

EXPLAINING THE VARIATION OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE:  
A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE COLOMBIAN CASE

by

LAURA ALBARRACIN

A thesis submitted to the

Graduate School-New Brunswick

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

Graduate Program in Political Science

written under the direction of

Prof. Alvin B. Tillery

and approved by

---

---

---

New Brunswick, New Jersey

May, 2012

## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Explaining the Variation of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: a Comparative

Assessment of the Colombian Case

By LAURA ALBARRACIN

Thesis Director:  
Prof. Alvin B. Tillery

Wartime sexual violence belongs to one of the most horrific aspects of modern warfare. However, unlike much of the literature until the early 2000s suggested, it is not a ubiquitous element of war. The prevalence of sexual violence varies not only across conflicts but also within them. This thesis analyzes the variation of conflict-related sexual violence through a comparison of two Colombian armed groups, the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) and the United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC). Drawing from theories that link the organizational structures of armed groups to their violence repertoires, it examines the importance of group norms, the gendered composition of armed groups and the effectiveness of command and control structures to explain the variation of conflict-related violence in the Colombian conflict. The findings suggest that the combination of group norms banning the sexual victimization of civilians, high levels of female participation and strict command and control account for the relative absence of sexual violence from the FARC's violence repertoire. On the other hand, the absence of group wide norms coupled with weak hierarchical and disciplinary strength explains the high levels of sexual abuse perpetrated by the AUC.

## Acknowledgement

First and foremost I offer my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor, Al Tillery, who has supported me throughout my thesis with his patience and knowledge whilst allowing me the room to work in my own way. For their most helpful comments I would also like to thank Paul Poast, Roy Licklider, Sebastian Kupferschmid, Arielle Bennett and Juan G. Albarracin. I would also like to gratefully acknowledge the generous funding and support I received from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the University of Konstanz and Rutgers University. For any errors or inadequacies that may remain in this work the responsibility is, of course, entirely my own.

## Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgement</i> .....	iii
<i>List of tables</i> .....	v
1. Introduction .....	1
2. Literature Review .....	3
2.1 Militarized masculinities.....	3
2.2 Sexual violence as a strategic weapon of war.....	7
2.3 Variations in wartime sexual violence.....	10
3. Variation of Wartime Sexual Violence: A Theoretical Framework.....	16
4. Research Design .....	22
4.1 Method of data analysis and case selection.....	22
4.2 Variable operationalization and measurement.....	29
5. Variation of wartime sexual violence: the FARC and the AUC compared .....	32
5.1 The FARC.....	33
5.2 The AUC.....	36
5.3 Variation of Sexual Violence in the Colombian Conflict.....	39
5.4 Norms related to sexual violence.....	44
5.5 Female combatants.....	48
5.6 Command and control structures .....	53
5.7 Findings compared.....	57
6. Conclusion.....	60
<i>Bibliography</i> .....	62

## List of tables

5.1 Summary of Sources Documenting the Prevalence of Sexual Violence.....	41
---	----

## **1. Introduction**

The use of sexual violence is arguably one of the most horrifying and least understood aspects of modern warfare. Following the genocide in Rwanda in 1995 and the ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia 1992-95 there was an upsurge in scholarly efforts to understand the complex relationship between sexual violence and war. The focus on the documentation of high profile cases led to an understanding of sexual violence as a weapon of strategic warfare and, therefore, as an inevitable outcome of war. However, as Wood (2009: 132) rightly noted in one of the most recent influential works in this field, “the frequency of rape of civilians and other forms of sexual violence varies dramatically across conflicts, armed groups within conflict, and units within armed groups”. Therefore, if sexual violence is not a ubiquitous feature of war, what factors explain its variation in armed conflict?

Following a wider trend in the civil war literature that focuses on how the organizational characteristics of armed groups influence the logic of violence in civil wars, particularly its use against civilians, recent literature draws on the organizational roots of sexual violence to explain the variation in its use across and within conflicts. Recent theoretical contributions by Wood (2006), for example, link the differences in group norms, the gendered composition of armed groups and the effectiveness of their command and control structures to the decision to promote (or prohibit) sexual violence and the ability to enforce such a strategy. However, despite the conceptual richness of these contributions, empirically, this field of research is still at an infant stage.

Given the need for more rigorous comparative testing, this thesis analyzes the variation of conflict-related sexual violence through a within-conflict comparison of two Colombian armed groups, the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC) and the United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, AUC). In a landmark report, special UN rapporteur on violence against women, Radhika Coomaraswamy, concluded that “violence against women, particularly sexual violence by armed groups, has become a common practice within the context of a slowly degrading conflict” (Coomaraswamy 2002). Since the release of the report in 2002 the problem of wartime sexual violence in Colombia has received increased international attention.

Interestingly, however, while the reported levels of sexual violence perpetrated by the FARC are low, the AUC is well known for the widespread use of wartime rape. The variation across conflict actors offers a unique opportunity for a rigorous test of the proposed hypotheses, while at the same controlling for potential alternative explanations of wartime sexual violence such as the importance of cultural norms.

The remainder of this thesis proceeds as follows. In the following section I will review the literature on conflict-related sexual violence. This will be the basis for the theoretical framework presented in section three. In section four I will more thoroughly discuss the methods of analysis and the criteria of case selection. The cases of the FARC and the AUC will be compared in section five. This will be followed by a discussion of the findings and some concluding remarks.

## **2. Literature Review**

Starting in the 1970s there has been growing academic interest in understanding the causes of wartime sexual violence. Initial contributions to the literature view sexual violence as a consequence of militarized masculinities. Subsequently, much of the focus shifted to the high-profile cases of wartime rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda, leading to theories that poise sexual violence as a strategic weapon of (ethnic) warfare. These theories emphasize sexual violence as a pervasive feature of all conflicts. More recent literature departs from this claim focusing on the variation of sexual violence across and within conflicts and focusing on how the organizational characteristics of armed groups influence the logic of this form of violence in civil wars. This literature will be discussed in the following.

### **2.1 Militarized masculinities**

The first theme in the literature analyses the link between militarized masculinities and wartime sexual violence. Within this vein of research, rape is viewed both as a reflection of underlying patriarchal hierarchies between men and women as well as a means to reinforce those roles. War, understood as the disruption of the social processes that regulate (sexual) aggression, generates an opportunity to bring to the surface men's underlying "cultural" hatred for women.

In her 1975 seminal piece, Brownmiller, for example, argues for a predisposition among men toward sexual aggression stemming from a general disregard for the bodily integrity of women. Rather than a sexually motivated act, Brownmiller views rape as an instrument of domination employed to keep women in a constant state of fear and



intimidation (Brownmiller 1975: 5). During war, dominant discourses of masculinity are reinforced by the very maleness of the military, the power of weaponry, the bonding of men at arms and the logic of hierarchical commands. War, accordingly, “provides men with the perfect psychologic backdrop to give vent to their contempt for women” (Ibid: 24). Rooted in socio-biological theory, Brownmiller therefore suggests that when given the possibility to rape, men will do it.

Seifert (1994) concurs with Brownmiller’s assessment and argues that wartime rape has to be understood against the backdrop of the social and cultural context in which it occurs. In war, rape results from the elevation of aggressive masculinity, which is reinforced by the military practice of fusing deeply entrenched cultural ideas of male domination with a soldier’s essence (Ibid: 59). For Seifert, “in the perpetrator’s psyche [rape] serves no sexual purpose but is the expression of rage, violence and dominance over a woman” (Ibid: 55). Similarly, Card (1996) argues that cross-culturally wartime rape is an instrument for women’s domestication that communicates, produces and maintains male dominance. War increases the vulnerability of women making them an easy target of the message of male domination (Ibid: 11).

Sanday (1981), while maintaining that rape is an expression of cultural forces, calls for a more nuanced examination of the social mechanisms that regulate aggressive social behavior. Drawing from the comparison of 95 societies, Sanday observes that the incidence of rape varies cross-culturally and that societies with a high-incidence of rape (*rape prone societies*) are embedded in distinguishably different cultural configurations than societies with a low incidence of rape (*rape free societies*) (Sanday 1981: 6). The socio-cultural correlates of rape are high levels of interpersonal violence, the presence of

an ideology which encourages males to be tough and aggressive and frequent or endemic warfare (Ibid: 24). Sanday therefore highlights the variation in the incidence of rape across societies and departs from the view that rape is inevitable across time and space.

Evolutionary psychologists Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer (2000) argue against cultural explanations that detach rape from ideas of human sexuality. In their view, male propensity to rape does not stem from deeply rooted patriarchal hierarchies but from a reproduction-specific male genetic adaptation. This genetic predisposition is selected for because men who lack alternative reproductive options have a better chance of reproducing if they rape vulnerable women than otherwise (Thornhill and Palmer 2000: 67). Rape is expected to occur when the reproductive benefits of the act exceed its potential costs (owing to some probability of resistance, injury or punishment). War, they argue, creates a permissive environment for rape: the excessive vulnerability of women during war and the improbability of being punished lowers the costs for rape-predisposed males (Ibid: 134). Rather than a tool for political domination, wartime rape is in their view, essentially a sexually motivated act.<sup>1</sup> Wood (2006: 322), however, questions this claim arguing that a universal male propensity for rape based on reproductive success cannot account for the raping of girls under reproductive age and elderly women. Moreover, it cannot explain the brutality with which acts of sexual aggression are often committed.

In a more recent contribution to the literature, Baaz and Stern (2008, 2009) bridge the debate between cultural and biological explanations of wartime rape. In their analysis

---

<sup>1</sup> Other biological explanations include the “testosterone argument” that establishes that the male hormone testosterone is responsible for higher levels of aggression. However, this relationship is complex and it is still unclear why aggression should necessarily take a sexual form (Wood 2006: 324). Moreover, if wars are understood as collective social processes, then it is difficult to equate the prevalence of wartime sexual

of government soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo they find that soldiers explicitly link their rationale for rape with their inability to fulfill certain idealized notions of manhood (Baaz and Stern 2009: 497). The internalized ideal of heterosexual masculinity simultaneously requires soldiers to be economic providers for their families as well as sexually potent fighters. Ideas of male power are therefore intermingled with sexual need and desire.

Within the constraints of generalized poverty in the DRC soldiers compensate their inability to fulfill their role as providers through sexual aggression. One of the interviewees states: “a soldier, if he has no possibilities, no money so that he can go the normal way [...] if he has nothing in his pocket, he cannot eat or drink his coke, he has nothing to give to a woman—he will take her by force [...] Physically, men have needs” (Ibid: 509). Therefore, as Baaz and Stern (2009: 514) suggest, “[through] the act of rape several key components of both the provider and the fighter are realized: the sexual relief “‘necessary’” for the *fighter* is achieved, and the dominance and the heterosexuality of the *provider* is experienced, however temporarily”.

Contributions to the literature on wartime sexual violence based on ideas of militarized masculinity have been broadly criticized. Skjelsbæk (2001: 218), for example, argues that exponents of ideas of militarized masculinity propose a theory of men as essentially sexually aggressive. Understanding masculine nature as static and unchangeable has led to reductionist and deterministic explanations that view sexual violence as an unavoidable aspect of warring. Sanday’s (1981) analysis is a noticeable exception. By examining the prevalence of rape across societies she is able to show that

---

violence with “the sum total of a couple of hundred thousand genetic predispositions for aggressiveness” (Seifert 1996: 36).

discourses about predominant masculinities vary cross-culturally and with them too varies the prevalence of rape. It is important to note, however, that the focus of Sanday's analysis lies in explaining variations in the peacetime rates of rape.

Furthermore, conceptualizations based on the idea of militarized masculinities assume that *all women* in war zones are equally prone to sexual violence. This assumption fails to recognize the intersection of gender with ethnic, religious, and political power relations which potentially make some groups of women more vulnerable than others (Skjelsbæk 2001: 223). Similarly, by conceptualizing rape as an instrument of dominance of all men against all women, these theoretical contributions cannot explain instances in which men become the victims of wartime rape<sup>2</sup> (Agirre Aranburu 2010: 862; Skjelsbæk 2001: 218). Work by Zarkov (1997) and Sivakumaran (2007) refutes this claim, arguing that if masculinity is broadly understood in terms of power, then the rape of men serves the purpose of empowering the perpetrator by reinforcing his masculinity while at the same time emasculating and feminizing the victim.

## **2.2 Sexual violence as a strategic weapon of war**

A second generation of literature on wartime sexual violence emerged during the 1990s in reaction to the genocides in Rwanda in 1994 and the former Yugoslavia in 1992-1995. The visibility of the sexual crimes in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina led to an upsurge of scholarly publications as well as human rights reports struggling to understand the endemic nature of this form of violence in the context of these two wars.

