Multiple Masculinities In Guerrilla Movements: Co-Existance Of Hegemonic And Non-Hegemonic Patterns In Gender Relations Among M-19 Militants In Colombia[1]

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Abstract :

This article engages with the constructions of militarised masculinities in the context of insurgent armed struggle. It argues that guerrilla movements organisations generate a different gender regime than standing armies operating in conflict contexts. This reconfiguration of gender relations amounts to alternative, non-hegemonic constructions of insurgent masculinities and femininities that refrain from legitimising hierarchical gender relations. Resorting to recent discussions among scholars engaging with *hegemonic masculinity* this article aims to disentangle hegemonic from non-hegemonic practices that circulate alongside in the context of insurgent armed struggle. It aims to further the gendered knowledge production on non-hegemonic masculinities in armed conflicts through an empirical exploration of gender constructions within the *19th of April Movement* (M-19) in Colombia (1974-1990). Using eight semi-structured interviews with former militants of the M-19 (three female and five male) conducted in the course of fieldwork in 2010 in Bogota this research will distinguish un-hegemonic patterns in gender relations that circulate alongside hegemonic patterns.

Key words: Latin America - Colombia – Movimiento 19 de Abril – guerrilla – hegemonic masculinities – alternative masculinities - insurgent masculinities – Insurgent femininities -

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Gerilla Hareketlerindeki Çoklu Erkeklikler: Kolombiya'daki M-19 Militanlarının Toplumsal Cinsiyet İlişkilerindeki Hegemonik Olan ve Olmayan Örüntüler

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Özet :

Bu makale militarist erkekliklerin direnişçi silahlı mücadele bağlamındaki oluşumunu ele almaktadır. Makale gerilla hareketlerinin çatışma ortamında faaliyet gösteren daimi ordulardan farklı bir toplumsal cinsiyet rejimi oluşturduğunu savunmaktadır. Toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkilerinin bu yeni konfigürasyonu, hiyerarşik cinsiyet ilişkilerini meşrulaştırmaktan kaçınan, alternatif ve hegemonik olmayan direnişçi erkekliklerin ve kadınlıkların oluşması anlamına gelir. Hegemonik erkeklikle ilgilenen araştırmacıların son dönemde yürüttükleri tartışmalara dayanan bu makalenin amacı, silahlı çatışma bağlamında görülen hegemonik olan ve olmayan pratikler arasında bir ayrım yapmaktır. Makale, Kolombiya'daki 19 Nisan Hareketi (M-19) (1974-1990) içindeki cinsiyet kurgularını ele alan ampirik bir araştırma vasıtasıyla, silahlı çatışma bağlamında ortaya çıkan hegemonik olmayan erkekliklerle ilgili cinsiyet perspektifli bilgi üretimine katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Üçü kadın, beşi erkek, sekiz eski M-19 militanıyla gerçekleştirilen adet yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlara dayanan bu çalışma, hegemonik örüntülerin yanı sıra görülen hegemonik olmayan cinsiyet ilişkilerinin farkına dikkat çekecektir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Latin Amerika, Kolombiya, Movimiento 19 de Abril, gerilla, hegemonik erkeklikler, alternatif erkeklikler, direnişçi erkeklikler, direnişçi kadınlıklar

The present article explores the co-existence of hegemonic and non-hegemonic patterns of gender relations in the context of the *19th of April Movement* or *Movimiento 19 de Abril* (M-19), a guerrilla movement that emerged at the beginning of the 1970s in Colombia. Over the past decade researchers in the field of critical masculinity studies have increasingly explored militarised masculinities in the context of armed conflict. Scholars have identified distinct constitutive elements that shape constructions of masculinities in accordance with specific militarised institutions, such as the armed forces (Barrett 2001), peacekeeping missions (Bevan and MacKenzie 2012, Withworth 2004), private security contractors (Higate 2012, Joachim and Schneiker 2012) and insurgent guerrilla movements (Gosses 2001, Dietrich 2012). Different researchers have used Raewyn Connell's concept of *hegemonic masculinities* to explore complex gendered power relations within social groups (*Masculinities* 37). This concept posits that, at any given time, one form of masculinity, in contrast to others that also exist, is culturally exalted or hegemonic and maintained through subordination of femininity, as well as marginalization of these other masculinities (77ff.). The perspective of hegemonic masculinity to understand gender constructions in militarised institutions is particularly fruitful as the "army is an institutional sphere for the cultivation of masculinity; war provides the social space for its validation" (Cock 58). In this context, the privileged male connoted values and behaviour encompass physical strength, displays of violence, weapon use, a fighting spirit, ability to endure hardships, courage and determination (Apelt and Dittmer 71, Barrett 81, Goldstein 268). As combat activities are decidedly constructed as masculine, they require the devaluation of female connoted traits (Hooper 47-48). In consequence, the successful embodiment of militarised masculinities lies in soldiers' ability to distance themselves from feminine qualities (Whitworth 2004). This is achieved through contemptuous references to women, which also aim to associate femininity with weakness, vulnerability and feebleness (Cock 61) and

"often result in the performance of an aggressive and frequently misogynist masculinity" (Theidon 4).

While the link between militarisation and hegemonic masculinities has been well established in academic literature, some of the underlying assumptions around gendered constructions in militarised contexts, such as binary gendered conceptions, gender difference, and devaluation of femininities and superiority of masculinity cannot be squarely mapped onto every militarised institution. For example, guerrilla movements have been known to build insurgent masculinities alongside a comrade identity, which is not based on salient gendered difference or the devaluation of femininity (Dietrich *Looking beyond violent militarised masculinities* 491). McKeown and Sharoni argue that militarised institutions operating in *contexts of liberation* – in contrast to *contexts of domination* - involve practices, policies and discourses designed to bring about freedom, justice and equality, and thus seek to radically transform existing institutions and change the political status quo. These organisations have the potential to be more flexible, mobile and susceptible to change (McKeown and Sharoni 3-4). In consequence, gender arrangements within insurgencies do not appear to display some of these hegemonic qualities. Therefore, in this article I argue that constructions of masculinities in guerrilla movements do not always conform to gendered underpinnings associated with militarised contexts displaying hegemonic patterns in gender relations. Instead, the specific location, the opposition to the status quo, the context of asymmetric warfare with political-military organisations should be considered to capture nuances, complexities and contradictions.

Empirical research suggests that constructions of masculinities within guerrilla movements in Latin America differ from other militarised institutions in so far as their political-military struggles to topple state power shapes insurgent norms and practices that make gender difference and hierarchical and complementary gender constructions less salient. The operational efficiency in the context of asymmetric warfare requires to access diverse militant capacities to obtain a competitive advantage over state armed forces. The

introduction of gendered difference and strict sexual division of labour in this context would make insurgent practices less efficient. The comrade identity that circulates in insurgent organisations does not appear to require a differentiation or devaluation from the 'feminine other' for the construction of insurgent masculinities. Despite operating in a militarised context of armed struggle, in which male connoted values - such as physical strength, courage, capacity to handle weapons and decision-making skills - prevail, insurgent organisations do not conclusively employ a rationale that guarantees the dominant position of male militants and subordination of female militants in its political-military realm. On the contrary, as gender difference and its complementary hierarchy are less important, male and female militants create and identify spaces to shape alternative gender arrangements. In this article, I attempt to explore to what extent hegemonic and non-hegemonic patterns in gender relations circulate within guerrilla movements and the constructions of masculinity and femininity that emerge in the context of insurgent armed struggle.

