

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE DEMOBILISATION, DISARMAMENT AND
REINTEGRATION PROCESS OF FORMER FARC FIGHTERS IN
COLOMBIA**

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Abstract

The implementation of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) processes represent an important part of post-conflict transition. By enforcing the state's monopoly on armed forces and integrating political opponents, these mechanisms hold a promising potential towards the reconstruct war-torn nations. In 2016, the government of Colombia reached an historic peace deal with the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) guerrilla, thus ending the longest lasting civil war in the Americas. After more than 50 years of civil war, in which hundreds of thousands were killed and millions displaced, the implementation of DDR started. Now in its third year, the implementation is slow, uneven and is encountering several difficulties. In August 2019, some ex-FARC leaders called for the return of an armed insurgency, citing the failures of the Colombian government in implementing the Peace Agreement. As mitigated results of the DDR in Colombia emerge, an overall assessment is valuable.

This paper aims to provide insights in the implementation of the DDR process of former FARC fighters in Colombia. The research is based on process-tracing and semi-structured interviews conducted with organisations which designed, implemented and monitored of the peace process. By combining these insights and methods, this research permits to highlights the successes and challenges of this DDR process. This research identifies key obstacles and opportunities for DDR in Colombia, highlighting the programmatic successes for the demobilisation and disarmament phases and identifying institutional weakness, programmatic flaws and the role of spoilers as key explanatory factors for the shortcomings of the reintegration in Colombia.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1 – THEORETICAL CHAPTER	5
<i>1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>1.3 MY FRAMEWORK</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>1.4 METHODOLOGY.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>1.5 LIMITATIONS.....</i>	<i>16</i>
CHAPTER 2 – CASE STUDY: COLOMBIA.....	19
<i>1.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>1.2 THEMATIC CHAPTERS.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>A- Demobilisation and Disarmament</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>B- Reintegration.....</i>	<i>26</i>
CHAPTER 3 – CONCLUSION.....	45
BIBLIOGRAPHY	47

Introduction

In 2016, the longest running civil war in the western hemisphere ended with the signature of a historical peace deal. After 52 years of a war between the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and the Colombian central government, the hope for lasting peace returned in a country where the last three generations have only known war. This lasting conflict took the lives of around 250,000 people and displaced millions, leaving Colombia with one of the highest internally displaced populations in the world. The ambitious and progressive peace agreement focused on six pillars: rural agrarian development, political participation, illicit drugs, victim's rights, end of the conflict and implementation. The agreement was hailed as one of the most comprehensive peace agreements in the world. In the fall of 2016, the peace agreement met its first significant obstacle when it was rejected by the population through a referendum with a margin of 0.4%. Former President Uribe led the campaign against the adoption of the peace agreement, citing the impunity offered to FARC members and the lack of justice for victims of the conflict. This prompted a revision of the peace agreement, which finally was passed at the Colombian Congress in November 2016. The implementation of the peace process started on January 1st, 2017.

For the purpose of this research, I will focus on one specific part of the peace process, which is the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process. This phase represents an incremental part of this agreement, part of the six pillars of the Peace Accords.

Furthermore, DDR has represented a key feature of post-conflict peacebuilding since the 1990s, as it permits to lay the ground for longer-term development and security programs that

will stabilise a country. It is more broadly linked to security sector reform (SSR), which is also essential in post-conflict settings. By enforcing the state's monopoly on armed forces and integrating political opponents, these mechanisms hold a potential to reconstruct war-torn nations and achieve the first steps towards lasting peace. After more than 50 years of civil war, the process of disarmament of the FARC rebels started with an average of 13000 combatants participating, representing 95% of the FARC guerrilla. Colombia is an ideal case to study DDR as it represents one of the only attempts at collective disarmament and reintegration in the world, which can significantly extend and enhance the understanding of this practice. The national government disposed of strong powers to fix the terms of the process and international actors were present only upon invitation, which significantly differs from other DDR processes in Asia or Africa. Secondly, my personal experience in the country exposed me to the complexity of the Colombian case, which prompted my interest in studying DDR in a context where illegal economies are predominant and where a conflict lasted for half a century. Finally, given the rise of small armed groups worldwide, it is interesting to study these processes in contexts where only one group demobilises while others keep fighting. These factors partly contribute to making the Colombian a case that can yield valuable insights into the factors that produce or limit DDR success.

Since the start of the implementation, the first two phases of demobilisation and disarmament have been completed, while reintegration is ongoing. The results and experiences emerging from this process are rather mitigated, with several organisations citing a slow, uneven and delayed implementation (Latin America Working Group, 2019; United Nations, 2019; European Union, 2019) which prompts further examination. Indeed, a failed DDR process can have severe repercussions on the security of a country and can reignite a conflict. Since 2016, the widespread murders and disappearances of social leaders and human rights activists

have remained unstopped, armed groups keep proliferating and rates of displacement are still high (New Humanitarian, 2019). In 2019, 8 million Colombians were estimated to be displaced (UNHCR, 2020). The neighbouring political crisis in neighbouring Venezuela also represents an unprecedented challenge for Colombia, which is welcoming millions of refugees. The crisis is potentially endangering the peace process through its political and security challenges, particularly at the border between both countries.

In August 2019, some ex-FARC prominent leaders and contenders for the elections of the newly formed political party, Ivan Márquez and Jesús Santrich, called for the return of an armed insurgency, citing the failures of the Colombian government. Despite their initial participation in DDR and their attempt at integrating politically, these key figures decided to return to an armed insurgency. In January 2020, the Colombian government foiled a plot of these two prominent figures to assassinate the FARC leader. The ex-commander, known as Timochenko, is the president of the new FARC political party since September 2017 and negotiated the peace process (Insight Crime, 2020). These events highlighted deep divisions within the FARC party that initially collectively demobilised in 2017. This surprising assassination plot not only revealed internal divisions, but the discontent of former combatants in terms of security provisions and the access to land, the key revindication of FARC since its creation. This setback, coupled with the current obstacles of the peace process, is worth exploring further as it threatens the success of the most comprehensive peace agreement in the world. As mitigated results of the peace process emerge, and violence is still prominent in the country, an overall analysis of the DDR process is invaluable.

This research focuses on how the disarmament and reintegration process evolved in Colombia since 2017, as the success of this process is incremental for the implementation of

the peace process as a whole. To answer this research question, I will consider the following: An analysis of the different stages of DDR and the actors involved. Secondly, a process-tracing of the DDR process, which permits to identify the relevant actors as well as the obstacles encountered and the successes of the program. Thirdly, the discrepancy between the agreed upon objectives of DDR and the state of implementation. Finally, the role of spoilers in the process will be considered. This thesis aims to provide insights in the implementation of the DDR process of former FARC fighters in Colombia, highlighting the obstacles encountered, providing opportunities and contributing towards good practices for future DDR programs. Through the methodology of process tracing and interviews, I seek to understand further the process of DDR in Colombia and provide explanations for these evolutions, considering the political, social and economic context of the country. This understanding will help to not only test causal links and test hypotheses but also to analyse how these variables interact and how certain combinations of factors contributed to changes in the process. This permits to single out certain variables while understanding the interactions, dynamics and evolutions that made the DDR process in Colombia what it is today. The holistic and comprehensive narrative emerging from this understanding and explanations will give meaning to events while answering the following research question: How did the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration process in Colombia evolve since 2017? To address this question, I will expand on the current literature, my framework and methodology. In the second chapter, I will present the Colombian case study and include a historical background before expanding on my thematic chapters, which present the main findings.

Chapter 1 – Theoretical Chapter

1.1 Research Question

How did the disarmament and reintegration process in Colombia evolve since 2017?

To answer this question, I will consider the following:

- An analysis of the different stages of DDR and the actors involved.
- A process-tracing of the DDR process, which permits to identify the relevant actors as well as the obstacles encountered and the successes of the program.
- The discrepancy between the agreed upon objectives for DDR and the implemented measures to achieve them.
- The role of spoilers in the process.