---

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the issue of male sexual abuse in conflict see Carpenter (2006) and Sivakumaran (2007, 2010). Sivakumaran (2007), for example, presents evidence that suggests that male sexual abuse in armed conflict is more prevalent than is generally reported. She argues that attention to the issue of male sexual abuse dispels the reductionist idea that places women solely as the victims and men as the perpetrators of sexual crimes and can lead to a reevaluation of gender roles in conflict.

The general tenor of these publications, as Skjelsbæk (2001: 213) finds in her extensive review of 140 publications, is that the use of sexual violence was “too widespread, too frequent, and seemingly too calculated for it not to be part of larger political scheme and hence a weapon of war”.

This view is mirrored in the 1995 Human Rights Watch Global Report on Women’s Human Rights which states that “[r]ape in conflict under repressive regimes is neither incidental nor private. It routinely serves a strategic function and acts as a tool for achieving specific military and political objectives” (HRW 1995: 2). These objectives include the destruction of specific group based ethnic or religious identities. Sexual crimes are therefore understood as a strategy of warfare; the consequence of conscious policy decisions as opposed to some anthropological or biological given.

Seifert (1996) argues that rape must be considered a central strategy of Serbian warfare aimed at the destruction of their opponent’s culture. The targeting of women who are the ‘glue’ that holds families and communities together leads to the dissolution of entire groups and affects overall cultural cohesion. For Seifert (1996: 39), “[t]he rape of women of a community, culture, or nation can be regarded – and is so regarded – as a symbolic rape of the body of that community”. In his analysis of the Rwandan genocide, Mullins’ (2009: 731) also finds that the Hutus engaged in widespread sexual violence as a way of adding socio-cultural insult to the persecution of the Tutsis. Rape can therefore be seen “as a way to tarnish the reputation and memory of a people before killing them of – ensuring that not only are the final experiences of the population horrible by nature, but the way in which they are remembered by others is also fixed on those moments”.

Other scholars have emphasized the use of sexual violence in genocidal campaigns as a way of targeting women's life giving capacities. Stiglmeier (1994), for example, uncovers the brutal patterns of sexual violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina through her analysis of extensive anecdotal evidence and victim reports. Based on these accounts she concludes that rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina took place at a large scale (in villages, brothels and rape camps) and was instrumental to a strategy of ethnic cleansing that targeted women's reproductive capacities. This concurs with Allen's (1996: 100) claim that the Serbs followed a policy of genocidal rape aimed at enforced pregnancy. This policy, she argues, was "founded in the negation of all cultural identities of its victims, reducing those victims to mere sexual containers". This resonates with MacKinnon's (1994: 191) assessment of rape as a policy of ethnic conquest through forced impregnation. Muslim and Croatian women were raped and then denied abortions as part of an effort to "help make a Serbian state by making Serbian babies".

The view that rape can be seen as an element of genocide led to important reconfigurations of international legal conceptualizations of wartime rape and set the basis for establishing the systematic use of rape in war as a crime in its own right (Farwell 2004: 391). The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda "underscored the fact that rape and sexual violence also constitute genocide in the same way as any other act, as long as they were committed with the intent to destroy a particular group targeted as such" (cited in Skjelsbæk 2001: 221). Similarly, Resolution 1820 of the United Nations Security Council recognizes sexual violence against women and girls in conflict as a "tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instill fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group" (UN Security Council 2008).

Copelon (1994: 205) problematizes the idea of genocidal rape arguing that “to exaggerate the distinctiveness of genocidal rape obscures the atrocity of common rape”. The extreme focus on ethnicity fails to recognize the gravity of this crime for women raped in different contexts and loses sight of the gender dimension of rape (Buss 2009: 163; Copelon 1994: 214). Similarly, it is argued that the Security Council’s definition of wartime rape as a ‘tactic’ of war obscures many other forms of widespread rape in war (Izikoğlu and Millard 2010: 19). From a methodological perspective Leiby (2009: 447) also argues that the exclusive focus on two high profile cases “has resulted in mono-causal theories that focus narrowly on the ethnic identity of the victim(s), conceptualizing sexual violence (with particular emphasis upon forced impregnation) as ethnic violence perpetrated during campaigns of ethnic cleansing or genocide”.

The analysis of sexual violence as a weapon of war expanded the analytical focus on wartime sexual violence by recognizing that besides their gender, women are singled out because they embody other ethnic or religious identities. However, the types of explanations stemming from this literature are equally partial and deterministic: wartime rape is no longer viewed as an inevitable outcome of war but rather an inevitable strategy of warfare.

### **2.3 Variations in wartime sexual violence**

Following a wider trend in the civil war literature that comparatively seeks to understand the logic of violence against civilian populations in modern civil warfare (Kalyvas 2006, Weinstein 2007), recent literature on wartime rape examines patterns of this form of civilian victimization across a wider range of cases.

In one of the first comparative analyses Wood (2006) looks at the patterns of wartime sexual violence in eight different conflicts and establishes that the frequency of rape and other forms of sexual violence varies dramatically across and within conflicts. Drawing from secondary literature and human rights reports she finds that while there was a high prevalence of wartime rape in World War II, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sierra Leone and Vietnam, in other cases such as Sri Lanka and Israel/Palestine the use of sexual violence is extremely limited. Wood (2006: 319) states:

Sexual violence in these cases appears to vary substantially in prevalence; in form; in who is targeted (all women, girls and men as well as women, or particular persons, perhaps members of an ethnic out-group); in whether it is exercised by combatants from a single party or more generally; whether it is pursued as a strategy of war; where it occurs (in detention, at home, or in public); in duration; whether it is carried out by a single perpetrator or by a group; whether victims are killed afterward; and whether its incidence varies with other forms of violence against civilians or occurs in a distinct pattern.

Subsequent comparative studies have confirmed this variation in patterns of sexual violence. Leiby (2009), for example, looks at two previously understudied cases – Guatemala and Peru – and concludes that across and within conflicts sexual violence can serve different functions. She therefore distances herself from previous literature that has overemphasized the use of sexual violence as an instrument of ethnic warfare (Leiby 2009: 447).

According to Leiby there are two major explanations on the purpose that sexual violence serves in war: the opportunistic and strategic explanations. Opportunistic explanations claim that sexual violence is perpetrated by out-of-control soldiers who use sexual violence for personal gain. This is possible because of the information asymmetry postulated by principal-agent theory according to which commanders lack information about their agents' behavior. This asymmetry is particularly acute in wartime scenarios in



which “conditions of anonymity and permissiveness that allow individuals to pursue their private interests without fear of detection or retribution” prevail (Ibid: 448).

Strategic explanations, on the other hand, argue that the use of sexual violence serves an instrumental purpose for armed groups and as such is promoted (or at least tolerated) by the principals. Within this framework, the purpose of sexual violence is manifold: it can serve as an instrument of generalized terror against civilians, it can be used as an instrument of targeted repression against the opposition, and finally, when the targeted opposition belongs to a particular ethnic group, it may also be employed as an instrument of ethnic cleansing (Ibid: 449-451).

For her analysis of the Peruvian and Guatemalan cases Leiby draws data from the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions’ reports and creates an event data set in which she codes individual observations of reported sexual violations with regard to the form they take and the context in which they are perpetrated. She finds that in Peru sexual violence was targeted mostly against detained insurgents in state-controlled facilities, lending support to the strategic explanation that views sexual violence as an instrument for targeted repression. In Guatemala, on the other hand, there is evidence of indiscriminate use of sexual violence against the civilian population mostly during community raids and massacres. In both cases, while it is possible to identify victims belonging to indigenous groups, Leiby does not find proof that these groups were targeted systematically (Ibid: 465).

Green (2004) also constructs an original dataset of wartime rape based on news stories from the New York Times published between 1991 and 2003. She uncovers 36 instances of collective rape including incidents in Sri Lanka, Kuwait, Georgia, Nigeria,

and Zimbabwe, that had previously received little or no attention in the academic literature on wartime rape (Ibid: 108). Moreover, Green establishes variation between the cases in terms of the perpetrators (with the majority of the incidents being perpetrated by state security forces), in terms of the form the violence takes (indiscriminate versus targeted) and, finally, in terms of the targeted victims. She finds that while most violence appears to be indiscriminate, in some instances specific ethnic (like the Ogoni in Nigeria), religious (such as Muslims in India and Myanmar) and political groups (like Aristide supporters in Haiti) are directly targeted (Ibid: 109). Finally, she also finds substantive variation in the estimates of number of victims. However, it is important to note that this variation can potentially be an artifact of the systematic underreporting of incidents as well as news biases, for example, due to the inaccessibility of particularly violent areas to reporters (Ibid: 112).

Similarly, Farr (2009) performs a comparative analysis of extreme war rape in ongoing or recently-ended armed conflicts in 27 countries. Drawing for the most part from data from studies and reports produced by human rights organizations and activist groups, she finds a high prevalence of sexual violence in all armed conflicts in her sample (Ibid: 10). This, however, could be a result of potential biases present in reports by advocacy and human rights organizations who face the incentive to overinflate figures to attract the attention of an otherwise apathetic public (Peterman et al. 2011)<sup>3</sup>. In contrast, Farr observes important differences between rape sites, perpetrator groups and victim targets across the 27 cases. Based on this variation she proposes four ideal typical

---

<sup>3</sup> For a more thorough discussion of the general challenges of measuring the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence see the section on methods and variable measurement.

categories of war rape: field-centered/opportunistic, field-centered/woman targeted, state-led/ethnic targeted, state-led/enemy targeted (Farr 2009: 13).

Butler et al. (2007) take a somehow different approach and explore the variation of levels of sexual violence perpetrated by state security forces across 163 countries and find that armed conflict is one of the correlates of state-led sexual violence. The authors argue that the “incidence of sexual violence by government forces is driven by out-of-control agents” and that the variation in its prevalence is determined by the degree of slack given to security force agents (Ibid: 673). Wartime scenarios are believed to increase the discretionary power of agents as the latter have closer contact to the civilian population, there is less opportunities for the victims to denounce the crimes and there is an increased risk of adverse selection in the state forces’ recruiting practices (Ibid: 675). The authors therefore not only establish variation in the prevalence of sexual violence across cases, but also between peacetime and wartime. However, given that their analysis is based on data for only one year (2003) and relies on a very crude coding of the prevalence of sexual violence, the quality of their inferences is questionable. This is suggestive of the strong methodological limitations of analyzing variation in wartime rape through large-N statistical analysis.<sup>4</sup>

In one of the more recent additions to the literature Cohen (2011) examines the incidence of conflict-related sexual violence by both insurgent groups and state actors in 86 civil conflicts between 1980 and 2009. Following Butler et al. (2007) she uses State Department Human Rights Country Reports to construct a four point scale that measures the relative magnitude of wartime sexual violence. Using this scale she establishes that

---

<sup>4</sup> See the section on methods and variable measurement for a more thorough discussion of the challenges of using quantitative data to assess conflict-related sexual violence.

there is substantial variation in the severity of wartime sexual violence, both across and within conflicts. Only 62% of the conflicts in her sample involved significant sexual violence in at least one conflict-year (Cohen 2011: 19).

By emphasizing on the variation of conflict-related sexual violence, recent comparative analyses suggest that wartime sexual violence is a major problem in many conflicts. However, it is not, as previous literature suggests, a ubiquitous feature of every conflict. Therefore, understanding this variation requires analyses that are sensitive to multiple causal pathways (Leiby 2009: 446). While explanations that highlight the relevance of patriarchal structures and militarized masculinities as well as ethnic hatred may have some explanatory power in some cases, as Wood (2006: 330) suggests, “[i]t is likely that a range of causal mechanisms interact to create the variation in sexual violence and that a probabilistic rather than a deterministic approach is necessary to account for the overall pattern of variation”.

### **3. Variation of Wartime Sexual Violence: A Theoretical Framework**

Recent theories that explain the variation of wartime sexual violence draw, for the most part, from a growing literature in political science that studies the conduct of rebellion and the logic of violence against civilians in civil war (Kalyvas 2006, Humphreys and Weinstein 2006, Weinstein 2007). This literature focuses on the micro-foundations of violence arguing that there is disjunction between the macro-level causes of war and patterns of violence on the ground. Therefore, the most important determinants of civilian abuse are internal to the structure of the armed groups: their origins, membership and systems of command and control.

Weinstein (2007) develops one of the most influential theories on the logic of violence linking a rebel group's social and economic endowments to its composition and tactics. He argues that "rebel groups abuse civilian populations in some contexts and not others as a result of processes of organizational formation" (Weinstein 2007: 11). According to Weinstein, rebel groups that emerge in environments rich in natural resources attract opportunistic soldiers that expect immediate rewards for their military engagement and have little commitment to the civilian population. Such groups must permit indiscipline to maintain their membership and are therefore expected to commit high levels of indiscriminate violence. On the other hand, groups that emerge in resource-poor contexts and depend on civilian support tend to attract more ideologically committed soldiers. Such groups can draw on a strong group identity to enforce their strategy and therefore exhibit fewer abuses and employ violence more selectively (Weinstein 2007: 10). From this we can predict that the higher the dependence of armed

groups on the provision of resources, intelligence and support from civilians, the more likely they are to constrain their use of sexual violence against the civilian population.