This article has two interrelated objectives. The first is the exploration of the particularities of insurgent gender constructions within the specific context of a the M-19 guerrilla movement, which operated from 1974 to 1991 in Colombia. Unlike other rural guerrilla movements operating at the time in the country[1], the M-19 emerged as an urban guerrilla movement, which gradually expanded to rural areas. The M-19 adopted democracy as the basis for its political and military project (García Durán, Grabe Loewenherz, and Patiño Hormaza 15) and was characterised by the strong emotional bonds among militants that allowed for their informality and flexibility and particular insistence on equality (Madariaga 120ff.). In consequence, the M-19 understood the more than 30% female participation (Londoño and Nieto 42) as a contribution and proactively involved women in visible political and military positions[2]. These elements indicate the M-19 disposition to promote alternative constructions of masculinity and femininity.

This article's second objective is to explore the role of different insurgent femininities as co-constitutive forces of the masculinities embedded in a context in which hegemonic and non-hegemonic patterns of gender relations co-exist. In this article I apply Mimi Schipper's *Gender Hegemony Framework* (86-89), which provides practical guidance for empirical explorations to identify multiple gendered constructions in localised contexts. To distinguish hegemonic from non-hegemonic patterns in gender relations, Schipper's framework establishes a clear definition and calls for consistent labelling of hegemonic characteristics, qualities and practices that perpetuate male dominance and circulate a legitimising rationale for women's subordination (87). According to Schipper, h*egemonic masculinities* are the "qualities defined as manly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to femininity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Schippers 94). Focusing on characteristics, qualities and practices that disseminate a legitimising rationale for male dominance and women's subordination generates inconsistent use of the concept (Beasely 2008, Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). A critical review of the empirical applications of this concept indicates that its inconsistent application has resulted in labelling men who have comparatively more power than others in a given context as expressions of hegemonic, despite the fact that these masculinities may actually do little to legitimate men's authority over women (Beasley 88). A critical revision also shows that hegemonic masculinities are not necessarily the most common or most socially celebrated in a localised context (Beasley 89). This article thus distinguishes hegemonic patterns in gender relations in the context of the M-19, which are based on gendered difference and in which hierarchical complementarity is salient and demonstrate the emergence of hegemonic features (Schippers 90-91) versus non-hegemonic patterns. As gendered relationality between female and male insurgents is prioritised and proactively disrupts hierarchical complementarity that secure male dominance and privilege, non-hegemonic patterns in gender relations diminish the importance of

gender difference. Non-hegemonic patterns thus hinder the circulation of legitimising rationales that promote male superiority and subordination of femininities.

Schipper's gender hegemony framework acknowledges the role of femininities as co-constitutive force of masculinities and advocates for a more consistent focus on femininities in masculinity research. Paying attention to constructions of femininity is crucial to unveiling idealised gendered attributes that circulate as well as characteristics that members of each gender category are assumed to possess and in this manner articulates and defines gender positions and their mutual relationship (Schippers 90). Understanding femininities as co-constitutive of masculinities suggests that female and male insurgents must have a required buy-in for the installation of these hegemonic patterns in their daily practice. Through the identification of which instances specific constructions of femininities serve the interest of male dominance and benefit men as a group, three distinct femininities emerge: *hegemonic femininities* that require buy-in, *pariah femininities* that overtly challenge the former and *non-hegemonic or alternative femininities* that resist and subvert attempts to install hegemonic patterns in insurgent practice. *Hegemonic femininities* are the "characteristics defined as womanly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Schippers 94). Since the qualities of *hegemonic masculinities* must remain unobtainable to women in order to guarantee men's exclusive access to these characteristics, Schipper proposes the empirical identification of *pariah femininities*, which are those practices and characteristics that when embodied by women are considered a threat to existing hegemonic masculinities and femininities, and thus require their stigmatization and feminization (Schippers 95ff.). This distinction between hegemonic femininities and pariah femininities allows for a conceptual space to identify *alternative insurgent femininities* that do not comply with nor are stigmatised in relation to

hegemonic masculinities and promote practices that counter hegemonic patterns (Schippers 95).

This article is conceived as an empirical exploration that uses data gathered in interviews with five men and three female ex-combatants of the *19th of April Movement* in 2010 in Colombia. The selection criteria centred on M-19 militants who were formally embedded in the organisation and were engaged in political and military tasks, holding various ranks. The interview questions aimed to explore prevalent insurgent norms and practices that shaped insurgent gender arrangements. Engaging with ex-combatants two decades after their formal disarmament and demobilisation meant that these people had a space to critically reflect on their involvement and the guerrilla movement. The interviews, which took place in recurrent sessions and included some interviews in pairs were transcribed and analysed using the qualitative data analysis software Atlas-ti.

Prior to presenting the analysis of the primary data, the following section provides a brief summary of this guerrilla organisation in the Colombian context. The first section of the analysis of the primary data focuses on the emergence of non-hegemonic gender relations in the operational sphere and in the second, hegemonic patterns of gender relations within affective relations are addressed. The third section maps the multiple insurgent gender constructions in a context of co-existence of hegemonic and non-hegemonic insurgent gender relations. In the conclusion, I identify the key findings and propose additional areas of research to further the understanding of multiple gender constructions in insurgent contexts.

The M-19 in the Colombian context

Colombia's internal armed conflict is currently the longest armed confrontation on the American continent. The complex dynamics of multiple and intertwined conflicts allowed for the emergence of a variety of armed actors that challenged the state's monopoly of

legitimate use of physical force. Over time, the evolving objectives of armed actors resulted in varying intensities of multiple conflicts, such as land-grabbing or drug-related conflicts. The conflicts started decades before the M-19 emerged in 1974 and continued well after the 1990 bilateral peace negotiations between this guerrilla organisation and the Colombian government, which paved the way for demobilisation.

The M-19 originates in the rigged presidential elections held on 19th of April 1970, which resulted in the defeat of retired General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla and his *National Popular Alliance Party* (ANAPO) (Chernick 199). Concurrent with losing the presidential seat, the conviction that political participation through elections was an unviable option gained ground among M-19's predominantly young and urban founding members[3]. Following a period of consolidation in the early 1970s, on 17th of January 1974, the M-19 made its first public appearance in a symbolic action that was to characterise the group's modus operandi in the years to come. A M-19 commando took the sword of independence hero Simón Bolívar[4] from a museum in Bogotá, stating that its services were needed for a 'second struggle for liberation in South America' (García Durán, Grabe Loewenherz, and Patiño Hormaza 9). The M-19 had a nationalist, democratic and revolutionary agenda (Guaqueta 421), started as largely urban revolutionary project, rejected foreign dogmatism, advocated for guerrilla unity and built an emotional community among militants:

The urban guerrilla of the M-19 carried out armed propaganda actions to address the needs of impoverished people, and ensured increased levels of acceptance of their uprising (Guaqueta 424). Audacious military operations included the theft of 5,700 weapons from the Colombian army installations at *Canton Norte* in December 1978, using a tunnel dug from a nearby home (García Durán, Grabe Loewenherz, and Patiño Hormaza 13). In February 1980, M-19 militants took 50 people hostage from the embassy of the Dominican Republic in Bogotá demanding liberation of the group's political prisoners (Chernick 199). Public opinion was negatively affected by the M-19's assault on the Palace of Justice on 6th of November 1985, which provoked severe

government repression and resulted in approximately a hundred deaths (García Durán, Grabe Loewenherz, and Patiño Hormaza 14). While concentrating its actions in urban centres, the M-19 increased its technical and tactical military capacity so as to engage in armed battles with the Colombian Army in rural settings and to develop 'mobile' guerrilla fronts throughout the country (García Durán, Grabe Loewenherz, and Patiño Hormaza 13). Ascendency within the M-19 played out along the rural and urban divide and shaped gendered power dynamics between women and men, as I explain below.