The current DDR process is the first collective reintegration attempt in the country, echoing to the crucial group dynamics in reintegration processes (Hazen, 2005; Torjesen, 2013). The process and its implementation have prompted the investment of billions of dollars from actors such as the European Union and the United Nations. Thus, studies on the programs of these organisations in Colombia is relevant for these practitioners. Despite numerous researches focusing on the current DDR process in Colombia, no process tracing was completed while contextualising and understanding the program in an inclusive manner. The FARC, while at war, had to hide in the jungle and stayed away from their home communities, for long periods of time (Gjelsvik, 2010), which makes reintegration different than in contexts such as Lebanon where combatants kept connections with their pre-war times roles (Karamé, 2009). This lack of connection, the duration of the conflict, added to the resentment

from civilian communities caused by their violent methods and participation in criminal economies, make the FARC a particularly interesting case to study in the context of DDR. The Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards of the United Nations (OGIDDRS) was published as a response to the evolving nature of warfare, armed groups and increasingly complex settings DDR occurs in. Colombia is a primary example of complex and evolving contexts and no DDR process had been attempted in a conflict that lasted as long as the Colombian civil war (2014).

Despite the promises of these peace accords, several recent reports mention the shortcomings of the implementation of the reintegration phase specifically (Kroc Institute, 2020; United Nations, 2019, European Union, 2019). The interview of actors involved directly in the design, implementation and verification of the process permits to gather first hand data while gaining an inclusive view of the process. Coupled with previously established criteria for successful DDR in the literature, this contributes towards a strong theoretical base for the methodological choices adopted in this research. Several articles and reports address the perspectives of the actors involved or the implementation's obstacles. The academic literature covers extensively on the perspectives of ex-combatants (Carranza-Franco, 2019), gendered perspectives (Theidon, 2009; Flisi, 2016; Hernández, 2017) and the political economy of the conflict (Berdal and Keen, 1997; Keen, 2000; Berdal and Zaum, 2012; Petrini, 2018). This will permit to explore whether the obstacles encountered in Colombia are due to programmatic failures, a lack of political will, institutional capacity or the role of spoilers. A lack of collaboration or conflicting agendas between key stakeholders can also be highlighted with such analyses. All these factors are relevant not only for DDR practitioners and researchers, but for the peace-building sector in Colombia and beyond and policymakers working on the country or the region.

1.2 Literature Review

Post-conflict transitions and the importance of DDR.

The literature on DDR evolved alongside its practice, which focused principally in Asia and Africa. DDR processes started in the 1990s as tools of peacebuilding across the world. It is a relatively new practice that has been rapidly evolving and adapting to new forms of warfare. As highlighted by scholars, transitions from armed conflict to ‘post conflict’ societies do not necessarily imply security and safety. Ceasefires and peace agreements do not “necessarily guarantee improvements in the safety of either civilians or former combatants” (Muggah, 2005, p239). To facilitate such transitions and address this gap, the international community has increasingly relied on DDR programs, which are especially supported by multilateral organisations such as the United Nations. It can be defined in the literature as a “collection of project initiatives that come relatively early in post-war project interventions and aim to collect weapons, dismantle armed groups and assist ex-combatants” (Muggah, 2009, p14). It is understood by the United Nations as “an early step in a series of peace-building processes. DDR focuses on the immediate management of people previously associated with armed forces and groups; lays the groundwork for safeguarding and sustaining the communities in which these individuals can live as law-abiding citizens; and builds national capacity for long-term peace, security, and development” (UNDP, 2006, p5). It has two principle objectives: to dismantle armed groups that threaten the state’s monopoly on security and armed forces; and to reintegrate these ex-combatants into society to prevent future security risks and promote long-term peace. Thus, DDR seeks to prevent the transfer of ex-combatants to other armed groups or mercenary activities. These processes rely on incentives given by organisations, often financial and yield promising results, as ‘DDR is the largest

intervention in nearly all of the United Nation's ongoing large-scale peacekeeping missions tasked with restoring social capital and promoting long-term peace' (Berdal and Ucko, 2013).

Rethinking critically DDR processes.

However, DDR and weapons reduction initiatives 'do not constitute the promised 'magic bullet' to restoring security' and assuring development (CERI, 2004). Traditionally, it focused on reaching certain military and security objectives, often overlooking issues of justice, reconciliation and long-term development (Theidon, 2009). This focus on the ex-combatants did not sufficiently consider the civilians that suffered from conflict and might object the reintegration of combatants. Indeed, these delicate transitions require a consideration for the security threat of armed groups, and reconciliation with the civilian population. The establishment of durable peace thus requires the action of different levels of actions, without which, a sustainable peace cannot be achieved (Lederach, 1997). The traditional approach of DDR considering success in terms of numerical data on the collection of weapons and soldiers demobilised, is incomplete (Knight, Özerdem, 2004). Moreover, researches indicate that criminality and violence involving weapons can escalate in spite of peace agreements (Guha-Sapir, Van Panhuis, 2002b). Several cases such as Guatemala indicate that post-conflict fatalities can actually equal the average figure of conflict time (Prophette et al, 2002). The armed violence from former combatants once their structure is dissolved can reach alarming peaks, transfer into urban criminality or towards previously peaceful areas. This transfer of violence from the area under a peace agreement towards neighbouring countries, even peaceful ones, is a significant risk of unsuccessful DDR (Millenium project, 2004). Thus, it is important carefully consider development and reintegration.

DDR reforms: towards new considerations.

The programming, monitoring and evaluation of DDR programs have gone through significant reforms, which increasingly consider the local context and long-term development goals. Furthermore, more inclusive approaches denounced the mistake of using the project initiatives as a starting point for research on reintegration (Torjesen, 2013). Researchers have prompted the need to study DDR within more inclusive and broader political, economic and social dynamics, as it shapes and is shaped by the context of a country. New generation DDR programs are more resilient, do not solely rely on voluntary participation and consider needs of transitional justice and security reforms (Muggah, O'Donnell, 2015). The practitioner's realm also reflected these considerations and the United Nations (2014) published the new OGIDDRS. The learned lessons point towards the importance of strategies adopted by governments and multilateral agencies, in terms of the clarity, the objectives and the benchmarks, while considering the cultural, institutional and political barriers of each context (Muggah, 2005). For an inclusive approach, a gendered analysis also needs to be incorporated, especially for armed groups such as FARC which have a significant proportion of women members (Theidon, 2009). Moreover, the psychological effects of extreme violence, both on civilians and combatants, is important to consider. Several damaging impacts have been observed in post-conflict contexts, "such as sexual violence, and impacts on physical and social mobility, familial cohesiveness and access to sustainable livelihoods among soldiers and civilians alike" (Banerjee and Muggah, 2002, p241). The determinants of success for such programs are dependent on the national level, through significant reforms, a good management of the political issues surrounding it, which echoes to the role of the media, and the economic structures. As Muggah stated, "development actors often forget that DDR and weapons reduction follow, rather than lead, the political process" (Muggah, 2005, p241).

A focus on DDR in Colombia

The question of the demobilisation of irregular armed group is central to the question of security and peace in Colombia. The country has already gone through several DDR attempts since the 1980s with various armed groups, guerrillas and paramilitaries (Carranza-Franco, 2019). The presence of several armed groups within the country and the tendency to include one or a few groups only in disarmament programs, due to the political context, has been damaging for DDR in Colombia. Other factors contribute to the complexity of the country. For a DDR program to be successful, a sound understanding of what it means for these former combatants and their dependants, both men and women, to be reintegrated within society is needed (Berdal and Ucko, 2013). Theidon incorporates the lack of gender-sensitive considerations and provisions as a damaging factor for DDR programs (2009). Despite attempts to incorporate gender sensitive platforms, previous DDR programs failed to effectively include women, and rather created subcategories that responded to a gender consideration: “men, evidently, are simply the generic category or ‘human’, against which these others are marked and somehow deviate” (Theidon, 2009). Thus, this address the question of gender without questioning the image of the male gender within society, even though its social construction can significantly contribute to violence. In particular unequal societies such as Colombia, with high rates of violence towards women, inclusive programs are essential while considering groups with high female memberships, such as the FARC (Gutiérrez, Carranza Franco, 2017). Different measures are now being applied to measure the efficacy, such as a feeling of acceptance from former combatants (Humphrey & Weinsten, 2007) or economic outcomes considering employment and education (European Commission, 2016, p41).

