access opportunities to reintegration. However, they are treated as marginal categories outlined only briefly on 3 out of 71 pages at the end of the document (Conpes 2008, 57–60).

CONPES 3554 prioritizes rather a policy of non-discrimination with regard to the diversity categories mentioned than a differential approach to different experiences of and opportunities in DDR. However, its determination of relevant categories of diversity is key in that it channels the responsibilities of the ACR, ICBF and assisting agencies and further directs program evaluations' perspective: the 2010 report of the National Commission for Reparation and Reintegration (CNRR) analyzes reintegration policies with regard to gender, age, ethnicity and disability – the categories established by CONPES 3554 (CNRR 2010).

In spite of emphasizing the importance of a differential focus in DDR and criticizing insufficient implementation (CNRR 2010), the CNRR similarly places diversity at a marginal position in the last chapters of the report (CNRR 220-269). On the contrary, primary attention is given to the problematic of re-mobilization into criminal gangs and to security concerns for both ex-combatants and receiving communities (CNRR 2010, 149–219). Can this prioritization of security topics over diversity categories be explained by a dominant stereotype of the (ex-)combatant exclusive to those captured under the diversity categories? In other words, does the common assumption "that males present the primary threat to post-conflict security and that they therefore should be the main focus of DDR programmes" (Specht 2013, 63) hold true for the Colombian DDR discourse? A feminist perspective on security theory and securitization provides the heuristic tools for further scrutinizing this assumption.

[25] CONPES documents are the key documents for defining public policies in Colombia and as such the basis for further programmatic elaboration and implementation in respective agencies.

Section Two: Theoretical and conceptual considerations

Theoretical framework: a feminist approach to securitization

DDR can be regarded as a means to re-establish the state monopoly of violence (Muggah 2005, 248). As such, DDR is meant to abolish a security threat for the state. However, the way in which this security threat is perceived has decisive implications for the design and long-term consequences of DDR programs. Are ex-combatants perceived as a monolithic group or differentiated according to categories such as gender or age? The following section explores the theoretical links between two contributors to critical security studies – first, Feminist Security Theory (FST) as a basis for analyzing the discursive construction of the 'combatant/ex-combatant'; and second, the Copenhagen School's securitization theory, as a heuristic device for conceptualizing the inclusion and exclusion of specific groups from perceptions of (in)security and DDR programs.

In the framework of the "third debate" that questioned the epistemological and ontological foundations of mainstream IR towards the end of the Cold War (Sjoberg 2009, 204–205), FSTscholars challenged "the dominant narrative" (Cheldelin and Eliatamby 2011, 283) of conventional security studies. FST scholars render women in international politics and security visible by questioning state protection of women, contesting women's alleged inherent peacefulness, and arguing that gendered security practices concern both men and women, and that the study of masculinities is useful to unpack security-sustaining practices (Blanchard 2003, 1290, 1304; see also Salla 2001; Skjelsbæk 2001). In other words, feminism is concerned with the complex gendered relationships of females and males of all ages,

including hierarchies among men and among women (Sjoberg 2009, 190), and as such with the "set of discourses" (Sjoberg 2010, 3) that are produced by and reproduce gendered social hierarchies.

FST scholars like Ann Tickner (1992) incorporate Johan Galtung's (1969, 1971) concept of *structural violence* to denounce economic and environmental insecurity as a violation of livelihood opportunities, and point to the normative and transformative need for social and gender justice as preconditions for lasting peace and security (Blanchard 2003, 1298–1299). "[R]evealing gendered hierarchies, eradicating patriarchal structural violence, and working toward the eventual achievement of common security" (Blanchard 2003, 1305) are declared goals of feminist security studies. Furthermore, FST scholars regard war as an expression of masculine aggressiveness, with masculinity being a question of socialization rather than of human nature and constitutive of a power relation of domination towards femininity (Fierke 2007, 56, 58). Joshua Goldstein (2001; cited in Fierke 2007, 59) underlines that war is a "social and cultural experience […] reproducing gender hierarchies between men and women". Consequently, Vanessa Farr (2005) argues, the transition to 'post-conflict' requires the demilitarization of armed forces, state institutions in general and society as a whole – not only through physical disarmament, i.e. weapons collection, but through the "mental demilitarization" (Farr 2005, 26), i.e. by transforming socially dominant notions of masculinity and femininity from a militarized to a non-militarized ground (Farr 2005, 7, 11-12,). DDR, Farr (2005, 27-28) contends, can play a crucial part in social transformation after armed conflict, provided that its designers conduct a gender-sensitive assessment and facilitate larger demilitarization.

Critical security studies in general introduced an epistemological shift towards more "interpretive models of understanding" (Krause and Williams 1997, 50) compared to traditional security studies, and a "focus on historically and reflexively constituted practices" (Krause and Williams 1997, 52). "[T]he questions become how these threats and interests are constructed, how the actors involved are constituted, and how these processes may change" (Krause and Williams 1997, 51). The Copenhagen School's *securitization theory* examines the construction of threats to a "referent object" as a social process – through "securitizing speech acts" (Williams 2003, 513) – as an existential security threat that creates an "emergency condition" and thus allows for extraordinary measures (Fierke 2007, 101).[26] The authority and legitimacy of securitizing actors as well as a receptive audience are preconditions for successful securitization (Fierke 2007, 103–108; see also Hansen 2000, 288). The "referent object" is a collective or political community whose identity as a group is (perceived as) threatened.

Gender was largely neglected in the Copenhagen School's initial conceptualization of the referent object. Lene Hansen (2000) considers both the silencing of women's voices and the rejection of gender as a salient identity – whose security can be threatened – as de-securitizing practices. Therefore, she introduces both "security as silence" (Hansen 2000, 294) and "subsuming security" (Hansen 2000, 297) as part of de-securitization. As Hansen puts it, "if security is a speech act, then it is simultaneously deeply implicated in the production of silence" (Hansen 2000, 306). I argue that, as much as for the referent object, a gender-sensitive analysis of the construction of the security threat can contribute to enriching the analytical potential of the securitization theory. Further criticism relevant for this research refers to a lack of context-sensitivity in the conceptualization of securitization (Balzacq 2005, 173, 191; McDonald 2008, 581). The aforementioned criticism shall be incorporated when using the Copenhagen School's securitization theory as a heuristic device for my analysis by embracing not only gender but diversity and context as key factors in the construction of a security threat.

Scholars have applied the securitization theory to analyze the discursive construction of the 'ex-combatant' in DDR discourse and programs. Jaremey McMullin (2012) argues that the framing and securitization of ex-combatants decisively shape the design of DDR programs, because the frames themselves have "power, politics and violence" (McMullin 2012, 413). He finds that Liberian 'ex-combatants' are socially engineered as a threat, through a "threat narrative" produced by the "disciplinary and governmentalizing logic of securitization" (McMullin 2012, 395). Despite similar likelihood to turn to violence among ex-combatants and never-recruited civilians (McMullin 2012, 397; see also Annan et al. 2011, 879–881), ex-combatants are alienated from communities and "reduced

[26] An underlying assumption for critical scholarship is that "people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them" (Wendt 1992, 396-397; cited in Fierke 2007, 101), with the meanings being culturally conditioned and constituted by discourses and discursive categories (Weldes et al. 1999, 13; cited in Fierke 2007, 101).

to threat" (McMullin 2012, 402) – which promotes ex-combatants' stigmatization and community resentment, hampers opportunities for ex-combatants as well as for reintegration programs, even if the latter are community-oriented.

As mentioned in the introduction, MacKenzie (2009a) adopts a feminist stance toward the securitization theory to analyze the gendered discursive construction of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone. She shows how male ex-combatants are securitized by the DDR program as a political, public threat, whereas female ex-combatants are de-securitized and driven out of the public to the private, social sphere as 'anything-but-soldiers' (MacKenzie 2009a, 256-257). The logic behind this argument goes in line with further findings of female exclusion from DDR processes, explored in the gender literature review below. MacKenzie's application of the securitization theory from a FST standpoint is highly enriching and raises the question as to whether this finding for Sierra Leone applies to the Colombian case as well. As such, her research provides two basic assumptions: first, the discursive construction of the 'combatant' or 'ex-combatant' influences the way DDR programs are designed and as such patterns of inclusion or exclusion; and second, hegemonic gender notions decisively shape these patterns.

Inspired by MacKenzie's analysis, but arguing that gender as a lens is insufficient to unpack the multiple layers of meaning that shape the identity of different ex-combatants, I expand the focus from a traditional gender perspective to the broader concept of diversity. As Errol Miller (2001) argues, other categories such as class and race may be dominant over gender identity, which problematizes the concept of patriarchy as a single framework for social structure (Skjelsbæk and Smith 2001a, 9–10). Others contend that it is gender identity that allows a deeper understanding of security itself, rendering gender an essential category for securitization (Hoogensen and Rottem 2004, 168–169). Adopting a diversity-sensitive focus for the Colombian case study that addresses "gender-based and other forms of inequality and discrimination simultaneously" (Skjelsbæk and Smith 2001a, 11) therefore seems appropriate.[27]

Towards a concept of diversity

The following sections explore external and internal categories of diversity and transfer them to the Colombian case based on relevant secondary literature. These categories, however, are not static but dynamically evolved in an abductive process, a constant exchange and revision with empirical data, throughout the research (Wodak 2004, 200). This 'conversation' between theory and empirics allowed for emerging categories to be included and preassumed categories to be refuted. As underlined in the introduction, gender analyses provide the major analytical tool and are thus given more thorough attention, however without presupposing any hierarchy among the diversity categories for the Colombian case.

Feminist scholars regard gender as the salient among a list of diversity categories, to be considered in order to gain in-depth understanding of the "related but distinct" (Cohn 2013, 22) lived experiences of conflict that produce multiple realities and give way to multiple identities, agencies and strategies (Moser and Clark 2001a, 5). Adapted to combatants, this list can comprise *age, economic class, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, physical ability, or geographic location* (Cohn 2013, 2), but also *age at abduction* and *time spent within the NSAG* whichinfluence the *level and type of education and skills* (Mazurana and Eckerbom Cole 2013, 195-196).

For the Colombian case, Alba Nubia Rodríguez Pizarro (2008, 5–6), finds that experiences of FARC women differ according to their specific *age, ethnicity, education, geographic location prior to enlistment considering the Colombian urban-rural dichotomy, location of participation in the NSAG, marital status and children (dependents), socio-economic class and rank within the NSAG, or the organizational level reached*, all of them intertwined: the geographic location (urban or rural), for instance, is closely linked to education, which in turn influences the motives for enlistment: urban, more educated *milicianas* tend to join in order to acquire the status of "political subjects" (Rodríguez Pizarro 2008, 20), whereas rural, less educated women join for a myriad of other motives, including a lack of (perceived) alternatives. In the following, I explore five large categories that subsume or relate to a number of other above-listed categories.

[27] Henry Myrttinen, Jana Naujoks and Judy El-Bushra (2014, 6) call such a diversity-sensitive approach a "gender-relational approach".

Why the type of NSAG matters

Analyzing different NSAGs in Colombia, Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín (2007, 34) underlines how the *type of NSAG* matters: different NSAGs socialize their members differently, which will translate into different responses to and experiences in the same DDR program, and thus would logically be taken into account. I define NSAGs as "organized non-state armed groups that have taken up arms to challenge the state or another armed group over control – or the state's or another armed group's attempt to hold a monopoly of control – of political, economic, natural, territorial and/or human resources" (Mazurana 2013, 147), recurring to armed violence dependent on "opportunities, risks and alternatives" (Muggah and Krause 2009, 141). In spite of the artificial and counterproductive distinction between conflict-violence and criminal violence (Cockayne 2011; Cockayne and Lupel 2009; Muggah and Krause 2009, 141), DDR addresses only those NSAGs considered parties to the conflict.[28] In the Colombian case, this includes arguably two of the five types of armed groups identified by Keith Krause and Jennifer Milliken (2009, 204-205): the guerrilla as insurgent groups and the paramilitary groups – collectively demobilized between 2003 and 2006 – as the fourth type, a kind of private militias temporarily legalized and in cooperation with state armed forces (Guáqueta 2009, 21).

Scholars analyzing NSAGs as monolithic groups debate whether economic/material or political motivations cause and perpetuate civil conflicts (e.g. Ballentine and Nitzschke 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2000; Humphreys 2005, 510). They further analyze influencing factors, such as characteristics of natural resources that alter the onset and intensity of civil war (Le Billon 2012; Lujala 2009; Ross 2003) or other external constraints that shape the political economy of NSAGs beyond natural resources (Wennmann 2007; 2011). Mats Berdal and David H. Ucko demonstrate how "variations among armed groups" (Berdal and Ucko 2009a, 3) matter for *Reintegrating armed groups after conflict* (Berdal and Ucko 2009b). On the individual level, studies analyze motivations to join NSAGs – including protection, revenge, political ideology, violence and social injustice in patriarchal systems and sexual violence in the private or public sphere, economic drivers (Mazurana 2013, 148-150), women's empowerment (Mazurana and Proctor 2013, 13) or forcible abduction (Annan et al. 2011, 885; Bøås and Hatløy 2008, 45) – as well as "individual-level determinants of demobilization and reintegration" (Humphreys and Weinstein 2007, 531).

Understanding NSAGs is relevant for the Colombian context in two major ways: first, on the group level, the type of NSAG determines which demobilization mode is accessible, as explained in the Colombian DDR history: collective demobilizations have been accessible to both guerrilla and paramilitary groups, though with different governing logics and conditions. Individual demobilization, on the contrary, is available to guerrilla deserters exclusively, meaning also that deserters from residual fractions of demobilized guerrilla groups can enter DDR that way, while those from residual paramilitary fractions cannot.

Considerable knowledge about the Colombian NSAGs has been accumulated through quantitative surveys (Arjona and Kalyvas 2012; Villegas de Posada 2009) or qualitative in-depth interviews with ex-combatants (Dietrich Ortega 2012; Herrera and Porch 2008; Londoño and Nieto 2006; Nussio 2011b; Nussio and Oppenheim 2013; Theidon 2007; Theidon 2009). Their insights hint to a second way in which differences among NSAG are relevant for understanding the Colombian DDR challenges: despite similar motivations to enlist in the different NSAGs (Arjona and Kalyvas 2012, 145), once enlisted, different internal structure and regulation constructs different identities, in other words, socializes people differently (Gutiérrez Sanín 2007, 34) and accordingly equips them with different coping mechanisms for the challenges in reintegration. Exploring the full range of differences between right-wing paramilitary groups – which differ strongly among themselves – and left-wing guerrilla groups is beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, only the most relevant differences will be outlined in the following.

Regarding the *internal structure and regulations,* strict vertical hierarchy and internal regulations in the guerrilla groups are opposed to a less rigorous hierarchy in paramilitary groups. The FARC is strictest in that they require absolute obedience to superiors in the army-like structure (vertical command structure from the Secretariat to blocs to fronts to columns), give no

[28] Labelling is crucial in this respect: while the Colombian paramilitary umbrella organization AUC was considered party to the armed conflict, their (partial) re-mobilization after the DDR process is considered outside the armed conflict, and as such merely criminal in nature. This is reflected in the label ascribed to these "neo-paramilitary" groups (Granada, Restrepo, and Tobón García 2009; Massé 2011; see also Restrepo and Aponte 2009) as *bacrim (BAndas CRIMinales),* or criminal gangs.

remuneration, consider enlistment a life-long commitment, punish desertion with death (Gutiérrez Sanín and Giustozzi 2010, 844–845; Gutiérrez Sanín 2007, 21-24), and forbid family contact as the organization operates in quasi-isolation from local support structures (Gutiérrez Sanín 2012a, 189). The latter distinguishes the FARC from the ELN whose dependence on local support produces softer regulations regarding desertion and return to the organization (Gutiérrez Sanín 2007, 24; 2012, 190). The paramilitary groups, officially demobilized between 2003 and 2006, are less elitist in their recruitment strategies, have a more horizontal structure, offer individual rent-seeking possibilities and pay a salary double the Colombian minimum wage,[29] allow for desertion, and are strongly integrated into civilian society (Gutiérrez Sanín 2007, 24, 37; 2012, 187). Socialization in a guerrilla group marked by military discipline, obedience and isolation from society will likely reduce a person's facility to return to civilian life after demobilization, as compared to a paramilitary member socialized in a system that resembles capitalist society more.

The younger *age at recruitment* into the contemporary guerrilla groups than into the AUC and, accordingly, the *lower level of education* of guerrilla recruits outside the group (Arjona and Kalyvas 2012, 152–153) further reduces 'civilian competences' of guerrilla recruits. No global statistics are available on this topic, but single studies indicate the trends: 82 percent of individually demobilized guerrilla members in 2000 were recruited between the age of 10 and 17, and 44 percent deserted as minors (Pinto, Vergara, and Lahuerta 2002, 6–7). The average age at recruitment of demobilized minors between 1999 and 2004 was 15.97 years, with the ELN recruiting the youngest (15.85 years) and the AUC the oldest (16.15 years) (Gutiérrez Sanín 2007, 38). The young age at recruitment coincides with *geographic location* and *ethnicity:* FARC soldiers, for example, are "overwhelmingly rural, frequently illiterate or barely educated, heavily indigenous or Afro-Colombian, and young" (Herrera and Porch 2008, 614). Given that reintegration programs are mostly located in urban areas, ex-combatants' rural provenance could further complicate the (often) mandatory move into poor urban suburbs.

[29] As of 2009, this corresponded to approx. 225 USD/month (Theidon 2009, 15).