Additionally, in ideological terms, the M-19 placed Colombian context at the centre of its actions instead of mirroring international 'revolutionary' developments in Russia, China, Cuba or Albania (Toro 53). Opposing traditional Marxist doctrines, the M-19 distanced itself from sacrifice, heroism and martyrdom that prevailed in other organisations at that time (Toro 53). The M-19 also saw their historical role as an intermediary between the government and the 'common people' in addition to building bridges among different guerrilla organisations. The creation of the *National Guerrilla Coordination* in 1985 brought together five political-military organisations aimed at exerting pressure on the government through a common political and military front (Chernick 200). From 1987 onwards, this joint guerrilla front, re-named *Guerrilla Coordination Simon Bolivar*, was reorganised to include the country's strongest insurgent group, the FARC. The openness of the M-19 to different social justice causes also encompassed the highlighting of female participation as symbolic capital and thus, increase the organisation's credibility as an agent for social change in the country.

The M-19 also developed a particular spirit and emotional community (Madariaga 115). In the M-19 worldview, passion, more than ideology or theory, was capable of unleashing emotions and enthusiasm to mobilise people for the insurgent's cause (M-19 1995:1). The guiding principle of the *chain of affection* was that strong emotional bonds and tenderness between supporters and family, and among militants, served as a shield against fate and danger, which "rendered the militant almost

immortal" (M-19 162). The M-19 asserted cheerfulness, pleasure and enjoyment in the course of its militancy, which it considered "a struggle for life" (Madariaga 117):

> The M, more than a political group, was always a way of being, of doing, of seeing, an attitude towards life, which was the same in politics, enjoying things, talking the language of the people, incorporating the magic; it is like a mentality and an alternative way to resolve problems (Vera Grabe, commander of the M-19, cited in Toro 49).

This emotional community bound by a strong comrade identity shaped the particular gender arrangements within the M-19, as detailed below.

The strategic shift of the revolutionary goal from socialism to democracy enabled openness towards political negotiations with the government throughout the struggle[5]. In January 1989, the bilateral negotiations between the M-19 and the government led to the establishment of a camp in Santo Domingo (Cauca) that included sectors of civil society to the peace talks. In March 1990, the M-19 signed a peace agreement that fostered the installation of the National Constituent Assembly, which led to Colombia's progressive Constitution (1991). The M-19 ceased its insurgent operations and integrated with a new legal political party, *Democratic Alliance M19* (AD-M19), in which many of its former members were candidates in national and municipal elections (Guaqueta 421).

1) Emergence of non-hegemonic gender relations in the operational sphere

Based on the localised context of the M-19, this section explores the norms and practices developed within the guerrilla movement to demonstrate that the introduction of non-hegemonic patterns of gender relations was linked to the organisation's political-military struggle. The M-19's efforts to enhance operational functionality of insurgent militants for armed struggle in a context of

asymmetrical warfare between the guerrilla movement and the armed forces of Colombia enabled the organisation to foster non-hegemonic gender relations.

Concurrently, the M-19 introduced idealised constructions of the revolutionary 'new man', which promoted a willingness to engage in individual as well as collective change (be better), and additionally encouraged a conscientious rupture with the prevailing civilian norms and practices (be different). Jaime Bateman, general commander of the M-19, has explained:

> The revolutionary struggle, due to its dynamic, creates a 'new human/man' [*hombre nuevo*] different from the normal human being who is created in a bourgeois society, who is individualistic, who is solitary, lacking perspectives, who lives exhausted, who lives frustrated. The revolutionary struggle creates a totally different individual, who lives from the community, from collectivism, from his [her] own action, not of the action of others, who lives from idealism and from the healthy things in life (M-19 121).

Despite the fact that the concept of the 'new man' was framed in male terms, it was understood among militants as a generic term for 'human', comprising idealised traits which female insurgents also aspired to embody. The M-19 assumed that its members were revolutionaries in the making and had not yet achieved the goal of social justice, an argument recurrently used to explain, if not to excuse, prevailing gendered inequalities.

> we are people in a process of transformation because we are not yet transformed. We come from a society with vices and within the organisation this equality was the objective; it was a process of construction (Man 1).

This process towards individual and collective transformation shaped idealised gender constructions within the M-19.

Combining the drive for operational functionality and the disposition to live up to the expectations of becoming a 'new human', the M-19 introduced a new *comrade* identity which put forth ideals of collectivism, idealism and zeal to achieve the revolutionary goal. This *comrade* identity enabled a reconfiguration of gender relations within the M-19, which made gender difference between female and male militants less salient than those on which male dominance was conventionally based. In consequence, the comrade identity allowed for the introduction of new insurgent masculinities and insurgent femininities and promoted alternative modes of engagement between these, based on comrade complicity. According to one woman interviewed:

> It seems that gender relations do change. It is not very noticeable or conscious but yes, they do change. Because a level of relations is built during militancy between women and men that allows for a type of complicity which is not possible in other levels of life; and it has an immense strength (Woman 2).

The gendered underpinnings of the 'new man' promoting social change and aiming to counter injustices foster idealised versions of human behaviour that impacted a type of restraint and self-control within insurgent masculinities. Further, these idealised traits led to a retreat from claiming customary male privileges that ensured male control over women, particularly in the political-military realm, such as accepting the military ranks of female combatants and their orders and recognising female comrades as militants in their own right. These constructions along the lines of operational efficiency were not without frictions, but male militants seemed to accept these practices and derive an emotional benefit since they were seen as a step towards embodying revolutionary ideals.

The 'new femininity' installed by the M-19 promoted idealised versions of the *compañera politica* or the female political comrade (Dietrich *La compañera politica* 105), which dissociated female comrades from political passivity and financial and emotional

dependence on men. In turn, ideal notions of female militants included assertiveness, self-reliance and creativity. During armed struggle female combatants were encouraged to refrain from care responsibilities associated with motherhood, free from social sanctions or labelled as unfeminine. In this sense, the M-19 enabled the introduction of a new insurgent femininity with traits and attributes functional to advance the armed struggle in a context in which male connoted values prevailed. I posit that the constructions of the female political comrade constitutes an alternative femininity, rather than an erasure of femininity through masculine assimilation (Bayard the Volo 421, Molyneux 39) or as male equivalents (Bernal 149). The female political comrade identity also shaped insurgent masculinities.