The Role of Spoilers

Another issue to consider in post-conflict transitions is the role of actors that benefit from conflict. These actors are called spoilers (Zahar, 2003, Jenne, 2010, Garzón-Vergara, 2015) and highlight the importance of including all participants of a peace process. Spoilers are capable of hampering DDR processes during each phase and can represent a faction of an armed group refusing to disarm. Indeed, the success of post-conflict processes is highly dependent on the capacity to manage the spoilers (Stedman, 1997). To solve this potential harm, Stedman (1997) advances the need for greater protection, benefits and legitimisation as a strategy to undermine peace spoilers. Thus, DDR programs should consider all potential peace spoilers, including the root causes of the conflict in particular during the reintegration phase. In the case of Colombia, criminal economies, organisations and armed groups are peace spoilers (Cockayne and Pfister, 2008). A particular challenge of DDR in Colombia is to address the role of spoilers and ensure their conversion into stakeholders (Muggah and Colletta, 2009, p10).

Expected Contribution

This thesis aims to explore the gap between the stated goals of DDR and the current state of implementation of the three phases of the process. By tracing the process of the three phases of the program, this thesis aims to provide an inclusive and holistic analysis of the process and its evolution, highlighting its successes and challenges. The first contribution lies in its methodology, as process-tracing of the implementation has been done before by the Kroc Institute, but it has not been done by contextualising of the process, the history of the country, the actors and mechanisms involved. Combining process-tracing with semi-structured interviews permits to gain a more complete understanding of the process through the

perspectives of actors involved. By mapping out the key stakeholders in this DDR process, including their perspectives through qualitative data, I will be able to bridge this gap between studies that previously focused on one actor, or specific aspects of the process. This research identifies key obstacles and opportunities for DDR in Colombia, thus participating towards good practices and an inclusive understanding of such programs, appealing to researchers and practitioners alike. As Torjesen highlighted, “reintegration has long been the underfinanced and understudied third element in DDR” (2013, p1). Thus, this research participates in the upswing of attention towards this phase, both in terms of programming and research. My contribution to the literature is thus empirical, as by providing new data which has not yet been addressed in the academic literature on the DDR process in Colombia. This analytical contribution also applies to the spoiler’s literature, by analysing the role of certain actors/spoilers, in the ongoing DDR process. Finally, my research is relevant not only to DDR researchers and practitioners, but to the broader peace-building literature.

1.3 My framework

I argue in this thesis that the historical, economic and social variables of the country have not been properly integrated in the programming and implementation of DDR, which results in serious obstacles that threaten the reincorporation of former combatants. I contribute to this body of literature that analyses DDR processes and more particularly reintegration, contributing to the understanding of this largely understudied phase. I thus align myself with scholars such as Özerdem (2012), Muggah (2015) and Theidon (2009). Inspired by the work of Torjesen on theorising ex-combatant reintegration, this research aims to advance some theoretical clues to advance the understanding of such processes, while not pretending to fill this gap in the literature. The approach adopted is similar, as I consider that my research

“should concentrate on fostering an ‘understanding’ of reintegration where many causal factors are assessed, including how particular combinations of factors may account for why and how the process of reintegration has unfolded in the way that it has” (2013, p2). My approach follows this logic as I try to understand the process in a holistic way, considering many variables and their interactions. To understand DDR processes, the interactions and results, it is essential to study the context before and during the conflict, thus a historical background precedes the data section.

The context in which DDR is taking place is as relevant as the process and programming itself, and both interact to create the results. Research on reintegration should not start at the beginning of the process, as such approaches “directs scholarly attention away from larger social, political and economic processes associated with combatants existing from armed groups, and towards short-term and narrow project activities” (2013, p20). This is why this research pays particular attention to the history of the country, the political, economic and social dynamics of the last century. This permits to identify programmatic flaws and differentiates between variables, short-term and long-term dynamics, as these can be mistaken when there is a lack of contextualised understanding. Other scholars such as Nussio (2012) have taken a comprehensive approach, which I am inspired by in this study. Several grievances, mechanisms and dynamics, whether political, economic or social, often contribute to both conflict and peace. It can also explain failure or successes, regardless of agencies’ programming. This leads to a consideration of not only Colombian dynamics, but also regional and international ones, considering for example the historical role of the United States in the country and the crisis in Venezuela. Moreover, this logic informs my approach towards the actors, both in terms of understanding their roles and power relations in Colombia. By considering many causal factors, including a political economy consideration,

a more inclusive understanding can be achieved. Interviews can reveal underlying dynamics, permit to examine further the positionality of actors and give the space to emphasise on points too political to be included in reports. These dynamics are relevant as they can deeply impact these processes, while remaining understudied. My approach links not only to the study of DDR but to sociology, political economy and history.

1.4 Methodology

For this research, the methodology followed is predominantly qualitative, as this research has exploratory and explanatory purposes. Qualitative methods permit to understand holistically the object of research while providing bases for explanation. I will analyse the DDR process in Colombia through the method of process tracing, which is used when the causal process between variables needs to be identified (George and Bennett, 2005, p206-207). In this study, the independent variable is the current state of DDR and the dependent variables are all the factors affecting this outcome. Process tracing is used in this case to gain a greater understanding of the causal dynamics that produced the current outcome of DDR in Colombia (Beach, 2016). The dependent variables are left-open ended for exploratory purposes and will be explicitly integrated in the data chapter and the conclusion. The process tracing aims to trace two different phases of the process: demobilisation and disarmament as the first phase and reintegration as the second one. This method is particularly relevant for this study as it “enables us to go a step further when studying causal relationships, allowing us to ‘peer into the box of causality to locate the intermediate factors lying between some structural cause and its purported effect’” (Gerring, 2007a, p45). As available reports already focus on quantitative methods to measure the state of the implementation of the peace process as a whole, qualitative methods and especially process-tracing permits to complete

the understanding of DDR in Colombia and to identify the intermediate factors that are understudied. The different factors emerging from both reports and interviews form a causal chain which impacts the independent variable. This study does not attempt to generalise at the national level, as results are scattered and can provide very contrasting outcomes from one locality to another. The emerging picture of this process and its implementation prompts the need for a more exploratory research that considers many factors while using process-tracing.

The data used for process-tracing will be gathered through the analysis of publicly available data and reports. The starting point for the first data-gathering method is the text of the Colombian Peace Accords (Presidencia de Colombia, 2016). The reports analysed are from three sources: The United Nations, the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, and the European Union. These actors have been selected because they are key actors in this process. Namely, the United Nations was attributed the task to oversee the demobilisation disarmament process. The United Nations Verification Mission is now overseeing two pillars of the peace process: the security guarantees and the economic reintegration of former combatants. The Kroc Institute was given the responsibility to monitor the implementation of the peace accords and all 578 stipulations through the article of the peace accords. Finally, the European Union, per its 2016 outlined strategy for Colombia, invested consequential financial and human resources in the peace process and more particularly the reintegration of former combatants. Other reports from international and national actors and organisations will be used in the data section to contextualise the data and add another perspective.

In the second data-gathering method, the interviews will follow a semi-structured form to allow for the perspective of each interviewee to be considered and analysed. The actors

interviewed are from the three key organisations who report on the DDR process in Colombia. The interviewees have been selected on the basis of their connection with the relevant organisations, through personal connections or the snowballing effect, as one interviewee often connected me to another. Interviewees have a role linked with DDR in Colombia at the Kroc Institute, the United Nations and the European Union. The semi-structured form allows for a deeper understanding of these actors and for supplementary data to be collected. Additionally, it respects the interviewees' boundaries and concerns that might arise from this research by being flexible in terms on content.

1.5 Limitations

It is important to note that as the Covid-19 outbreak affected the availability and responsiveness of potential interviewees. The sample was much smaller than anticipated, going from 20 to 9 interviews. The research fatigue in Colombia, as well as the format of online interviews in English severely impacted the access to potential interviewees and might have affected the quality of the data gathered. A set of 11 semi-structured key interview questions remained the same across all interviews for comparative purposes, while certain specific questions are tailored around the specific role of the interviewees or events/facts mentioned during the interview. The questions were left open-ended to reflect the personal or organisational perspective on the process, its failures and opportunities. The access to these organisations was guaranteed through personal contacts, direct emails and other channels such as LinkedIn. I sought to cover the period from 2017 to present regarding the roles of the interviewees and their institutions to prevent any time period gap that could potentially affect the data. For ethical concerns and per request, interviewees have been anonymised and will be referred to as sources.