One of the limitations of generalized theories of violence such as the one developed by Weinstein is that they operationalize violence very broadly including killings, mutilation, abduction, detention, injury, destruction, looting, forced displacement and rape (Weinstein 2007: 367). Such theories treat different forms of abuse as if they followed similar logics. Therefore, a central assumption is that the level of sexual violence will correlate with levels of other forms of abuse. However, as the literature on the variation of wartime sexual violence shows, some armed groups such as the LTTE in Sri Lanka engage in significant levels of other forms of violence against civilians but rarely engage in sexual violence (Wood 2009: 134).

As a result Wood (2006) argues that the analysis of group norms specific to sexual violence can explain why this form of violence does not always vary with the general pattern of abuse. Armed groups may develop and promote norms that either condemn or approve sexual violence as an effective way to achieve their goals. Sexual violence, for example, may serve as an immediate reward for participation, can be seen as instrumental to promote bonding amongst (heterogeneous) groups of combatants or can be viewed as an effective tool of terror and punishment for non-cooperative civilians (Wood 2006: 327).

However, armed groups may also decide to prohibit sexual violence for practical and normative considerations (Ibid: 329). From a practical perspective, allowing combatants to engage in 'raping sprees' may undermine group discipline or even lead to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases that can weaken the strength of the troops

(Cohen 2011: 12). From a normative perspective, sexual violence can conflict with a groups' ideology or self-image. Wood (2006: 329), for example, argues that armed groups that see themselves as the representatives of a new, more just social order and embrace ideologies such as liberation theology may ban the use of sexual violence. Based on the idea that armed groups develop norms specific to the use of sexual violence the following hypothesis can be derived:

*H1: If an armed group develops norms that promote (prohibit) sexual violence as part of its strategic violence repertoire, higher (lower) levels in the prevalence of sexual violence are expected.*

Related to the idea of group specific norms on sexual violence, Wood (2006: 333) suggests that female-intensive insurgencies might develop strong norms that prohibit sexual violence against civilians. Although the mechanism by which groups with strong female participation should engage less in sexual violence is unclear, Wood suggests that the presence of female combatants may disrupt dynamics of bonding in small units through gang rape, displace patriarchal role models within the group, or constrain sexual violence out of fear of retaliation against fellow female soldiers.

For these mechanisms to be effective in developing norms that prohibit sexual violence, an equitable division of labor between male and female combatants should be evident within the group, supported by the presence of female combatants in leadership roles. Given these conditions, we expect armed groups to engage less in sexual violence.

*H2: Armed groups with a higher proportion of female combatants engage less in sexual violence.*

However, whether an armed group can effectively enforce norms of prohibition or promotion of sexual abuse depends on the strength of the group's hierarchy and the enforcement of mechanisms for punishing indiscipline (Wood 2006). This is due to the potential divergence of interests between individual combatants and the group's leadership. When the individual benefits of abuse outweigh the group's gains from a policy of constraint or conversely, if an individual disproportionately bears the costs of abuse while the group enjoys the benefits, strong principal-agent tensions emerge that undermine the effective implementation of an armed group's strategy.

Such tensions can be resolved through effective command and control structures. These include an effective flow of information up the chain of command concerning agent shirking, as well as the willingness of superiors to punish deviant behavior (Wood 2009: 137). Alternatively, high levels of secondary group cohesion which Wood (2009: 137) defines as an individual combatant's "identification with military units above the most immediate and with the armed group as a whole" are key in enhancing the obedience of rank-and-file soldiers and resolving principal-agent tensions. From this, the third hypothesis is derived:

*H3: Armed groups with strong military hierarchies and high levels of secondary group cohesion are more likely to effectively enforce the promotion (prohibition) of sexual violence.*

These hypotheses remain, for the most part, untested. Two noticeable exceptions are Wood (2009) and Annan et al. (2009). Wood (2009), for example, analyzes the restrained use of sexual violence on the part of the secessionist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka. In her analysis of the violence repertoire of the LTTE,



she finds that the absence of sexual violence perpetrated by this group is best explained by the leadership's ban of its use and the organization's strict internal discipline (Ibid: 149). The LTTE promotes a puritanical code of conduct not only amongst its cadre but also amongst the civilian population in the areas it controls. Deviations from this code are severely punished (Ibid: 151). Wood's analysis thus suggests that organizational strategy and military hierarchy are key explanatory variables of the use of wartime sexual violence.

Annan et al. (2009) analyze the use of sexual violence by the Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). They find that under Kony's leadership the group set-up strict norms prohibiting the use of sex outside marriage with reportedly little rape against unmarried abductees and non-abducted civilians.<sup>5</sup> Norms banning sexual violence outside of marriage are thought to have ideological and spiritual roots. Annan et al. (2009: 16) explain: "Among the Acholi, Kony is widely accepted as a powerful spirit medium and (by some) as a prophet. The dictates and rules proclaimed by the Holy Spirit are numerous, detailed, and sometimes mercurial and the restrictions on sexual violence could be reinforced by a (possibly idiosyncratic) spiritual norm".

Furthermore, strict norms surrounding sexual violence also serve the more practical goal of controlling HIV transmission. The LRA is reported to have lost several commanders to AIDS early in the conflict, including Kony's original second-in-command, Komakec Omona (Ibid). Given the decentralized structure of the LRA's units, they find that discipline, harsh punishments and indoctrination were instrumental to reinforce prohibitions of rape outside marriage. The combination of group norms specific

to sexual violence, female participation in the armed group, and strict command and control appears to account for the low levels of conflict-related sexual violence reported amongst non-abducted civilians.

---

<sup>5</sup> However, 93.5% of forced wives in their sample reported they were sexually abused or forced to have sex with a man (Annan et al. 2009: 14). Given that these women were forcibly recruited into the LRA, it is questionable why these violations are not also categorized as sexual violence against civilians.

#### **4. Research Design**

Based on the theoretical framework presented in the previous section, this analysis aims at testing the casual effect of the organizational structure of armed groups on the variation of wartime sexual violence. The plausibility of these hypotheses has been previously tested in single-cases studies. However, given the inability of this design to control for alternative explanations of conflict-related sexual violence, the validity of these empirical tests can be questioned. Therefore, this analysis is concerned with subjecting the postulated hypotheses to more rigorous comparative testing and achieving a greater degree of control for alternative explanations. In the next sections, I will more thoroughly discuss the methods of data analysis, case selection and data collection.

##### **4.1 Method of data analysis and case selection**

In their discussion of comparative methods George and Bennett (2005: 152) argue that controlled comparison, defined as “the study of two or more instances of a well-specified phenomenon that resemble each other in every respect but one” can provide “the functional equivalent of an experiment that enables the investigator to make use of experimental logic to draw causal inferences”. Controlled comparison therefore closely resembles the experimental ideal of causal inference, giving the method considerable appeal. However, it is extremely difficult (if not impossible) to find two cases that resemble each other in every respect but one (Ibid). This has led some to question the value of the comparative method as a method of causal inference arguing in favor of

statistical methods that exercise control by means of partial correlations.<sup>6</sup> However, they fail to recognize the fact that for many phenomena of interest the number of cases is often too small to permit statistical analysis or there is simply no available quantitative data (Lijphart 1975: 164; George and Bennett 2005: 152).

The lack of reliable cross-conflict quantitative data is particularly acute in the study of wartime sexual violence. Roth et al. (2011: 23) define sexual violence as a “classic elusive phenomenon”, i.e. a phenomenon that is rare and unevenly distributed with respect to the population so that it is not likely to be captured when drawing a random sample. Arriving at reliable estimates of the incidence of wartime sexual violence is further complicated by reporting bias. Sexual offenses are associated with high levels of shame, stigmatization, guilt and fear which prevent victims from reporting such crimes. This silence is reinforced in war scenarios where victims willing to report sexual crimes may not find the necessary institutions or infrastructure to do so (Green 2004: 104; Roth et al. 2011: 25).<sup>7</sup>

There have been several previous efforts to create datasets and informal lists of incidents of wartime sexual violence.<sup>8</sup> However, these rely for the most part on news reports, anecdotal evidence, or a crude coding from more generalized human rights reports which carry a high potential for significant measurement error. Cohen (2011) and Butler et al. (2007), for example, construct a four-point scale of sexual violence incidence

---

<sup>6</sup> Ragin and Hagin (1993), for example, argue that “most applications of comparative methodology resort to truncated, rhetorical comparison that gives the appearance but have little of the substance of a natural experiment” (cited in George and Bennett 2005: 152). See also King, Keohane and Verba (1994).

<sup>7</sup> Peterman et al. (2011) and Palermo and Peterman (2011), however, also warn about the potential risk of overcounting. Particularly human rights organizations and advocacy groups might face incentives to inflate figures in order to draw attention to the issue. This appears to have been the case with figures of conflict-related sexual violence in Liberia.

<sup>8</sup> See Cohen (2011) for a review of existing cross-conflict datasets of the prevalence of wartime sexual violence.

using the US State Department Human Rights Country Reports. This data could be politically biased and we can expect a correlation between the criteria the US State Department uses to select cases on which to report and the outcome the authors are interested in measuring. Accurate counts of acts of sexual violence are therefore difficult, if not impossible, to construct. Roth et al. (2011: 26) suggest that there are currently no reliable datasets with incident counts of conflict-related sexual violence. At most, existing datasets reflect estimates of the magnitude of this form of violence which cannot serve as the basis for rigorous statistical analysis.

Given the lack of reliable cross-conflict data on wartime sexual violence and the impossibility of statistical analysis, there are alternatives that allow the researcher to achieve a large measure of control even with a small number of cases. Lijphart (1971, 1975), for example, discusses the method of comparable cases. Comparable cases are “cases that are similar in a large number of important characteristics, but dissimilar with regard to the variables between which a relationship is hypothesized” (Lijphart 1975: 159). Notice that the assumption that the cases are similar in every aspect but one is relaxed. However, the researcher should still strive to achieve the greatest degree of control among the cases (Lijphart 1971: 633). Comparability can be enhanced, for example, by focusing on within-country instead of cross-country comparisons. Smelser (1967, cited in Lijphart 1975: 164) states that “the proper method is to investigate comparable national or intranation cases. The more similar two or more [cases] are with respect to crucial variables...the better able is the investigator to isolate and analyze the influence of other variables that might account for the differences he wishes to explain”.

Along this line, in a more recent contribution, Snyder (2001) discusses the advantages of the ‘subnational comparative method’. Like Smelser, he argues that “[a] focus on subnational units can greatly strengthen the ability of comparativists to establish control over potential explanatory variables” (Snyder 2001: 95). Comparing cases within the same country allows the researcher to control for cultural, historical, ecological and socioeconomic dimensions more convincingly (Ibid).

Given the nature of the question posed and the objective of this study, a within-country comparison of two or more armed groups is an appropriate method to assess the causal effect of armed group organizational characteristics on the variation of wartime sexual violence, while at the same time controlling for other alternative explanations highlighted in the literature. Ideally, one would compare patterns of sexual violence between two or more armed groups within the same conflict and over time.<sup>9</sup> However, as Lijphart (1975: 163) notes, a potential problem of subnational comparison is that subnational units are likely to be similar not only with regard to potentially confounding background variables (which should be controlled) but also with regard to the operative variables of interest. Armed groups that emerge within the same conflict, sharing the same underlying cultural values can also be expected to converge in their organizational structures and patterns of civilian abuse. Therefore, in order to meet the criteria for controlled comparison it is necessary to identify two (or more) cases where the variance of the dependent and independent variables of interest is maximized and the variance of the controlled variables minimized.

---

<sup>9</sup> As Wood (2006: 334) notes, within-country analyses have been employed for the study of violence and participation in civil war, including in Greece, Rwanda, Peru, and El Salvador. Snyder (2001) also highlights Varshney’s (2001) study of ethnic conflict that compares civic ties between Hindus and Muslims in different Indian cities.

Based on these criteria I choose to compare the patterns of wartime sexual violence of two Colombian illegal armed groups, the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC) and the United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, AUC)<sup>10</sup> in the period between 1997 and 2002<sup>11</sup>. In the past decade, the Colombian conflict has received increased attention by human rights advocates and international organizations such as the United Nations and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights for the ‘widespread’ nature of wartime sexual violence. However, although reports by advocacy organizations and NGOs highlight that all groups party to the conflict have engaged in sexual violence to a certain degree, only in the case of the AUC does this form of violence appear to be generalized and systematic. For example, in an analysis of 276 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, the Colombian advocacy group *Corporación Humanas* (2009: 22) found that 57% of the violations were attributed to the AUC while the FARC was found to be responsible for 13% of the violations.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, there appears to be sufficient variation in the prevalence of sexual violence between these two actors to warrant an examination of the cases. Based on preliminary research of the cases,<sup>13</sup> there also appears to be significant differences in the

---

<sup>10</sup> A third, considerably smaller armed illegal group also party to the conflict in the period of analysis is the National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, ELN). Given the lack of available secondary literature on the organizational structure and violence repertoire of this group it is excluded from the analysis.