However, power differences in non-hegemonic patterns were discernible, although these failed to legitimise a rationale ensuring the subordination of insurgent femininity. Messerschmidt distinguishes two patterns of non-hegemonic masculinities among masculinities that failed to culturally legitimise patriarchal relations, namely dominant masculinities and dominating masculinities. Dominant masculinities refer to the most powerful or the most widespread types in the sense of being the most celebrated, common, or current forms of masculinity in a specific social setting (72). In the context of the M-19, *dominant* insurgent ideals emerged were associated with the 'heroic' rural combatants. One woman interviewed explained: "Of course, there was a myth centred on the rural guerrilla fighter. Those who had not gone through the rural armed experience in the mountains had not yet completed their initiation ritual" (Woman 2). In consequence, the ascendency of rural combatants required the devaluation of urban lifestyle. Another female former combatant explained: "Those of us who came from urban operations were seen as lazy, going from restaurant to restaurant, and having a good time. In the city there is money, there are cars - there you have everything" (Woman 3). Despite being considered the most widespread type and associated with idealised and valued attributes, *dominant* versions were not hegemonic, as they reconfigured militant relations along urban rural divides and not along gendered lines.

Dominant features cannot be strictly mapped onto male or female insurgents; female rural combatants had ascendency over urban male combatants as the former embodied physical strength in rural struggle. The frictions resulting from this reconfiguration of power relations for male urban combatants is explained by one male former combatant detailed:

> Seeing a female comrade that is carrying wood and swinging an axe and finishes by saying: '*compañero* [comrade], you are rather slow' is a terrible aggression. And she carries a backpack with 2 to3 pieces of wood, but you are barely able to carry one. Those are complicated moments and on top of it she is saying those kind of things out loud (Man 1).

This reflection underpins gendered expectations of the man interviewed, in so far as he interpreted the assertion of the female rural combatant in a dominant position as aggression and public humiliation, while failing to demand authority in this rural context. At the same time, this man implicitly acknowledges the female combatant's capacities in the specific context as functional to advance the insurgent cause. Despite the fact that physical strength, a conventionally male connoted value, continues to be promoted as a core value within the insurgent armed struggle, female rural combatants embodying functional physical strength could gain ascendency over urban male combatants. Consequently, conventional gendered power relations were able to shift within the insurgent armed struggle, while making gendered difference less pertinent.

The value given to merit and capacity linked to the advancement of insurgent armed struggle resulted not only in female and male combatants being held accountable to the same behavioural standards, but also in applying the same rewards and promotion policies to militants. This practice, which disrupted the constructions of gendered difference, superseded the promotion of men on gendered grounds as is

characteristic of hegemonic practices. Expounding on this point, another male former combatant stated:

> In my experience, I did not see it in the sense of being a man or a woman. I don't know if for a woman to be ascended implied an additional challenge or not. I couldn't tell. For us, as men, to ascend…, I don't think that I had any advantage to become an officer, nor do I think that any of the other men had. The advantage is constituted by your organisational capacity and your capacity of command, of how you handle difficult situations, in the battle, in combat, that you can control the situation (Man 4).

This explanation demonstrates the manner in which internal norms and practices that reward certain behaviour undermined constructions of gendered differences.

Despite the frictions that emerged from the introduction of new insurgent masculinities and femininities, militants recurrently stated that no distinction existed between female and male capacities and shared the assumption that there was already an improvement with regards to gendered inequalities prevailing in Colombian society in general. In consequence, male and female insurgents who were not very conscious about gendered inequality did not proactively examine the manner in which gender difference remained intact in their other daily interactions.

Dominating masculinities, understood as those commanding and controlling specific interactions and exercising power and control over people and events (''calling the shots'' and ''running the show'') is the second pattern of power differences within non-hegemonic masculinity (Messerschmidt 72). Rank and related authority, particularly that rooted in merit and capacity used to determine promotions, did not necessarily legitimate male dominance over women. To the contrary authority conferred by rank on men or women could enforce practices of enhanced gender equality. I posit that the hierarchy or rank in the insurgent context cannot be simply labelled as hegemonic, despite the fact that it

yields power to individual militants. Militants' buy-in of the hierarchical structure was possible since it was linked to operational functionality, as a male former commander from the M-19 states:

> There is no time in war. The times in war are very precarious; the times in war are not defined by you/us, but always defined by 'the others'. There is often not enough time to engage in consultations. Therefore the command structure is important and hierarchies are very important and hierarchies are contrary to equity, so, the military life is an accepted life of inequality and accepted subordination (Man 4).

In this context, rank structure contributed to operational efficiency and was not interpreted as a contradiction, but as a contributing factor to M-19's aim to achieve social justice.

Although the hierarchy of rank accepted subordination, it ensured further buy-in through 'meritocracy' that structured access as promotion dependant on leadership and military skills and recognition by subordinate militants. This practice enabled women's access to positions of high political and military rank. The M-19 promoted women to command positions, most notable among them being Vera Grabe and Nelly Vivas, who were members of the *Senior Command*, while in the early 1980s three other women commanded political-military structures in the capital city of Bogota (Sanchez-Blake 62). When the M-19 existed, the access of women into high ranks was unprecedented. Although this situation was used for propaganda purposes, it should be noted that throughout the history of the M-19 women never constituted half of the members of the *Superior Command*, nor did any woman ever become of the general commander of the organisation.

However, hierarchical rank structure was not introduced to subordinate women and the structure had the potential of disrupting female subordination through rank based on merit and capacity as one woman former militant describes:

> There is one thing in armed struggle that allows for more equality; in the context of armed struggle, there is no merit that you didn't need to earn, because life itself was at risk (…) There is no such thing as 'he is more handsome', those things do not matter (…) and if it's a woman or a man does not matter. What matters is getting us out of this problem, so it is about who is most capable (Woman 3).

Some militants were able to take advantage of the space for non-gendered subordination provided by the meritocratic system, while others remained immersed in gendered relations that affected their power over others.

Hierarchical structure of rank, characteristic of *dominating* power relations, in practice promoted non-hegemonic practices. The command structure that issued orders, regardless of the gender identity of the person in charge, were complied with. Seeing women in command positions, acknowledging their merit and capacity in different armed actions and obeying to female command, had an impact on insurgent gender relations and intrinsically challenged the circulation of hegemonic rationale that legitimised masculine superiority based on the subordination of femininity. Thus, rank structure per se should not be viewed as always hegemonic since it can entail the opportunity to reconfigure gender relations with regards to gendered difference and complementary hierarchy. However, this potential depends on the manner in which it is applied in practice since the abuse of rank authority also has the potential of installing and fostering hegemonic patterns.

Despite the prevalence of male connoted attributes, the drive for operational functionality, in particular the need to capitalize on the capacities and contributions of all militants, the M-19 enabled the introduction of norms and practices that did not require subordination of female militants and thus promoted non-hegemonic patterns in insurgent gender relations. Although the alternative gender constructions of insurgent masculinities and femininities, which were

not based on gendered difference and hierarchical complementarity that guarantees male privilege, did exist, elements of friction for male and female insurgents were also present.