Documents have been studied both in English and Spanish as some organisations do not have translations of reports, while interviews were solely conducted in English, to accurately gather data. Specific attention was paid to positions of DDR agreed within the peace process formally that have not yet been implemented or produced mitigating results. By proceeding with this comparison, the data gathered through the interviews brings meaning while being supported by the data and research of scholars and organisations. This combination of methods permits to gain a complete understanding while confronting the data gathered from a small sample of interviews with a more systematic and verified database of reports, which to an extent prevents the of personal bias and unverifiable information.

Finally, it is essential to consider my own positionality while conducting this research. My previous work experience in the country, as a peace-building trainee for six weeks, made it easier for me to grasp the context, the history of the country, and facilitated the understanding of certain social and economic issues. Moreover, my Spanish reading skills have considerably helped while studying secondary data, research articles and the reports of organisations that were not translated into English. My French speaking skills have further facilitated my research while analysing certain reports or declarations from the European Union. The Central European University facilitated my access to many resources and external contacts, principally per its alumni network.

The limitations of this research lie primarily in the lack of resources and the cancellation of my field research trip to Colombia. My Spanish speaking skills permitted me to access resources and reports in that language but the current inability to travel to the field will substantially reduce the context knowledge, despite previous experience in the country. The

current situation has limited the number of interviews that can be carried, as only online interviews were possible. This resulted in the exclusion of certain relevant actors at the grassroots level which could have significantly contributed to this research.

Chapter 2 – Case Study: Colombia

1.1 Historical Background

Bi-partisan opposition dominated Colombia since its independence in 1819, as well as the widespread distribution of publicly owned land to private owners, through violence and corruption, which still shapes Colombia today (LeGrand, Van Isschot, Riaño-Alcalá, 2017). Bi-partisan tensions culminated in the 1940s during the most violent period of Colombia's modern history during La Violencia, ignited by the murder of a popular liberal candidate. His assassination prompted a decade-long civil unrest, which killed around 200 000 people and displaced around 2 million. In 1957, the Declaration of Sitges enforced a National Front, with liberal and conservative parties governing jointly for 16 years. The party was created in 1958 and far-reaching reforms efforts started. However, the weakness of the government structure persisted, the party was tainted by clientelism over long-term state building. A climate of lawlessness was enforced by the national geography and the lack of state presence in rural areas. The concentration of land ownership in Colombia was extreme, with the largest 0.8% farms owning more 30% of farmlands in the 1950s (Global Risk Insights, 2017).

The interference of the United States also contributed to the instability (Kirk, 2012). During the Cold War, The Truman Doctrine was used to interfere regionally and dissuade social reforms. Through the 'Alliance for Progress', the US supported financially social and economic progress on capitalist terms, which pushed the government corporations towards the private sector. The US encouraged and fuelled clientelism in Colombia, supporting politicians who favoured multinational corporations. Paramilitary groups were also funded to

fight Marxist guerrillas and defend the interests of corporations. This resulted in increased wealth inequality and social injustice, fuelling political support towards Marxist guerrillas.

In the 1960s, rapid urbanisation changed the country, the unformal economy expanded, and political circles turned outside of the traditional two-party system. Marxist groups had appeared, appealed by Marxism and revolutions in the region. These groups formed during the 1960s, amidst a Conservative presidency and a deep economic crisis. The Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) was founded in 1964 by students returning from Cuba. In 1964, the FARC officially formed as a guerrilla, mostly composed of farmers and resistance committees formed during La Violencia. Pro-communist peasants' communities had formed and denied state authority, arming to oppose US-backed paramilitary groups since the beginning of the 1960s. In response, the Colombian army destroyed the farmer's community, 'independent republic', and most peasants fled in the jungles and mountains before reforming in May 1964 to topple the national government. Ideologically, the FARCs were influenced by Soviet-influenced communism, a key revindication being the redistribution of land and the eviction of multi-national companies. They officially became the military wing of the Communist party and their initial strategy was defensive, protecting farmers against landowners (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015).

In the 1970s, the resources allocated to the military fight against guerrillas increased, funding operations and paramilitary groups, supported by the United States which perceived them as communist threat to eradicate. Cocaine production drastically increased, encouraged by enormous demand from the West. This lucrative business gave rise to drug cartels which were amassing billions and controlling large areas of land on Latin America's most lucrative trafficking routes (Norwegian Refugee Council., 2015). Cartels were flexible and filled a gap,

controlling the most valuable contraband in the 1970s. They grew closer to the political establishment, putting several officials on their payrolls. At the end of the 1980s, drugs became the country's principal foreign exchange earner (Bagdley, 1988). Cultivable lands became the platform for violent confrontations between armed groups fighting for control. At their heights, the FARC controlled up to 40% of Colombia's territory, most exclusively rural areas.

In 1984, several guerrilla groups were debilitated, and the FARC signed a cease-fire with the government of Betancur. In 1985, demobilised FARC members and left-wing political allies formed the left-wing opposition party Unión Patriótica (UP). This party aimed to address popular discontentment, result of the economic crisis and the rising violence. It was not only composed of FARC but the Communist Party, left-wing politicians, members of the traditional two parties, social democrats and other social movements (Carvajal, 2014). In 1985, the peace talks collapsed, and many guerrilla members went back to fight in rural areas while the UP presidential candidate Jaime Pardo Leal gathered a number of votes never achieved previously by any alternative candidate (Carvajal, 2014).

A new Constitution in 1991 terminated the previous right of the President to appoint all local and state executives, permitting competition locally. But instability had destroyed the country's institutional and judiciary capability. Governments in Colombia used force to grab lands, enforce laws and ensure the economic viability of the elite. Where the military is normally used to protect a state's borders, the military was used as a tool for domestic intervention. Coupled with weak institutions, no civilian oversight of the military, a climate of force prevails over law and justice. The UP was widely perceived as the political branch of FARC, and it was heavily targeted by paramilitary groups, the government and the very

powerful private sector. This opposition to UP led to an extreme violence. It is estimated that around 4000/5000 leaders, members and sympathisers of this party have been assassinated or disappeared, including presidential candidates, members of the Houser of Representatives, senators and thousands of local politicians (Schemo, 1997). The party was dissolved in 2002 and survivors of this political genocide are mostly silenced or in exile. The author Robin Kirk equals this brutality to the 'language of violence' that dominated political dialogue in Colombia for centuries, turning massacres and terror as tools of political messaging (2012).

The FARC were given a sizeable amount of territories by president Pastrana as part of peace negotiations in 1998. However, these talks collapsed in 2002. The country was confronted to the failure of political negotiations, an ever-increasing drug trade and violence. Paramilitary groups and guerrillas were fighting actively in the rural areas, where paramilitary groups were not only used for drug trafficking but also became private security for big companies, corporations and the government itself. Millions of people were displaced, and the rates of murder and kidnapping were the highest in the world (International Crisis Group, 2002). A particularly brutal paramilitary group, AUC (United Self Defense Forces of Colombia), was created in 1997 and enjoyed particular powers to fight leftist groups.

The United States passed the Plan Colombia bill in 2000, in the context of the war on drugs, increasing their involvement in Colombia. A campaign of spraying aerially plantations with toxic products such as glyphosate, theoretically targeting coca plantations, started. This fuelled poverty, displacement and internal conflict. Conservative president Uribe was elected in 2002, promoting securitisation and militarisation. The government launched several disarmament programs, which led to the demobilisation of around 40 000 combatants (Porch, Rasmussen, 2008). However, paramilitary actions were increasing, guerrillas kept engaged in

kidnappings, the use of landmines and the forced recruitment of children. In 2004, Uribe mobilised around 15 000 troops to launch offensives against FARC (SIPRI, 2005). By the end of Uribe's term, the number of FARC combatants had fallen from 20 000 to 8 000. His popularity was high at the end of his presidency, but another term was prevented by the Constitution. Colombia was still dominated by clientelism and a mentality of political survival and self-interests, leading in part to collusions with paramilitary groups (Osterling, 1988).