Finally, different *gender relations* within the NSAG mean different experiences for men and women in different NSAGs, which in turn could provoke different levels of shock when re-entering civilian society and being confronted with traditional gender roles (Londoño and Nieto 2006, 22). While the social structure in Colombia, a "militarized, masculinized patriarchal system", was reproduced within the AUC (Mazurana 2013, 166), the FARC is reportedly less *machista* than rural communities (Dietrich Ortega 2012, 95) and women feel empowered and treated as equal partners (Herrera and Porch 2008, 617). Other guerrilla groups, for instance the ELN, are considered more patriarchal and excluded women completely until the 1980s (Gutiérrez Sanín 2007, 11-12).[30] The logic derived from this literature and applied to the Colombian society leads to the somewhat ironical assumption that the more patriarchal the NSAG, the more masculinities and femininities in the NSAG should resemble the socially dominant gender norms and the easier reintegration into a patriarchal society should be. In that logic, the type of NSAG must be accounted for.

Why regional context and conflict dynamics matter

Disregarding the *greed v. grievance debate* and the overall governing logic of Colombian NSAGs, the conflict dynamics on the local level shape patterns of mobilization and demobilization (Arjona and Kalyvas 2012, 167–168): in areas of weak state control and strong NSAG presence, socialization is closely tied to "family traditions" of enlistment (Dietrich Ortega 2012, 93) and the prestige for both men and women related to the possession of weapons reflects a highly militarized environment (Dietrich Ortega 2012, 95; Herrera and Porch 2008, 616). Shifting conflict dynamics change the dominance of particular NSAGs in specific areas, which explains that approximately ten percent of former combatants change 'the workplace' at least once, mostly from guerrilla groups to the paramilitaries (Arjona and Kalyvas 2012, 166; Gutiérrez Sanín 2012a, 179). Ongoing conflict and weak state presence in zones of the Pacific Coast, where the

[30] This translates into an exclusion of women from high ranks and leadership roles in AUC and ELN, reducing them to support roles (Mazurana 2013, 165; Londoño and Nieto 2006, 38). While M-19 women and several women in the EPL had access to the highest ranks (Londoño and Nieto 2006, 25, 30), however, this is also the exception in the FARC, which counts on few female commanders and no women in the Secretariat (Herrera and Porch 2008, 619-620).

majority of the population is afro-descendent, further produces patterns of over-proportional affectation of these ethnic groups by the armed conflict, including recruitment (Hernández 2013).

Regional dynamics are furthermore decisive in that ongoing conflict and the *demobilization mode,* i.e. individual or collective demobilization, shape ex-combatants' opportunities with regard to their geographic location. Some ex-combatants – most likely former paramilitary members – return home or have never left during their NSAG activity. Others move or are forced to move to a new location, mostly Bogotá – a circumstance that renders different reintegration approaches imperative (Nussio 2011b, 597). *Security concerns* about ex-combatants' security (Nussio 2011b), their level of trust in the state (Nussio and Oppenheim 2013), hostility and stigmatization by receiving communities due to fear of ex-combatants (Theidon 2007) and the complexity of the Colombian conflict rendering a clear-cut distinction between 'civilian' and 'combatant' impossible (Arjona 2008; Orozco Abad 2005) are indirect factors deriving from these regional dynamics and related to NSAG-specific DDR opportunities.

Why gender matters

"[G]ender is, at heart, a structural power relation" (Cohn 2013, 4) rooted in different manifestations of patriarchy. The latter can be understood as a

"social structure which shapes individual identities and lives […], a way of categorizing, ordering, and symbolizing power, of hierarchically structuring relationships among different categories of people, and different human activities symbolically associated with masculinity or femininity" (Cohn 2013, 3).

Gender scholars are thus interested in the way gendered power relations shape and are shaped by the experiences of individual human beings, both men and women, within the socially constructed role ascribed to them due to their biological sex. Accordingly, gender scholars assume that women and men experience conflict differently, and are affected by the same phenomena in different ways. Conflict modifies the highly dynamic and context-specific gender roles and relations (Specht 2013, 62). Since patriarchy as the underlying structure of society is considered "a principal cause both of the outbreak of violent societal conflict and of […] failures in providing long-term resolutions to those violent conflicts" (Enloe 2005, 181), more equal gender relations become a prerequisite for overcoming conflict and attaining development and social justice (Castellejo 2011, 19; UNDP Colombia 2007, 3).

Due to the (implicit) gendered assumptions of leading personnel, patriarchy is reproduced in the gendered relations within perceivedly neutral institutions (Cohn 2013, 15–16), as is the case in SSR designs (Bastick 2008, 156). This logic applies to DDR as well: "institutional resistance" (Jacobson 2013, 224–225) to change in the gendered institutional structure or the perception of the DDR design as gender-neutral, e.g. not specifically addressing men while providing male-friendly facilities and services, could promote selective opportunities to participate in and benefit from DDR for men and women. In this logic, I hypothesize that the traditional patriarchal structure of Colombian society, marked by *machismo,* "the cult of virility", and its counterpart *marianismo,* the idea of female sanctity (Mazurana 2013, 165), is likely to be reproduced in Colombian DDR processes.

Two main streams of the gender and conflict literature are of crucial relevance to this analysis of the Colombian DDR programs: the growing international focus on womens' and girls' empowerment during and after conflict, reflected in a growing body of academic research on women in war on the one hand,[31] and the idea of demilitarizing the notions of masculinity and femininity as part of a transition to post-conflict on the other hand.

Women and girls as agents in conflict

„[I]nattention to, and subsequent miscalculations about, women's and girls' roles and experiences during particular conflicts and in early postconflict periods systematically undermines the efforts of peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, civil society, and women's organizations to establish *conditions necessary for national and regional peace, justice, and security*" (Mazurana et al. 2005, 2, emphases added).

Challenging the assumption of women's inherent peacefulness and victimhood – as opposed to the militarized notion of masculinity (de Alwis, Mertus, and Sajjad 2013, 175) and the idea of men as perpetrators of violence – feminist scholars analyze how women's lives become militarized in war (Elshtain and Tobias 1990;

[31] See, e.g.: Baaz and Stern 2013; Cockburn 2001; Coulter, Persson and Utas 2008; Jennings 2009; Mazurana, Raven-Roberts, and Parpart 2005; McKay 2004; McKay and Mazurana 2004; Moser and Clark 2001b; Skjelsbæk and Smith 2001b.

Enloe 1983; Sutton, Morgen, and Novkov 2008) and how they become key agents in violent and non-violent conflict (Moser and Clark 2001a, 4): in shadow economies (Duffield 2001; Nordstrom 2004; Raven-Roberts 2013) and refugee-camps (Giles and Cohn 2013), as political activists (Cohn and Jacobson 2013), but also as leading perpetrators of genocide (Leggat-Smith 1995; Brown 2013; Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Sylvester 2010, 32), as torturers (Bunster 1993), suicide bombers or combatants in state military forces or non-state armed groups, breaking the social taboos of traditional gender roles (Alison 2004, Gautam, Banskota, and Manchanda 2001; Kampwirth 2002; Mathers 2013; Mazurana 2013).

While female participation in war ranges back to the 5th century AD, women have increasingly assumed active combat roles since the end of the Cold War, with considerable proportions of women participating in armed opposition groups in 59 countries worldwide (Mazurana 2013, 147–148). Even though some highly *machista* NSAGs like the Somalian al Shabaab, the Palestinian Hamas or the Colombian AUC ban women from their public image and employ them for support roles mainly, other NSAGs like the Sri Lankan Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) employ about 40 and 65 percent of women respectively in bombing attacks (Mazurana 2013, 151-159). Estimates about the proportions of females in the FARC range from 15 to 30 percent (Gutiérrez Sanín and Giustozzi 2010, 845) up to 40 to 50 percent (Mazurana 2013, 155), depending on the referred source, front and region.

Besides operative roles like "cooking, looting, washing clothes, serving as porters, collecting water and firewood" (Mazurana 2013, 150) that are crucial for the functioning of an NSAG,[32] women work as "commanders, frontline fighters, spies, intelligence officers, weapons dealers, messengers, recruiters, and political strategists" (Mazurana 2013, 150). "Women and girls play vital roles helping to establish the identity of a group and in supporting its ability to project its authority, power, and protection, both within the group and among its supporters" (Mazurana and Eckerbom Cole 2013, 212; see also Dietrich Ortega 2012, 96–97).[33]

The growing normative international framework acknowledges women's agency and emphasizes the need to take them into account in DDR processes, starting with UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) as the first of a range of international resolutions, declarations and best-practice guidelines like the UN IDDRS.[34] However, continuing "invisibility and marginalization of women and girls within DDR processes" (Mazurana and Eckerbom Cole 2013, 194–195) suggests a large gap between UN theory and practice in the field.

Interestingly, numbers of female participation in DDR cast doubt on the transferability to the Latin American context of conclusions drawn from African cases about systematic exclusion of women and girls from DDR programs (e.g. Mazurana 2013, 151). Compared to a low proportion of female combatants in African DDR programs, where most lessons incorporated into the IDDRS have been learnt and two thirds of DDR processes have taken place since the 1990s, Latin American DDR programs count important numbers of women, e.g. 29 percent for the El Salvadorean Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) (Mazurana 2013, 204), between 17.5 percent for the CRS and 31.5 percent for the M-19 among the Colombian guerrilla groups demobilized in the 1990s (Londoño and Nieto 2006, 42).

But while mobilization into NSAGs can be a form of *female empowerment* and rupture with traditional gender roles, DDR as part of the transition to 'post-conflict' often becomes a disempowering experience as a forced return to 'women's roles', reinforced through patriarchy-reproducing DDR programs reducing women's post-NSAG agency to the private sphere or social realm (Dowler 1997; cited in Fierke 2007, 59; Londoño and Nieto 2006, 189). By not perceiving female ex-combatants as "a threat and hence [someone] who has

[32] As a comparison, 15-20 percent of military personnel in the U.S. army hold active combat positions, whereas the remainder operates as vital support structure (Mazurana and Eckerbom Cole 2013, 202-203).

[33] In historical perspective, "the participation of women and children in organized violent resistance [in Colombia] is a huge moral and political victory" (Gutiérrez Sanín 2007, 16).

[34] A non-exhaustive list of relevant documents includes: OP 13 of UNSC Res. 1325 (2000) dealing with specific needs of men and women in DDR; OP 13 of UNSC Res 1889 (2009) urging women's access to DDR; OP 4 of UNSC Res. 2122 (2013) reiterating the provisions of UNSC Res. 1325; articles 66-69 of the CEDAW General Recommendations No. 30 criticizing widespread exclusion of women and girls and urging for their inclusion into DDR processes (2013); art. 7(4) of the Arms Trade Treaty (2013) establishing the need to account for risks of gender-based violence exerted by to-be-traded arms; as well as the gender and generational modules in the UN IDDRS (United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre 2014).

credibility and must be taken seriously" (Mazurana and Eckerbom Cole 2013, 212), DDR programs fail to acknowledge the fundamental importance of women's roles for the functioning and perceived legitimacy of military systems, be they an NSAG or state armed forces (Enloe 1989; cited in Fierke 2007, 59).

Studies on DDR experiences in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Uganda show how DDR programs, if designed without accounting for women's specific constellation of risks, opportunities and alternatives, rather than promoting further empowerment of women post-demobilization contribute to perpetuating the status quo ante of patriarchal gender roles and the gendered inequalities and misconceptions "about men-as-actors and women-as-victims, misleading ideas that serve to perpetuate the very conditions that set off the conflict in the first place" (Enloe 2013, xv–xvi). This may occur through masculinized sports in cantonment camps (Dyck 2011, 402), gun-for-money eligibility criteria to disarmament (MacKenzie 2009a, 250), or disempowering "women's reintegration programs" whose skills training offer is reduced to "gara tiedying, soap-making, tailoring, catering, hairdressing and weaving" (MacKenzie 2009b, 209), based on assumptions about patriarchal family and community structures, neglecting female ex-combatants' previous skills and disregarding local market needs and capacities, i.e. employment opportunities after skills training.

Reintegrating "into a differently gendered world" (Mazurana and Eckerbom Cole 2013, 207) thus means re-negotiating identities and roles acquired during the armed conflict and coping with the identity crisis resulting from a (perceived) loss of power upon demobilization, compared to their position within the NSAG (Mazurana 2013, 154). Besides difficulties to cope with the return into traditional roles, DDR entails women's exposure as ex-combatants and thereby increases their vulnerability in terms of security, access to education and income, (sexual) exploitation or social acceptance (MacKenzie 2009b, 212–213; Mazurana and Eckerbom Cole 2013, 211).[35] Testimonies from Colombian female ex-combatants demobilized during the 1990s illustrate the twofold social stigmatization against female ex-combatants. Women in Colombia are rejected for a double transgression: first, for having taken up arms as NSAG combatants; and second, for transgressing gender norms as *female* ex-combatants (Londoño and Nieto 2006, 154-161).

These women's reintegration experiences differ not only between women from different guerrilla groups, but also between different *guerrilleras* of the same armed group, depending on their personal constellation of factors like: social class, which is expressed in Colombia through so-called *estratos,* or designated social strata; former group affiliation that determines post-conflict support networks; rank and political or military motivations for armed struggle; locality in terms of urban or rural origin, with stronger disempowerment for rural women; civil status and maternity; family support, which is the centerpiece for most of the women demobilized during the 1990s; and regional differences in terms of culture, politics and economic development (Londoño and Nieto 2006, 120-142).

Interestingly, this study finds that female ex-combatants are neglected by and invisible in reinsertion programs, NGO work in Colombia, in linguistic forms used by the public media, as well as in data collected by the national agencies and legal documents on DDR until the Justice and Peace Law, which was the first to refer explicitly to both men and women (Londoño and Nieto 2006, 86-100). However, by adapting to the patriarchal structure of their environment, these women also marginalize and subordinate themselves (Londoño and Nieto 2006, 78). While lastingly empowered through self-confidence gained in the collective armed struggle, only few *ex-guerrilleras* maintain political leadership positions after demobilization (Londoño and Nieto 2006, 190-197). Rather, and in line with the abovementioned FST assumption of women being pushed to the social sphere and thus perceived as non-threatening, they engage mainly in social work, contributing their part to the 80 percent of demobilized men and women working in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or think tanks for peace projects (Sánchez-Blake 2012).

The *Colectivo de Mujeres Excombatientes (Colectivo),* a mutual support network created by *ex-guerrilleras* demobilized in the 1990s, aims to mitigate jointly the most disempowering experience of silence around their identity as *ex-combatants*: a negation of their memory as *insurgentas,* female insurgents, and consequent social isolation (Londoño and Nieto 2006, 202-204). Public visibility of female ex-combatants from all Colombian

[35]The high number of obstacles to female reintegration reinforced instead of alleviated through DDR programs potentially explains the general findings of women's tendency to self-demobilize secretly (Mazurana 2013, 151; Mazurana and Eckerbom 2013, 197; Paaskesen 2013).

NSAGs is increasing thanks to the work of the CNMH that collects testimonies of victims and perpetrators of the conflict and recently published a volume on the challenges of gender, age and ethnicity in reintegration (CNMH 2013a), as well as to a range of journalistic (e.g. Lara Salive 2010) and academic publications (e.g. Herrera and Porch 2008; Londoño and Nieto 2006). Nonetheless, the social expectation of "women-as-victims" (Enloe 2013, xv) is even imposed on female combatants, portraying them as victims of sexual slavery in the FARC rather than acknowledging that some women experience FARC membership as empowering and a form of sexual liberation in comparison to their civilian environment (Herrera and Porch 2008, 609-610).

Perceived gender equality within the NSAG and subsequent loss of this opportunity to access respect and status is a point all demobilized women seem to share (Herrera and Porch 2008, 617; Londoño and Nieto 2006, 51). Gender equality, however, corresponds to an assimilation of women to masculinity: they prove they are equally worthy as a man by assuming "traditionally male tasks" (Herrera and Porch 2008, 617) and gain access to higher ranks by proving stronger and tougher than the men in their group (Herrera and Porch 2008, 619). Testimonies underline that only upon demobilization, when confronted with the social expectations towards women to resume the roles and attitudes ascribed to femininity, female ex-combatants gain gender awareness and criticize affronts against their femininity (Londoño and Nieto 2006, 74), e.g. the prohibition of maternity in Colombian NSAGs (Herrera and Porch 2008, 625; Mazurana 2013, 166). This commonality and important reflection mirrors an ongoing academic debate about changing notions of masculinity and femininity as drivers of violence and peace.

Demilitarizing the mind: changing masculinities and femininities in reintegration

As early as in 1982, the 'Societies at Peace' project by Signe Howell and Roy Willis found that the more differentiated the notions of masculinity and femininity within societies, the more vulnerable to violence these societies were (Kimmel 2005, 6).[36] Gender scholars have demonstrated how conflict produces overall societal militarization of gender identities, or masculinities and femininities, actively constructed by both men and women (Farr 2005, 14) and based on the dynamic constellation of the four identity-determining social roles as provider, protector, procreator and prestige-seeker (UN IAWG on DDR *draft*, 28–31). Militarized masculinity becomes contingent on the dominant role as protector in conflict, with combatant status, weapons and violence providing access to prestige and manhood (Specht 2013, 66; UN IAWG on DDR *draft*, 13, 38).