2) Affective relationships: as space to assert hegemonic patterns of gender relations

The installation of non-hegemonic patterns in gender relations through insurgent norms and practices did not necessarily translate into full gender equality in the M-19. Rather operational functionality limited gendered discrimination, made gender difference less important in the distribution of tasks and granted access to command positions based on merit and capacity. Instances of gendered inequality based on gender difference and conceptions of hierarchical and complementarity in gender relations coexisted with the former, serving to propagate assumptions of male superiority. However, these cases emerged less in the political-military realm of the M-19, but more in the continuation of affective (heterosexual) partner relationships. Despite its disposition for change in the political-military realm, the M-19 constructed operational functionality in such a way to maintain (heterosexual) partner relationships as an ordering principle to regulate relationships under the pretence of avoiding negative impacts on militant efficiency. This normalisation of partner relationships generated gender difference based on a different set of rules and behavioural expectations for women and men and allowed for complementary hierarchies, in which men could assert their masculine prerogatives by subordinating femininities. A female interviewee highlighted the distinct gendered expectations that coexisted with comrades and with male partners:

> Among the comrades, gender relations do change, but among couples they do not. Comrades are one thing and husbands are another. I cannot talk about all male militants. I like men, but, god, beware of 'husbands'. The whole

> gender dimension plays out when they (men) become one's husband or the husband of any of the female militants (Woman 2).

A distinct set of rules and expectations governed the affective partner realm versus that of the militant comrade realm, thus demonstrating the entanglement between hegemonic and non-hegemonic patterns in insurgent gender relations. Female guerrilla fighters navigated the two realms of contradictory gendered expectations. In the political-military sphere, female militants were expected to be self-assertive and claim their space as political and military actors. In the affective partner sphere, women were expected to accept their male partner's authority and manifest their subordination. Multiple insurgent femininities and masculinities were shared by the extent to which insurgent women bought into, complied or resisted these contradictory gendered expectations.

Hegemonic patterns of gender relations in the M-19 were more salient in the affective partner sphere, particularly with the assertion of male privilege and the recourse to establishing men as the dominant partner. According to Schippers, h*egemonic masculinities* are "qualities defined as manly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to femininity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Schippers 94). Since in the context of the M-19, qualities linked to *hegemonic masculinities* coexisted alongside idealised traits of the revolutionary combatant, the full embodiment of hegemonic characteristics were not culturally celebrated, thus limiting its prominence. Nonetheless, the practices associated with male dominance continued to circulate and to be asserted through the conflation of male superiority with operational functionality and efficiency. Male dominance as 'heads of household' was legitimised through the assumed naturalisation of complementary gender relations and the continuity to ensure 'order' in partner relationships and avoid the disruption of operational efficiency in the political-military realm. Since jealousy or inter-partner violence were considered as disruptive of operational

functionality, the M-19 aimed to regulate these issues for their potential to disrupt political-military efficiency. Concurrently, other tendencies to assert hegemonic patterns in the militant realm were not addressed. In consequence, insurgent men aimed to assert certain hegemonic qualities in the realm of their relationships free from the threat of sanction, effectively undermining un-hegemonic practices prevalent in the political-military realm. Example of hegemonic qualities that were asserted by male insurgents in the militant realm include enforcing gendered difference that allowed male insurgents to maintain multiple concurrent affective relationships, a practice that was sanctioned when overtly practiced by women. Additionally, the attempted appropriation of female partners' political work was not sanctioned since it was viewed as a privilege rooted in complementary gendered conceptions. Another example was the maintenance of rank authority in private relationships, in which informal and formal power was granted to female partners so men could opt out of the responsibilities of paternity under the guise of alleged incompatibility between parenthood and militancy.

Furthermore, hegemonic patterns in gender relations were asserted around monogamy. As one women interviewee stated, manliness was proven through an active sexual drive and multiple relations: "They (men) have a position in which they sleep with ten women, they do not miss out on a single opportunity" (Woman 2). In contrast, gendered expectations for women established an ideal of fidelity in which women's overtly promiscuous behaviour was supressed, as one women interviewee explains:

> The famous phrase of that (male) commander was 'it doesn't look good that these insurgent women change male partners like they change their underwear'. Consequently, the commander reprimanded women, based on morality, while at the same time he had his formal partner and another woman by his side (Woman 1).

Women's open promiscuity was generally constructed as a threat to internal order and a transgression of militant discipline and treated as

disruption of operational efficiency. In consequence, women's sexuality required regulation, which sometimes occurred with a public reprimand, as one of the female former combatants suggested:

> She was an outstanding combatant; she was a talented sharp shooter. But in the political meetings, she was always criticised for having too many partners. They admonished her to put order in her relationships, to change her behaviour and to stop acting 'crazy' being with one partner and then another. Women like that existed and they were suddenly removed them from the (guerrilla) forces; their image destroyed. They removed them or the women themselves, defeated, asked for leave (Woman 4).

In this context, promiscuous femininities constitute *pariah femininities*, which are expressions embodied by women who threaten to contaminate hegemonic gender relations and consequently face stigmatisation and feminization (Schippers 96). Since qualities of *hegemonic masculinities* must remain unavailable to women to guarantee men's exclusive access to these characteristics, women's open promiscuity was constructed as threatening male privilege. These promiscuous femininities were inescapably constructed as feminine ('acting crazy') and sanctioned (removal of threatening women from the guerrilla forces) (Budgeon 8). The defence of the masculine hegemonic privilege of maintaining multiple relationships took precedence over operational efficiency, as 'an outstanding combatant' and 'talented sharp shooter' was separated from the fighting forces. However, the threat of public sanction for visible promiscuity did not end this practice, as women became increasingly cautious and less visible in their multiple relationships. Ironically, hidden promiscuous practices were actually enabled through elements of operational efficiency, such as available birth control measures, enforced compartmentalisation in the context of clandestine actions, tasks and whereabouts, which granted women spaces of autonomy. In this sense, operational functionality generates spaces, but regulates them in accordance with what is considered to be disruptive the internal order.

The tendency to extend male privilege from the affective partner realm to the militant realm was also manifested in the attempt of male partners to appropriate women's work as their own, as this was considered a legitimate resource of complementary partner relationships:

> Operating in a the world of men also meant to eventually fall in love with someone who attempts to use this feeling to obtain benefits from your work, nd being aware that this might happenand that you have to take care of your political work. The feelings are one thing and political work is another. This also happened to me. Well, I fell in love with someone who knew that I was involved in leading the urban political work for the organisation and he wanted to take advantage of my political work so he could figure prominently. 'This woman is in love with me, so I take her work and it is mine'. Because it is the traditional way of (doing) things; women usually relinquish the merits of their work. When I say, 'no, wait a moment, this work is mine', his argument in public was: 'You criticise me, because you are in love with me' (Woman 3).

This male militant attempted to usurp his partner's political work by co-opting the altruistic and collective values important to operational efficiency for his own gain and in assertion of male superiority. The resistance of the female militant to relinquish her work is framed as her being 'emotional', 'selfish' or guided by her desire for recognition. Further, this demonstrates the resort to an aggressive form of stigmatisation within an insurgent logic, namely to allege that a woman prioritises personal interests over the organisation's revolutionary goal, while ignoring the man's attempt to undermine the meritocratic system of the militant realm.