Juan Manuel Santos came to power in 2010, having previously served as Uribe's Defense Minister. The President quickly set a reconciliatory tone, stepping away from the militarisation approach adopted by his predecessor, encouraging modernisation, education and peace. In 2012, Santos initiated negotiations with FARC to reach a peace deal. The negotiations took place in Havana, as Cuba was considered a neutral territory. The peace talks were finalised in August 2016 after 4 years of negotiations, which were hailed as historic, particularly because of the participation of victims of the conflict. The peace agreement addressed the conflict with FARC and deeply rooted social and economic issues fuelling poverty and violence for decades.

1.2 Thematic Chapters

A- Demobilisation and Disarmament

The demobilisation and disarmament phase of the peace agreement was addressed in the item 3 of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, which stipulated that FARC would disarm within 180 days of signature. The framing and discourse around these phases were emphasised by FARC leadership, which advanced the

terms of ‘laying down the weapons’ over demobilisation and disarmament. A former combatant explained: “we are not demobilizing, we are laying down our weapons to become an open and legal political movement” (Casey, Daniels, 2017). The United Nations was invited by the Colombian government to oversee these phases, alongside FARC representatives and the national army of Colombia. The phase lasted 9 months, starting in January 2017.

Over 7000 weapons were handed by former combatants by August 2017. Indeed, an average of 95% of FARC guerrilla members participated in the disarmament and collaborated to provide the location of hidden weapon stocks. In September 2017, 750 out of 998 arms caches had been retrieved and removed, which contained over 488 000 pieces of ammunition, 1200 weapons and 26,400 kilos of explosives (United Nations, 2017). The last count from the United Nations indicated the collection of 7,132 individual weapons (United Nations, 2017), thus completing one of the peace agreement’s key condition. A factor that participated in this success, as several sources have confirmed, was not only the quantity but the quality of the weapons. Indeed, the UN collected quality weaponry with significant financial value, weaponry that would be an asset during fighting. The process was extended according to a revised schedule but was completed ahead of the revised schedule in September 2017.

The most difficult aspect on this phase was to access all the weapons caches, mostly located in very remote and hardly reachable areas the FARC had been operating in. The United Nations oversaw the disarmament, the shipping of the weapons outside of the country, to be melted down. The results of the disarmament phase were welcomed by several organisations and groups noting that “the goal of ending the war has essentially been met” (Casey, Daniels, 2017). The international presence was received positively, as confirmed by interview sources,

which emphasised that the UN's presence increased the trust of former FARC members when laying down their weapons. This links directly with Walter's argument (1997) emphasising the fear of ex combatants when only one side disarms, and the importance of a third-party intervention to solve this dilemma and provide assurances to both sides. Given the history between the government and guerrillas in the country and previous failed disarmament attempts, the role of the United Nations can be hailed as a key factor of success. Thus, international oversight could be used as a future pathway for disarmament in Colombia to increase its success with other armed groups such as the ELN, as it was the first time an international actor had oversaw disarmament in the country. Thus, the UN acted as a middle, trusted agent, fulfilling these two phases with the full cooperation of both parties and increasing the level of accountability. The first United Nations Mission concluded its mandate in September 2017, following a successful disarmament. A UN Verification Mission in Colombia was subsequently created through the UN Security Council Resolution 2366, adopted unanimously on July 10th, 2017. The disarmament was highly encouraging and symbolic for the country, as its biggest guerrilla group laid down their weapons and agreed to start lives as civilians after 52 years of civil war.

All analysed reports mentioned the success of the disarmament phase and the completion of many initial short-term measures necessary for the end of the conflict in 2017. As the Kroc Institute highlighted in April 2019, "passing the two-year mark without the resumption of armed conflict is an important milestone" (p2). The commitment of the FARC to enter this process was also widely cited, by both reports and interviewees, as a key driver of success. Despite initial suspicion that the group would hide and not disclose many weapons and money it has hidden in the jungle, three years after the disarmament, this phase is still widely considered as a case for successful disarmament.

B- Reintegration

Amongst both practitioners and scholars, it is widely agreed that the reintegration phase of DDR is the most challenging. This phase is also addressed in the item 3 of the peace agreement. Disarmament and demobilisation, ‘laying down the weapons’, are technical phases of a peace process that are relatively short-termed, often led by one or a few actors such as the United Nations and are relatively easy to measure (number of weapons collected, quality, tons destroyed). However, the reintegration phase is the longer-term, it encompasses social, historical, cultural and economic considerations while a higher number of actors are often involved in the phase, especially NGOs operating at different levels (Banholzer, 2013). As outlined by the National Reincorporation and Normalisation Agency (ARN), the roadmap of each signatory is determined by “an outline of activities obtained in line with the real options of the individual in relation to the project of life desired, without losing sight of the way the social, economic and legal aspects of the Reintegration Process are regulated” (2016).

Reintegration is understood here as a process during which combatants become civilians, distance themselves from violence and the use of it to achieve their means, whether political, social and economic. Reintegration occurs within three arenas. Socially, combatants increase their interactions and participation with mainstream communities and other civilians. Politically, they renounce to using violence as a means to achieve their goals, entering in the civilian political realm. Economically, former combatants step away from the economic provisions and guarantees that their combatant roles offered, to participate economically through lawful employment. This transition can be completed through formal means, with nationally or internationally supported reintegration programs. Certain combatants can also

self-reintegrate, through their personal means without the support of a formal program.

Reintegration is not a linear process and can be partial and reversible, as many combatants can oscillate between fighting and attempts at reintegration or reintegrate socially but not economically or politically (Torjesen, 2013). The extent to which a former combatant can reintegrate politically highly depends on the national government, the strength of institutions and democracy in the country, as well as the particular provisions of a DDR process or peace agreement.

A failed reintegration compromises the success of DDR and peace in a country, as “unmet needs can result in social unrest in communities and political instability at the national level” (Peace Operations Training Institute, 2017, p30). This is particularly relevant in places where weapons are as easily obtainable as in Colombia, partially caused by the United States’ policy transfer, which facilitates violence and the formation of armed groups. Considering the experience of FARC and their ability to hamper the state’s presence and actions, the reintegration of former combatants is particularly important for the security of the country. Just 20% of FARC dissidents would still form the biggest guerrilla in the country. The key actors for reintegration in Colombia are the Reintegration and Normalisation Agency created by the government of Colombia in 2016, the United Nations, the European Union and other NGOs, social leaders, communities and civil society groups.

Collective reintegration

A primary variable that makes Colombia and this particular peace process a rather unique case is the collective reintegration opted for by parties of the agreement. This collective emphasis was strongly pushed by FARC, given the nature of their insurgency and ideology. FARC refused the individual ‘neo-liberal blueprint’ of individual reintegration and prioritised

the existence of FARC as a social group and a collective throughout reintegration. Because of the collective aspect, it is referred to as reincorporation and not reintegration, as reflected in the renaming of the national agency for reincorporation. The FARC chose remote rural areas they mostly had connection with as designated reincorporation zones for the process to occur. These zones were the subjects of concern for the physical and wellbeing of former combatants from the first Kroc Institute report (2017), emphasising women's safety.

This approach made sense militarily, as an interviewee emphasised, as it would provide them with more safety, the possibility to hide and regroup quickly if DDR was to fail. Politically, it also would make the transition from guerrilla to political party easier, by safeguarding the group cohesion and dynamics (Hazen, 2005). However, economically and socially, it concentrated the group in remote rural areas with no access to basic infrastructure and services, mostly excluded from access to the economic market, as a base for economic reintegration. As Torjesen argues, economic reintegration should consider "formal economic assessments of growth, employment prospects and livelihood options" (2013, p6). However, the approach was based on the ideology of a guerrilla and not according to realistic economic assessment, which present a significant obstacle for its implementation. A particular source from the European Union emphasised on the delays caused by disagreements between collective and individual reintegration within the National Reincorporation Council during the first year. This approach also contradicts the economic trajectory of the country, which favours neo-liberalism. Moreover, this approach disregarded the potential wish of former combatants to return to their families. When the opportunity to return to their families presented itself, many combatants took it. An overestimation of group dynamics and the social capital of FARC led to a flawed assessment of how their social relations outside of the organisation would impact reintegration. It seems that in the Colombian case, families acted

as ‘pull’ factors motivating their departures from the camps (Torjesen, 2013, p6). A particular interview also mentioned that certain family members had moved in the reintegration zones with former combatants, thus affirming the importance of social relations outside of the faction during reincorporation.