These militarized violent masculinities become the basis for "societal expectations of violent male behavior", expressed in "heterosexual gender norms" that neglect and discriminate alternative sexualities of LGBTI persons and discard all aspects considered feminine (Myrttinen, Naujoks, and El-Bushra 2014, 16-17; see also Whitworth 2008, 113–114). "Masculinity cannot be generalized to men per se, but it can be equated with power-holding and the subordination of the feminine" (Fierke 2007, 58). Women's access to respect, power and status in NSAGs is thus highly contingent on their adoption of similar violent masculinities, and a constant proving that they are equal to or better than men (Cohn 2013, 18; Specht 2013, 67–69), as mentioned before for the Colombian *guerrilleras*. Even though both men and women in NSAGs act according to social expectations of hegemonic militarized masculinity, their experience of DDR and the societal expectations towards them *as men and women,* based on the ideas of masculinity belonging to the public and femininity to the private space,are different and provoke different forms of identity crises, 'post-conflict' violence and gendered discrimination (Farr 2005, 8-9).

DDR programs can contribute to larger-scale 'post-conflict' demilitarization through ex-combatants' "mental demilitarization" (Farr 2005, 26, my translation), the (re)construction of masculinities and femininities after conflict (Specht 2013, 63) by providing non-violent civilian alternatives to violent militarized masculinities. Disarmament and demobilization produce gendered identity crises, such as a feeling of emasculation for male ex-combatants, who pass from "hero to zero" (UN IAWG on DDR *draft*, 13) through the loss of social status as a combatant and weapons-bearer. Male violence has been found to shift from the public to the private sphere post-demobilization, with increasing rates of intra-familiar gender-based violence (Specht 2013, 76, 81). Female ex-combatants, as mentioned above, experience that traditional patriarchal ideas of femininity become an

[36] Such differentiation is highly developed in patriarchal societies (Farr 2005, 11).

obstacle to their reintegration, as their bodies and former combatant status become a source of social stigma, rejection and the reversal of their wartime empowerment (Farr 2005, 13, 24).

Colombian society remains highly militarized and patriarchal, guided by the notions of *machismo* and *marianismo* as ideal-types of masculinity and femininity (Mazurana 2013, 165). The prevalence of armed conflict for over half a century has arguably provoked a "culture of violence" (Sweig 2001, 122; Waldmann 2007, 63), articulated in high social and cultural legitimation of violence in discourse, including early socialization: "deep-rooted cultural images linking manliness to violence, competition and courage, continue to dominate school settings" (Gómez Alcaraz and García Suárez 2006, 102).

Anthropologist Kimberly Theidon (2009, 5-6), studying male ex-combatants from both paramilitary and guerrilla groups in Colombia, finds their mindset is dominated by militarized masculinity, "that fusion of certain practices and images of maleness with the use of weapons, the exercise of violence, and the performance of an aggressive and frequently misogynist masculinity" (Theidon 2009, 5), hegemonic in Colombian society due to the lack of societally or individually accessible alternative forms of masculinity. The latter is reinforced by female preference of the "big men" in the local economies of war, i.e. of those with access to power through weapons and violence (Theidon 2009, 18).[37]

In order to mitigate the effects of gendered identity crises in DDR and the societal expectations towards ex-combatants, DDR programs need to assist ex-combatants in two ways: first, in transforming their identities into non-violent, positive civilian identities through specific economic, social and psychological assistance and second, in replacing the economic and symbolic value of a weapon for both men and women (UN IAWG on DDR *draft*, 68-71; see also Bastick 2008, 167). This implies acknowledging that alternative access to economic stability and security is as important as alternative access to prestige and manhood for men and empowerment for women. Consequently, two challenges arise: first, to develop DDR programs that avoid perpetuating patriarchal gender ideas and contribute to de-militarizing masculinities and femininities of ex-combatants; and second to embrace in this approach an understanding of how other categories of diversity, or "identity markers" (Myrttinen, Naujoks, and El-Bushra 2014, 5) such as age or ethnicity interact with the differential experience of masculinity and femininity of former combatants.

These challenges have been detected for the Colombian case as well. Theidon (2009, 31) finds that DDR programs reinforce patriarchal gender stereotypes prevalent in Colombian civilian society, thereby hampering female reintegration and family recovery. She urges for gender-sensitive and bottom-up reintegration in Colombia that could assist ex-combatants in re-learning civilian behavior and recovering non-violent, non-militarized gendered identities – a precondition for mitigating the security conundrum in reintegration and reducing social stigma and mutual fear within receiving communities (Theidon 2007, 76; 2009, 18–20). A re-definition of femininity becomes equally important, given the paradoxical contrast of female empowerment in the FARC with their renunciation to femininity in favor of masculine attitudes (see Herrera and Porch 2008, 627), and the consequent equation of women's (forced) return to traditional gender roles in reintegration, experienced as disempowerment by many women, as a recovery of their femininity (see Londoño and Nieto 2006, 106).

Other studies confirm that 'disarming' gender identities, militarized due to their relation to the armed conflict, pose a major challenge to the Colombian reintegration program and can only be achieved if accompanied by a rupture with 'normalized violence' (Esguerra Rezk 2013; Villarraga 2013b, 24). Acknowledging gendered differences in reintegration design is deemed crucial for a positive contribution of the ACR's work to the social transformation of gender relations (Serrano Murcia 2013b; Villarraga 2013b, 23).

Age: legal or human distinction?

Generational differences as a category of diversity require attention, among others due to the fact that the international legal framework determines minors as victims of conflict and sets a limit of 18 years as the threshold for the majority of age. Under international law, underage combatants are entitled to specific protection as victims of conflict, as established by the *Paris Commitments to Protect Children Unlawfully Recruited or*

[37] The *type of NSAG* impacts the intensity of militarization of the mindset: Theidon (2007, 76) finds that "images of 'militarized masculinity'" are most salient among former paramilitaries, with the AUC being a much more patriarchal and masculinized organization than guerrilla groups like the FARC, whose gender-equality doctrine provokes less overtly misogynist masculinities and more nuanced interactions of masculinities and femininities (Herrera and Porch 2008, 627).

Used by Armed Forces or Armed Groups (2007)and the *Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups* (2007)(Muggah 2010, 7). A second reason for attention is that age matters and is intersected with gender dimensions, as Dyan Mazurana (2013, 147) shows: girls are abducted *as females,* but for different purposes than women, based on specific characteristics related to their younger age.[38] This translates into different roles within the armed group and thus different challenges in demobilization and reintegration.

There is an ongoing debate about whether children are to be regarded as pure victims, as the international legal framework suggests, or as deliberate participators in NSAGs (ODDR 2009, 50-51). Jason Hart (2012, 72) opposes conventional (Western) ideas about "the institution of childhood", identified with the 18-year-threshold and the notion of limited agency as minors. He argues that mobilization into NSAGs can be a purposive action chosen by adolescents – both girls and boys – themselves to gain access to "social adulthood" where social and economic constraints hamper conventional transitions, and to achieve respect and self-protection against abusive family members (Hart 2012, 76–77).

Similarly, former Sierra Leonean child recruit and current UNICEF advocate for Children Affected by War, Ishmael Beah, underlines that the aforementioned identity loss from "hero to zero" can be even harsher if the access to adulthood (and manhood) gained through the possession of a weapon is reversed during DDR. While not challenging the usefulness of the international child-combatants-as-victims approach, he advocates recognition of former child combatants' agency and ability to assume a high degree of self-determination in their reintegration (John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum 2013). A range of participatory action research studies with female youth in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Uganda support this statement and further demonstrate that social acceptance increases with more options for economic independence and self-determination of the participants (Burman and McKay 2007; McKay et al. 2011; Veale et al. 2013; Worthen et al. 2010).

Colombian scholars and practitioners, on the other hand, argue in favor of a child-as-victim approach and a 'differential approach' to reintegration with separate provisions for children and adults, contending that a child cannot enlist fully deliberately and that the specific conflict context is a violation of children's rights (Otálora and Bermeo 2013; Villarraga 2013c). This argumentation in accordance with the international legal framework is reflected in Colombian law: persons demobilized from a Colombian NSAG under the age of 18 years are considered victims of the conflict and emphasis lies on their protection and the restitution of their legal rights, as established in the *Código de infancia y adolescencia* (2006), the legal basis for child reintegration (ODDR 2009, 5) and the more recent Victims Law, Law 1448 (2011, Arts. 3, 181).[39] Under the Justice and Peace Law of 2005, the collective demobilization of paramilitary blocs was contingent on the a priori delivery of all minors in their ranks to the Colombian authorities (ODDR 2009, 19).

As established by Law 418 (1997) and prorrogated by Law 782 (2002), the ICBF runs a specific reintegration program for demobilized minors (ODDR 2009, 29; Ruiz García 2013, 442) – calling them 'devinculated' instead of 'demobilized' in order to emphasize the forcible nature of their recruitment into and stay within the NSAG. Regarding the age category, the Colombian DDR thus makes a difference between adult ex-combatants (ACR) and demobilized children (ICBF). The ICBF can designate the child either to return into his or her biological family *(hogar gestor),* a host family *(hogar tutor)*, shared flats for youth between 17 and 18 years *(casa juvenil)* or a larger childcare center *(centro de atención especializada),* CAE (ICBF 2010, 19), depending on an individual evaluation of each demobilized child's personal constitution, including family situation and allegedly maintaining the child's cultural and regional background to the extent possible (Y CARE International 2007, 5).

[38] While there exist studies on recruited minors that treat children as a monolithic category (Annan, Brier, and Aryemo 2009; Angucia, Zeelen, and de Jong 2010; Dyck 2011), other studies acknowledge the interaction between gender and age as categories of diversity, examining either male youth (Hoffman 2005; McMullin 2012) or girl recruits (McKay and Mazurana 2004).

[39] Children under the age of 14 years are considered exclusively as victims, whereas youth between 14 and 18 years are conceded a certain degree of agency under specific recruitment conditions and given that they committed serious crimes under international law (ODDR 2009, 22-23).

Ethnic minorities: historically excluded and disproportionately affected by the conflict

According to the 2005 population census, 3.4 percent of the Colombian population are indigenous, belonging to 102 different indigenous peoples (Ruiz García 2013, 424), and 11.52 percent are afro-descendent (Hernández 2013, 330). The majority of the indigenous and afro-Colombian population lives in rural, highly conflict-affected areas, which exposes them disproportionally to security threats such as displacement and recruitment.

International law grants ethnic groups protection against racial discrimination and of their integrity as a people, their rights and equality of conditions and the recognition of their self-determination, autonomy and self-governance (Serrano Murcia 2013b, 40).[40] Art. 7 of the Colombian Constitution (1991) acknowledges ethnical and cultural diversity and the integrity and preservation of afro-Colombian and indigenous communities is protected by law (Serrano Murcia 2013b, 41-42). Furthermore, amendments to the 2011 Victims Law recognize indigenous communities and their territory as well as different afro-descendent communities in Colombia as disproportionately affected victims of the armed conflict (Serrano Murcia 2013b, 55).

The CONPES 3554 (2008, 59) document acknowledges the need for a differential approach towards ethnic communities in terms of the reintegration, designed in consultation with the indigenous and afro-Colombian communities and reflecting their cosmologies – a requirement that has been found unimplemented in late 2013, but is deemed of crucial importance by the authors of the respective case studies (Hernández 2013, 373; Ruiz García 2013, 450; Villarraga 2013b, 28, 30). An exception to reported state neglect of ethnicity aspects in reintegration is the ICBF *Granja Ingruma*, an agricultural CAE for indigenous and afro-Colombian children focused on rural education – however, failing to cooperate with local embera communities and to acknowledge the cultural diversity of the 32 inhabitants who stem from different afro-descendent and indigenous communities (Ruiz García 2013, 445–446).

In line with their autonomy status, indigenous reintegration rituals are generally conducted independently from state institutions: the reintegration of demobilized members of arhuaco communities in the Sierra Nevada in Northern Colombia (Villarraga 2013d, 408–409); the three-year youth reintegration program 'Recomposing a way home', an autonomous economic and spiritual accompaniment by the Association of Indigenous Communitiesof the Northern Cauca (ACIN) to reintegrate their youth (Ruiz García 2013, 443–444); the 'rescue' missions of embera and waunan communities in the Chocó region to recover recruited youth and adults through constructive dialogue with NSAGs and reintegrate them autonomously and differently in each community, but with state recognition by CODA registration (Ruiz García 2013, 446–448); or the autonomous re-socialization projects for demobilized adults in embera, zenú and gundula communities in Antioquia, a region highly affected by paramilitary activity, drug trafficking, large-scale extraction industries and massive indigenous displacement (Ruiz García 2013, 448-449). No similar initiatives have been documented for Afro-Colombian communities, however (Hernández 2013).

Synthesis: core aspects in theory

In this chapter, I explored DDR literature and the Colombian DDR history. I constructed a theoretical framework based on feminist security studies and securitization theory as well as a concept of diversity, as relevant for the Colombian context. While feminist security studies and the gender literature on conflict and DDR provide useful tools for analyzing diversity, I expanded the gender perspective to a more holistic concept of diversity, comprising other categories external to the person like the type of NSAG or regional differences, and internal to the person like age and ethnicity. This implied recurring to different bodies of literature for each category.

The literature review reveals that there are no clear-cut borders between diversity categories: as a person holds a myriad of 'identity markers' composed in a specific constellation that influence his or her opportunities in DDR, the categories themselves can hardly be examined in isolation from each other, but are strongly intertwined. For example, the NSAG type and the consequent socialization a person received in the NSAG are closely

[40] The respective international documents are the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (1989) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).

linked to regional conflict dynamics, while at the same time influencing gendered relations, roles of men and women, boys and girls within the NSAG, or the age at recruitment. Arguing that diversity-sensitive DDR requires an in-depth understanding of the complex interplay of diversity categories, I thus reject any presupposed hierarchy between these categories.

This results in a range of theoretical assumptions (as resumed in Table 1 one below) that guide but don't restrict the empirical data collection: first, that the discursive construction of the 'combatant' or 'ex-combatant' as a security threat influences the way DDR programs are designed and thereby shapes patterns of inclusion or exclusion; second, that these patterns reflect the hegemonic gendered notions in society, likely to be reproduced in DDR; third, that the more socialization and roles during armed struggle differ from post-demobilization societal expectations, the more difficult reintegration; fourth, that these difficulties differ according to the particular constellation of the relevant diversity categories of a demobilized person; and fifth, that (de-)securitization follows patterns of social inclusion and exclusion in larger society.

Tab. 1: Theoretical assumptions drawn from the extensive literature review

No.	Theoretical assumption
1	The discursive construction of a) the 'combatant' or b) the 'ex-combatant' as a security threat influences the way DDR programs are designed and thereby shapes patterns of inclusion or exclusion.
2	These patterns reflect the hegemonic gendered notions in society, likely to be reproduced in DDR.
2a	Men are likely to be perceived as a security threat and thus securitized in DDR.
2b	Women are likely to be perceived as belonging to the private sphere and as such de-securitized in DDR.
2c	Similarly, children and ethnic minority groups are likely to be marginalized in or excluded from DDR.
3	The type of NSAG influences reintegration capacities: the more socialization and roles during armed struggle differ from post-demobilization societal expectations, the more difficult reintegration.
4	These difficulties differ according to the particular constellation of the relevant diversity categories of a demobilized person.
5	That (de-)securitization follows patterns of social inclusion and exclusion in larger society.

Section three: Securitizing along the lines of diversity?

Before delving into the detailed empirical analysis, it is noteworthy that there is no single narrative of threat regarding the DDR process and (ex-)combatants in Colombia and patterns of exclusion and inclusion are not clear-cut. Nonetheless, implicit and explicit assumptions regarding gender, age, ethnicity, regional differences and NSAG type compose subtle arrangements of discursive elements that justify or condemn the perceived practices in DDR and thereby contribute to a securitizing or de-securitizing discourse. The critical discourse analysis (CDA) extracts these discursive elements through a coding procedure of interview transcripts and identifies (emerging), congruent and contrasting themes in the interviews. It is worth underlining that reproducing my interviewees' discourses is neither the aim of this analysis nor would it be feasible, considering the richness in detail of each single narrative I was fortunate to hear.

This chapter presents the results of the CDA of 55 semi-structured interviews and two public events with 74 relevant persons involved in shaping the DDR discourse, 60 of them directly in Colombia.[41] As explained in Appendix B, the sample was composed on a theoretical basis and chain referrals were pursued until a saturation point was reached and referrals became circular. Lasting between one and three hours, the interviews allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of the interviewees' perspectives and to explore emerging themes beyond the questions based on theoretical assumptions. The interview sample reflects my diversity approach, combining experts focusing on gender, age and ethnicity, and Colombian NSAGs in the realm of DDR. Contrary to preceding studies, I thereby aim to embrace the complexity of diversity and avoid focusing on one category specifically. Notably, however, gender seems to be the dominant category in most interviewees' thinking since most prioritized gender when answering my questions about diversity.

Where the interviewees themselves adopt a critical and analytical stance towards the Colombian DDR discourse,

[41] As mentioned in the introduction, Appendix A contains an anonymous list of interviewees. Most interviews were conducted in Spanish, some in English and German. All direct citations in the empirical analysis are my own translations.

which is especially the case among ex-combatants working on gender issues, the lines between discourse and discourse analysis blur. Therefore, section 3.4 separately sums up the terminological key results of the CDA, while the remainder of the analysis walks the reader along the thin line between emerging themes from interviewees' discourse and my critical analysis of their discourse.