<sup>11</sup> This period corresponds to the creation of the AUC in 1997 and the official declaration on an unilateral cease fire and subsequent demobilization of the group in 2002. The FARC were established long before and continue to be an active actor in the conflict which would allow for a longer longitudinal analysis of this case. However, in order to enhance comparability and safeguard against potential time-specific confounders, both groups will be compared during the same time period.

<sup>12</sup> The remaining violations are attributed to the Colombian Armed Forces (22%) and other unidentified actors (8%).

<sup>13</sup> The researcher’s foreknowledge of the variables in cases has been criticized by some to generate selection bias (see George and Bennett 2005: 24 for this discussion). Here, however, I follow George and Bennett who argue that selection with some preliminary knowledge of cases can be particularly fruitful in

organizational structures and ideological norms of both groups so that variance in the independent variables of interest is also maximized. Furthermore, given the non-ethnic nature of the Colombian conflict it is also possible to control for the alternative explanation presented in the literature which states that sexual violence is a weapon of strategic ethnic warfare. Finally, given that both armed groups emerge and are active within the same underlying cultural framework, the potential influence of patriarchal hierarchies and militarized masculinities in determining the variation in wartime sexual violence across the cases can also be held constant.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, there are also practical reasons that warrant this case selection. Because of the enduring nature of the conflict, the emergence, expansion and operations of both the AUC and the FARC have been subject to extensive academic analysis, predominantly by Colombian scholars. Moreover, abuses against the civilian population, including the prevalence of sexual violence, have also been extensively documented. Given the impossibility to conduct field research, the fact that the Colombian conflict has been so well documented allows me to draw on rich secondary data to engage in an extensive analysis of the cases at hand.

There are, however, potential shortcomings and pitfalls of this design that merit discussion. One issue is the problem of omitted variables (George and Bennett 2005: 81). If significant variables are left out of the comparison and these vary along with the

---

within-case studies. Through more thorough case analysis the researcher tests whether the presumed values were wrong, and if so, can conclude that the proposed theory does not adequately explain the case.

<sup>14</sup> However, as Lijphart (1971: 689) and Snyder (2001: 96) emphasize, within-country comparisons do not necessarily improve our ability to hold cultural conditions constant. For example, in countries with vast territories certain sub-regions might share cultural traditions with other sub-regions in neighboring countries and not necessarily with other regions within the same country. This could also apply to Colombia where, for example, patriarchal norms in coastal regions might differ from those in the inland. However, given the territorial nature of the Colombian conflict, during the period analyzed the FARC and



outcome, I run the risk of overestimating the casual effect of the variables related to the organizational characteristics of the armed group. However, the variables to be analyzed have been selected based on an extensive analysis of the literature on theories of wartime sexual violence. Particularly two of the main alternative explanations identified in the literature, i.e. militarized masculinities and ethnic warfare are being controlled for so that the ‘problem of overdetermination’ (Lijphart 1975: 172) is, to a large extent, alleviated.

A further limitation concerns the problem of interdependence of the cases. As Snyder (2001: 104) states, “[because] of the possibility of diffusion and borrowing among subnational units in a single country, within-nation comparisons can involve a trade-off between the ability to establish control over potential explanatory factors and the ability to make independent observations and tests of hypotheses”. In the design at hand, for example, a group may add sexual violence to its repertoire in response to another group’s engaging in that form of violence. Since both cases are going to be analyzed diachronically across time, particular attention will be paid to any indication of diffusion effects.

Finally, the most common critique of within-country analyses concerns the issue of generalizability. Arguably, within-country analyses involve a trade-off between the ability to gain control and the ability to generalize (Snyder 2001: 103). Therefore, it is valid to ask: do the insights gained from the Colombian conflict apply to other conflicts and settings? The comparison of the FARC and AUC will, at most, in Lijphart’s (1975: 172) words, lead to “partial generalizations”. However, this comparison is a step forward to previous studies on the variation of sexual violence which have focused on single case

---

AUC engaged militarily in the same regions across the country. Cultural norms can thus justifiably be assumed to be constant.

studies and have therefore been unable to control for alternative explanations. Moreover, given the strong limitations to the cross-conflict quantitative analysis of wartime sexual violence discussed above, partial generalizations should be viewed as a useful first step in the assessment of the organizational structures of armed groups and their impact on the prevalence of wartime sexual violence. Ideally, such a study should be followed by replications in different settings.

#### **4.2 Variable operationalization and measurement**

Having specified the method of analysis, several measurement issues require further specification. Particularly the measurement of the dependent variable of interest – the prevalence of wartime sexual violence– necessitates some discussion. Although rape is the most common form of conflict-related sexual violence discussed in the literature, for the purposes of this analysis the term is understood to encompass a broader set of acts of violence including sexual torture and mutilation, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, enforced sterilization, and forced pregnancy. This study will analyze reports on wartime sexual violence compiled by human rights organizations, IGOs and NGOs in order to reconstruct tendencies in the use of this form of civilian victimization by the AUC and the FARC.

The most important data collections which include incident counts are those of Colombian NGOs and advocacy organizations, particularly the Colombian *Corporación Humanas*. Despite their numerical quality these data collections are too heterogeneous with respect to geographic coverage, period, and informational content to be considered reliable statistical evidence on the dimensions, characteristics and dynamics of sexual violence in Colombia (Roth et al. 2011: 44). Therefore, count data will be supplemented

with broad qualitative anecdotal evidence of conflict-related sexual violence included in numerous reports by women's rights organizations such as the Colombian Roundtable on Women and Conflict (*Mesa de Trabajo Mujer y Conflicto Armado*) and Amnesty International.

Turning now to the main independent variables, the existence of group norms specific to sexual violence is central to the analysis. Leadership behavior and statements concerning sexual violence are crucial to assessing the presence of these norms in both armed groups. As with the Sri Lankan LTTE and the Ugandan LRA, the groups' ideological origins can also be indicative of their position regarding sexual violence. Moreover, to the extent that these norms are codified, official armed group statutes and codes of conduct may contain important references to a groups' position on the sexual victimization of civilians.

The study will also identify the proportion of women in the armed groups as well as their roles within the group. More specifically, drawing from statements by leaders and combatants, the gendered expectations of men and women within the group will be assessed. Is there a significant proportion of women in leadership positions? Are women trained for military combat or are they mostly responsible for logistical tasks (e.g. cooking, nursing, etc.)?

The strength of military hierarchies to enforce decisions and norms promoted by the leadership is also central to the theoretical framework proposed. Wood (2009: 142) argues that the degree of hierarchical strength must be observable other than through patterns of civilian victimization. Following her argument, organizational strength will be measured through two observable indicators: (1) the group's ability to punish combatants

who break rules and norms other than those related to civilian victimization, and (2) its ability to collect taxes and revenue from the civilian population without the mismanagement of those resources by individual combatants for private consumption.

These variables will be measured using academic literature which contains extensive and detailed information on the emergence, expansion and operation of both armed groups. Particularly ethnographic analyses which include valuable interviews and statements by group leaders and demobilized combatants will be drawn into the analysis.

## 5. Variation of wartime sexual violence: the FARC and the AUC compared

One of the main characteristics of the Colombian conflict is its protracted nature. Only two other currently active conflicts – the Israel/Palestine conflict and the territorial dispute in Kashmir – surpass in length the ongoing armed struggle in Colombia (Pizarro Leongómez 2006: 174). Throughout its more than forty-year history<sup>15</sup>, the Colombian conflict has experienced various transformations<sup>16</sup>, including the emergence and decline of various non-state armed actors as well as changes in the levels of conflict intensity and victimization.

The period analyzed in this study (1997-2002) is considered by many as a phase of heightened conflict intensification (Restrepo et al. 2006; Granada et al. 2009). During this period, the struggle for territorial, economic and military control between the Colombian Security Forces, the guerrilla – mainly represented by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (hereinafter FARC) and the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (hereinafter AUC) reached new dimensions both in terms of number of military confrontations and victimization figures. The number of unilateral attacks increased steadily, reaching its highpoint in 2000 with over 1,200 coded events (Restrepo et al. 2009: 520). Likewise between 1996 and 2005 the number of civilian casualties rose from 500 to over 2,500 annually (Granada et al. 2009: 39). It is against this backdrop that the analysis of the patterns of sexual violence in the Colombian conflict takes place.

---

<sup>15</sup> Some argue that the conflict dates back to the period of bipartisan rural warfare known as “La Violencia” which was triggered by the 1948 assassination of populist political leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. Others trace the origin of the conflict to the establishment of the FARC in 1964 (Pizarro Leongómez 2006: 174).

<sup>16</sup> For a very comprehensive overview of the development of the conflict, its complexity and transformation see: Gutiérrez Sanín (2006).

In order to better understand how the organizational characteristics of the two groups compared in this analysis – the FARC and the AUC – influence the varying patterns of civilian sexual abuse, the origins and trajectory of the groups will be briefly reviewed in the following.

## 5.1 The FARC

The FARC is a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary guerrilla of peasant origin that follows an agrarian, anti-imperialist political project of Bolivarian inspiration (Medina Arbeláez 2009: 10). Its origins date back to a period of protracted confrontation and large scale violence known as ‘La Violencia’ (1948-1958). FARC leading cadres were actively engaged in this period of rural warfare which pitted Colombia’s two major political parties against each other. Following a bipartisan power sharing agreement between liberal and conservative forces, the liberal guerrillas – the direct predecessors of the FARC – continued operating in several rural enclaves, forming peasant ‘self-defense’ communities fighting against the *latifundista* project of large-scale industrial farming (Ferro and Uribe 2002: 26; Gutiérrez Sanín 2004: 263).

Within the framework of the Latin American Security Operation (LASO), a counterinsurgency large scale military operation supported the by the United States Central Intelligence Agency, the Colombian government began attacking many of the ‘self-defense’ communities established in the early 1960s. The FARC was officially formed in 1964 by Manuel Marulanda Vélez after a military attack on the peasant community of Marquetalia. Marulanda and 47 other armed men fought against government forces and then escaped into the mountains. These 48 men formed the core force of the FARC (Matta Aldana 1999: 162-167; Ferro and Uribe 2002: 27).

The consolidation and expansion of the armed group in the Colombian territory has followed distinct phases. The first, from 1964 to 1980 constitutes the transformation from a peasant 'self-defense' group to an armed guerrilla force. In this period, the group engaged in an 'imaginary war': only sporadically did they come to the front stage of the political debate, they seldom faced the army and their primary activity consisted in the recruitment of new members and the establishment of new fronts along the southern and central Colombian territories (Gutiérrez Sanín 2004: 263; Medina Arbeláez 2009: 11; Sánchez and Chacón 2006: 355). By 1978 the FARC had 1000 members (Ferro and Uribe 2002: 29).

The second phase, from the early 1980s to the mid 1990s is a phase of organizational takeoff and military modernization. In this period the FARC established forty new fronts and transitioned to the largest, most capable, and best-equipped insurgency of Marxist origin in Latin America (Ferro and Uribe 2002: 29; Pizarro Leongómez 2006: 173). The group's transition was made possible through the multiplication of income based on illicit activities (Sánchez and Chacón 2006: 358; Gutierrez Sanín 2004: 265). In the early 1980s Colombia was witnessing the 'coca boom'. After initial opposition, the FARC gradually became involved in all aspects of the coca business, from establishing links to small peasant growers to becoming a full-fledged warlord of coca territories (Ferro and Uribe 2002: 97). Kidnapping, racketeering and extortion were other sources of income established in this phase. In the 1980s the guerrilla group established the *vacuna*, a quota that prevented kidnapping and appropriation of livestock. Wealthy landowners, mining companies, multinational

corporations and subnational governments were all targets of *vacuna* collection and kidnapping (Gutiérrez Sanín 2004: 266).

Starting in the mid 1990s the FARC entered a phase of heightened militarization. Between 1996 and 1998 seven major military compounds were ambushed resulting in the death of over one hundred Colombian soldiers and the capture of several hundred others. In its military incursions the FARC disregarded systematically the safety of civilians. The group's most common basic artillery weapon was a mortar that threw gas cylinders. The high level of impression of the mortar very frequently resulted in the killing of civilians (Gutiérrez Sanín and Giustozzi 2010: 847).

Also during this period the FARC entered peace negotiations with the Colombian government and were granted a 42,000km<sup>2</sup> safe heaven centered around the municipality of San Vicente del Caguán. After three years of negotiations, the unwillingness of the FARC to decree a cease fire led the Colombian government to end the peace talks and regain control of the demilitarized zone in February 2002 (Ferro and Uribe 2002: 196-200). By then the armed group had reached its organizational apex with sixty-two fronts operating across the Colombian territory and over 20,000 combatants in its ranks (Gutiérrez Sanín and Giustozzi 2010: 841).