Hegemonic masculinity further draws strength from the naturalisation of gendered difference and the establishment of reproductive care-work as an exclusive female-coded sphere. Within the

M-19, motherhood was not constructed as idealised trait of insurgent femininity since it diminished operational functionality for armed struggle. The apparent incompatibility between maternity and insurgent responsibilities led to the argument that motherhood should be postponed until the end of the armed struggle and supplemented with the availability of contraceptive pills and the option of abortion. Despite the fact that pregnancies were allowed within the M-19, there was a social sanction attached to prioritising 'an individual choice' over the collective goal, as expounded by one male interviewee:

> Within (the M-19) there is a regulation or orientation to not to provide more children for this war, for the oligarchy. And it was like saying: "sister, you knew about this rule, why did you mess up?". It was a way to sanction this decision to continue with the pregnancy (..) (Man 1)

When female combatants decided to continue their pregnancies, the double burden of militancy and care-work was placed strictly on them, as one woman explains:

> I told them (male comrades): when I have a husband like your wives, my life is going to be easy. But in the meantime one has to work double for her militancy and has the work of raising children. I had my first child under very difficult circumstances. So, it is not the same for them (men) to maintain their militancy and be fathers than for one of us to be a militant and to be a mother. For us, it was much more difficult (Woman 1).

In terms of child-rearing responsibilities, insurgent mothers were not only overburdened, but held to the same standards as other militants and faced criticism when not being able to fully comply, as one woman former militant explained:

> Ina certain manner, male militants had some help because they had a woman who washed the clothes, and made his food; she would also wake him up in the morning so he

> wasn't late for his appointments. But not (for) women. This was very much discussed when I had my daughter. To fulfil the tasks as a militant, I woke up at 4 am, I washed her clothes, I made baby food, I prepared her soup, I heated hot water for the thermos. I had to do many things to be able to leave at eight and when I arrived late at an appointment, the comrades then were already there and for them it seemed like I was failing to comply with my responsibility (Woman 3).

The maintenance of gendered difference associated with parenthood overburdened women as it maintained the same requirements and expectations for operational efficiency and functionality, which intrinsically heightened male dominance.

In contrast, male insurgent militants had the option of fathering children without gendered expectations of responsible paternity and could even disown their children, alleging – in line with operational functionality – that paternity was not compatible with militancy. When asked about how he handled paternity during his insurgent militancy, a male militant replied: "You did not live paternity in the mountains. I don't have children. Yes, there are some kids that have my surname, but they have not been my children" (Man 2). While operational functionality theoretically could also extend the same option to female militants, in so far as motherhood is not an idealised trait of insurgent femininity, this was not as prevalent among women as among men.

The maintenance of two spheres governed by contradicting norms and practices was furthered with the acceptance of complementary gender relations among affective partners. For example, female militants were often relocated their high-level male partners changed locations in Colombia. The relocation of women contradicted the meritocracy installed in the political military realm by privileging the emotional stability of male partners over the efficient use of the women's militant capacities. This situation resulted in a weakening of women's standing within the organisation, as a female former militant recalls:

> At that time Carlos Pizarro[6] asked me to sacrifice my development within the organisation so that my partner at that time, a young urban militant he believed in could develop his capacities in a military setting. So, I had to repeat the training, which I had already completed in order to accompany this young man because Carlos Pizarro wanted him to be militarily trained and this was detrimental to my own development. Carlos recognized this and said: 'When you come back, we'll talk again, but now go with him because he would not stay at the training because he is in love with you.' I was foolish enough accept that proposal. Stupid me (Woman 1).

This woman's reflection highlights the gendered expectations for female partners and their expected willingness to sacrifice their career opportunities and limit their personal advancement for the benefit of their male partners. Male privilege was again concealed by collapsing it with the overarching objective of the collective revolutionary struggle. Although female insurgents generally ended up accompanying their male partners on their missions, at times when this did not occur, female insurgents' resistance severed relationships, as one woman interviewee states:

> In my case for example, my comrade was a more military than political cadre, and our arguments were eternal, every day, from morning to night. I think that these arguments would not lead anywhere and there is a moment where he is sent to complete tasks in rural operations; and they start looking for a place for me in the military structures where he will be sent and I say, 'no, no.. my life is here. And what I do is this (political work). So, goodbye' (Woman 3).

These examples suggest that gendered complementary and hierarchical relations were based on the assumption of women's subordination.

Finally, *hegemonic masculinity* is enforced through maintaining the hierarchy of militant rank within affective relationships; this

practice, ensuring male dominance, was not readily available for female commanders who had to actively claim their position, as detailed below. Male commanders within the M-19 had the privilege to transfer informal and formal power to their female partners. This was possible with the introduction of the figure of 'first ladies'. This pattern emerged with increasing institutionalisation of the organisation and became particularly visible during the peace negotiations between the M-19 and the government, particularly "when the Movement opened up and daily life of the M-19 became more public and accessible through installation of peace camps" (Women 1). The figure of 'first ladies' furthered gendered difference in the access to hierarchy, as "women have the power of 'sleeping-up' the hierarchical ladder, a factor of power that men don't have" (Man 3). However, this so-called 'factor of power' was precarious since female partners were replaceable and this "first lady" position was based less on their merit as militants than on their qualities as affective partners. As a result their formal and informal powers were temporal and finished concurrent with the relationship's end. Effectively, the idea of first ladies undermined the meritocracy since these women often lacked a formal position in the rank structure since they were often young and/or new to the organisation. But more importantly, the existence of the figure of the first ladies trivialised the capacities of those women in important support and representative functions of the M-19 command structure, as one women close to this situation remembers:

> Despite the fact that they also fulfilled strategic functions as political advisors, thematic delegates, command representatives and mediated between the command structure and the troop, in some instances they were not recognised as 'reserve structures of the command' [*estructuras reserva del mando*] instead their political role was reduced to sleeping with some guy (Woman 3).

Moreover, this dynamic also weakend the role of women who had ascended in the ranks based on their own capacity and happened to maintain a relationship with a commander.

The assertion of male privilege, which originated in partner-relations, in the militant realm illustrates the co-existence of hegemonic and non-hegemonic patterns of insurgent gender relations. The following section will use these findings to identify the multiplicity of masculinities and femininities that existed within the context of the M-19.

3) Multiple insurgent gender constructions and the co-existence of hegemonic and non-hegemonic insurgent gender relations

As previously stated, femininities are co-constitutive of insurgent masculinities. Based on this premise, the distinct and multiple gender constructions within the M-19 can be mapped. In a context of co-existence of hegemonic and non-hegemonic patterns of gender relations, it is important to identify attributes and practices that can be embodied at different times by the same persons, rather than singling out types of women or men.

As explained in the previous sections, the M-19 required operational functionality from their militants who prioritised the collective revolutionary project over individual life choices and demonstrated commitment to the revolutionary goals. The idealised attributes of the comrade identity had gendered underpinnings and enabled the construction of alternative insurgent femininities and masculinities that were functional for the advancement of the political-military struggle in a particular context. Excessive constructions of gendered difference and complementary hierarchy were overlooked, which led to the co-existence of rationales that legitimised superiority of masculinities and subordinated femininities.