The CDA indicates an interesting trend: during the D&D phases, 'the combatant' and later 'the demobilized' is discursively constructed as a security threat and as such securitized, whereas in R, the demobilized combatant is discursively constructed as a neutral participant of the reintegration program, a 'participant', 'client' or 'person in reintegration process' (PPR), and as such de-linked from his or her past as a combatant and (perceived) security threat, i.e. de-securitized. The (de)securitizing discourse, led by reintegration institutions mainly, makes use of the discursive construction of diversity, as well as the silence and invisibility of some diversity categories. Before analyzing the discursive elements and themes of each category, I scrutinize accessible statistics on demobilized combatants in reintegration, introduce the approaches of the national ACR and the Bogotá district program *Proyecto 840* and critically reflect upon observed problematics.

(Un)available statistics on demobilized ex-combatants

Interested in which categories of diversity are considered determining when registering demobilized combatants and being denied access to the databases themselves, I asked my interviewees how the data they work with (based on the Ministry of Defense, ICBF and ACR databases) are disaggregated.[42] Both ICBF and ACR reportedly maintain sophisticated databases with data being disaggregated into "all imaginable categories" (BG14G), except for two decisive categories in the ACR database: whether the 'PPR' was formerly registered as a demobilized minor in the ICBF and, if indigenous, which of the 102 indigenous peoples he or she belongs to. Incompatibility of ICBF and ACR database formats further produces a loss of information when minors are passed to the ACR (BC14G).

Publicly available ACR statistics show that between February 2013 and January 2014, 30,612 demobilized persons were registered PPRs with the ACR, 88.1 percent or 26,969 of whom are men and 11.9 percent or 3,643 are women (ACR 2014b). The ACR's information system for reintegration (SIR) registers a total of 56,197 demobilized persons between 2003 and 2014, 62.8 percent or 35,314 of whom are former AUC (31,695 of them collectively demobilized), 30.3 percent or 17,000 former FARC members (190 of whom collectively demobilized), 6.1 percent or 3,403 individually demobilized ELN members and some individually and collectively demobilized members of smaller guerrilla groups recognized at some point as part of the armed conflict (ACR 2014b). No complete disaggregated data with regard to former group affiliation, sex, age or ethnicity is publicly available for the demobilized currently undergoing the program. Verbally provided ACR data show percentages of former group affiliation in combination with gender:

Tab. 2: Distribution of former NSAG affiliation and gender among ex-combatants in ACR reintegration

Percentage	AUC	FARC	ELN	EPL	Overall
All demobilized registered in the SIR (2003-2014)					
Women	7	20	22	28	12
Men	93	80	78	72	88
Currently enrolled in the R process (as of mid-March 2014)					
Women	8	22	23	-	-
Men	92	78	77	-	-

Source: Own depiction of data on the ACR population, verbally provided during interview BC6G.

These numbers don't indicate the absolute number of ex-combatants per type of NSAG, however, and can only serve as comparison to the gender proportions given in the reviewed secondary sources: with seven to eight percent female ex-combatants, the AUC has a slightly higher percentage of women participating in reintegration than registered upon demobilization (six percent), meaning that a larger proportion of women than men registered as demobilized then enter the reintegration program. On the contrary, the present numbers of 20 to 22 percent for the FARC remain below estimates of up to 50 percent female members in the FARC (Mazurana 2013, 155). Even the 30 to 40 percent estimates given

[42] Some studies on DDR in Colombia recur to demobilization lists and further data from the Colombian Ministry of Defense administering the individual demobilization process, the ACR or the ICBF. Up to date, high access barriers in the form of lengthy administrative procedures have prevented my access to their databases, as to gain an insight into the respective demobilization numbers and disaggregation of the data.

by a number of interviewees (BC8P; BC13P; BC17P; BC22P) are significantly higher than these percentages, indicating either inadequate estimates or a much higher proportion of females staying within the FARC or demobilizing independently, as opposed to their male *compañeros.*

Depending on the constellation of former AUC and guerrilla members in each regional reintegration office, deviations in the total gender distribution from the national average will occur, as illustrated by the example of one particular ACR regional service center with 31 percent former AUC and 64 percent ex-FARC members shows: there, 18.8 percent are women, as opposed to 12 percent on the national level (BC40E).

Tab. 3: Distribution of former NSAG affiliation and gender among PPRs in a specific regional ACR office

Percentage	AUC	FARC	ELN	EPL	Overall
Women	8.2	23.7	18	0	18.8
Men	91.8	66.3	82	100	81.2

Source: Own depiction of data provided by Interviewee BC40E, as of 12 April 2014.

Another regional office reports 85 percent former AUC members (BC39E). The gender distribution, though not provided, will be expectably lower. Different gender distributions in regional offices are likely to shape the gendered dynamics within these offices. Neither verbal nor written data about ethnic diversity in different service centers or the age distribution of PPRs was made available to me.

Individual versus collective focus in reintegration

The individual reintegration approach of the ACR

According to several interviewees previously or currently employed by the ACR, the reintegration strategy is based on 'personalized attention' to work out each ex-combatants' (PPR's) 'reintegration route' – consisting of a concrete 'working plan' that has to be completed in order to receive reintegration benefits – according to the concrete 'life project' of the person and in line with his or her particularities and contextual possibilities (BC35P). Formerly, the ACR operated in a three-tier system of social, economic and community reintegration units, with separate projects and responsibilities and a range of professionals working with the demobilized in their reintegration route (BC5G; BC11P; BC24P). This "old school" (BC5G) reintegration introduced educational, health and psycho-social attention tracks with maximal durations (education with 6.5 years being the longest) that could be flexibly applied to individualized profiles. Part of this design is still at work, while a "new dimensions approach" (BC35P) was designed in the ACR headquarters in Bogotá and allegedly introduced in the 38 regional offices in 2013 (BC6G; BC7G; BC35P). While implemented in some regional offices (BC39E), others report difficulties in the transition between the two models and incomplete implementation thus far (BC40E).

Contrary to the previous model, each PPR has only one personal *reintegrador* (reintegration professional), with whose guidance he or she undergoes the personalized reintegration route. Depending on the interviewee, the number of demobilized persons attended per professional ranges from 30 (BC1EvG) to 55 (BC35P) in one of the four local Service Centers in Bogotá. The reintegration route is based on the reintegration professional's evaluation of each PPR's particularities according to eight dimensions: personal, educational, productive, citizenship, family, health, living environment and security. Remarkably, the ACR's eight-dimensional approach, borrowed from a development model already applied in efforts to reduce extreme poverty (BC12P), embraces a range of external and internal categories along whose lines the individual PPR is characterized. This reflects an acknowledgment of the complexity of the individual, but sets different priorities than my theoretically established diversity concept and potentially accounts for the internal categories of diversity in the personal dimension, while rejecting former NSAG membership as part of the PPR's characteristics.

A complementary alternative for Bogotá? The Proyecto 840

The Bogotá reintegration program, since January 2014 denominated *Proyecto 840,* counts on a working team composed to a large part but not exclusively of male and female ex-combatants from different NSAGs. Currently in a planning and design phase, the district program works complementarily to but independently from the ACR, addressing also ex-combatants who are not (any more) under the auspices of the national reintegration agency. Contrary to the individual focus of the ACR, the family and community approach of *Proyecto 840* places the collective into which ex-combatants return and whose functioning they can contribute to into the center of attention. Rather than 'erasing' the past, the *Proyecto 840*

rejects the ACR denomination 'participant' as a denial of identity andaims to transform ex-combatants' formerly violent expression of dissent into positive, non-violent activism and active citizenship at the local level, through community-based activities, still to be concretized at the point of writing (BC23P).

Under the area of mental health, a gender route on female empowerment and addressing new masculinities is envisioned, including workshops on mitigating intra-familiar violence, e.g. anger control, parenting, drug consumption and prostitution (BC30P). The focus on community involvement complements the ACR's individual approach (BC29P). Criticized on the one hand for perpetuating the patriarchal model of female subordination (BC34P), the family and community focus of the *Proyecto 840* is appreciated on the other hand as providing assistance in a crucial area insufficiently addressed in personal ACR reintegration routes (BC29P).

(No) diversity-sensitive DDR or inter-institutional miscommunication?

Against the policy prescriptions to account for gender, age, ethnicity and disability (Conpes 2008), the interviews reflect a common belief among persons involved in the Colombian DDR process that there is neither 'differential treatment' of ex-combatants nor a strategy for differential treatment in current reintegration practice (BC2P; BC4P; BC8P; BC13P; BC25P; BC28P; BC33P; BC40E).[43] Some underline a merely "functional use of gender" (BC2P) for counterinsurgency purposes, e.g. in advertisements inciting individual demobilization (BC25P), or to satisfy international demands in reintegration, i.e. mainstreaming gender "because they oblige us to" (BC6G).

While criticism of the ACR's individual approach being "so integral that it throws everything into the same pot" and cannot systematically account for anything (BC13P) concurs partly with the findings of this research, the lack of nuances in DDR experts' evaluation of current reintegration practices indicates inter-institutional miscommunication that prevents full-fledged cooperation on and knowledge dissemination about approaches to diversity. Of my interviewees outside the ACR, none was informed about the existing gender strategy (ACR 2009), explored below, or about alleged "pilot projects" on specific reintegration routes for youth and elderly (age), ethnicity and disability within the ACR (BC6G; BC7P) – "pilot projects", although these categories are mentioned as existing reintegration routes in a 2010 presentation of the by-then Social Reintegration Unit of the ACR already (BC11P).[44]

Furthermore, there seems to be a failure in intra-institutional knowledge dissemination and training given that only one of the twelve current ACR employees interviewed knew about and provided me with the existing gender strategy document (ACR 2009). Given the high fluctuation of ACR personnel (BC1P), a single capacitation workshop in four years within the ACR headquarters (ACR 2009, 7) seems insufficient to transfer knowledge within the institution – not to speak of the transmission to regional staff and translation into specific activities on the ground. Overlapping responsibilities and competition between national and international institutions further seem to hamper effective formulation and implementation of reintegration policies – reinforced through these institutions' mandates depending on the persistence of the problematic (BC11P). With due consideration of the potential bias in interviewees' responses due to their institutions' agendas, more nuanced scrutiny of their perceptions of diversity and perceived reintegration priorities can give insights as to why specific categories of diversity are less accounted for than others.

Diversity in the perception of the '(ex-) combatant'

The type of NSAG: Does it really matter?

Interestingly, former group affiliation is part of the publicly available ACR statistics since April 2014. Nonetheless, interviewees from ACR and other institutions argue that the type of NSAG does not matter for reintegration. As mentioned above, the ACR treats all demobilized persons equally, as 'participants' or 'PPRs' striving to become independent citizens. A more nuanced analysis finds that the type of NSAG matters at the group level and regarding the type of demobilization, while it is

[43] Neither do they see diversity being accounted for in individual D&D, conducted by the Ministry of Defense, which comprises short-term reinsertion disguised as "humanitarian assistance" in the Program for Humanitarian Assistance to Demobilized (PAHD) for those awaiting CODA certification (BC25P; BC26P).

[44] "Pilot projects" were referred to frequently, but no concrete projects were mentioned. Combined with the "we are currently exploring this issue" answer, I interpret referral to pilot projects as an indirect way to tell something does not exist so far, while showing consciousness of the legal or normative requirement for such existence.

considered of less importance to individual reintegration, contrary to my theoretical assumptions.

As explored in the theoretical chapter, interviewees underline the three different governing logics of D&D linked to the type of NSAG, limiting access to specific demobilization modes to the respective NSAG: first, individual demobilization under the Ministry of Defense as part of counterinsurgency is reserved for guerrilla groups (BC5G); second, the collective demobilization of guerrilla groups in the 1990s and prospectively the FARC in the near future as part of peace agreements (BC26P); and third, the collective demobilization of the AUC blocs as a "negotiated submission to justice" (BC2P; BC3P), because paramilitary groups were considered themselves a counterinsurgency element and as such not a direct threat to the state monopoly of force (BC26P; BC2P).

On the individual level, some interviewees from international organizations support the socialization argument about the type of NSAG influencing an ex-combatant's identity and coping capacities in reintegration: they underline differences between AUC and guerrilla groups influencing patterns of violence post-demobilization (BC16P) as well as NSAG-type specific movements of demobilized (BC14G). Former group affiliation further influences post-demobilization interests: for example, access to political participation is important to some former *guerrilleras* but generally not to former AUC women (BC17P). Furthermore, the type of NSAG influences the gender proportions and thus the proportion of women demobilizing from the group, as the literature and above-examined ACR data suggest: 25.6 percent of individually demobilized persons of the remaining guerrilla groups in 2013 were women (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional 2014), as opposed to six percent of the 31,671 collectively demobilized AUC women – with a variation from zero to 14.1 percent, depending on the paramilitary bloc (ODDR 2011, 9, 12).

On the contrary, counterarguments from academia support the ACR approach as "the ideal model of reintegration" (BC2P). They argue that due to the future-oriented character of reintegration focused on the construction of citizens with access to all possible opportunities renders past choices irrelevant. Considering former NSAG membership would only introduce unnecessary discrimination in this logic (BC1P; BC2P). A former M-19 combatant underlines that, while differentiating among persons according to their human characteristics is "positive discrimination" in that it allows us to understand the differences and acknowledge each other with these differences as subjects with agency and power, differentiating among ex-combatants due to their chosen condition, "on the basis of the violence exerted" in specific NSAGs, would be counterproductive as "negative discrimination" (BC33P). Furthermore, one researcher appreciates how the homogenization of reintegration benefits through one uniform reintegration model abolished historical discrimination among ex-combatants of different NSAGs depending on the moment of demobilization and the respective, constantly changing legal framework (BC3P). Remarkably, none of the interviewees gave the NSAG socialization argument any importance for reintegration.

Rather than neglecting a form of diversity among ex-combatants, two interviewees working on child reintegration argue, the ICBF program mixing children and youth from all NSAGs helps to overcome these categories of the past and related socialization patterns and to re-humanize the image of "the other" through direct contact of former members of all NSAGs (BC31G). Anecdotal evidence from a *hogar de paz,* a transitional home for demobilized NSAG combatants, supports this argument: while the direct confrontation of former members of all NSAGs first provoked violent clashes based on historical rivalry and mutual transgressions, a process of truth then culminated in reconciliation and new group cohesion based on the common condition as demobilized combatants (BC1EvG). Another interviewee told a story of unintended reconciliation and the recognition of a common condition beyond NSAG membership between prison inmates of guerrilla and paramilitary groups, who are usually separated but were imprisoned together during a period of overcrowding (BC21P).

While interviewees generally contest the assumed importance of NSAG membership as a category of diversity influencing individual reintegration capacities, the socialization argument seems to hold true for state officials working in the reintegration sector, which affects ex-combatants of different NSAGs in a particular way: a number of interviewees from academia and international organizations emphasized that, despite officially treating all demobilized in the same way, state officials' mindset is shaped by a de-humanizing pubic discourse labeling guerrilla members as "narco-terrorists" (BC4P; BC8P; BC16P) and urban FARC militias as "terrorist support networks" *(redes de apoyo al terrorismo)*, abbreviated

RATs (BC16P). Professional socialization within this de-humanizing discourse, these interviewees argue, leads reintegration officials to (unconsciously) reproduce negative imageries and stereotypes in the ACR or ICBF reintegration programs and thereby risk to conduct "negative differentiation" among ex-combatants in favor of former paramilitaries (BC4P). Consequently, former NSAG affiliation could affect reintegration through external rather than internal effects, namely through 'negative discrimination' by reintegration officials and other parts of society influenced by a de-humanizing public discourse that discriminates between types of NSAG.

Accounting for regional differences in reintegration?

"Colombia is a country of regions" (BC5G) with stark geographical, social, ethnic and cultural differences (BC5G). The ACR seeks balanced regional representation among its staff designing the national reintegration program (BC11P). Concretizing and implementing the national reintegration model in a context and culture-specific manner is responsibility of the currently 38 regional offices operating in all Colombian departments (BC11P).[45] Experiences of three regional office coordinators from three different regions provide valuable insights into related challenges, though findings cannot be representative for all regional contexts in Colombia (BC35P; BC39E; BC40E).

Given that NSAG fronts usually reflect the social, ethnic and cultural composition of the area they operate in, i.e. have a similar ethnic and cultural mix within the group as in the civilian population of the respective region (GS10S), local staff stemming from the regions and sharing the cultural and social context facilitates context-sensitive implementation of the national reintegration design (BC11P). However, considering that local conflict dynamics strongly polarize the local population, local staff could introduce (unintended) discrimination against ex-combatants according to former group affiliation, or – depending on the degree of *machismo* prevalent in their region – unconsciously perpetuate patriarchal structures and impose traditional gender stereotypes upon ex-combatants through their local activities (BC5G; BC24P; BC34P).[46] Furthermore, the flexibility to adapt the national design to the regional context is given on paper but *de facto* restricted by funding limitations (BC40E).

Interviewees furthermore underline that context-sensitive implementation in the regions is hampered by a lack of institutional capacities, professional skills and know-how as well as political will – a problematic for DDR but not reduced to this area: "In Colombia, the norms exist, but the practice doesn't" (BC34P). Cultural and educational differences between local staff in the regions and national staff designing the reintegration program can lead to clashes with regard to program contents and implementation: in conservative regions, addressing sexuality with ex-combatants can become a challenge (BC11P), transmitting gender theory to local reintegration staff in highly *machista* areas an almost insurmountable obstacle (BC5G; BC24P) that can produce absurd implementation results, e.g. a priest holding a workshop on sexual health and consequently avoiding relevant topics like reproductive health (BC11P). Besides psychosocial assistance provided by ACR staff, all ACR activities depend on local service providers and their offers, such as the local SENA program for job training (BC1P; BC35P).