Following the failed peace process and the election of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez initiated a period of decline and strategic withdrawal of the FARC. Under Uribe Vélez the Colombian government increased war funding and promoted the reorganization of the armed forces, allowing them to land heavy blows on the armed group. More than half of the group's members have deserted, it has lost several of its cadres, its communication networks have been intercepted and it has struggled to adapt its military strategy to the



government's counterinsurgency offensive. However, to date, the organizational structure of the group is far from being dismantled and the FARC continues to exhibit its military capacity and defensive skills (Ibid).

## **5.2 The AUC**

The emergence of the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) dates back to 1968 with the approval by the Colombian Congress of Law 48 allowing the government to “mobilize the population in activities and tasks to restore the public order”. The formation of civilian self-defense groups was intended to counteract the proliferation of leftist guerilla movements such as the FARC, ELN and M-19 which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s (Tate 2001: 165). The formation of these groups was originally supported by wealthy landowners and cattle ranchers who were strongly affected by the extortion and kidnapping schemes perpetrated by the various guerrilla groups (Tate 2009: 112).

In the early 1980s, links to powerful drug barons were also established. In 1981, members of the Medellín Drug Cartel created Death to Kidnappers (*Muerte a Secuestradores*, MAS) which sought to retaliate against the kidnapping by the M-19 of Martha Nieves Ochoa, whose brothers were members of the Medellín Cartel. Carlos Castaño and Fidel Castaño Gil, who became major paramilitary leaders in the 1990s, were involved in MAS (Gutiérrez and Barón 2006: 280). MAS became a model for further paramilitary organizations, particularly in the Middle Magdalena Valley.

Several ‘self-defense’<sup>17</sup> organizations emerged in this territory to defend the interests not only of local farmers and landowners that were threatened by the guerrillas, but also of powerful drug-traffickers such as Pablo Escobar, who in the mid-1980s started purchasing land in the region (Tate 2009: 117; Valencia 2009: 244). Drug-traffickers financed paramilitary groupings, providing them with resources that allowed them to transform from small local protection groups to private armies (Tate 2009: 116). This led to a first wave of expansion and the emergence of several regional groupings. The counterinsurgency rhetoric that led to the emergence of these groups conflated with the expansion of the drug business: paramilitary armies established themselves in strategic areas of drug production, cocaine laboratories, and trafficking routes (Rangel 2005: 15).

By the late 1980s, paramilitary groups had increased their numbers amounting to 2500 men (Tate 2009: 111). Their improved funding also translated into increased territorial control, and the ability to target and eliminate guerilla sympathizers, activists and candidates from leftist parties, as well as government officials investigating drug-trafficking (Ibid.: 117). Due to increased international pressure and the participation of paramilitary groups in human rights abuses, President Barco declared the creation of such groups illegal in 1989. Paramilitary groups, however, continued their expansion reaching more than 15,000 members by the end of the 1990s (Ibid: 111).

In 1997, Carlos Castaño, the leader of the Córdoba and Urabá Peasant Self-Defense Forces, met with delegations of paramilitary groups operating independently across the country and created the AUC. This umbrella organization brought together under a single

---

<sup>17</sup> Based on their counterinsurgency rhetoric and the claim that their emergence was directly linked to the lack of protection by the Colombian state to the wealthier sectors of Colombian society against attacks from the guerilla, these groups often referred to themselves as self-defense groups (Gutiérrez and Barón 2006: 272).

military command structure most of the regional paramilitary groups with the goal of creating a powerful counterinsurgency army (Tate 2001: 167). Their strategy was not to attack the guerillas frontally, but to debilitate them by targeting sectors of Colombian society believed to support these insurgent groups (Koth 2005: 15). This was the beginning of the bloodiest episode of paramilitary history, with paramilitaries carrying out massacres targeting the civilian population (mostly in rural areas), trade unionists and human rights' activists suspected to be guerrilla sympathizers (Pardo 2007: 29-30).

The AUC became a major factor of violence in the Colombian conflict. Up to 2002, the year in which Álvaro Uribe was elected president, the demobilization of the Colombian paramilitary groups seemed unlikely. Not only were these groups at the height of their military power,<sup>18</sup> but the guerrilla, which they had vowed to crush, remained undefeated (Guembe and Olea 2006: 124). In a surprising decision at the time, on 1 December 2002 the paramilitaries organized under the umbrella organization AUC announced a unilateral cease-fire as a demonstration of their willingness to initiate peace negotiations.<sup>19</sup> The Uribe government responded to this act of “good faith” by designating an exploratory committee in charge of reaching a rapprochement between the AUC and the government. On 15 July 2003 the Santa Fe de Ralito Agreement, which stipulated the demobilization of all paramilitary units, was signed (ICG 2004: 4). Demobilization was completed on 15 August 2006.

---

<sup>18</sup> It is estimated that by 2002 the AUC was composed of 22 regional groups spread across 28 departments (Sánchez and Chacón 2006: 365).

<sup>19</sup> For an analysis of the strategic considerations that might have led the AUC to demobilize despite of their heightened influence see Koth (2005) and Rozema (2008).

### 5.3 Variation of Sexual Violence in the Colombian Conflict

In a landmark report, special UN rapporteur on violence against women, Radhika Coomaraswamy, concluded that “violence against women, particularly sexual violence by armed groups, has become a common practice within the context of a slowly degrading conflict” (Coomaraswamy 2002). Since the release of the report in 2002 the problem of wartime sexual violence has received increased international attention.

However, despite evidence that conflict-related sexual violence is a relatively common problem in Colombia, there exists no national mechanism to report this crime. Official organizations, such as the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Science (*Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses*, INML) which has the most complete dataset on sexual assaults, has only recently begun to include armed actors as a perpetrator category in its records. This makes it impossible to identify whether a given episode of sexual violence is conflict-related (Roth et al. 2011: 18). Therefore, it is women’s and human rights organizations that have been the driving force behind the documentation of the prevalence of sexual violence in the Colombian conflict.

Table 5.1 summarizes the most frequently cited documentation efforts of conflict-related sexual violence in Colombia. There is significant heterogeneity amongst the sources in terms of the time period for which data is collected, the geographic coverage, and the type of data. Moreover, there is some overlap in the documented incidents across the different sources. Particularly, reports using anecdotal evidence tend to cite each other’s victims’ testimonies. Despite these limitations, the sources reviewed tell a consistent story about sexual violence in Colombia: while it appears to have been

perpetrated by both the AUC and the FARC, the extent to which it is reported suggests that it is a systematic component of the AUC's violence repertoire.

Turning first to human rights reports containing anecdotal evidence, in her field mission to Colombia, UN Special Representative Coomaraswamy found repeated accounts of women who were abducted by armed men, detained in conditions of sexual slavery, raped and mutilated before being killed. According to information collected during the Special Rapporteur's visit, members of the paramilitary groups were the principal perpetrators of these violations (Coomaraswamy 2002: 8). All the testimonies included in the report account for sexual abuses which occurred during the AUC's military incursions or were part of massacres perpetrated by the group. One victim narrates:

500 paramilitaries arrived in our village because it is in guerrilla territory. They threatened us and took women to work for them. They killed girls, boys, men and women. We were not allowed to pick them up, the bodies were eaten by dogs. They hanged children and sexually mutilated bodies. Many women were raped (Ibid: 12-13).

The report does not include any testimony of similar behavior by the FARC. In fact, the only testimony that places blame on the rebel group highlights an incident of sexual abuse of a female combatant by the commander of her unit (Ibid: 14). Based on the information provided in the report it is not clear whether this is a common practice within the group or an isolated event. Similarly, the report includes evidence of forced contraception and abortion practices within the FARC. However, despite the appalling nature of such acts, this analysis focuses on patterns of civilian sexual victimization and not the victimization of combatants themselves.

Table 5.1 Summary of Sources Documenting the Prevalence of Sexual Violence

Source	Time period	Geographic space	Regions covered	Type of data	Number of incidents
<b>Corporación Humanas</b>	1992-2008	National	25/32 Departments	Count data	276 cases, of which: 57% perpetrated by the AUC 13% by the FARC 30% other
<b>CNRR</b>	1986-2005	Regional	1 Department (Magdalena)	Count data	63 cases, of which: 63.5% perpetrated by the AUC 4.7% by the FARC 20% other
<b>OXFAM<sup>1</sup></b>	since 1993	National	N/A	Count data	183 cases, of which: 58% perpetrated by the AUC 8% by guerrilla groups <sup>2</sup> 34% other
<b>Mesa de Trabajo Mujer y Conflicto Armado</b>	2001-2003	National	N/A	Anecdotal evidence	The majority of testimonies contained in the reports indicate the AUC as the perpetrator of sexual violence. One testimony refers to the practice of forced contraception and abortion in the FARC. A second testimony blames the FARC in an incident of forced prostitution.
<b>Amnesty International</b>	N/A	National	N/A	Anecdotal evidence	Testimonies of survivors indicate that most sexual attacks are committed by paramilitary groups. Multiple reports of forced contraception and abortion within the ranks of the FARC.
<b>UN Special Rapporteur</b>	N/A	National	Interviews in four main cities: Bogotá, Cali, Medellín, Cartagena	Anecdotal evidence	Four testimonies of sexual abuse (including rape, sexual slavery, and mutilation) during incursions by the AUC. One testimony of forced contraception within the FARC.

<sup>1</sup> Oxfam reports findings included in Ruling 092 of the Colombian Constitutional Court (2009)<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, data is not further disaggregated by group

Amnesty International's 2004 report "Scarred bodies, hidden crimes" paints a similar picture. The report asserts that while all armed groups have been accused of sexually abusing women, both civilians and their own combatants, "the testimonies of survivors indicate that most such atrocities are committed by paramilitary groups" (Amnesty International 2004: 17). According to Amnesty International, civilians are targeted by the AUC "in order to punish them for their perceived collaboration with guerrillas, to generate terror, or to force whole communities to flee a particular area of military or economic interest" (Ibid). Sexual violence has been reported to be a common feature of the massacres perpetrated by the AUC. In the massacre of *El Salado* in February 2000, women were sexually humiliated and forced to strip naked. Several women were raped and subjected to sexual torture. Amnesty International also received reports of the gang rape and mutilation of a pregnant woman suspected of collaborating with the guerrilla (Ibid: 18).

Reports of sexual abuse by the FARC are much more limited. Amnesty International mentions a kidnapped woman who was raped by FARC commander 'Beltrán' while in captivity: "he grabbed my breasts and savagely manhandled them and raped me (...) one of the women guerillas asked me, 'What happened? I heard you complaining' (...) Beltrán was confronted and the troops turned against him" (Ibid: 23). The victim reports that the perpetrator's behavior was punished by his own troops. Together with the limited number of testimonies that place blame on the FARC, this could suggest that episodes of sexual violence by this group are isolated events.

Besides the anecdotal evidence contained in human rights reports by international and national advocacy groups, there are counted efforts of establishing event datasets

which document cases of sexual violence. The percentages presented confirm that sexual violence is a systematic component of the AUC's violence repertoire. Between 57% and 64% of the cases of conflict-related sexual violence are adjudicated to the AUC. In contrast, only in 5% to 13% of the cases the FARC is found responsible of wartime sexual abuse.

Particularly interesting is the dataset collected by the National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation (*Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación*, CNRR). Although it only includes abuses committed in Magdalena, a department in Colombia's Caribbean coast, the CNRR distinguishes between cases of strategic and opportunistic sexual violence (cp. Leiby 2009). In this context, strategic sexual violence occurs in military incursions or any other military action planned and coordinated by the group's leadership (CNRR 2011: 216). On the contrary, sexual crimes are considered opportunistic when they are perpetrated by individual agents without the group's endorsement (Ibid: 219).

Out of the 40 cases of sexual violence adjudicated to the AUC, 21 were considered strategic and 13 opportunistic. For the remaining 6 cases the CNRR was unable to recover sufficient background information to determine the nature of the violation (Ibid: 298). This suggests that sexual violence perpetrated by the AUC is both a strategic component of the group's violence repertoire, as well as the consequence of undisciplined agents. The same dataset only uncovers 3 incidents of sexual violence perpetrated by the FARC, 2 of which are opportunistic and 1 strategic (Ibid).

While the data sources are diverse, together they portray a consistent characterization of the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence in Colombia



pointing to the AUC as the main perpetrator of these crimes<sup>20</sup>. In the following sections, organizational characteristics of the armed groups will be compared and the degree to which they explain this variation will be assessed.