Hegemonic masculinities and femininities

Patterns of *hegemonic masculinity* emerged from the naturalisation of heterosexual affective relations that were maintained as functional ordering principle. This principle ensured male dominance of the role of 'heads of household'. Gendered constructions based on gendered difference and hierarchical and complementary relations between female and male militants served to maintain male privilege. Contradictions between the militant and partner identities emerged as male privileges were no longer restricted to affective relations but rather extended, successfully or not, to the operational political-military sphere largely governed by non-hegemonic norms and practices. The assertion of superiority of masculinity often relied on co-opting or appropriating the concepts of operational functionality and altruistic militant values for personal gains.

As it contradicted the individual transformation of the "new man" and relied on the abuse of hierarchical authority, the embodiment of *hegemonic masculinity* countered the idealised version of the revolutionary and heroic combatant. For example, the male rank and file combatant recalls the attempts to separate him from his female partner under the guise of operational functionality (i.e. developing their potential as insurgent militants) so higher ranking commanders could establish a relationship with her, he claims:

> At that time and until today, *la Flaca* [the skinny one—a nickname] was a very beautiful woman. And how could I, as rank and file combatant, have such a beauty by my side? So they said: 'Let us see how we can separate them, move her away in order to seduce her'. And that was what they did. But I only realise this now. At that time, I did not think about it this way. I was convinced that the commanders saw her capacities and wanted to develop her potential and also wanted to develop my capacities for the armed struggle – which now can be interpreted as a rather machiavellian and macabre move. So they convinced me,

> '*Comrade,* you have been chosen to conduct this task'. (..) We spent seven years together (..) Although they tried to separate us, they were never able to. We only separated after the demobilisation (Man 1).

At the time, the existing trust in the organisation prevented the male comrade from identifying these decisions as an intentional move to separate him from his partner, motivated by selfish interests of male leadership in the organisation.

The attempt to assert dominance over other insurgent men through the 'possession' of comrade's female partners was a more common abuse of the rank structure. In the following example, a male commander resorts to continuous subordination and public ridicule of a male rank and file militant in order to assert his own privilege as commander in order to 'get the woman', as one women interviewee states:

> In the early days of the organisation, there was a case involving a comrade who came originally from the *National Liberation Army* (ELN), with traditional ELN formation that had mobilised in popular struggle and came from a really rough neighbourhood. He cast his eyes on the prettiest girl around, who was the partner of a rank-and-file militant, a university student, a swimmer; he was a very sweet boy, not at all *machista*. They had been a couple since they were fifteen years old. So the commander starts to seduce her. And how does he do it? Here is where the issue of masculinities comes in – all the time ridiculing the rank-and-file comrade, humiliating him, destroying him, using his rank to his advantage. The commander assigned this man the most difficult tasks, ridiculing him when he did not accomplish them. And eventually he takes his woman and the commander became 'the man of the hour' who gets the woman (Woman 1).

This narration stresses the abuse of authority to assert male superiority in the political-military realm. Furthermore, this example constitutes a hegemonic feature in so far as the 'possession' of women as sexual objects was used to buttress hierarchies among male combatants. In this case, this abuse of authority was eventually sanctioned, as the superior command structure also relieved this commander from his responsibilities. While this sanction was interpreted as 'progressive' by many militants, a female combatant had a different assessment of the situation: "of course, the *macho commanders* were defending the affront that another man has been stripped of his property (…) they were all saying, 'well, this can happen to me, too' (…) and this sanction indicates male complicity" (Woman 1). While in this particular case, the transgression of the code of conduct was sanctioned, other less visible attempts, such as the separation of couples were not acknowledged and were perpetuated through male complicity.

The perpetuation of hegemonic patterns in gender relations also required the buy-in, acceptance and contribution from women, who resorted to *hegemonic femininities* when embodying "characteristics defined as womanly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Schippers 94). In the context of the M-19, womanly characteristics implied assertiveness as political-military agents for change, engaging in combat, as well as deciding against or postponing motherhood. The result was the legitimisation of a hierarchical and complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity , such as the case in which women accepted their male partners' promiscuity. One women interviewee narrates: "Those men easily maintained three female partners at the same time. And the three women knew perfectly that they were three (..) They slept and lived together in the same house" (Woman 1). Moreover, *hegemonic femininities* within the M-19 accepted the appropriation of their work by selflessly renouncing the acknowledgement and merit of their actions. In addition, they assumed a subordinated role when they were deployed alongside their male

partners, contributing to the male heads of household privilege. Hegemonic femininities also meant the acceptance of the double burden as militants and mothers to compensate for irresponsible paternity. These hegemonic femininities also ensured a complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity by living up to gendered behavioural expectations as, one woman interviewee characterises as "'the good girls', who only slept with their partners, did not get drunk, and did nothing wrong" (Woman 2). In other words, the avoidance of so-called disruptive behaviour such as promiscuity, excessive complaining or voicing jealously, were avoided.

The embodiment of *hegemonic femininities* in the M-19 implied balancing contradictory gendered expectations in which women militants were assertive political comrades and women in affective relationships served as submissive complements to their male partners.

Non-hegemonic masculinities and femininities

Non-hegemonic expressions of femininity aimed to live up to the militant comrade ideals while resisting gendered expectations of subordination as partners and implementing non-hegemonic norms and practices in their affective partner relations. *Non-hegemonic femininities* were motivated by the contradiction between militant practices put forth for operational functionality (meritocratic rank system, idealisation of the 'new man' and attached aspirations for transformative change) and gendered expectations of subordination to male authority.

Many female insurgents, refusing to embody *hegemonic feminities*, resisted the assertion of male privilege that had its origins in affective partner relations in their interactions with other. This included the refusal to give up the acknowledgement and merit for their actions, publically criticising the attempts to appropriate their work, or insisting on respect of their rank positions within affective relationships. They further resisted by arguing with their partners, refusing to comply or

raising formal complaints with the leadership structure. The following interviewee explains how she resisted her male partner's attempt to control the household finances, she states:

> The arguments with my partner were about his wanting to control our finances and only give me what I needed for a trip. But I had a higher rank and I was in the *National Directorate*, not him. Because there's an idea that men manage the couple's finances, while I had the higher hierarchy. Those were really tough discussions. (..) His argument was that the Commanders had given him the money. So I ended up stating that he had to give me exactly half of everything or I would not go on this trip because I was not going to risk my safety and in the case of an emergency and I would not have the means to go elsewhere. This is a manner in which the commanders highlighted the power of the male partner, even if he had no hierarchy and had less rank than I did and could also reject my commands (..) There is complicity among them and also his expecting that he could control me with money. The money they gave to him, who normally did not have any, power over me (Woman 1).

This example indicates how the assertion of male dominance often relies on complicity from other males, in this case those in higher command structures who gave the money to the man, undermining her higher rank.

As I have demonstrated embodying *non-hegemonic femininities* came at the cost of being branded selfish or considered disruptive of operational functionality and often implied tough decisions, such as separation from male partners. However, the guerrilla environment provided space for manoeuvring and navigating the contradictory and co-existing gendered expectations for female militants. When these did not overtly threaten hegemonic masculinities. When resistance was an outright challenge to *hegemonic masculinity*, such as the case of women

daring to practice aspects of *hegemonic masculinity* as seen in the example of *pariah femininities*, these female insurgents were stigmatised, considered a threat to operational functionality and often received public sanctions.