Contributing to regional dynamics, the urban-rural-divide in Colombia with reintegration service centers being located in urban areas provokes a problematic of *defenestración,* uprootedness of ex-combatants of rural origin as a price for access to reintegration benefits and personal security in urban centers (GS10S). Considering the strong rural component of the FARC, their prospective demobilization would need to tackle this problem through a region-based rural DDR model (BC8P).

Accounting for gender: women's (dis)empowerment and new masculinities

"Adopting a gender focus is necessary for legitimacy purposes, for the ACR but even for the FARC" (BC13P). The ACR's attempt to incorporate gender, as mandated

[45] A gradual expansion of geographic coverage and numeric representation of the ACR is ongoing, with three more service centers planned in the South of Colombia, where guerrilla demobilization is high and coverage lowest until now (BC7P).

[46] Interviewees working in different regional ACR offices in Colombia concurred in their description of *machismo* as a patriarchal system, with men in provider roles and women subordinated to their husbands, reproduced in the family, economic, educative and political models of the region. They argue that some womenreinforce *machismo* whereas other women actively reject it, through feminist activism (BC40E) or transgression of social norms as *libertinas,* rampant women (BC39E).

by CONPES 3554 (2008), is reflected in visual and linguistic confrontations with gendered stereotypes and the eventual rendition to these stereotypes through a focus on men and masculinities. While visually acknowledging the existence of female NSAG members, as illustrated in the first picture below, the mustachioed male combatant bears the weapon and, independently of this, enters the individual demobilization process, receives his CODA certification and undergoes his personalized reintegration route within the ACR, rejoining his wife and children and enjoying support in becoming a responsible citizen (ACR 2013).

Fig. 1: Cutouts from ACR video and picture explanations of the ACR reintegration route47

[47]Sources: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLfgjgdW2bE&feature=share&list=UUhCx4_slRXcAO3ZzM_n5lhQ;http://www.reintegracion.gov.co/Reintegracion/procesodereintegracion/ruta/PublishingImages/infografia_grande.jpg (Access 23 April 2014).

Why not visually depict her, the armed or unarmed female combatant in her reintegration route, if even the CONPES 3554 (2008, 58) declares an increase in female participation in reintegration an objective? Because the majority of combatants and victims of conflict-related lethal violence are men (GS2P), the majority of DDR designers are men (GS5P) and as such men are the "natural partners" (GS6S) in DDR, SSR and other security-related initiatives? Or because Colombian society is highly *machista* and it is highly unlikely that men in power positions, benefitting from gender inequalities, would make gender an authentic objective on the agenda, irrespective of *pro forma* declarations to satisfy international claims (BC1P)? Or because women are perceived as those without the weapons, hence not as a direct threat (GS7P)?

The ACR's visual focus on male combatants reflects and reinforces the aforementioned silence around female ex-combatants, resulting in their quasi-invisibility. This is criticized by academics and practitioners (CNRR 2010, 220; Londoño and Nieto 2006) as well as by a range of female ex-*guerrilleras* who demobilized in the 1990s and now promote public visibility of female (ex-)combatants (BC17P; BC22P; BC33P; BC34P). Interviewees perceive that gender is neither discussed nor understood in Colombian DDR discourse (BC2P), and that academic discourse and the reintegration programs further silence the voices of female ex-combatants (BC34P).

Interestingly, there exists a gender strategy that elaborates a "differential gender focus" (ACR 2009, 3, my translation), based on the understanding of female empowerment and simultaneous victimization in NSAGs and male militarized hegemonic masculinity as a foundation of patriarchal culture and female subordination (ACR 2009, 4). Aiming to abolish those femininities and masculinities that hamper reintegration efforts, the strategy suggests empowering female ex-combatants' economic opportunities and self-esteem and offering men access to "new masculinities" (ACR 2009, 9, my translation). This conceptual framework, based on international norms and incentivized among others by Theidon's (2007, 2009) recommendations, however, is hardly known, even within the ACR headquarters (BC12P).

A number of examples illustrate this finding: first, interviewees working closely with the ACR partly know about some kind of gender mainstreaming (BC18G), but see no concrete gender policy or differential focus in the

reintegration programs of neither ACR nor the local city programs *Proyecto 840* in Bogotá or the *Programa Paz y Reconciliación* in Medellín (BC21P). Neither in the former nor the current reintegration model of the ACR have former PPRs participated in concrete activities addressing new masculinities or gender in general (BC30P).

Second, different degrees of knowledge about gender among ACR employees are striking, ranging from complete absence of gender knowledge and practice in some regional offices (BC40E) to declared gender mainstreaming in all aspects of the personalized route without concrete activities (BC39E) to alleged gender-sensitive application of the multidimensional approach, however with a gender focus only introduced in 2013 (BC36G). A former employee underlined that gender topics are differently received by staff from different regions, with the service centers in the capital being most receptive and having already developed ad hoc gender-sensitive activities prior to institutionalization (BC24P).

Third, the overall weak resonance of the gender strategy is articulated in the absence of gender in the 2013 management and implementation report (ACR 2014a). Female (dis)empowerment in and after armed struggle and the question of masculinities and femininities are the two recurring gender fields mentioned by interviewees. Therefore, the subsequent sections report a more detailed analysis of the perceptions of these topics and emerging sub-themes.

Female (dis)empowerment in NSAGs and DDR

Given the aforementioned silence of female ex-combatants' voices, crucial insights into women's priorities and challenges can be gained by paying attention to the themes emerging in interviews with those who have experienced DD(R) themselves and work to improve conditions and awareness around female reintegration: female ex-combatants. It is important to bear in mind, however, that the majority of women demobilized in the 1990s stem from urban areas and enjoy access to political participation. As such, they are not representative for contemporary FARC and ELN women, who are generally younger, come from poor rural areas and lack education and alternatives (BC1P; BC22P).[48] This difference among female ex-combatants is reflected in the interview sample as well.

Interviewees underline that guerrilla groups as well as leftist political parties in Colombia are highly *machista*, though possibly less patriarchal than some parts of civilian society (BC23P). The FARC is considered to be more patriarchal than the M-19 and EPL in the 1990s (BC17P; BC22P). Striving for respect and power within the guerrilla groups, female ex-combatants emphasize that while in the NSAG, their relationships were based on perceived gender equality – as an approximation to masculinity during war. Only after demobilization, confronted with social challenges towards them *as women* did they develop gender awareness (BC22P; BC33P). Other interviewees observe a similar pattern for contemporary FARC women, the *farianas,* who have their own website presenting 'the female side of the FARC', but perpetuating FARC patriarchy by adopting their gender-blind discourse (BC8P; BC17P).[49] The lack of consciousness about gender inequality in the guerrillas is part of a pattern observable in other militarized organizations like the police or military in Colombia (BC2P).

"After eight years in the FARC, we were almost like two men" (BC29P). This *approximation to masculinity* in NSAGs – which is still perceived as gender equality by a male *ex-miliciano* (BC23P) – has a twofold impact on women's lives: first, women lose self-esteem *as women* through the constant denial of their femininity. While one interviewee experienced demobilization as an opportunity to return to their selves (BC34P), another emphasized the need for assistance in recovering femininity and self-esteem (BC29P) – a point acknowledged in the ACR gender strategy (ACR 2009, 10), but not mentioned in any interview as concrete activity. The second aspect is the 'maternity debate' around female combatants' (lost) right to control their own bodies and to become mothers. Two of the four women demobilized in the 1990s had to give up their children for adoption, while for the other two, recovering their full right to maternity upon demobilization was a crucial stabilizing experience (BC17P; BC22P; BC33P; BC34P). Formerly a nurse conducting forced abortions on 12 to 13 year-old FARC combatants, another ex-*guerrillera* equally appreciated her maternity after demobilization as being "important for any woman at some point in life" (BC1EvG).

[48] Neither is Tanja, the Dutch FARC member present for strategic reasons at the Havana peace negotiations (Rubio 2013).

[49] The FARC women's website is accessible under http://www.mujerfariana.co.

The desire for the rather *traditional role* as a mother and caretaker can become an unachievable ideal for women after demobilization, and the failure to recover relationships with their children may be among the most traumatizing experiences in reintegration (BC22P; BC29P). While none of the interviewees rejected the need for overcoming *machismo* and patriarchal structures, these testimonies show that the return to traditional gender roles is not in general perceived as disempowering, but can be partly desired. They oppose feminists' push for women's "double rupture" with social norms, first by joining the NSAG and afterwards by reversing traditional gender relations in civilian society (BC8P). Thereby, these interviewees demonstrate the need for a more nuanced understanding of post-demobilization female empowerment.

Nevertheless, the return home, into "where most patriarchal contradictions were" (BC17P), as a necessary step after demobilization for 98 percent of the 130 women of the *Colectivo* due to economic restrictions (BC22P), is mentioned as particularly hard. *Social stigmatization*, a double stigmatization for being *woman* and *ex-combatant,* give female ex-combatants (perceivedly) less opportunities to re-make their lives (BC2P; BC17P) and forces them to adopt silence about their identity and past as a survival strategy (BC17P). This stigmatization can take many forms: for example, due to the social normalization of intra-familiar violence and humiliations against women in highly *machista* regions, women who separate from their violent partners are socially despised, a practice reproduced in gender dynamics in regional reintegration offices (BC39E). Others are rejected by their families or by employers due to the unexplainable gap in their CV (BC22P).

A number of interviewees criticize the (unintentional) *perpetuation of discriminating gender relations* in the ACR through apparently 'gender-neutral' approaches: monetary reintegration benefits – already too little to survive – are accumulated conditionally on the assistance to and completion of reintegration activities (BC6G; BC14G; BC28P). Given that there are generally no childcare facilities available (BC6G) and women in Colombia are usually responsible for childcare, whether raising their children alone or not, their access to these activities is *de facto* restricted, which wraps them into a vicious circle of less economic support while not benefitting from the educational, health and psychosocial offer either, with decreasing possibilities to travel to service centers to even present themselves in order to remain registered in the program (BC28P; also BC5G; BC34P). Prioritizing the economic survival of their families, female ex-combatants risk to get stuck in the ACR program, which becomes another pressure in their daily struggle to survive instead of a helping hand (BC37G). While certainly not the rule, this observation is crucial in that awareness among reintegration workers needs to be created. A female director, one interviewee remarks (BC34P), is no guarantee that gender-sensitivity will be promoted as part of the institutional agenda either, as the case of Gloria Quicena, former head of the ACR predecessor program, the PRVC, illustrates.

Another emerging theme that requires a more nuanced approach than generally the case in DDR literature is *women's skills training*. The traditional gendered labor division, with regional particularities, is reproduced in local SENA offers: carpentry for men and sewing or knitting for indigenous women, as opposed to styling or fashion production and sale for urban women (BC1P; BC6G; see also ACR 2009). While much enjoyed by one female ex-combatant who is now a cosmetic (BC29P), another complains that they were offered training that neither matched their skills acquired in the NSAG nor their professional interests (BC22P). Considering the social stigmatization against women, reinforcing the economic sectors traditionally reserved for women instead of training them for men's jobs may be a sensible choice – despite potential disempowering effects in terms of perpetuating traditional gender roles. For example, in South Sudan, reinforcing the dairy product sector – traditionally a women's domain – has proven more empowering than training women as butchers – with meat being traditionally a men's domain (GS8S).

The abovementioned examples show that different women experience the return to traditional roles differently and that *(dis)empowerment has many facets*. The women who held high political positions in the M-19 and EPL had twofold experiences: in one case, the personal impression was that *access to political participation*was blocked by their male *compañeros,* forcing them into social work rather than continuing political tasks (BC22P). In another case, the interviewee felt that women were instrumentalized as a symbol and gained access to higher political positions than before (BC33P). Few female ex-combatants aspire and actually gain such highly visible positions in public policy. Nevertheless, they underline that political participation at

the lowest levels, in everyday life and as part of citizenship, is a crucial element for building a "peace culture" from the bottom up – through a process of self-reflection and acknowledgment of others with the differences between them, thereby gaining agency as a subject and rejecting the disempowering, passive notion of victimhood (BC33P).

Further disempowering elements are the *lack of female voices in negotiations*: in peace negotiations with the FARC, whose female negotiator Tanja's contribution is limited to physical presence (BC8P; BC22P); in the male-only negotiation of the conditions for collective AUC demobilization, with demobilization lists composed and demobilization agenda negotiated by the commanders only (BC10P); in the absence of negotiated conditions of reintegration for the AUC, as opposed to the *comisiones de seguimiento*, representative organs of the guerrilla groups, negotiating reinsertion details in the 1990s (BC13P; BC22P). In general, the members of the *Colectivo* experience their collective organization among women as empowering (BC22P; BC34P), as opposed to weakness and isolation and even more *silence and invisibility as individuals* – a fundamental criticism of the ACR approach to reintegration (BC34P).

Interestingly, a male researcher underlined female ability to collectively organize in peaceful resistance against violence as a vital characteristic that renders women invaluable peacemakers and at the same time converts them into targets of systematic violence, *femicide*, as they pose a threat to the functionality of violence in society (BC16P). For him, understanding women's traditional roles as the foundation of the family and community, as the glue that holds war-torn society together, and supporting these women in their collective organization, be it as mothers of rivaling youth gang members pacifying their *barrio* in Medellín or as knitting communities of female survivors of the massacres in Montes de María, is key for overcoming conflict (BC16P). Female ex-combatants, despite the former *guerrilleras* of the 1990s' long-term commitment to non-violence (Red Nacional de Mujeres Excombatientes de la Insurgencia 2013), are marginalized from this image of women as peacemakers, as illustrated by their exclusion from and rejection by feminist organizations "working only with victims" (BC15P).[50]

The analysis reveals further patterns of *female ex-combatants' exclusion* in different realms. Arguably, women were excluded from commanders' demobilization lists (BC10P), although other interviewees object to this idea claiming the contrary (GS1P; BC16P). Their access to political participation was restricted in the 1990s and is less discussed for women demobilized in the 2000s and later, since they are perceived to be less ideological (BC22P). Access to ACR benefits in terms of activities and financial support is restricted through "the normal limitations Colombian women face: getting your husband's permission, finding someone to take care of your child, paying the bus ticket" (BC5G).

In synthesis, female combatants remain largely invisible in demobilization and reintegration, hence de-securitized through silence (compare Hansen 2000, 294). Where visible, they are stigmatized both for being ex-combatants and for being women. Furthermore and in accordance with previous academic findings (Herrera and Porch 2008, 609-610), some interviewees project the notion of female victimhood on female ex-combatants, implicitly rejecting them as potential security threats. The social and economic challenges women face in reintegration are reinforced by patriarchal society and gender-blind ACR regulations 'treating everybody the same'. With the contemporary female population in the FARC being proportionally larger, much younger, less educated, often mothers at a very young age and without family support upon demobilization, their future as female ex-combatants will likely be more difficult than the experiences of current female ex-combatants. As one female ex-combatant summarized: "We left a war behind when we demobilized, but they have an entire war in front of them" (BC22P) – a war against forgetfulness on the one hand and stigmatization on the other.

Despite manifold limitations, interviewees also demonstrate positive female agency in DDR, through roles considered as empowering from a feminist perspective, e.g. political leadership (see BC8P), but also through the resumption of traditional roles, e.g. as mothers (BC17P; BC22P). There is an apparent divergence between feminist rejection of everything related to patriarchy, e.g. the family approach of the *Proyecto 840* (BC34P), and maternity and family as two driving factors for demobilization (BC10P; BC17P; BC22P). While none of the interviewees mentioned this contradiction, the demilitarization of masculinities and

[50] Interestingly, these feminist organizations lack a public voice as well, being perceived as "too radical to be credible" (BC2P; see also BC20P).

femininities, as discussed below, could potentially soften the lines through less patriarchal family models.

'New masculinities': masculinizing the feminine for war, feminizing the masculine for peace?

One interviewee explains 'new masculinities' with the philosophical concept of *déterritorialisation,* developed by Gilles Deleuze: a concept, for example a water glass, exists on a specific basis, e.g. its use as an instrument to drink. If moved to another basis, for instance a museum, the meaning of the concept changes: the water glass becomes a piece of art (BC16P). Applied to masculinities, the war context in Colombia provides the basis for the concept of masculinity as violent and militarized. The 'new masculinities approach' thus aims to move this concept onto a basis of peace and thereby change its expression into a non-violent alternative (BC16P). "Changing the chip" (BC16P; BC30P; BC33P), i.e. demilitarizing the mind and re-humanizing the other, however, is a challenge both society and the political elite must accept (BC16P). It requires unlearning violence as a socialization model by both those who have suffered this violence and those who exerted it (BC16P).

While difficult for society as a whole due to the ongoing conflict with other NSAGs, the adoption of systematic paramilitary violence by armed groups outside the conflict (the so-called *bacrim),* and a highly militarized state apparatus, female ex-combatants consider demilitarizing ex-combatants' minds an important contribution to changing the basis of the concept of masculinity (BC33P; BC34P). With the right pedagogy, an interviewee argues, "getting out of the logic of war" (BC33P) can be a fast and effective healing process based on subjectivity and reflexivity from the self on to others.[51] "Men need to re-think themselves" (BC33P), as do women whose distorted relation to masculinity and femininity also requires critical reflection and a "process of truth" (BC33P). Passing through the *Fundación para la Reconciliación*, an NGO working with people from all sectors of society on pardon and reconciliation, was a transformative experience for ex-combatants (BC29P; BC30P) in this regard. In a mental and emotional process involving the re-learning of physical and mental closeness, they learn to reflect their past, forgive themselves and reconcile with others (BC38P). Addressing new masculinities, the ACR allegedly forgets to promote truth and critical thinking among ex-combatants (BC33P).