#### **5.4 Norms related to sexual violence**

The relative absence of cases of conflict-related sexual violence by the FARC can be explained by the existence of strict norms banning this form of civilian victimization. There is strong evidence of the existence of formal rules in the FARC prohibiting the sexual abuse of civilians. As was mentioned, the FARC is a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary guerrilla of peasant origin that follows the principles of agrarian egalitarianism, enforcing strong moral rules not only amongst its militants, but also in the territories under the group's control (Gutiérrez Sanín 2004: 269). These include restrictions on drinking, wife battering, incest, drug consumption, prostitution and other forms of deviant moral behavior (Gutiérrez Sanín 2008: 24).

Roberto, a demobilized FARC combatant who belonged to the organization for nine years states: “it is not appropriate for a *guerrillero* to be with the wife of the peasant (...) Therefore that is prohibited” (quoted in Medina Arbeláez 2009: 108, own translation). In its interviews with demobilized child combatants, Human Rights Watch (HRW) also finds evidence that the FARC “prohibits unruly conduct by its fighters, especially when they are among the civilian population. Robbery, extortion, threats, sexual abuse, and irresponsible use of arms can be capital offenses” (HRW 2003: 69).

---

<sup>20</sup> One could argue that this variation is an artifact stemming from a bias in the reporting of crimes. With the demobilization of the paramilitaries and subsequent judicial proceedings, access to information about sexual crimes committed by the group increased. However, several of the sources that have been gathering data for a significant period before the group's mobilization, for example, the *Corporación Humanas* consistently reported high figures of AUC victimization.

This prohibition is codified in the group's Disciplinary Regime (*Reglamento del Regimen Disciplinario*). Article 3 of the document classifies 'sexual abuse' and 'any activity that goes against the revolutionary moral and good customs' as serious disciplinary offenses, which pursuant to Article 4 are evaluated by the group's war council and can be punished by death (Medina Arbeláez 2009: 134-135).

The prohibition of sexual abuse is reinforced through rigorous political and ideological training. Besides military training, new recruits are instructed on orderly behavior with the civilian population. Luis, another demobilized combatant recalls his experience in training camp:

They teach you how to fight, how to behave with the civilians, what it is that you have to do and what not to do; here you are taught the norms that you have to follow internally and externally. You have to behave with the civilian population. They teach you what not to do because you will be sanctioned (quoted in Medina Arbeláez 2009: 22, own translation).

The group's leadership tight control over combatants' sexuality further reinforces the prohibition of sexual abuse. Combatants are allowed to develop relationships within the group, but couples can be set apart if the military rationale or the immediate superior demands it (Gutiérrez Sanín 2008: 18). Moreover, conjugal permits are required to have sexual relations within the group. Luis explains:

Sexual relations are only permitted on Sunday, we call them conjugal days, only Sundays, sometimes Saturdays too (...) we have to ask for permission during morning formation. They control that there. The officer in charge reads everything during formation, announces the permissions, so-and-so with so-and so (quoted in Medina Arbeláez 2009: 84-85, own translation).

Cristina, a female ex-combatant, also expresses that sexuality within the FARC is strongly regulated: "There you ask for permission to be a couple and sleep together but they tell you, I will give you permission but don't think that anybody belongs to anybody

here. They would not allow for too much passion because people would desert” (quoted in Medina Arbeláez 2009: 86, own translation). Tight bans over unregulated sexuality are therefore intended to prevent combatant indiscipline.

Other practical concerns that reinforce the prohibition of sexual abuse include the fear of spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Luis states: “They are very careful with diseases there, they make regular check-ups to men, to women too, general medical check-ups, and if a combatant is sick they let us all know (...) Those diseases are transmitted by civilians” (quoted in Medina Arbeláez 2009: 87, own translation). Luis explains that although consensual relationships with civilians were initially allowed for male combatants, they were eventually banned out of fear of the spread of STDs.

The FARC’s leadership has set tight rules banning the sexual abuse of fellow combatants and civilians. This prohibition not only responds to the group’s ideological roots and its promotion of moral codes of conduct, but as Cohen (2011) suggests, also reflects more practical concerns which include the risk that unregulated combatant sexuality will undermine group discipline and lead to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases that can weaken the strength of the troops.

Contrary to the FARC, the AUC have no codified norms that prohibit the sexual abuse of civilians. In the organization’s Foundational Statute and Disciplinary Regime (*Estatuto de Constitución y Régimen Disciplinario*) the only reference made to the group’s behavior towards the civilian population is the combatants’ responsibility to ‘sustain excellent relations with the community’ (Art. 10).

Furthermore, the political and ideological formation of combatants does not appear to be an explicit component of the group’s training practices. On the contrary, the focus

lies on military formation and the socialization of combatants to dehumanizing tactics of war. For example, witnessing the murder and dismemberment of captured guerrillas or civilian traitors is a common practice in the training of new recruits. Oscar, a demobilized combatant interviewed by HRW states:

They bring the people they catch, guerrillas and robbers, to the training course. My squad had to kill three people. After the first one was killed, the commander told me that the next day I'd have to do the killing. I was stunned and appalled. I had to do it publicly, in front of the whole company, fifty people" (cited in HRW 2003: 64).

Such practices occasionally took a gendered dimension. Ana, a demobilized AUC combatant mentions that when wounded female guerrillas were captured, they were publicly raped and then murdered (Medina Arbeláez 2009: 53).

Moreover, combatant sexuality is not regulated by the group. Given the limited bureaucratization of the AUC and the low level of female combatants in the group's ranks, the nature of sexual and affective relations within the group are different than in the FARC. Combatants are allowed to have sexual relations with civilians. In fact, as Gonzalo, a demobilized AUC commander, states some AUC members view this as part of their responsibility towards civilian women:

Women there are like from another world because they really like the camouflage look, they like it a lot, I don't know, they like us *paracos*; also minors, ten, eleven, twelve year olds all wanting us to do them the favor, and we had to because imagine our men in the jungle for three or four months without doing anything (cited in Medina Arbeláez 2009: 91, own translation).

Rather than group wide norms of prohibition, individual commanders appear to have more freedom in determining norms specific to sexual violence in their military units. This is the case of 'El Oso', a mid-level commander operating in the village of San Onofre in the Atlantic coast. El Oso prohibited rank-and-file soldiers to rape and abuse, or even engage in consensual affective relations with civilians, deeming this a privilege

of the upper-ranks. He established a detention center in his camp where he and his immediate subordinates would rape and abuse the ‘pretty girls’ of San Onofre. However, lower ranking soldiers were excluded from participating in these raping sprees (CNRR 2011: 167). A public functionary of San Onofre states:

We registered a case of a girl who was pregnant; she had a relationship with one of el Oso’s men, they were in love; then it turned out she was pregnant and el Oso called for her, he raped her and she lost the baby as a consequence of the sexual abuse. Then he had the guy killed, his own soldier” (Ibid: 168, own translation).

Although el Oso prohibited the use of sexual violence by his lower ranking soldiers, his individual behavior shows that this prohibition did not stem from a normative concern, but rather from the desire to establish his superiority within the group.

There appears to be a large heterogeneity in the norms related to sexual violence within the AUC, with individual leaders having considerable autonomy to determine the nature of the sexual and affective relations of their troops. However, a generalized lack of prohibitive norms should not be conflated with a generalized strategic promotion of sexual violence. At best, norms specific to sexual violence in the AUC are ambivalent and their effect on the high levels of sexual victimization by this group is undetermined.

## **5.5 Female combatants**

The FARC are a highly feminized force. Although there are no exact figures, it is estimated that 4 out of 10 combatants are female (Ferro and Uribe 2002: 67). Using data from judicial proceedings and information from the confiscated computer of the commander of the group’s 58<sup>th</sup> Front, Gutiérrez Sanín (2008: 10) estimates that units attached to the top leadership of the FARC (the *Secretariado*) have a female participation of nearly 30%. Among the normal fronts the presence is estimated at 19%.

Female combatants are active in logistical operations often taking the roles of nurses and doctors (Medina Arbeláez 2009: 80). However, they are also commonly assigned more specialized tasks in communications, intelligence and IT. Commander Ivan Rios explains:

Women in rural areas, if we look at it proportionally, are more educated, have more academic training than men; female peasants join the guerrilla better trained and on the long run that is an advantage (...) We have to find a place for them and if they already know how to write it is easier for them to work with the computer (cited in Ferro and Uribe 2002: 67, own translation).

Female combatants are also perceived to be more disciplined. In the 41<sup>st</sup> Front, for example, all-female *escuadras*<sup>21</sup> have been created to serve as a model of military performance and revolutionary moral (Ibid: 68). Moreover, women have roughly the same opportunity as men to become mid-level field commanders (HRW 2003: 56).

However, there is a notable absence of female participation in FARC top-leadership positions. This is representative of the broader struggle for gender equality within the group. In the group's early years women were recruited as 'caretakers' responsible for washing, cooking, and other traditional female roles. However, starting in the mid-1980s women began to be recruited for military tasks and the principle of gender equality was established in the organization's statutes: "the woman is one combatant more; she has the same duties and rights as the male combatant and has the right to carry the same weapons" (Ibid: 69). Although officially codified, the recognition of women's equality has been a gradual process. Lucero, a mid-level commander who had been a FARC militant for 10 years states:

Women at the guerrilla have had to fight in two fronts, the idea is for us not to lag behind; you see greater female participation in the guerrilla. But we have fought a

---

<sup>21</sup> The *escuadra* is the smallest operational unit of the group composed of twelve combatants (Ferro and Uribe 2002: 44)

tough fight; it's not only about talking and demanding but demonstrating that we are capable. And we have been able to show that militarily we are as good or better combatants than men. We did not come here to wash the clothes of the guerrilleros; we came here to perform as every other member demonstrating that we are capable (cited in Ferro and Uribe 2002: 66, own translation).

Despite the relative inequality in leadership positions, female combatants emphasize that, compared to the civilian world, guerrilla life is egalitarian (Ferro and Uribe 2002: 71; HRW 2003: 56). The majority of female recruits have a rural background and have experienced large deprivation. They rarely can escape their traditional role as 'mothers' and 'caregivers' and in this regard, belonging to the FARC offers better opportunities than civilian life (Ferro and Uribe 2002: 66). Some female recruits have also joined the group to escape sexual abuse at home (HRW 2003: 9).

As was shown in the review of the reports and datasets on the prevalence of sexual violence in the Colombian conflict, the practice of forced contraception and abortion is the most frequently cited form of female abuse in the FARC. While such practices are clear violations of the reproductive rights of female combatants, they can also represent the erosion of the traditional motherhood role adjudicated to female peasants. Commander Ivan Rios explains:

Women are told: comrade, go and have your child and when you have him you have to know who you are leaving him with, and then you come back to the guerrilla because before being a mother you are a *guerrillera* (cited in Ferro and Uribe 2002: 68, own translation).

The shift in gender roles, from mother to revolutionary fighter, has the potential to displace patriarchal structures within the group and disrupt the chauvinistic socialization of new recruits. Men are trained to accept that within the organization, women have the power to give orders to men and boys. It is likely that the struggle for gender equality within the FARC has contributed to the group's ban of sexual violence. By gaining

respect within the organization, FARC women may have transformed chauvinistic practices that view women's bodies as battlefields.

Female participation in the AUC is noticeably lower than in the FARC. Using data from the confiscated computer of Jorge 40, commander of the AUC's Northern Block, Gutiérrez Sanín (2008: 10) finds that out of 516 members engaged in military activity, only nine were women. Data from the Colombian Institute for Childhood and Planning and from judicial proceedings also corroborate that only 1.5% of the group's members are female (Ibid).

It is not clear why female participation in the group is so low, but one can infer that the non-egalitarian treatment of women in the AUC serves as a deterrent for potential female recruits. Although Article 8 of the AUC's Foundational Statute and Disciplinary Regime states that any adult person can be a member of the organization regardless of their sex, religious beliefs or ethnic origin, there are no further provisions in the document that establish the principle of gender equality within the organization. This is also reflected in the types of roles female AUC members take within the organization. Women are often recruited as sexual companions for the troop. Gonzalo, a demobilized mid-level commander speaks of female recruits as weak, valueless sexual objects:

[T]here were about seven women in the whole block, seven women who were good for nothing; they were like all the women in the war, only there to sleep around with all the men in the troop, nothing more; they weren't even good for guard duty (...) the women of the *paracos*, besides not being good for anything than to have sex, shoot twice and because they know they will get backup become complete nervous wrecks; or they can't shoot anymore because they get their periods" (cited in Medina Arbeláez 2009: 82, own translation).



This view is also shared by Ana, a demobilized AUC combatant who worked as a nurse. As one of the few females with a logistical role in her group she differentiates herself from the ‘wimpy’ typical female combatant:

Maybe what I have to say is that women in the self-defense forces, in comparison to the women in the guerilla, are not as tough, yes? The ones here are wimpy. The great majority of women, only the majority because there is some that maybe did have military training, but only few. The great majority was taken straight out of their neighborhood; the commanders would take them as their mistresses and only because of that they were suddenly *paracas* (cited in Medina Arbeláez 2009: 82, own translation).