This DDR process represents the first attempt of Colombia towards a collective reintegration with an unprecedented number of participants. However, as the reincorporation phase started, many combatants left the territorial spaces for training and reincorporation (ETCR) from 2017. The fast and widespread dispersion of combatants, who did not adhere or want to continue on the collective path, represents an obstacle in terms of reintegration, partly for programmatic reasons. It also weakens their networks and support system, leaving them more vulnerable socially and in terms of security (Hazen, 2005). These departures from the camp, as a result of the shortcomings of collective reintegration, dispersed numerous combatants and led to the lack of security protection. Since 2017, more than 200 hundred former combatants have been murdered, while only two cases took place within the designated zones for reincorporation. This failure of collective reintegration led to a security issue which today threatens the trust between parties and the success of the peace process itself (Segura, Stein, 2019).

Institutional Capacities

The peace process of 2016 is largely considered as very ambitious, especially for a country with a continuous history of weak governments and little state presence in many areas. From 2017, Kroc reports highlighted the risk of the peace agreement collapsing, due to the lack of implementation and the delay in providing former combatants with several services and basic infrastructures. This worry is reinforced by an interviewee mentioning the suspicion of FARC

members in 2017 that the government would provide them with the due zones for reincorporation. However, the creation of key institutions that would support the reintegration process were not created quickly enough, as supported by interview data and Kroc's 2017 report. In its second report, the Institute highlighted the need for 'structural transformations and deep-seated institution reform' for the implementation to occur (2019).

In 2020, as the progress of the implementation falls short of the stated objectives in the accords (Kroc, 2020; Rodeemos el Dialogo, 2020), it is worth looking at the institutional capability of the state to pinpoint the mechanisms that contributed to these shortcomings. The better inter-agency coordination necessary to provide both security and services in the reincorporation zones (Kroc Institute, 2019, p8) mentioned in 2017 has fallen short of expectations, as interviewees pinpointed. Indeed, the murders of social leaders and former combatants continue. Indeed, the implementation of the process represented an immense challenge for the country and its institutions, as it requires the integration of the country's biggest guerrilla after half a century of fighting. The armed group was principally located in areas with little state presence, which is where they mostly stayed during the reincorporation, further complicating the assistance of the state and its potentially effective presence.

For example, the agency states that the following will be available for former combatants: education, job training, support for productive projects and psycho-social support. However, these goals are particularly costly and ambitious, especially in terms of psycho-social support, when the capacities of the Colombian state are considered. For example, the lack of cooperation between public institutions strongly limits the ability of the government to provide more services, as mentioned during several interviews. The lack of presence of the government and institutions in rural areas also limits the access to former combatants and the delivery of services, particularly while considering how scattered former combatants now are

and the geography of the country which makes commuting particularly costly for organisations. The lack of safety in many areas around the reintegration zones further complicates the access and the movement of public servants working on DDR. As the reincorporation camps do not dispose of basic infrastructures and are so hard to reach, any new installation or reparation is particularly costly for the government and institutions. As most of the institutional capacity of the state was centred around individual reincorporation, this prompted the necessity for new institutional learning from a long-standing institution, logically delaying the implementation of several measures and programs.

Several interviews mentioned the lack of institutional capacities of the government and public institutions to effectively implement the process, specifically in rural areas. The ARN has largely been the institution in the country leading the reincorporation efforts. Despite partnerships with other institutions and the private sector (United Nations, 2020) only a third of projects benefitted from financial and technical support, testifying of limited institutional capacities. For example, in terms of education, there is limited effort from the Ministry of Education to provide more support to the reintegration of former combatants, as highlighted by an interviewee. The duration of the conflict further complicates the intervention necessary for reintegration, because “fighters have been at war for a number of years, some lack enough education that allows them to secure jobs that can reignite their careers” (Banholzer, 2013).

The lack of training for people in charge of providing formations in the camps were also highlighted. This is due to institutional weakness and the unwillingness of the current government to provide additional support and coordination between institutions. Thus, one institution with no previous experience of handling 13 000 former combatants had the task to reintegrate them in society, and collectively. In terms of implementing such DDR processes,

the state capacities, coalitions and coordination matter (Gutierrez Sanin, 2019). Moreover, the tracking of now mostly dispersed former combatants, and especially children, reveals a gap in the implementation of DDR worth nothing. The institutions currently in place do not have enough resources and capabilities to ensure a smooth and rapid access to reincorporation benefits, as several reports highlighted (Kroc, 2020, United Nations, 2020, European Union, 2019).

Programmatic flaws

The organisation and preparation of the point 3 of the peace agreement, the reintegration, failed to integrate the lessons of past programs. The learned lessons of previous programs point towards the importance of the strategies adopted by governments and multilateral agencies, in terms of the clarity, the objectives and the benchmarks, while considering the cultural, institutional and political barriers of each context (Muggah, 2005). The point of reintegration was rushed during the negotiation, due to nearing the end of Santos' presidential term. This tight political timeline posed a strain on the negotiations and prompted the quick overview of this phase. However, due to its complexity, long-term approach and many factors to consider, the phase would have needed much more preparation before and after the signature of the agreement. This resulted in a lack of details in terms of programming, benchmarks and detailed timelines, which in practice led to a lag between the laying down of the weapons phase and the start of reintegration activities, which played on the trust of former combatants in the process (United Nations, 2020).

The programmatic flaws are partially linked to the FARC's approach centred on a particular economic agenda for reincorporation, which does not match the economic reality of the country. This partially encouraged many members of FARC to leave reintegration camps and

seek opportunities in their former communities or cities, where they were left more vulnerable in terms of security. In 2019 already, the Kroc Institute warned that the “absence of a robust long-term reincorporation strategy that integrates the visions and considers the special needs of ex-combatants” (p9) fragilised the process of reincorporation. The early warning that these factors could lead to former fighters returning to armed violence was not adequately considered by the institutions involved, as testifies the call for a return to an armed struggle by FARC dissidents in August 2019.

This was again highlighted by the United Nations in 2020, as 9412 former combatants now reside outside of the official zones for reintegration, which considerably hampers the delivery of reincorporation service. From the evolution of this process, it can be concluded that these early warning were not addressed in programming. In terms of supported projects, “approximately 27% of accredited former combatants have received economic support for productive projects through these mechanisms” (United Nations, 2020). Only 1 in 4 ex-combatants benefits from one of these projects currently (Rodeemos El Dialogo, 2020). This results in almost 75% of former combatants not having received support for their projects, deeply contrasting with the benchmark for success at a 76% reincorporation rate. Programmatic flaws particularly affected women during the reintegration phase, especially in the reintegration camps where they cannot access all the due benefits and services.

A specific example gathered from an interview indicated the installation of a day care facility for women in a specific reintegration camp for women to be able to fulfil their roles in the reintegration process. However, these day cares did not have staff, leading to no tangible benefit for women and severely limiting their participation in the post-conflict process. If these flaws extend to many reintegration camps in the country, this could lead to a severe

limitation of women's participation in DDR, which represents a security risk in the long-term (Theidon, 2009). As the role of women is guaranteed in the peace process but implementation on gender provision is lacking (Kroc Institute, 2018). In its first report, the Kroc Institute (2017) highlighted the lack of women representatives in key reincorporation institutions. This echoes with an interviewee mentioning the significant gap between the role of women in theory and in practice. More than a third of FARC members were women and they consider the organisation to consider gender equality in a far more advanced manner than the society as a whole (Gutiérrez Sanín, Carranza Franco, 2017). A failure to include women in DDR accordingly results in long-term security risks and the potential disfranchising of women from the agreement.