Confronting concepts of masculinity and femininity in civilian society that contrast with those learnt in the NSAG can create strong identity crises among ex-combatants, starting at the moment when men disarm and burst out in tears (BC10P). Female ex-combatants' identity crises reflect an incomplete transition to civilian life: they reportedly shift between war-time identity, using their NSAG pseudonym, and civilian identity, using their real names, even years after demobilization (BC22P). Mitigating these identity crises is considered among the major challenges for the ACR (BC8P), but is also an opportunity to recover and demilitarize the identity combatants left behind when entering the NSAG (BC30P; BC34P). Reintegration professionals in a Bogotá service center of the ACR explain their efforts to demilitarize masculinities by empowering women and strengthening their self-recognition, while offering alternative roles to men (BC36G).

Linked to the demilitarization of *both* masculinities and femininities, several interviewees particularly emphasize the aforementioned re-definition of family roles: alleviating the problem of "absent paternity and aggressive maternity" (BC11P; see also BC33P; BC36G), e.g. through workshops on parenting and domestic labor division. Gender-based (sexual) violence as a consequence of post-demobilization identity crises, but also "daily bread" in Colombian society in general (BC23P), poses a particular challenge to both receiving communities and families of returning ex-combatants (BC16P; BC22P). Intra-familiar violence is subject of ACR workshops on non-violent conflict resolution (BC11P) and part of the mental health program of *Proyecto 840* (BC23P; BC30P).

Feminist interviewees criticize that gender in the Colombian DDR process is preoccupied with men and masculinities. They argue that this focus maintains the appearance of a gender-perspective while further marginalizing women and increasing their invisibility (GS13S; BC17P; BC34P). On the other hand, the focus on demilitarizing (men's) minds also de-securitizes the masculine. Ex-combatants' discourse reflects that the feminine is masculinized during war, either through women's aspiration to prove equal to men (BC17P; BC23P) but also through gender-specific sanctions depriving female combatants of their femininity markers,

[51] That disconnecting mind from the logics of war is not as easy as pretended is illustrated by the continuing exclusion of ex-AUC women from the *Colectivo,* despite acknowledgment of many common challenges as demobilized women irrespective of their ideologies (BC34P).

such as shaving women's heads in the AUC as a sanction for female combatants (BC30P).

After war, however, "the masculine is feminized" (BC38P) for peace through alternative, non-violent masculinities allowing for feelings, emotion, or body expression through hugging (BC38P).[52] With the female being de-securitized through silence as non-threatening in the first place, the masculine, though more visible in visual depictions of the 'combatant', 'demobilized' and 'participant', becomes de-securitized through the approximation in the 'new masculinities' to characteristics traditionally reserved to the feminine. While demilitarizing masculinities and femininities is deemed crucial for 'post-conflict' stability (see Farr 2005), linguistically relating 'new masculinities' to femininity could potentially further aggravate male ex-combatants' identity crises and put them in an awkward position towards their civilian male peers, whom the 'new masculinities' idea has not reached or resonated with yet in a persistently patriarchal civilian society.

Particular challenges to gender in DDR arising from the Colombian context

A number of challenges arise from the cultural context and hegemonic stereotypes in society that stand in contrast to the discursive strategy analyzed above. First, gender is generally understood as referring to heterosexual men and women and gendered ideas based on the traditional family model, even under the reintegration program's "halo of modernity" (BC2P). Addressing LGBTI is difficult to unacceptable in Colombian society, depending on the region and degree of conservatism paired with *machismo*. Within NSAGs, "homosexuality means death" (BC11P).[53] Accordingly, ex-combatants are reserved against LGBTI topics and reintegration staff, depending on their region, seek to avoid addressing them for cultural taboos and the sake of acceptance of the reintegration program (BC7P; BC30P). If mainstreaming gender within the ACR is already problematic, embracing homosexuality as part of gender issues seems almost unthinkable (BC12P).

Oversimplified, overlapping, dichotomic perceptions of victims/civilians/women versus perpetrators/combatants/men pose a second challenge: not only do they misrepresent the double condition of most Colombians as both victims and perpetrators to some extent (BC5G; BC38P) but they also reinforce the patriarchal stereotypes in society. Campaigns in public transportation against violence against women further enhance the dominant notion of female victimhood, indirectly increasing stigmatization of female ex-combatants who fall outside this stereotype (BC9P).[54] Opposed to female victimhood is male aggressiveness, which denies male ex-combatants access to alternative masculinity. As one interviewee emphasized, society has a mistaken image of (ex-)combatants because most of the foot soldiers of NSAGs are themselves victims of their environment (BC24P). In that sense, a demilitarization of the mind will need to occur on a societal level, if alternative masculinities and femininities are to replace patriarchal gendered notions.

A last observation concerns my own stance as a *female* interviewer in Colombia. Several of my male interviewees, all of whom work on gender issues and are highly knowledgeable about gender concepts, explained the difficulty of making gender visible in some Colombian regions and of teaching gender-sensitivity in the DDR program. At the same time, however, their unperceived and certainly unintended *machista* attitudes towards me as a female interviewer demonstrate the social embedding of traditional gendered relations – hinting to the obstacles the 'new masculinities' are likely to encounter in Colombian society.

Differentiating between ex-combatants according to age or perceived agency?

Having analyzed the gender dimension of diversity in the interviewees' perceptions of the Colombian DDR process, this section addresses the question how age influences the perception of a demobilized person and is accounted for in DDR.[55] In general, interviewees not

[52] Implicit in this perspective is the underlying assumption of militarized, patriarchal masculinity and peaceful, caring femininity, which again is incompatible with feminine combat identity.

[53] The FARC maintains a "stereotype of the heterosexual warrior" and links homosexuality to myths about infiltration. Male homosexuality punished with death, while lesbian women are transferred to other units (BC23P).

[54] The public bus system in Bogotá, TransMilenio, campaigned during the two weeks following the international women's day on March 8, with the bus labels reading "Violence against women is a crime", "We, the women, claim a life free of violence" or "Let's act so that women can travel safely". Due to a number of sexual assaults against women in these buses, separate women's buses were introduced during that time.

[55] Access to ICBF personnel was extremely difficult due to high administrative barriers and most information stems from ICBF partners.

working specifically on child reintegration gave the age category little attention.

Age is the category of diversity among ex-combatants, however, that is most obviously addressed through the separation of institutional responsibilities for adults (ACR) and minors (ICBF). This has not always been the case, however: minors were excluded from DDR in the collective demobilizations of the 1990s (BC26P). It was not until 1997 that the special attention program under the ICBF directed to demobilized minors was created, receiving a total of 5,330 demobilized children since 1999, with a peak in demobilization numbers during the collective demobilizations of the AUC (Observatorio del Bienestar de la Niñez 2013, 3-4). Notwithstanding this new instrument, interviewees working on child reintegration contend that only a small part of the estimated number of underage combatants appeared in the demobilization lists of the AUC, and less were delivered to the authorities (BC4P; BC18G; BC26P), whereas it is still common practice among NSAGs to send recruited minors "home" directly – disregarding their familiar conditions – and thereby deprive them from official registration and access to reintegration benefits (BC18G).

The key theme in interviews regarding age is a counterproductive dichotomy between the notions of childhood and adulthood and the institutional separation of child and adult reintegration. A number of contradictions arise therefrom that demonstrate how diversity categories are not necessarily overlapping or complementary in practice, and how incompatible institutional approaches to diversity can provoke identity crises and clashes with other 'identity markers'. For this reason, I argue that a more nuanced concept of age that can account for different shades of grey within the large dichotomy of childhood versus adulthood could facilitate the problematic transition from ICBF to ACR and mitigate identity crises in relation to other diversity categories, such as gender and ethnicity.

The following themes that emerged from the interviews illustrate this argument: first, the internationally and nationally established threshold of 18 years separates ex-combatants into either victims or perpetrators from a legal perspective. 'De-vinculated' minors, i.e. persons who demobilized under the age of 18 years, are considered victims of the conflict who have a right protection, restoration of their rights and legal reparation. In contrast, adult ex-combatants, i.e. persons who demobilized after their 18th birthday, are considered guilty of the crime of rebellion and legally obliged to contribute to reparations (BC4P; BC5G; BC31G). It is the age at demobilization, not at recruitment that determines the status as victim or perpetrator. However, an estimated 23 percent of all ex-combatants registered as demobilized in Colombia were recruited as minors, which corresponds to approximately 31 percent of the ACR population (ICBF 2013, 35). Taking the age at recruitment and duration within the NSAG into account when establishing an ex-combatants' degree of guilt and legal responsibility could be a more age-sensitive alternative (BC21P).

Second, the transition from ICBF to ACR means passing from victim with a right to reparation to victimizer with a duty to pay reparations to society (BC4P; BC14G). Given that 74.4 percent of demobilized minors in 2013 are between 15 and 17 years old (Observatorio del Bienestar de la Niñez 2013, 11), the transition to the ACR is imminent for many entering the ICBF – a situation that enhances confusion and identity crises throughout the double transition in demobilization and institutional transfer (BC4P). Despite an alleged preparation phase of half a year in the ICBF (BC31G), an ACR employee acknowledges that the transition fails to prepare the "de-vinculated-child-turning-PPR" for the new responsibilities and identity crises resulting from an ambivalent legal and moral standing (BC7P). Aggravating to this is former child recruits' double condition as adult ex-combatants: as 'PPR' with a duty to repair under the ACR and Law 1424, and as victim with a continuing right to reparation under the Victims' Unit (BC31G).

While their legal condition as victims renders minors as a monolithic category perceivedly unthreatening, the transition to the ACR presumably alters this perception and introduces the gender-based difference in de-securitizing discourse (silence for women and feminization for men). Though interviewees outside child reintegration hardly mentioned age differentiation, two former ACR employees refer to the concept of cultural and sports activities for PPRs between 18 and 25 years to make "responsible use of their free time" (BC5G) and reduce their high "vulnerability to re-recruitment" (BC5G). The transition from the ICBF to the ACR thus implies more than passing from victim to perpetrator: it further entails the transition from genderless unthreatening minor to a differentially perceived youth PPR, potentially threatening

and thus worth targeting with the above identified gendered de-securitization discourse.

Third, the 18-year threshold for accessing adulthood and the image of the de-vinculated child mismatches social reality particularly in rural contexts. There, access to adulthood is gained early on through the assumption of adult responsibilities: boys become providers, protectors and procreators and girls mothers and caretakers as early as at the age of 13. This social reality is reproduced in NSAGs, rendering demobilizing minors "adults in the bodies of children" (GS10S). A reintegration model based on the notion of childhood and pure victimhood runs the risk of reversing this access to adulthood (GS10S). Consequently, interviewees perceive a need for reintegration programs to acknowledge children's roles as economic providers for their families within specific contexts (GS8S) as well as their agency acquired as combatants (GS10S): FARC-internal recruitment regulations establish the age theshold of 15 years for recruitment, treating all recruits above this threshold as adults, which reinforces their agency despite their legal status as minors under national law (BC16P).[56]

Linked to this problematic is the debate about agency and children's cognitive capacities to voluntarily enlist, likely reflected in the agency they are given in reintegration. Recruited into the FARC at the age of 12 through false promises and fleeing intra-familiar sexual abuse, an ex-combatant underlines that child recruitment cannot be voluntary, but is a form of kidnapping. According to her, 98.8 percent of girls in rural areasexperience intra-familiar sexual violence, which converts them into easy targets of child recruitment (BC1EvG). While other interviewees acknowledge that environmental factors like domestic violence, search for protection, love, and economic security are driving factors for child enlistment, they underline that only five percent of child recruitment is forcible in Colombia, suggesting children's capacity to voluntarily enlist (BC18G). The increasingly young age at recruitment, with the FARC allegedly recruiting children as young as eight years old by now (BC1EvG), confirms the need for a more nuanced concept of age that can account for the questions of agency and voluntariness.

Fourth and lastly, different institutional approaches to other diversity categories such as gender and ethnicity mark a further clash in the transition from ICBF to ACR: about 27 percent of demobilized minors are girls (ODDR 2009, 33), proportionally more than adult women. While the ACR has a gender strategy, at least on paper, a group of ICBF partners admit that there exists no institutionalized differential focus with regard to gender or ethnicity (BC31G), notwithstanding the ICBF's linguistic distinction in terms of gender and age among demobilized minors, referred to as 'boys, girls and adolescents'(NNA). An inclusion of gender in terms of femininities and girls' sexuality and maternity is "being explored" (BC31G), however with a traditional focus on girls as victims of sexual violence (e.g. BC9G) rather than with a comprehensive gender perspective. On the contrary, while there exist ad hoc cooperations between ICBF and ethnic minority groups for the reintegration of minors, as explored below, the transition into the ACR means a loss of this (minimal) ethnic sensitivity.

Ethnicity-sensitive DDR or modeling a 'neutral' citizen?

Interviewees agree on the necessity to account for ethnicity in DDR and to have specific reintegration routes that are sensitive to the cultural context of ex-combatants belonging to ethnic minorities – not because they were considered specifically prone to becoming combatants, but because of their disproportional exposure to the conflict and the loss of cultural diversity and extinction of languages. However, apart from particular projects conducted in an ad hoc, exploring manner in cooperation with indigenous communities, no ethnicity-specific reintegration routes have been designed thus far. The possibility of case-specific cooperation between ACR and indigenous communities in the reintegration of their members mentioned in CONPES 3554 (2008) has never materialized into practice (BC5G), although ACR employees refer to current "pilot projects" exploring cooperation possibilities (BC6G; BC7P). A lack of interest in the ethnicity dimension is manifest in the generalized categorization into 'indigenous' and 'afro-Colombian' in ACR disaggregated data, more nuanced in ICBF data that registers specific tribes and communities of the children (BC14G).[57]

[56] FARC regulations coincide with the threshold below which child recruitment is considered a war crime under international criminal law established by the Rome Statute (1998, art. 8(2)(b)(xxvi)).

[57] Since I was denied access to the databases themselves, I have to rely on the information given by ICBF and ACR partners in this respect; though conscious of potential misinformation on their part, considering the aforementioned overall inter-institutional miscommunication.

Ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected by recruitment, particularly child recruitment (BC9G), with an increasing trend: while the overall proportion of recruited minors is 7 percent afro-Colombian and 6 percent indigenous, these proportions rose to 12 and 18 percent respectively between 2011 and 2013 (ICBF 2013, 37-38). According to one interviewee, 25 percent of all recruited minors are of indigenous origin – a percentage much higher than the proportion of registered indigenous ex-combatants recruited as minors, which indicates their tendency to avoid official registration and reintegrate back into their communities silently, sometimes after an agreement between communities and the respective NSAG (GS3P; see also Villarraga 2013d).

While ethnic communities often count on their autonomous forms of reintegration, as explored in the theoretical part, cooperation with national reintegration institutions has proven difficult, first and foremost because the ACR's focus on the individual clashes with indigenous peoples' focus on the collective, the community (BC18G). Furthermore, coordination and cooperation between the autonomous indigenous communities' institutions and state institutions have long been problematic (compare Scheye 2011, 22), which translates into disagreements in reintegration, e.g. with regard to how and where the mandatory social service can be delivered by indigenous ex-combatants in the Sierra Nevada (BC18G).

Despite the lack of institutional practices, returning indigenous children to their families and communities – if no case of intra-familiar violence is found – and preserving their ethnic and cultural upbringing is considered important by the ICBF (BC31G). In this respect, the "pilot project *modelo familia gestor*" is worth mentioning: accounting for the community-orientation of indigenous culture, the ICBF accompanies child reintegration into nasa communities, treating the entire indigenous community as *lugar gestor,* the biological family (BC31G). Another project, the aforementioned *Granja Ingruma,* however, proves insensitive to ethnic specificities by offering "rural education" with spiritual accompaniment to afro-Colombian and indigenous children from very different cultural and ethnic backgrounds (BC4P). At least, one interviewee argues, the rural orientation of the project prevents what usually happens with the ICBF bringing "rural kids into urban contexts": uprooting them completely from their social reality prior to recruitment (BC28P; see also BC4P).

Overall, the discourse around ethnicity led by reintegration staff reveals a contradictory position: despite acknowledged importance of ethnic and cultural sensitivity, the larger aim and *de facto* approach of Colombian reintegration seems to 'create' an 'ethnically neutral' citizen rather than making an effort for ethnicity-sensitive alternatives – a neutrality claim embracing but not reduced to ethnicity, as the silence around former NSAG affiliation and socialization within specific NSAGs demonstrates. Divergence between autonomous indigenous and afro-Colombian communities' collectivity-focus and the ACR's and ICBF's individual-focus reintegration approach further complicate potential cooperation.

Given the complexity of the more than 102 different indigenous cosmologies alone and adding to this the aforementioned difficulty for reintegration staff to implement existing national strategies, an 'ethnicity-neutral' reintegration route might indeed be the most feasible option, but should be acknowledged as biased in favor of the dominant mestizo culture.

Terminology: (de-)securitizing the (ex-)combatant

The critical discourse analysis has revealed a number of securitizing but many more de-securitizing elements regarding the perception of (ex-)combatants. Women, minors and ethnic minorities are rather de-securitized through silence than linguistically addressed. On the contrary, male ex-combatants, who are referred to by the generic term 'ex-combatants' because "the majority of ex-combatants are men" (BC32P), are partly securitized by referrals to high recidivism rates, disclaimed by ACR employees (BC6G), but de-securitized through the discourse about 'new masculinities' led by a wide range of interviewees from national and international organizations.