Contrary to these views, Hugo, another interviewed demobilized male combatant, mentions how in his group there were also few female combatants, but they were assigned the same tasks as men and were treated with respect. However, women were still perceived as the weaker sex and were treated more delicately during training and military operations (Medina Arbeláez 2009: 81).

In general terms, female participation in the AUC is very limited. Again, there appears to be some heterogeneity between the roles women take in the different blocks and groups. However, despite these differences, the integration of women to the group appears to serve the purpose of reinforcing patriarchal structures and chauvinistic militaristic practices in which women are either solely valued as sexual objects, in the case of Gonzalo, or as weak group members in need of protection as Hugo states.

The disregard for women’s bodily integrity is reflected in the overall absence of group specific norms related to sexual violence. If women within the group are perceived as valueless, there is nothing to suggest that civilians will not be treated with the same contempt. The high victimization of women by the AUC is a reflection of the degrading treatment that female AUC combatants receive.

## 5.6 Command and control structures

The FARC is often characterized as a highly vertical, organized and disciplined force (Gutiérrez Sanín 2008: 13). Its organizational structure is established in the group's Statute (*El Estatuto*) and Regime of Disciplinary Rules (*Reglamento de Régimen Disciplinario*) which formulate the ideological foundation of the group, define its structure, its command regime, the rights and duties of combatants, sanctions, and other basic principles of the organization (Ferro and Uribe 2002: 57).

The FARC's organizational strength is evident in its ability to effectively punish deviant behavior and collect taxes and revenues. Each company (*compañía*) is subject to a daily disciplinary review called *la Relación*, which deals with the daily offenses or misbehavior of members of the company. Depending on the gravity of the offense, the company commander either determines the individual punishment or reports the offense to a higher level commander (Ibid: 58). The most serious offenses<sup>22</sup> are dealt with in the 'war council', a procedure in which each member of the front votes on whether the accused should be put to death by firing squad or given a lesser punishment. A former FARC combatant explains:

The whole front participates in the war councils. The person accused is given someone to defend them. You are allowed to speak up for your friends. But it can be dangerous. They had a saying in the camp: 'the regulations have no friends' (cited in HRW 2003: 68).

In the confiscated computer of the 58<sup>th</sup> Front, Gutiérrez Sanín (2008: 13) finds that offenses, together with their respective punishments are carefully documented within the

---

<sup>22</sup> Serious offenses include: being caught asleep on guard duty if the company is on the march or in combat at the time; being caught while trying to run away or being absent without leave; surrender or loss of a weapon; being a police or army infiltrator or informer; using a weapon against a fellow combatant; firing rounds in populated areas; robbery, extortion, or violence against the civilian population; repeated drug or alcohol abuse; and rape (HRW 2003: 70).

Front: “Indiscipline, disorder, failure to maintain the soldierly standards of the force (not cleaning the military equipment, lack of hygiene), alcoholism, and aggressions against civilians, are the most common transgressions. The prototypical disciplinary action is imposing a chore on the delinquent (digging ditches, carrying firewood)”. Gutiérrez Sanín also finds that the scale of punishment is very coarse and escalation in the severity of the sanction occurs very fast, increasing the effectiveness of the disciplinary effort.

Tight hierarchical control is also evident in the group’s ability to effectively raise revenue without resources being diverted for the personal enjoyment of the combatants or the group’s top leadership. A key organizational principle of the FARC is that no combatant, regardless of their position of authority, has individual access to rents. Cases of individual enrichment of guerilla high ranking leaders are not known and there are only a limited number of accounts of mid-level commanders who have deserted taking with them considerable sums of money; this, despite the large sums of money handled by the group<sup>23</sup> (Gutiérrez Sanín and Giustozzi 2010: 845).

Although the FARC is deeply involved in the coca business, no personal interactions of individual combatants with drug traffickers are permitted. Rather this relation is highly bureaucratized (Gutiérrez Sanín 2008: 15). Moreover, there is severe vigilance over the group’s finances and political and administrative sanctions are in place to block the temptation of ostentatious consumption: financial misconduct can be sanctioned with capital punishment (Gutiérrez Sanín 2004: 269). Commander Julio Rincón states:

---

<sup>23</sup> There are no precise estimates of the FARC’s finances. However, a governmental committee (*Comité Interinstitucional para la Finanzas de la Subversión*) concluded in 1991 that the group’s income was larger than that of all the Colombian industries put together. Although in academic circles this is considered a gross overestimation, it still hints at the magnitude of the group’s finances (Gutiérrez Sanín 2004: 266).

Drug trafficking spoiled several of our combatants, that is true (...) That is why my first decree was: nobody is allowed to wear golden chains, if someone gives you gold, you give it to me and I send it to the *Secretariado* (cited in Ferro and Uribe 2002: 61, own translation).

Discipline is not only enforced through tight vertical control, but also through the promotion of group cohesion. The FARC is a highly cohesive entity. Violent clashes or internal purges between different levels of leadership and rank-and-file commanders are practically unknown (Gutiérrez Sanín and Giustozzi 2010: 845). Based on the principles of agrarian egalitarianism members within the group have developed a “strong consciousness of a shared destiny” (Gutiérrez Sanín 2004: 269-270). This is reflected in the following statement by Luis, a former FARC combatant:

Amongst the *guerrillerada* exists a strong friendship and everybody takes care of each other (...) Relationships there are very nice, everybody looks out for each other, of the things of each other. For example if so-and-so is sick I look out for his food. Everybody looks out for each other's things. In order to get things, everyone has to struggle. Because of this, there is equality; if there is not enough food for everyone we all wait until we find more (cited in Medina Arbeláez 2009: 64, own translation).

Discipline in the FARC is particularly strict and secondary group cohesion high. This strongly suggests that combatants at all organizational levels adhere strongly to the group's strategy. Most likely, civilian abuse (or lack thereof) is the result of specific orders that have been carried out and not the product of agent misconduct.

As was previously discussed, the AUC are a federation of local and regional movements brought together under a single command and control structure. However, the group presents a much laxer hierarchical structure than the FARC, giving individual commanders in the second and third tier generous autonomy to operate without consultation to the group or immediate superiors (Gutiérrez Sanín 2008: 18; HRW 2003: 75). This form of weak verticalism is also reflected in the group's discipline structures.

Although the group has harsh disciplinary measures in place, their application is far more arbitrary than in the FARC.

Article 13 of the AUC's Foundational Statute and Disciplinary Regime envisages demotion and expulsion as the most serious sanctions that can be applied for serious violations of the group's statutes. Moreover, articles 14 and 15 state that transgressions are to be dealt with by a Regional Disciplinary Tribunal (*Tribunal Disciplinario Regional*), composed of the commander of the block, the commander of the front, the offender's immediate superior in the unit to which he belongs, and a representative of the AUC's regional political structure. However, evidence suggests that this statute is not applied and, that as is the case in the FARC, serious breaches of discipline are punished not by expulsion, but often by execution (HRW 2003: 76).

The arbitrary nature of punishment within the organization is reflected in the following statement by a former AUC combatant: "The organization has tough discipline. There are great commanders, but there are others who love to kill. Those guys are real assassins. If one of them catches you asleep on guard duty, he'll cut your throat there and then so that you never wake up" (Ibid). Similarly, another demobilized combatant recalls:

A lot of times you are playing with a friend and end up fighting, and then you can end up dead because the commander gets angry; he kills both, just for fighting. And then the rules are broken through the organization's own hands; but not the hands of the combatant, the hands of the commander (cited in Medina Arbeláez 2009: 66, own translation).

Moreover, other than the FARC, the AUC is based on an economic system that offers selective incentives for leadership and rank-and-file members. The AUC's involvement in the coca business is based on a tight network of personal interactions with drug traffickers and the mutual expectation of personal enrichment (Gutiérrez Sanín

2008: 15). Although access to rents from trafficking, extortion and kidnapping is a privilege awarded to middle and high-level commanders, there is considerable slack for indiscipline and there are known cases of rank-and-file profiting from the spoils of war (Ibid).

The rash distinction between the benefits of the leadership and those of the lower ranks also undermines group cohesion and increases the likelihood of principle-agent tensions. As Gutiérrez Sanín (2008: 27) suggests, the asymmetric incentive scheme “permanently undermines, every hour and every minute the chain of command, promoting internal conflict and the coveting of other comrades’ goods and territory”.

While discipline within the AUC may be harsh at times, there is also considerable slack for indiscipline. Coupled with the lack of secondary group cohesion, ineffective hierarchical control within the group might explain while several of the instances of sexual violence attributed to the group are opportunistic.

## **5.7 Findings compared**

Consistent with the theory, the combination of group norms banning the sexual abuse of civilians, female participation in the armed group, and strict command and control appears to account for the low levels of conflict-related sexual violence by the FARC. Organizational theories, however, can less clearly account for the patterns of sexual abuse perpetrated by the AUC. Conceivably this is because contrary to the FARC, the AUC is organizationally more fragmented; it presents high heterogeneity with regards to norms and the enforcement of discipline within the group. The sexual victimization of civilians therefore not only varies across both groups, but also very likely within the AUC.

The FARC's restrained use of sexual violence is particularly striking as it engages in significant levels of other forms of violence against civilians. Such victimization occurs in the context of bombings, reprisal attacks, kidnapping and racketeering. However, the group promotes strict norms against the sexual abuse of civilians. Not only are these norms codified but they are reinforced through the stringent political and ideological training of combatants and the leadership's tight control over combatants' sexuality. Moreover, there appears to be a strong link between the gender composition of the group and the establishment of norms banning sexual violence. As a highly feminized force, the FARC has witnessed an arduous struggle for gender equality within its ranks which has possibly resulted in the gradual transformation of gender roles. The transformation within the organization is very likely to be reflected in its behavior towards female civilians.

Female combatants also appear to be instrumental in upholding such norms. One of the few testimonies of sexual abuse by the group suggested that after a civilian held in captivity was raped by commander 'Beltrán', he was confronted by one of the *guerrilleras* in his unit who then proceeded to report the offense to the commander's superiors. Given the group's effective command and control structure and the consistent enforcement of disciplinary measures, such forms of deviant behavior are severely punished. Individual combatants are therefore deterred from engaging in opportunistic behavior and prioritizing individual preferences over the group's strategy and goals.

This stands in stark contrast to the AUC. There is no evidence of generalized group norms related to the sexual abuse in this group; rather, commanders have greater leeway in establishing such norms within their individual units. The influence of female cadre is

also much more limited within the AUC and the limited participation of women within the group appears to serve the purpose of reinforcing patriarchal structures and chauvinistic militaristic practices. However, here again, there appears to be heterogeneity across units.

Contrary to this, weak vertical control is a generalized feature of the group. Commanders are reported to frequently bypass the chain of command and the punishment of combatant's is highly arbitrary. This creates significant room for indiscipline. Moreover, the rash distinction between the benefits of the leadership and those of the lower ranks also undermines group cohesion, ultimately increasing the likelihood of principle-agent tensions and creating an enabling environment for individual combatants to engage in opportunistic sexual violence. When norms related to sexual violence are ambivalent, the importance of the command and control structure in deterring this form of victimization appears to be greater. The absence of hierarchical and disciplinary strength therefore accounts for the high levels of sexual abuse perpetrated by this group.

However, this is merely a partial conclusion as it only accounts for episodes of opportunistic sexual violence. As the CNRR database showed, abuses by the AUC often served a strategic purpose. A question that then emerges is how do patterns of opportunistic and strategic sexual violence relate? And is opportunistic sexual violence subsumed by strategic sexual violence? The AUC therefore presents an extremely interesting case. Without closer examination of the organizational dynamics across and within the group's units, our understanding of the pattern of civilian sexual victimization remains, at best, partial.



## **6. Conclusion**

Wartime sexual violence belongs to one of the most horrific aspects of modern warfare. However, unlike much of the literature until the early 2000s suggested, it is not a ubiquitous element of war. The prevalence of sexual violence varies not only across conflicts but also within them. This thesis analyzed the variation of conflict-related sexual violence between two Colombian armed actors, the FARC and the AUC. Drawing from theories that link the organizational structures of armed groups to their violence repertoires, it examined the importance of group norms, the gendered composition of armed groups and the effectiveness of command and control structures to explain the variation of conflict-related violence in the Colombian conflict.

The findings suggest that the combination of group norms banning the sexual victimization of civilians, high levels of female participation and strict command and control account for the relative absence of sexual violence from the FARC's violence repertoire. On the other hand, the absence of group wide norms coupled with weak hierarchical and disciplinary strength explains the high levels of sexual abuse perpetrated by the AUC.