Another issue lies within the reincorporation route for minors seems to be an example of programmatic failure during this DDR process. A differential pathway to reincorporation was adopted for the 135 minors declared as members of FARC by the organisation. Firstly, it is important to point out the widespread use of minors by FARC, which makes this available figure rather suspicious. The will of the organisation to avoid prosecution for recruiting minors potentially deprived hundreds, and maybe thousands, of minors to access reincorporation benefits. This represents a significant security risk in the long-term, which the failures of the differential pathway only reinforce per its lack of resources and shortcomings. Several interviewees mentioned this program as problematic, due to its several shortcomings, lack of resources and lack of tracking. The overall lack of cooperation between institutions severely impacts the education options of these youths. These shortcomings that affect women and the youth disproportionately are cited widely among the literature as critical shortcomings of DDR programs (Theidon, 2009, Muggah, 2015, Nussio, 2012). These programmatic flaws mentioned in this section participated greatly to the departure of

former combatants from reincorporation areas, strengthened the internal divisions and the dissident group of FARC and led to security and economic issues that are threatening the reincorporation of former combatants today.

Lack of political will

Despite an initial strong will from both the government and FARC to commit to the peace agreement and its implementation, it is fair to conclude that this has not been a constant since the start of the implementation. Internal divisions amongst FARC leadership impacted the collective's commitment to reintegration. In September 2017, Timochenko was elected president of the FARC newly formed political party. Iván Márquez, another leading figure of FARC was also a candidate for the command of the organisation while still a guerrilla. He was a very popular figure among FARC, earning more votes than Timochenko in the elections of September 2017 and was more critical of the peace process (InsightCrime, 2019). Márquez took arms again in August 2019 and encouraged others to join him and other commanders in an armed struggle again. In January 2020, it was revealed that two key leaders of the party, Ivan Márquez and Jesús Santrich, plotted to assassinate Timochenko (Rodeemos El Dialogo, 2019). However, the will to pursue the peace agreement from former combatants is still tangible and strong. On the government's part, the current President Duque ran on a political platform of opposition to the peace agreement, which affected the trust between both parties (Kroc Institute, 2019). Moreover, the institutional weakness previously mentioned links not only to the long-standing weakness of the Colombian government and its institutions, particularly in the judiciary field, but to its lack of presence in rural areas.

The current militarisation and lack of development opted by the current government, particularly in rural areas, represents a lack of commitment towards the peace process and

contradicts the purpose of the agreement. Several third-party reports from NGOs and civil society groups (Latin America Working Group, 2017; Rodeemos el Dialogo, 2020) highlights the lack of implementation, which sometimes contrasts with but does not contradict, the official reports from all analysed institutions. Once again, it seems that the intervention, facilitation and investment of the United Nations and the European Union (2016) to support the peace process has been a key mitigating factor of this lack of trust and will. For centuries, the central government of Colombia lacked complete control over its territory, which favoured guerrillas, criminal economies and paramilitary groups. The election of President Duque and the beginning of his term in August 2018 was a turning point in the DDR process. Indeed, this candidate aligning with the politics of former president Uribe, ran on a platform opposing the peace process and negotiations with armed groups. His election enhanced a climate of distrust and suspicion from not only former combatants but also members of the civil society.

These suspicions have been since deepened by some governmental decisions to defund several measures agreed in the peace process (Rodeemos el Dialogo, 2020). The disarmament of former FARC combatants left a security vacuum in all the territories they used to control, and former held territory became the subject of disputes between armed groups fighting for control after 2017, as emphasised by almost all interviewers. In 2018, forced displacement rose considerably, with official figures estimating around 13,447 displacements in the first half of 2018 (UNHCR, 2018). This echoes to previous work pointing towards the renewal of fresh violence as a result of competition between groups after disarmaments (Muggah, 2009; Guha-Sapir, 2002b). 2019 was the deadliest year for former combatants, with 77 killed, 10 forced disappearances and 30 murder attempts. as highlighted in the UN's Verification Mission annual report (2019).

The recent commitment of the Colombian government to resume the fumigation of coca crops with the herbicide glyphosate not only contradicts the measures agreed upon in the peace agreement but represents a significant obstacle to reintegration by the problems of poverty, displacement and violence it creates (New York Times, 2020). This echoes with the Plan Colombia bill and the actions previous governments in terms of coca eradication, which fuelled displacement, poverty and violence in the past. Nothing indicates that the widespread fumigation of coca crops would lead to different results this time.

Moreover, first-hand data gathered during interviews with a relevant actor mentioned the politicisation of the war on drugs, with support from the United States, which led to several arrest warrants against former FARC commanders. As supported by other interviewees, these policies and limitations ensuing from the war on drugs prevented combatants to access their reincorporation benefits and politicised the process, deteriorating trust between parties. This partially caused several high-ranking figures from FARC to leave the peace process. Other former FARC commanders called for the return to an armed fight in August 2019, citing the shortcomings of the government. The prioritisation of the political agenda for FARC and their naivety in regard to the areas of reincorporation they chose led to internal divisions, as many combatants do not feel represented or protected by FARC leadership. Given the current spread of the Covid19 pandemic and the concerning economic situation in Colombia, it is possible that these factors will further deteriorate the factor of political will towards the agreement in the country and deepen grievances.

The Access to Land

The FARC originally argued towards a redistributive agrarian agenda, promoting the distribution of land to farmers and peasants, which was not adopted by the final peace agreement. Instead, a non-distributional agrarian reform was opted by both parties, which did not deflate political conflict more broadly in the country. As apparent from Colombia's history, the issue of land has always been the subject of conflict, divide, and fuels violence to this day. The ongoing reintegration of former combatants intersects directly with the section 4 of the peace agreement, which is the substitution of illicit crops. Indeed, criminal economies can dominate in places such as Colombia where the informal economy is predominant and around half of the land in the country is not properly and formally registered, as emphasised on by sources during interviews. This significant limitation leaves half the country's territory up for grabs, illicit activities and encourages a security vacuum for armed groups to compete over.

These two concerns highlight the need to address criminal economies and the access to land more broadly for these factors not to spoil the reintegration process. This directly impacts DDR and its success by determining the spaces in which economic opportunities are located and their scope, which can discourage or encourage violence. The Kroc Institute highlighted in 2019 in its second report that no strategy was in place for former combatants to access the land they needed (p9). As mentioned by some interviewees, former FARC combatants did not obtain an advantageous reintegration package shortly after the disarmament period, and in many cases still did not receive what promised to them in terms of opportunities. This is partly due to the model of reintegration that the FARC pushed, based on collective project and agriculture, which failed to address how they would obtain the land necessary for their economic projects. This limited the institutional capacities of the Agency for Reintegration

and Normalisation to obtain land for former combatants. To this day, no plots have been allocated (United Nations, 2020, p4). The ongoing violence in rural areas also leaves former combatants more vulnerable. The United Nations stated in 2020 that “communities across Colombia continue to be affected by the violence stemming from illegal economic activities” (2020). As many left the territorial areas for training and reintegration, this further delays their access to reintegration measures and deepen the security risks they face.

A strategy that would consolidate the territorial areas and facilitate the access to land has yet to be considered by the National Reintegration Council (United Nations, 2020), further delaying necessary progress and prompting the discontent of former combatants. A programmatic flaw in terms of reintegration lays in the lack of preparation, detailed benchmarks and timelines towards the consolidation of former territorial areas. The lack of resources to achieve such measures are also highlighted by reports (United Nations, 2020; Kroc Institute, 2020). Interviews from the European Union confirmed this worry which significantly hampers the process and links to the history of Colombia on conflicts over land. The failure of the government to deliver on agrarian reforms is an illustration of the broader historical antagonism and opposition between urban and rural areas in the country, which translates today into a severe shortcoming of this peace process and reincorporation attempt. When FARC dissidents cited the shortcomings of the Colombian government in August 2019 to justify a return to an armed insurgency, the non-application of the state’s engagement was mentioned, which included the question of land.

Spoilers: Illegal Economies, the United States, Regional Dynamics

It is essential to consider the role of spoilers while analysing this DDR process. Indeed, several key actors act as spoilers during the implementation of the peace process.

1) *Illegal economies*

The issue of illegal economy is central to both the economy and the peace process in Colombia, with a direct effect in reintegration. I will here focus on the issue of illicit crops and of illegal mining. Both of these activities fuelled the production of drugs and the fighting between armed groups fighting for control of both lands and their exploitation for decades. Since 2017, the disarmament of FARC led to a security vacuum in the areas they used to control, as explained in UN, Kroc reports and several interviews. In 2017 already, the Kroc Institute reported on the “various armed groups, criminal gangs, successors of paramilitary groups, the ELN and dissident element of FARC” (Kroc Institute, 2019, p8) fighting for control in areas previously controlled by the group. The year of 2018 marked a turning point in the national discourse around illicit crops. The previous president, Santos, favoured crop-substitution programs to shift the economic activity from coca production to other legal activities. However, the election of President Duque and his agenda aligning with the United States’ war on drugs shifted the discourse from these crop-substitution programs to forced eradication programs which include the fumigation of coca fields.