For D&D, the analysis found that state discourse securitizes guerrilla combatants, the remaining official NSAGs addressed by DDR in Colombia, through a de-humanizing public discourse labeling them as "narco-terrorists" or "RATs" (BC16P) and justifying individual D&D as a security measure conducted under the Ministry of Defense (BC26P). For R, the findings are less black-and-white and worth further scrutiny. Interviewees related to the ACR portray the condition of 'ex-combatant' or 'demobilized' as a social ill, to be remedied

through reintegration. One interviewee used a medical metaphor to illustrate the shift from reinsertion to full-fledged reintegration as the change from giving an aspirin to all demobilized to proscribing an individual cure, specific medication for their long-term recovery (BC5G). Before entering the ACR, ex-combatants are labeled 'demobilized', whereas afterwards, they become 'the person in reintegration process, PPR', 'the participant' or 'the client' (BC6G; BC7P; BC11P; BC35G; BC36G).

Some interviewees who demobilized in the 1990s fiercely oppose this linguistic practice. They argue that the denomination as 'participant' deprives ex-combatants of the right to history, denies their identity as ex-combatants and silences their memory (BC17P). I was fortunate to observe the effects directly with two PPRs, in the reintegration process since ten and six years respectively, whose existence is based on their hidden identity and fear of revelation before their employer or teacher (BC37G). While rejecting the label 'demobilized' as disempowering, sounding like deprived of agency (BC34P), the members of the *Colectivo* opt for the self-denomination as 'ex-combatants', reiterating thereby their compromise to non-violence given in the peace agreement. Furthermore, they adopt the female, in conventional Spanish non-existent version of insurgents, *insurgentas,* underlining their ongoing compromise with the ideology they once took up arms for (BC34P; see also Londoño and Nieto 2006). They show that credible commitment to non-violence need not go along with the complete abandonment of past ideology in reintegration.

While one interviewee argued that, from a security perspective, once disarmed, i.e. deprived of their weapons, and demobilized, ex-combatants are not a threat anymore (GS7P), references to ex-combatants' personal security risks de-securitize through a more subtle argument: their vulnerability to aggression from an unspecified other. PPRs have "an inherent condition: they are demobilized people and as such at risk" (BC35G), an ACR employee underlines. A video explanation of the reintegration process addresses this vulnerability and promises a solution: ACR-supported displacement (ACR 2013).[58] The presentation of personal stories from ex-combatants being tracked by the NSAG they deserted from and their family punished with kidnapping and assassinations (BC1EvG) further enhances the notion of vulnerability of ex-combatants. Declarations about the majority of foot soldiers in NSAGs being victims rather than perpetrators (BC24P) supports this de-securitizing discourse, though also casts doubt on the securitization of 'the combatant' prior to D&D.

Opposing this focus on ex-combatants' vulnerability and hence their discursive de-securitization, other interviewees argue that ex-combatants are security risks if not well reintegrated, as the "gun-for-hire gangsters" in West Africa show (GS6S). Understanding the Colombian reintegration process as a *système de proximité* to keep close track of the "demobilized ex-terrorists" (GS5P) implies seeing reintegration as a security measure rather than a healing process. While insisting that female demobilization is to be neglected as insignificantly small in comparison to female victimization, a Colombian researcher portrayed (male) ex-combatants as a specifically problematic population, "people who have spent the largest part of their lives killing" (BC32P) – a statement directly opposed to the aforementioned argument that the majority of foot soldiers are victims rather than perpetrators (BC24P).

One important element that undermines the de-securitizing discourse is recidivism, the re-mobilization of ex-combatants into NSAGs or organized crime. While interviewees pursuing the de-securitizing strategy either avoid the problematic or state an unrealistic four percent rate (BC6G) to underline the unlikeliness of recidivism, ex-combatants themselves make their potential return to armed violence explicit, should this be the best alternative in a given moment (BC29P) and contend they frequently receive offers to join different armed groups (BC29P; BC37G). Interestingly, and contrasting with the de-securitization as well as with the victims discourse around child recruits, one interviewee mentioned extremely high re-mobilization rates among minors, as the civilian environment they return to lacks attractive alternatives (GS3P). Persisting fear of and mistrust against ex-combatants, as mentioned in the literature and confirmed by a range of interviewees (e.g. BC22P), further indicate a limited effect of the discursive strategy of de-securitizing ex-combatants on contemporary Colombian society.

Synthesis: Results of the empirical analysis

The empirical analysis provides a number of unexpected findings (as resumed in Table 4 below): on the one hand, ex-combatants as a monolithic category are generally de-

[58] This forced displacement converts them into IDPs, however, without changing the security problematic as such (CNRR 2010, 197-200).

securitized in the interviewees' discourse around reintegration, rather than securitized as (male) (ex-)combatants. On the other hand, whether intentionally or not, the discursive strategy instrumentalizes different diversity categories to achieve this de-securitization through different channels: either through *silence and invisibility*, combined with varying degrees of perceived victimhood and deprivation of agency, as for women, minors and ethnic minority groups, or through the *demilitarization of masculinities* as approximating feminine characteristics, traditionally identified with peacefulness. Disabled ex-combatants, though included in CONPES 3554 (2008), were not mentioned as part of the diversity categories deserving specific attention. Furthermore, interviewees acknowledge discrimination against ex-combatants according to their former group affiliation, but reject the assumption that the type of NSAG and respective socialization should be accounted for in DDR.

While showing parallels with MacKenzie's (2009a) findings for the Sierra Leonean DDR process in female de-securitization, the empirical analysis of the discourse around Colombian DDR thus contests her findings of male securitization in DDR. In Colombia, women are marginalized in DDR, not because they are denied access, but because the visual and discursive focus on men distracts attention from them. The long-standing practice of silence and invisibility of female ex-combatants as a de-securitizing practice in Colombia corresponds to what Lene Hansen denominates "security as silence" (Hansen 2000, 294). Male ex-combatants, however, are de-securitized through a combination of visual and discursive attention, transitioning from dangerous 'combatants' to vulnerable 'PPRs'. Rather than fearing their re-mobilization potential, the reintegration discourse emphasizes vulnerabilities and portrays the PPRs, but visually men's, reintegration process into civilian society as a cure, a healing procedure from an unlabeled illness – unlabeled because both former combatant status and NSAG membership are (officially) banned from the PPR's identity, marking the entry into the ACR or ICBF reintegration programs as point zero for a new life.

Interestingly, the concept of 'new masculinities', frequently referred to by interviewees, contributes to this de-securitization of the male ex-combatant by 'feminizing' the masculine (BC38P), thereby distancing male ex-combatants from what is being perceived as threatening, but also as manly in a society marked by hegemonic militarized masculinity. With this finding, the feminist security lens opens up a new perspective on the gendered dimensions of (de-)securitization in DDR: rather than reproduced through male securitization and female de-securitization in DDR (see MacKenzie 2009a), the Colombian case suggests that gendered stereotypes are both reproduced and contested in an overall de-securitizing discourse around (ex-)combatants in DDR.

The analysis further reveals a complex interplay of different, not necessarily overlapping categories. While an integral, individual approach to reintegration, like the ACR approach, could potentially account for diversity in a holistic manner, its design and application need refinement in order to avoid adverse effects on the group level, e.g. to avoid further invisibilization of marginal groups due to the focus on masculinities. Raising intra and inter-institutional awareness about diversity, developing a more critical stance towards dominant stereotypes and generating institutional capacities to implement sophisticated strategies existing on paper, e.g. the ACR gender framework, could be a first step to mitigate these problematics. Certainly more in-depth research would be necessary to make concrete recommendations for a diversity-sensitive approach. Nonetheless, asking diversity-related questions, as does the present research, and thereby ideally inciting interviewees to reflect about their own presumptions, approaches and (un)intended impacts, could potentially have a transformative effect by its own.

Tab. 4: Comparison of theoretical assumptions and empirical findings

No.	Theoretical assumption	In accordance with empirical analysis? Why?
new	The discourse around Colombian DDR follows a de-securitizing logic: building on the socially prevalent marginalization of women, children and ethnic minorities through a strategy of silence, while 'feminizing' and thus de-securitizing the masculine, the 'ex-combatant' loses his/her threatening features in reintegration as a 'participant' and ideally becomes a 'neutral citizen'.	
1	The discursive construction of a) the 'combatant' or b) the 'ex-combatant' as a security threat influences the way DDR programs are	a) Yes, indeed for the securitization of the 'combatant' and visual identification with a male person of mestizo features (dominant ethnicity in Colombia) before and

	designed and thereby shapes patterns of inclusion or exclusion.	during D&D. This determines whose practical possibilities in R are accounted for and leads to the marginalization of other groups, such as women, children and ethnic minorities. b) Not exactly for the discursive construction of the 'ex-combatant' due to overall de-securitization of this population as a whole. Nonetheless, the previous focus on men directs DDR efforts in favor of this sub-group.
2	These patterns reflect the hegemonic gendered notions in society, likely to be reproduced in DDR.	Only partly in accordance with findings about the 'new masculinities' approach: while the focus on men in this approach is criticized as a reproduction of patriarchal subordination of the female, the demilitarization of the masculine and its 'feminization' stand in contrast to *machismo* and *marianismo*, hegemonic gendered notions in Colombian society.
2a	Men are likely to be perceived as a security threat and thus securitized in DDR.	Only partly. Men are more dominant, especially in visual depictions of the 'combatant', and as such securitized before DDR and during D&D, but not in R.
2b	Women are likely to be perceived as belonging to the private sphere and as such de-securitized in DDR.	Indeed. Female ex-combatants support this assumption, arguing that the suppression of their voices marginalizes them from the discourse – Lene Hansen's (2000, 294) concept of "security as silence" applies.
2c	Similarly, children and ethnic minority groups are likely to be marginalized in or excluded from DDR.	Indeed. Children are de-securitized due to their legal status as victims, their agency is thereby neglected. Ethnic minorities do not receive specific discursive attention and are regarded rather as victims, or simply not of importance, as well.
3	The type of NSAG influences reintegration capacities: the more socialization and roles during armed struggle differ from post-demobilization societal expectations, the more difficult reintegration.	No. The type of NSAG matters, but in a different way: the de- humanizing public discourse against guerrilla members socializes state officials, leading to (perceived) 'negative discrimination' against former guerrilla combatants, in favor of former paramilitary members. Although former NSAG affiliation is considered unimportant in the future-oriented reintegration programs, the ex-guerrilla members' discourse reveals that leaving the past identity behind is not that easy – a reason for further scrutinizing this assumption and discussing its relevance.
4	These difficulties differ according to the particular constellation of the relevant diversity categories of a demobilized person.	Indeed. For instance, female ex-combatant interviewees illustrate how different women experience reintegration differently: while female urban militia of the M-19 could build on strong support networks, were educated and had access to leadership prior and post demobilization, this is normally not the case for rural FARC women, often uneducated, poor and from highly violent family environments.
5	That (de-	Indeed, except for the de-

	)securitization follows patterns of social inclusion and exclusion in larger society.	securitization of men in reintegration. However, even in the overall de-securitizing discourse of reintegration officials, the visual focus on men reproduces social gendered patterns of exclusion. Children and ethnic minorities are similarly silenced and marginalized from security concerns in discourse, and disabled persons not even considered.

Conclusion

Based on the assumption that accounting for diversity among ex-combatants in DDR processes – as the complex interplay of different 'identity markers' – is crucial in order to avoid perpetuating existing and introducing new patterns of exclusion into this population and into their relation with civilian society, this MA dissertation enquired how 'combatants' and 'ex-combatants' respectively are perceived and which categories of diversity are given importance in DDR discourse. Inspired by scholarly work on gender and DDR in Sierra Leone, but critical of a one-sided focus on a single diversity category, I expanded the gender focus to a diversity concept based on an extensive literature review and used a feminist approach to the securitization theory as a heuristic tool for analysis.

Epistemologically situated in critical realism, as described by Norman Fairclough (2010), a critical discourse analysis was conducted on a total of 55 interviews with 74 key informants whose positions in governmental and non-governmental, national and international institutions as well as faculties and think tanks working on DDR in Colombia gives them leverage over the discourse around DDR and according policy design and implementation. Their perception of the (ex-)combatant thus shapes the discourse legitimizing or delegitimizing patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

The empirical analysis revealed a range of themes that support the assumption that women are de-securitized as unable to make a difference, but extends this finding for the Colombian case to minors and ethnic minorities as a particular and disproportionately affected part of the combatant population. Contrary to the expectation that men will be securitized in DDR, however, the present analysis reveals a more nuanced discursive strategy regarding men, the visual stereotype of the combatant: securitized and de-humanized in public discourse beforehand and situated in an intermediate situation while undergoing D&D, the demobilized combatant is de-securitized in a neutralizing discourse about 'the participant' in reintegration – a strategy reinforced by the social construction of different gendered relationships, based on the idea of feminized, i.e. non-threatening 'new masculinities'. The external categories of diversity are accounted for in this discourse, albeit differently than expected: while the 'negative discrimination' around the type of NSAG indirectly shapes a differential perception of (ex-)combatants according to former NSAG affiliation, regional variations of *machismo* influence interviewees' perception of the combatant, however without translating into context-sensitive DDR implementation, given practical limitations on the local level.

Interviewees opposing the discourse seek to counter the consequent suppression of female ex-combatants' visibility and argue for a more nuanced understanding of the influence age and ethnicity has for the opportunity to reintegrate. They furthermore criticize that, as a practical consequence of the de-securitizing discourse and related individual-focused reintegration as a cure for a social ill, ex-combatants are forced to hide their identity.

In conclusion, the analysis finds that diversity among ex-combatants is being perceived by some interviewees, but hardly accounted for in programs due to a neutralizing individual-focus reintegration design that claims to account for all relevant facets of diversity, but lacks the conditions to fulfill this claim. Notwithstanding the aim to construct 'new masculinities' as a first step in overall social demilitarization, the gendered patterns of exclusion are (unintendedly) reproduced through DDR in Colombia and extended to other diversity categories such as age and ethnicity. At the same time, the de-securitization of (ex-)combatants as a whole further introduces a different dynamic that withdraws attention from the risk of recidivism to ex-combatants' vulnerability as normal citizens – irrespective of their particular socialization within different armed groups and denying their identification with the past.

De-securitizing ex-combatants could positively influence social acceptance, if the discourse was more visible and

resonated with Colombian society as a whole. This could facilitate ex-combatants' reintegration into civilian life and thus effectively decrease the risk of recidivism. Nonetheless, accounting more thoroughly for diversity among ex-combatants in order to provide equitable opportunities through the reintegration program remains a challenge whose surmounting is crucial to avoid adverse impacts of the programs on part of the ex-combatant population.

Considering that the R element of DDR has gained overweight and is located rather in the development than in the security realm, however, some interviewees contest the idea that reintegration programs are necessary at all and advocate larger development programs embracing the entire population at risk instead (e.g. BC22P). With collective FARC demobilization still open to negotiation in Havana, ex-combatants demobilized in the 1990s argue that political participation and region-based collective development plans for the entire population, guaranteeing equitable access to all and thus accounting for diversity within this population as a whole, provide a realistic alternative to individual-focused reintegration. This, however, would contradict the revoked image of DDR as a necessary and 'successful' state mechanism, a disbanding procedure from an armed collective that constitutes a security risk for the state to a disarmed, demilitarized aggregation of individuals whose reintegration 'cure' has converted them into ordinary law abiding citizens – just without a right to history.

CERAC
CENTRO DE RECURSOS PARA EL ANÁLISIS DE CONFLICTOS

List of Abbreviations

ACIN	Association of Indigenous Communitiesof the Northern Cauca *(Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca)*
ACR	Colombian Reintegration Agency *(Agencia Colombiana de Reintegración)*
AD M-19	Democratic Alliance of the 19th April Movement *(Alianza Democrática Movimiento 19 abril)*
ADO	Workers' Self-Defense Movement *(Movimiento Autodefensa Obrera)*
AUC	United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia *(Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia)*
BACRIM	Criminal gangs *(Bandas Criminales)*
CAE	Specialized Attention Center for Minors *(Centro de Atención Especializada)*
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CERAC	Conflict Analysis Resource Center
CINEP/PPP	Investigation and Popular Education Center/Peace Program *(Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular/Programa por la Paz)*
CODA	Operative Committee of Weapons Abandonment *(Comité Operativo de Dejación de Armas)*
CNMH	National Center for Historical Memory *(Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica)*
CNRR	National Reparation and Reconciliation Commission *(Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación)*
CRS	Socialist Revolution Movement *(Corriente de Revolución Socialista)*
DCAF	Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
ELN	National Liberation Army *(Ejército de Liberación Nacional)*
EPL	Popular Liberation Army *(Ejército Popular de Liberación)*
FARC-EP	Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia – the People's Army *(Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo)*
FIP	Ideas for Peace Foundation *(Fundación Ideas para la Paz)*
FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Front *(Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional)*
FSI	Failed States Index
FST	Feminist Security Theory
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation
ICBF	Colombian Institute for Family Welfare *(Instituto Colombiano del Bienestar Familiar)*
IDDRS	Integrated DDR Standards
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM *(OIM)*	International Organization for Migration *(Organización Internacional para la Migración)*
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
M-19	19th of April Movement *(Movimiento 19 abril)*
MAPP-OEA	Mission of Support to the Peace Process in Colombia of the Organization of American States (*Misión de Apoyo al Proceso de Paz en Colombia de la Organización de Estados Americanos)*
MAQL	Armed Movement Quintín Lame *(Movimiento Armado Quitín Lame)*
MIR COAR	Independent Revolutionary Movement – Armed Commandos *(Movimiento Independiente Revolucionario Comandos Armados)*
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NNA	Boys, Girls and Adolescents *(Niños, niñas y adolescentes)*
NSAG	Non-State Armed Group
ODDR	DDR Observatory *(Observatorio DDR)*
PAHD	Program of Humanitarian Attention to Demobilized *(Programa de Atención Humanitaria al Desmovilizado)*
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PKK	Kurdistan Worker's Party
PPR	Person in Reintegration Process

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	(Persona en Proceso de Reintegración)
PRT	Revolutionary Party of the Workers *(Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores)*
PRVC	Program for Reincorporation into Civilian Life *(Programa para la Reincorporación a la Vida Civil)*
RAT	Terrorist Support Networks *(Redes de Apoyo al Terrorismo)*
SENA	National Education Service *(Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje)*
SIDDR	Stockholm Initiative on DDR
SIR	Information System for Reintegration *(Sistema de Información para la Reintegración)*
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TJ	Transitional Justice
UP	Patriotic Union *(Unión Patriótica)*
UNDP *(PNUD)*	United Nations Development Program *(Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo)*
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

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Appendix A. List of interviewees

Interview codes give information about the *location of the researcher* at the time of the interview (GS for Geneva, Switzerland; BC for Bogotá, Colombia), the *interview number* in the respective location and the dominant *interview mode* (P for personal/face-to-face; G for group; S for Skype; E for e-Mail; EvG for interviews conducted in the framework of larger/public events). For coherence with the Chicago in-text citations style, I use the interview codes for in-text citations.