However, the AUC is also organizationally much more fragmented, suggesting that there is significant variation in the patterns of sexual violence within the group. Ideally, therefore, one should compare patterns of sexual violence not just between groups but also across subunits of the armed factions. Such an approach would not only improve our understanding of how the different types of hierarchies developed by armed groups affect their violence strategies, but also as Wood (2006: 334) suggests, can help clarify the

causal force of the suggested explanatory variables at different organizational levels. On a more practical level, a better understanding of the strategies and motives of combatant parties may allow for more precise and potentially effective policy interventions able to curtail this brutal form of civilian victimization.

## Bibliography

- AGIRRE ARANBURU, X. 2010. Sexual Violence beyond Reasonable Doubt: Using Pattern Evidence and Analysis for International Cases. *Law and Social Inquiry-Journal of the American Bar Foundation*, 35, 855-879.
- ALLEN, B. 1996. *Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia*, University Of Minnesota Press.
- AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL 2004. Colombia: "Scarred bodies, hidden crimes": Sexual Violence against women in the armed conflict. London: Amnesty International.
- ANNAN, J., BLATTMAN, C., MAZURANA, D. & CARLSON, K. 2009. Women and Girls at War: "Wives", Mothers, and Fighters in the Lord's Resistance Army. *Unpublished Manuscript*.
- BAAZ, M. E. & STERN, M. 2008. Making sense of violence: voices of soldiers in the Congo (DRC). *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 46, 57-86.
- BAAZ, M. E. & STERN, M. 2009. Why Do Soldiers Rape? Masculinity, Violence, and Sexuality in the Armed Forces in the Congo (DRC). *International Studies Quarterly*, 53, 495-518.
- BROWNMILLER, S. 1975. *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*, New York, Bantam Books.
- BUSS, D. 2009. Rethinking 'Rape as a Weapon of War'. *Feminist Legal Studies*, 17, 145-163.
- BUTLER, C. K., GLUCH, T. & MITCHELL, N. J. 2007. Security forces and sexual violence: A cross-national analysis of a principal-agent argument. *Journal of Peace Research*, 44, 669-687.
- CARD, C. 1996. Rape as a Weapon of War. *Hypatia*, 11, 5-18.
- CARPENTER, R. C. 2006. Recognizing gender-based violence against civilian men and boys in conflict situations. *Security Dialogue*, 37, 83-103.
- CNRR 2011. *Mujeres y guerra: víctimas y resistentes en el Caribe colombiano*, Bogotá, Taurus.
- COHEN, D. K. 2011. Causes of Sexual Violence During Civil War: Cross-National Evidence (1980-2009). *Minnesota International Relations Colloquium*.

- COOMARASWAMY, R. 2002. Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (UN Doc E/CN.4/2002/83/Add.3).
- COPELON, R. 1994. Surfacing Gender: Reconceptualizing Crimes against Women in Time of War. In: STIGLMAYER, A. (ed.) *Mass Rape: The War Against women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- CORPORACIÓN HUMANAS 2009. *Guía para llevar casos de violencia sexual: propuestas de argumentación para enjuiciar crímenes de violencia sexual cometidos en el marco del conflicto armado colombiano*, Bogotá, Ediciones Ántropos.
- FARR, K. 2009. Extreme War Rape in Today's Civil-War-Torn States: A Contextual and Comparative Analysis. *Gender Issues*, 26, 1-41.
- FARWELL, N. 2004. War Rape: New Conceptualizations and Responses. *Affilia*, 19, 389-403.
- FERRO, J. G. & URIBE, G. 2002. *El orden de la guerra: las FARC-EP, entre la organización y la política*, Bogotá, Centro Editorial Javeriano.
- GEORGE, A. L. & BENNETT, A. 2005. *Case Studies And Theory Development In The Social Sciences*, Mit Press.
- GRANADA, S., RESTREPO, J. A. & VARGAS, A. R. 2009. El agotamiento de la política de seguridad: evolución y transformaciones recientes en el conflicto armado colombiano. In: RESTREPO, J. A. & APONTE, D. (eds.) *Guerra y violencias en Colombia: herramientas e interpretaciones*. Bogotá: Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, EPUJ.
- GREEN, J. L. 2004. Uncovering Collective Rape: A Comparative Study of Political Sexual Violence. *International Journal of Sociology*, 34, 97-116.
- GUEMBE, M. J. & OLEA, H. 2006. No Justice, no peace: Discussion of a legal framework regarding the demobilization of non-state armed groups in Colombia. In: ROHT-ARRIAZA, N. & MARIEZCURRENA, J. (eds.) *Transitional justice in the twenty-first century: beyond truth versus justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- GUTIÉRREZ, F. & BARÓN, M. 2006. Estado, control territorial paramilitar y orden político en Colombia. In: GUTIÉRREZ SANÍN, F. (ed.) *Nuestra guerra sin nombre: transformaciones del conflicto en Colombia*. Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma.
- GUTIÉRREZ SANÍN, F. 2004. Criminal Rebels? A Discussion of Civil War and Criminality from the Colombian Experience. *Politics & Society*, 32, 257-285.

- GUTIÉRREZ SANÍN, F. (ed.) 2006. *Nuestra guerra sin nombre: transformaciones del conflicto en Colombia*, Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma.
- GUTIÉRREZ SANÍN, F. 2008. Telling the Difference: Guerrillas and Paramilitaries in the Colombian War. *Politics & Society*, 36, 3-34.
- GUTIERREZ SANIN, F. & GIUSTOZZI, A. 2010. Networks and Armies: Structuring Rebellion in Colombia and Afghanistan. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 33, 836-853.
- HRW 1995. The Human Rights Watch Global Report on Women's Human Rights. New York: Human Rights Watch.
- HRW 2003. "You'll learn not to cry": Child Combatants in Colombia. New York: Human Rights Watch.
- HUMPHREYS, M. & WEINSTEIN, J. M. 2006. Handling and manhandling civilians in civil war. *American Political Science Review*, 100, 429-447.
- ICG 2004. Demobilising the Paramilitaries in Colombia: and achievable goal? *Latin America Report*. Bogota/Brussels: International Crisis Group.
- ISIKOZLU, E. & MILLARD, A. S. 2010. Towards a Typology of Wartime Rape. Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion.
- KALYVAS, S. N. 2006. *The logic of violence in civil war*, Cambridge; New York, Cambridge University Press.
- KING, G., KEOHANE, R. O. & VERBA, S. 1994. *Designing social inquiry: scientific inference in qualitative research*, Princeton University Press.
- KOTH, M. 2005. To End a War: Demobilization and Reintegration of Paramilitaries in Colombia. Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion.
- LEIBY, M. L. 2009. Wartime Sexual Violence in Guatemala and Peru. *International Studies Quarterly*, 53, 445-468.
- LIJPHART, A. 1971. Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method. *The American Political Science Review*, 65, 682-693.
- LIJPHART, A. 1975. II. The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research. *Comparative Political Studies*, 8, 158-177.
- MACKINNON, C. A. 1994. Rape, Genocide, and Women's Human Rights. In: STIGLMAYER, A. (ed.) *Mass Rape: The War against women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

- MATTA ALDANA, L. A. 1999. *Colombia y las FARC-EP: origen de la lucha guerrillera. Testimonio del comandante Jaime Guaraca*, Bogotá, Txalaparta.
- MEDINA ARBELÁEZ, C. 2009. *No porque seas paraco o seas guerrillero tienes que ser un animal : procesos de socialización en FARC-EP, ELN y grupos paramilitares (1996-2006)*, Bogotá D.C., Colombia, Universidad de Los Andes, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Departamento de Ciencias Políticas.
- MESA DE TRABAJO MUJER Y CONFLICTO ARMADO 2001a. Primer Avance del Informe sobre Violencia Contra las Mujeres y las niñas en el conflicto armado colombiano. Bogotá: Ediciones Ántropos.
- MESA DE TRABAJO MUJER Y CONFLICTO ARMADO 2001b. Segundo avance del informe sobre violencia contra las mujeres y las niñas en el conflicto armado colombiano. Bogotá: Ediciones Ántropos.
- MESA DE TRABAJO MUJER Y CONFLICTO ARMADO 2003. Tercer avance del informe sobre violencia contra las mujeres y las niñas en el conflicto armado colombiano. Bogotá: Ediciones Ántropos.
- MULLINS, C. W. 2009. 'We Are Going to Rape You and Taste Tutsi Women'. *British Journal of Criminology*, 49, 719-735.
- OXFAM 2009. Sexual Violence in Colombia: Instrument of War. OXFAM.
- PARDO, R. 2007. *Fin del paramilitarismo : ¿es posible su desmonte?*, Barcelona; Bogotá, D.C., Ediciones B Colombia.
- PARLERMO, T. & PETERMAN, A. 2011. Undercounting, overcounting and the longevity of flawed estimates: statistics on sexual violence in conflict. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*.
- PETERMAN, A., COHEN, D. K., PALERMO, T. & HOOVER GREEN, A. 2011. Rape Reporting During War Why the Numbers Don't Mean What You Think They Do. *Foreign Affairs* [Online]. Available: <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/print/67936?page=2> [Accessed 15 March 2012].
- PIZARRO LEONGÓMEZ, E. 2006. Las FARC-EP: repliegue estratégico, debilitamiento o punto de inflexión? In: GUTIÉRREZ SANÍN, F. (ed.) *Nuestra guerra sin nombre: transformaciones del conflicto en Colombia*. Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma.
- RANGEL, A. 2005. *El poder paramilitar*, Bogotá, Editorial Planeta.
- RESTREPO, J. A., SPAGAT, M. & VARGAS, J. F. 2006. El conflicto en Colombia: quién hizo qué a quién? Un enfoque cuantitativo (1988-2003). In: GUTIÉRREZ SANÍN, F. (ed.) *Nuestra guerra sin nombre: transformaciones del conflicto en Colombia*. Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma.

- ROTH, F., GUBEREK, T. & HOOVER GREEN, A. 2011. Using Quantitative Data to Assess Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Colombia: Challenges and Opportunities. Bogotá: Benetech Human Rights Program / Corporación Punto de Vista.
- ROZEMA, R. 2008. Urban DDR-processes: paramilitaries and criminal networks in Medellín, Colombia. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 40, 423-452.
- SÁNCHEZ, F. & CHACÓN, M. 2006. Conflicto, Estado y descentralización: del progreso social a la disputa armada por el control local, 1974-2002. In: GUTIÉRREZ SANÍN, F. (ed.) *Nuestra guerra sin nombre: transformaciones del conflicto en Colombia*. Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma.
- SANDAY, P. R. 1981. The Socio-Cultural Context of Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study. *Journal of Social Issues*, 37, 5-27.
- SEIFERT, R. 1994. War and Rape: A preliminary Analysis. In: STIGLMAYER, A. (ed.) *Mass Rape: The War against women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- SEIFERT, R. 1996. The second front: The logic of sexual violence in wars. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 19, 35-43.
- SIVAKUMARAN, S. 2007. Sexual Violence Against Men in Armed Conflict. *European Journal of International Law*, 18, 253-276.
- SIVAKUMARAN, S. 2010. Lost in translation: UN responses to sexual violence against men and boys in situations of armed conflict. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 92, 259-277.
- SKJELSBÆK, I. 2001. Sexual Violence and War. *European Journal of International Relations*, 7, 211-237.
- SNYDER, R. 2001. Scaling Down: The Subnational Comparative Method. *Studies in Comparative International Development (SCID)*, 36, 93-110.
- STIGLMAYER, A. 1994. The Rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In: STIGLMAYER, A. (ed.) *Mass rape: the war against women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- TATE, W. 2001. Paramilitaries in Colombia. *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 8, 163-175.
- TATE, W. 2009. From Greed to Grievance. The Shifting Political Profile of the Colombian Paramilitaries. In: BOUVIER, V. M. (ed.) *Colombia: building peace in a time of war*. Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.

- THORNHILL, R. & PALMER, C. 2000. *A natural history of rape: biological bases of sexual coercion*, MIT Press.
- UN SECURITY COUNCIL 2008. Resolution 1820 (UN Doc S/RES/1820).
- VALENCIA, L. 2009. Ni Justicia, Ni Paz. In: PIZARRO, E. & VALENCIA, L. (eds.) *Ley de justicia y paz*. Bogotá, Grupo Editorial Norma.
- VARGAS, G. 2009. Urban Irregular Warfare and Violence Against Civilians: Evidence From a Colombian City. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 21, 110-132.
- VARSHNEY, A. 2003. *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*, Yale University Press.
- WEINSTEIN, J. M. 2007. *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, Cambridge University Press.
- WOOD, E. J. 2006. Variation in sexual violence during war. *Politics & Society*, 34, 307-341.
- WOOD, E. J. 2009. Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When Is Wartime Rape Rare? *Politics & Society*, 37, 131-161.
- ZARKOV, D. 1997. War Rapes in Bosnia: On Masculinity, Femininity and Power of the Rape Victim Identity. *Tijdschrift voor Criminologie*, 39, 140-151.