Secondly, the violence stemming from illicit economic activities, whether drug trafficking or illegal mining, leaves former combatants themselves more vulnerable to this violence and more likely to turn to the informal economy if reintegration packages do not address their needs. As highlighted by the Kroc Institute in 2019, “a lack of viable options for effective civilian reincorporation of ex-combatants in a context of incentives for illegality could undermine the peace process” (p8). These limitations are inherent to the Colombian case, the history and economy of the country. The prospects offered by the criminal economies and the initial location of the reintegration seems to greatly affect the economic reintegration

trajectory of former combatants, which is reinforced by the programmatic flaws previously mentioned, and the lack of strategy. As several left the reintegration camps to seek individual opportunities, many may have returned to criminal economies such as drug trafficking and illegal mining, as some interviewers have confirmed. This echoes with the literature supporting that the skills gained by combatants during war-time activities need to be considered (Keen, 2000) as they are not always integrated within programming or future opportunities, being considered either victims or criminals. However, the skills of former combatants are very suitable to criminal economies rather the regular one, particularly given the activities FARC engaged in.

The gap between the economic reintegration strategy and the economic reality of the country can be filled by criminal economies which provide economic opportunities and most former combatants are suitable for. Moreover, a group of around 2300 FARC dissidents, which count former members that never participated in the process or left it, and new recruits, actively participate in drug trafficking and illegal mining (Colombian Military Intelligence). Many groups involved in criminal economies are targeting citizens and civil society members supporting the peace process and the voluntary substitution of coca crops as per agreed in the accords. It is estimated by the Special Investigation Unit, greatly supported by the European Union, that “80% of attacks against ex-combatants are linked to criminal organisations” (European Union, 2019). The deaths and disappearance of hundreds of social leaders and human rights activists since the signature of the peace agreement is considered by the European Union as the biggest worry and challenge to the peace process and to reincorporation. As long as the state will not provide security guarantees for ex-combatants and social leaders and complete several land reforms to diminish the capacities of criminal groups, such alarming human rights violations will continue. These murders are also

denounced by all NGOs and international organisations involved as a significant obstacle to the peace process and the reintegration of former combatants (European Union, 2019, United Nations, 2020; Kroc Institute, 2020; Rodeemos el Dialogo, 2020).

2) The United States

As outlined before, Colombia has traditionally been in the United States sphere of influence and is its main partner in South America. The enforcement of neoliberalism by the United States in Colombia through diverse agreements and political influence creates this ‘liberal blueprint’ that considerably limits the land reforms, agrarian changes and social consideration that would directly address the FARC’s revindications (LeGrand, Van Isschot, Riaño-Alcalá, 2017). The lack of these progressive provisions in the peace accords directly impacted the reincorporation process. Despite a good degree of unity internationally and at the Security Council on the support to the peace process, as confirmed by interviews, the bilateral relations between Colombia and the United States do not lead towards the respect of accords. Ivan Marquez, while expending on the reasons to return to an armed insurgency, was denouncing the judiciary ‘montages’ taking place in the Colombia. An interviewee emphasised on the politicisation of the accords in Colombia, pushed in part by the United States’ war on drugs. Indeed, several leading FARC figures were targeted by the special prosecution office in Colombia and the United States for drug charges, which antagonised some FARC figures from the process.

Moreover, the United States’ recent pressure on the Colombian government to restart the fumigation of coca fields, to fulfil its own war on drugs, clashes directly with the peace process and the efforts accomplished in the past three years (WOLA, 2019). However, interviewees have cited international pressure and in particular the EU and the UN’s

involvement as a counterbalancing force of the United States' policies in the country, which benefitted the process and pressured the government to pursue its implementation. For example, as the United States considers former combatants as terrorists, the financial support accorded to Colombia does not support any reincorporation efforts and is centred around military cooperation. The United States' agenda in Colombia shifted from supporting peace to a stronger support of military action and the war on drugs, given the current political dynamics of both countries, led by conservative right-wing figures.

3) Regional Dynamics

This DDR process was not only ambitious on a national level, but also on a regional and international level. As Mr Eamon Gilmore, the former EU Special Envoy for Peace in Colombia stated in an interview: “this peace process is the most comprehensive peace process in the world of the 21st century”. Indeed, it contributed a significant advancement not only for the country itself but for Latin America. Multinational companies and criminal groups do not have an interest in agrarian reforms succeeding, as this would limit their land ownership and power in the country (Garzón-Vergara, 2015). Indeed, a peaceful and advancement towards a unified democracy on the whole territory of Colombia would harm their economic interests. Regional dynamics must be considered while tracing the evolution of this process (Jenne, 2010). Indeed, the current crisis in Venezuela has impacted DDR by providing further instability, economic challenges and further strain on governmental capacities. Venezuela was the nation where the FARC had an official political representation and the country was a safe place for the organisation (Martínez, 2017). A safe heaven across the border can contribute to the preservation of the strategic command of FARC dissidents, even if they only represent a very small faction of the previous organisation. This can hamper the process while being outside of the spectrum of accountability. Currently, the border

between Venezuela and Colombia represents a significant base for all armed groups, FARC dissidents and the ELN. The policy of regime change of the US towards Venezuela will also have a snowballing effect on stability and peace in Colombia if it came to succeed. Through the sanctions imposed on the country, the issues of poverty and displacement in Venezuela will keep increasing, thus potentially destabilising Colombia and weakening the borders further by harbouring and providing an environment enabling the rise of armed group

Chapter 3 – Conclusion

Despite the peace agreement signed in 2016 in Colombia between the central government and the FARC being hailed as the most comprehensive peace agreement in the world, the implementation points towards significant obstacles. As the implementation is currently at a crucial point, it is essential to highlight the current challenges, understand the mechanisms at play in an inclusive manner. From interviews and reports of three key actors, the United Nations, the European Union and the Kroc Institute, this research gathers and analyses data to gain a holistic view of DDR in Colombia. The disarmament and demobilisation phases are definite successes, with the political will of FARC, the success of a tripartite system and the crucial role of the United Nations are advanced as key variables of its success. However, the reincorporation phase, while being crucial to the success of DDR, is encountering serious challenges. Indeed, this research highlights how the history of the country and the nature of its economy shaped the reincorporation trajectory and the variables hampering the process. Programmatic flaws, a flawed assessment of collective reincorporation, as well as clashes in visions, a lack of trust between parties, the question of the access to land and the role of spoilers are all variables that shaped the process to its current state. Indeed, the question of land links intimately the question of reincorporation with the point 1 of the peace agreement, which represents its biggest challenge and is inherent to the history of the country. While considering the role of spoilers in DDR in Colombia, actors and dynamics emerge at both the international, regional and international level. Indeed, nationally, the illegal economies and other armed groups represent a significant obstacle that both anticize former combatants and threaten their security. Secondly, regionally, the current crisis in Venezuela poses a challenge to DDR in Colombia by the strains imposed on the country through the flow of refugees, a first for Colombia. The instability at the border and the harbouring of

FARC dissidents by Venezuela also represent challenges fragilising border areas and preserving the structure of a dissident FARC faction. Internationally, the role of the United States in Colombia has been historically centred around militarisation, the push for neoliberal policies and the war on drugs. These factors operating at different level are taking the roles of spoilers in this process and represent further obstacles to be considered. The current covid19 crisis represents a significant threat by emphasising the strain already present through all these variables and per the economic damage it will inflict on the country. While this research has been limited by a lack of time and the cancellation of field research, the model of research for a holistic understanding and the collection of first-hand data improves the understanding and provide explanations for the current state of DDR in Colombia. This thesis is opening pathways for future researches, to explore further the variables within FARC that impact the trajectories of DDR, more localised researches on DDR trajectories or the variables over time that affect the combatants' experiences with the process.

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