First round of interviews

GS1P Expert on gender and armed violence in a Geneva-based think-tank

GS2P Expert on DDR and armed violence in a Geneva-based think-tank

GS3P Expert on NSAGs, gender and armed conflict in Colombia in a Geneva-based NGO

GS4P Expert on small arms and illegal armed groups, independent consultant

GS5P Expert on gender and DDR in an international governmental organization

GS6S Expert on gender and SSR/DDR in a Geneva-based think-tank

GS7P Expert on SSR/DDR in a Geneva-based think-tank

GS8S Expert on gender and age in DDR in a Dutch NGO

GS9P Expert on gender and SSR/DDR in a Geneva-based think-tank

GS10S Former FARC member, university professor

GS11P Expert on gender and conflict, university professor

GS12S Expert on gender and DDR in Colombia working in a British think-tank

GS13S Expert on feminism, gender and DDR, independent consultant

GS14S Expert on gender and armed violence in a Geneva-based think-tank

Second round of interviews[59]

BC1P Researcher on reintegration, university professor

BC2P Researcher in a Colombian think-tank

BC3P Researcher in a Colombian think-tank

BC4P Researcher in an international NGO working on child reintegration

BC5G Two government officials formerly involved in reintegration

BC6G Two ACR employees in the central office

BC7P ACR employee in the central office

BC8P Expert on gender and DDR in an international governmental organization

BC9G Two experts on child recruitment working in a German governmental organization

BC10P State official formerly involved in AUC negotiations, disarmament and demobilization

BC11P Former ACR employee in the central office

BC12P ACR employee in the central office

BC13P Expert on DDR in an international governmental organization

BC14G Three advisors on adult reintegration in Colombia, employees of an international governmental organization

BC15P Researcher in a Colombian feminist NGO

BC16P Researcher and employee in an international governmental organization

BC17P Former EPL member working in a state institution

[59] All interviewees are experts on DDR in Colombia.

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BC18G Two experts on DDR working in an international governmental organization

BC19P Expert on NSAGs, gender and armed conflict in Colombia working in an NGO

BC20P Expert on DDR history working in a Colombian think-tank

BC21P Advisor on DDR, university professor

BC22P Former M-19 member working in a state institution

BC23P Former FARC member working in a state institution

BC24P Former ACR employee and regional coordinator

BC25P Researcher on conflict and violence, university professor

BC26P Former EPL member working in a state institution

BC27P Researcher in a state institution

BC28P Expert on child reintegration working in a German governmental organization

BC29P Former FARC member working in a state institution

BC30P Former AUC member working in a state institution

BC31G Two advisors on child reintegration in Colombia, employees of an international governmental organization

BC32P Researcher on conflict and violence in a Colombian think-tank

BC33P Former M-19 member working in a Colombian NGO

BC34P Former M-19 member working in a state institution

BC35P ACR employee in a regional office

BC36G Five ACR reintegration in a regional office

BC37G Two PPRs, former ELN member and former FARC member

BC38P Employee in an international NGO

BC39E ACR employee in a regional office

BC40E ACR employee in a regional office

BC41S ICBF employee

BC1EvG Interviews conducted in the framework of a guest lecture by two ACR employees at a university in Bogotá, one former FARC member and one former AUC member

BC2EvG Event on political participation with five former guerrilla members demobilized in the 1990s (M-19, EPL, ERT, CRS)

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Appendix B. Methodology

This M.A. thesis is located in the realm of critical theory and bases its methodological approach on critical discourse analysis, as developed by Norman Fairclough (2010) and colleagues. Before delving into concrete methods, I first outline the underlying epistemological and ontological stance upon which the methodology is founded and adequate, concrete methods are selected.

Ontological and epistemological assumptions

I adopt Norman Fairclough's (2010, 4) critical realist stance, which assumes the existence of a real world irrespective of our knowledge and understanding, but acknowledges that the existence of the social world depends on human action and interaction, hence the "socially constructed" character of the social world. In accordance with Herbert Blumer's *Symbolic Interactionism,* I assume that the individual acts towards things dependent on the meaning the he or she attributes to them, with meaning being derived from social interaction and constantly modified through interpretive processes (Blumer 1969, 2). Given the countless layers of meaning overlapping and constructing research objects, there is "turtles all the way down" (Geertz 1973, 29) and thus, for much of an in-depth understanding the researcher aspires, he or she can never grasp but part of their meaning.

Aspiring a critical understanding of the research object, I acknowledge the general principles of critical theory, outlined by Keith Krause (1998, 316-317) as central claims for Critical International Relations. This implies a non-deterministic worldview in which subjects are contingent upon their social construction and thus malleable over time. Epistemologically speaking, gaining knowledge is a subjective process, conditional on the collective construction of social 'facts' through social interaction. Therefore, an interpretive methodological approach is adequate to "examine actor's understandings of the organization of their social world, as well as the relationships between these understandings and the social structures and practices in which they are embedded" (Krause 1998, 317).

Methodology: Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

CDA is not merely a method, but a "research program" (Wodak 2004, 198), a methodology (Fairclough 2010, 225) that comprises the construction of a research object on a theoretical basis and selection of adequate methods for it. Norman Fairclough (2010, 164) understands CDA as a theory of critical realism that can also be described as a "'moderate' or 'contingent' form of social constructivism" (Fairclough 2010, 5) in that it "rejects versions of discourse theory which collapse the distinction between reality and discourse, yet also asserts that the real world is socially and discursively constructed" (Fairclough 2010, 164).

CDA as a research program is inter-disciplinary, problem-orientated, context-sensitive, and adopts a pragmatic and ecclectic stance towards the selection of sources, categories and analytical tools (Fairclough 2010, 233; Wodak 2004, 199-200). Abduction, the "constant movement back and forth" (Wodak 2004, 200) between top-down theory and bottom-up empirical data collected in (ethnographic) fieldwork, facilitates an in-depth understanding of the research object and circumvents "fitting the data to illustrate a theory" (Wodak 2004, 200). CDA thus benefits from the interplay between "previous theoretical knowledge and new empirical observations" (Kelle 2007, 154) to infer the most plausible explanation for newly observed empirical phenomena.

Discourse is considered as "socially constructed as well as socially conditioned" (Fairclough and Wodak 1997, 258, cited in Wodak 2004, 198), i.e. as a predecessor as well as a consequence of social practices. CDA is not the "analysis of discourse 'in itself'", but of the "dialectical *relations between* discourse and other objects" (Fairclough 2010, 4). Social practices in their semiotic articulation as *orders of discourse* function as mediator "between (abstract) structures and (concrete) events and actions" (Fairclough 2010, 163).[60] Therefore, they constitute the level that allows linking the microanalysis of events (texts)

[60] Following Fairclough's (2010, 234-251) four-stage methodological procedure and treating all data collected as discourse, I select linguistic and theoretical categories and analyze their dialectical relationship. These categories are not fixed, however, and the abductive approach produces novel categories emerging from the data. Since I expand the theoretical framework of FST from gender to diversity more generally, the categories that determine diversity in the specific Colombian case need to be rooted in empirical findings.

with broader social practices (Fairclough 2010, 7). Furthermore, CDA contains a critical and normative element: it aims to unpack how power relations and inequalities produce the research object (Fairclough 2010, 8, 26) and "to 'demistify' discourses by deciphering ideologies" (Wodak 2004, 199) that serve as discursive strategies to perpetuate unequal power relations. This is relevant for the present MA dissertation that seeks to unpack discursive (de-)securitization strategies in relationship to the perceived and discursively constructed (or de-constructed) diversity among NSAG members becoming ex-combatants.

Methods and further considerations

Secondary sources

In accordance with the eclectic approach of CDA, the selection of sources seeks to combine the strengths of several disciplines, e.g. of political science theory and ethnography (Wedeen 2010). The theoretical chapter draws on scholarship from various disciplines, informed by both positivist and post-positivist schools of thought, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Reports from (international) NGOs and think tanks as well as interview data complement the theoretical part as appropriate. Amplifying the number and type of data sources, and submitting them to external and internal critique shall reduce potential bias and selectivity (Thies 2010). The empirical part triangulates interview data with with secondary sources, such as reports of national and international practitioners or government statistics on demobilization, in order to increase the validity of this study and reduce the effect of single biased sources. Since linguistic analysis in CDA comprises all semiotic modes, "including language, visual images, body language, music and sound effects" (Fairclough 2010, 7), I treat both 'high data', e.g. government reports and statistics, and 'low data', e.g. websites, videos, visual descriptions (Weldes 2006, 181–183), as discourse in the analysis. For interpretive approaches, I regard the absence of data, or bias between data sources, as meaningful data per se (Roth and Mehta 2002, 139).

Sampling method

Potential interviewees are identified on the basis of *theoretical sampling* that aims to cover key informants of relevant institutions that shape the discourse around DDR and ex-combatants in Colombia.[61] The first round of 14 interviews was conducted with experts on DDR, gender and security in Geneva-based and other international organizations. The idea of this first round of interviews was to test the relevance of my interview questions and expand my extensive literature review beyond a systematic literature search by including "peer search" (Luckham and Kirk 2012, 22). Furthermore, as "gatekeepers" (Lofland et al. 2006, 43), these interviewees facilitated access to Colombian contacts, triggering a process of *snowball sampling* (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981). The latter – still on a theoretical basis and balancing the number of referral chains and respondents therein – was used to gather a meaningful sample for a second round of 41 interviews in Bogotá, Colombia, where the major national and international agencies and NGOs working on DDR in Colombia reside. A *saturation point* was reached when *chain referrals* became circular, referring back to the persons already interviewed and indicating the best possible coverage of relevant interview partners. The interviewees are or were affiliated to the following institutions:

- The public sector, composed of state agencies involved in the design of DDR policy and programs on the national level, e.g. the adult reintegration agency ACR, the child reintegration unit of the ICBF, the *Alto Comisionado para la Paz* working on the peace negotiations with the FARC, and on the Bogotá district-level, e.g. the Bogotá reintegration *Proyecto 840* or the *Secretaría Distrital para la Mujer* promoting a feminist approach to public policies in Bogotá. Another institution providing three interviewees was the CNMH, collecting testimonies from victims and perpetrators for composing a coherent historical memory of the recent conflict.
- National think tanks and academia, the former including the Conflict Analysis Resource Center (CERAC), the *Fundación Ideas para la Paz* (FIP), the *Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular/Programa por la Paz* (CINEP/PPP), the *Fundación para la Reconciliación*, the *Observatorio para la Paz*, the feminist victims' NGO *CorporaciónHumanas,* and the latter referring to professors from several Colombian

[61] Adhering to Irene and Herbert Rubin's (2012, 177) procedure, I establish initial contact by e-mail or in person, presenting my research and formally soliciting an interview.

universities and directors of attached centers, such as the *Observatorio DDR* of the National University in Bogotá.

– International agencies assisting the nationally owned Colombian DDR and TJ processes, such as the Verification Mission of the Organization of American States (MAPP-OEA), the adult and child reintegration units of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), several UN agencies (UNDSS, UNDP, UN Women) and the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), as well as the NGO Save the Children.

– From international institutions covered in the first round of interviews, I could count on interview partners from the Small Arms Survey, Geneva Call, DCAF, Transition International, International Alert, UN Women and UNDP.

Two major points are worth highlighting: first, among the interviewees, 13 persons are former combatants from the M-19 (3), EPL (2), FARC (5), AUC (2), ELN (1) who are currently employed in state agencies or directing NGOs. Counting on their perspectives is crucial in that they can speak from both perspectives: the ex-combatant seeking return to civilian life and encountering a range of challenges, and the 'constructors of peace' participating in the discourse around DDR and its challenges in the Colombian context. Second, it is crucial to underline that I do not purport to draw a single narrative from the myriad of discourses I was fortunate to explore during this fieldwork. Rather, I draw attention to particular facets of specific discourses, finding commonalities and contrasts to others. Generalizations about experiences as women, as children, as indigenous persons assume commonalities among the members of these identity groups, but shall at no point suggest uniformity of experiences or undermine the value of each individual and unique experience.

Interview method

Drawing on Blumer's (1969, 2) epistemological assumptions, the purpose of my interviews was to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning(s) of the research object, the (ex-)combatants in the Colombian DDR process, for individual interviewees. I reject any claims of interviewer/researcher objectivity and adopt an empathetic interviewing position, while being aware of the effects of my framing of interview questions (Fontana and Frey 2005, 712). Acknowledging the uniqueness of every interview situation but aiming for inter-subjectivity in all steps of the data collection process, I opt for flexible semi-structured interviews. Further aspiring the closest approximation possible to the quality criteria detail, depth, vividness, nuance and richness (Rubin and Rubin 2012, 102–107), I adhere to an interview structure in three main strages with main, follow-up and probe questions (Rubin and Rubin 2012, Ch.7-8). After the first eight interviews, I refrained from tape-recording in order to decrease self-consciousness of the interviewees and obtain more 'off-the-record' information. Ethical considerations – the do-no-harm imperative, showing respect at all times, honoring promises and avoiding pressure on the interviewees (Rubin and Rubin 2012, 85–90; see also Wood 2006) – are of utmost priority and guide my empirical data collection. For ethical, but also legal and security reasons, all interviews are based on informed consent, full confidentiality and anonymity. For the sake of consistency, I maintain the anonymity of all interviewees although not all of them solicited remaining anonymous.

Most interviews were conducted face-to-face, either in Geneva, Switzerland, or in Bogotá, Colombia. However, where personal meetings were not possible, Skype interviews were held and, in two exceptional cases, answers were obtained by e-mail. Different advantages and limitations arise from different interview forms: Often considered inferior to face-to-face interviews (Hermanowicz 2002, 497), telephone interviews pose a range of limitations to a meaningful conversation in contrast to direct conversation: the absence of non-verbal communication (gestures, facial expressions, body language) that requires more explicit verbal communication between interviewer and interviewee, an abbreviated entry into the conversation (Rubin and Rubin 2012, 177-178) or a potential lack of trust in agreements on confidentiality, anonymity or recording may reduce the amount and quality of information exchanged in telephone interviews in specific situations (Johnson, Hougland Jr., and Clayton 1989, 181).

In other situations, however, the difference in obtained information has been reported as insignificant (Rubin and Rubin 2012, 177) and the quality of data collected as comparable (Sturges and Hanrahan 2004, 108, 112). Telephone interviews have logistical advantages and may prove possible when face-to-face interviews are denied

(Johnson, Hougland Jr., and Clayton 1989, 182). Skype as an intermediate solution combines the advantages of both face-to-face interviews, i.e. by making visual contact possible and facial expressions and gestures visible, and telephone interviews, i.e. by preserving flexibility and privacy of both interviewer and interviewee (Hanna 2012, 241). Limited Internet access and slow connections, however, can be a restriction for Skype interviews. In these cases, an e-mail conversation offers a last-resort communication channel for interviews, though the spontaneity of reactions in direct conversation gets lost.

Self-reflexive stance of the researcher

The major contribution of the Frankfurt School theorists, according to Ben Agger (1991), was their advocacy for self-reflection and self-criticism in social research and their unmasking of positivists' "avoidance of values [as] the strongest value commitment of all" (Agger 1991, 111). Therefore, adopting a self-critical and self-reflexive approach towards the theoretical assumptions and methodology of this study is as important as critical awareness about the stance of the researcher in terms of her own presuppositions, or "tacit knowledge" (Wolfinger 2002, 87) based on what Udo Kelle (2007, 153) refers to as "theoretical sensitivity". The latter guide my research perspective and questions towards the literature, my use of language and framing of interview questions. I am conscious that, thereby, I exert influence on both the research object (Agger 1991, 121) and the subjects I interact with along the research process.

At the same time, my theoretical perspective and presuppositions are changing through these interactions. Furthermore, in-process memos and interview transcripts (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995, 146, 162) as well as the present final research report form a discourse themselves, that can only claim superiority over the critiqued discourses if it has greater explanatory power than the latter (Fairclough 2010, 8). The ultimate goal is thus no ostensible value-neutrality, but a coherent discourse that reflects my interpretation of interviewees' perceptions of diversity among ex-combatants, based on duly conducted CDA, and allows readers to gain a more in-depth understanding of the research object when adding a third layer of interpretation through their lecture.