Beyond the resistance to specific attempts to assert male dominance, *non-hegemonic femininities* were also possible with the acceptance of *non-hegemonic masculinities* that emerge in complicity between comrades. Insurgent men embodied non-hegemonic gender patterns when they accepted their female peers on equal footing, acknowledged the meritocratic system as an ordering principle and respected rank positions regardless of gendered identity of the commander in charge. On a personal level, embodying non-hegemonic patterns entailed embracing the idea of transformative change by renouncing male privileges. The *dominant* or most frequent expressions of masculinities embodied by rank-and-file militants were those that aimed to live up to the idealised versions of the revolutionary fighter and were culturally celebrated within the M-19 rationale. Even when they held rank positions, as *dominating* versions of insurgent masculinities, commanders could engage in practices that promoted non-hegemonic practices and decisions that challenged subordination of femininities on gendered grounds.

The culturally celebrated versions of non-hegemonic masculinities were those that came the closest to practicing revolutionary ideals that integrated militants in the facets as combatants and as partners. In several instances, alternative insurgent masculinities co-existed with hegemonic masculinities. While some men might comply and actively enforce non-hegemonic patterns in the militant realm, the experiences analysed indicate that these same men could assert their privilege in the realm of their affective relationships. In other words, these male militants could buy-in but they did not have to, highlighting the manner in which non-hegemonic practices and hegemonic practices could, and did, co-exist.

Conclusion

By placing femininities at the centre of my analysis, I have aimed to explore multiple masculinities in the context of a historic guerrilla movement in Colombia. Insurgent organisations, as temporary institutions opposing the status quo and proposing social change, often generate an operational functionality that allows for non-hegemonic patterns in gender relations originating in the political-military sphere, while maintaining hegemonic idealised attributes of complementary relations of (heterosexual) affective relationships. Despite operating in a militarised context, in which male connoted attributes continued to be valued, alternative gender constructions in this case examined did emerge, but rather than replacing one system for another, hegemonic and non-hegemonic patterns co-existed. The reconfiguration of gender arrangements linked to the political-military sphere was made possible with the introduction of a new comrade identity that circulated idealised attributes and gendered behavioural expectations. These new gender arrangements also entailed changes for male insurgents in which women were viewed as their political peers and they abstained from exercising male privilege. At the same time, female combatants were encouraged to assume political and military roles and depart from prevalent roles as mothers and dependants.

Focusing on the constructions of insurgent femininities, particularly viewing these as co-constitutive of multiple insurgent masculinities, brings to light the diverse manners in which hegemonic and non-hegemonic patterns co-existed in insurgent gender relations. My identification of practices as militants and in affective relationships rather than on 'types' of women and men provides the conceptual space to capture the complexities and dynamics involved in the continuous (re)negotiations of gender arrangements. Multiple insurgent masculinities and femininities can be discerned in the women's and men's decisions to buy-in, resist or challenge everyday practices and gendered behavioural expectations. As I have shown, this occurs when male insurgents aim to assert their partner privileges with female

militants; when female insurgents maintain the rank structure in relation to their male partner or when female militants challenge gendered expectations by engaging in the same sexual practices as their male comrades. As such, I posit that 'pure' non-hegemonic or hegemonic masculinity do not exist as both depend on the specific context and concrete actions taken by female or male insurgents to comply with or challenge gendered behavioural expectations in the different realms.

My efforts to distinguish conceptually hegemonic from non-hegemonic practices aims to transcend discussions surrounding the possibility of gender-equality in insurgent contexts. Employing interviews with women and men former militants, I have mapped out instances in which male and female combatants identified improvements, changes, ruptures or continuation regarding insurgent gender relations within the larger context of gender arrangements in Colombian society in the 1970s and 1980s. Female ex-combatants interviewed valued the space that the M-19 gave to women in terms of their participation in a project of national liberation, being acknowledged as valued members of this political project and access to increased spaces for to exercise their agency, which for lack of a more precise concept, these women labelled 'more equal gender relations' between male and female combatants.

Furthermore, the consistent application of only labelling as hegemonic the practices that disseminate a legitimising rationale of superiority of masculinity and the subordination of femininity opens the possibility of exploring gender dynamics that emerge in the context of non-hegemonic power asymmetries, for example along urban-rural divides. This exploration has also demonstrated that hierarchies of rank are not intrinsically hegemonic features, but can enable hegemonic practices with the abuse of authority. Similarly, as much as the idealisation of the heroic insurgent combatant strongly corresponds to male connoted attributes valued in a militarised context, its construction is not always linked to the devaluation and subordination of insurgent femininities, and as such, cannot be labelled hegemonic. In addition, the assertions of hegemonic masculinities in the political-military sphere

were marginalised since it was counter to the idealised construction of the heroic combatant that conflicts with the male appropriation of women's work, advancing individual interests to the detriment of the collective project, and even entails sanctions when the practice involved an obvious abuse of power.

In conclusion, the findings presented in this essay aim to inform the research of other scholars interested in unpacking militarised gender constructions in the context of insurgent armed struggle. As I continue research on this topic, I envision the further exploration of the constructions of multiple masculinities and femininities in the context of the M-19 throughout the organisation's existence. In particular, research is needed that engages with the manners in which increasing institutionalisation of guerrilla movements entail shifts in gender norms and practices, starting with and the clandestine early work through the expansion of actions from urban to rural settings and finally culminating in the peace negotiations. Further, the co-existence of hegemonic and non-hegemonic patterns also opens the possibility of identifying the multiple constructions of masculinities and femininities in different work areas, such as political and community mobilisation, intelligence gathering, combat units or international diplomacy.

Secondly, to apply findings emerging from this exploration to map the constructions of multiple gendered constructions in other insurgent contexts, in order to establish to what extent the disposition for change and operating in a context of liberation can be generalised to other guerrilla movements.

Lastly, scholars interested in gender dynamics in the transitional justice period (transition from a context of armed conflict towards post-conflict) my findings have contributed elements to better explore the manner in which gender relations are affected by the dismantlement of insurgent organisations and the disappearance of the comrade identity within the context of disarmament and demobilisation, particularly the gendered mechanisms in the context of reintegration into civilian life.

It is my belief that my research and future explorations on connected topics contribute to furthering our understanding of how multiple gender constructions are created through constant re-negotiation embedded in which hegemonic and non-hegemonic patterns co-exist.

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Personal Interviews

Woman 1. Personal interview on 28 March 2010 and 16 April 2010 in Bogota.

Woman 2. Personal interview on 15 April 2010 in Bogota.

Woman 3. Personal interview on 2 April 2010 and 7 April 2010 in Bogota.

Woman 4. Interview on 19 November 2002 in Popayan.

Man 1. Personal interview on 18 April 2010 in Bogota.

Man 2. Personal interview on 13 April 2010 and 16 April 2010 in Bogota.

Man 3. Personal interview on 3 April 2010 and 16 April 2010 in Bogota.

Man 4. Personal interview on 13 April 2010 in Bogota.

[1] These include the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the People's Liberation Army (EPL).

[2] For example, the M-19 leadership designated Carmenza Cardona, alias *Chiqui,* as the chief negotiator in the hostage take-over of the embassy of the Dominican Republic in 1980, which for a long time was considered the most important action of the M-19.

[3] The founding members, as well as many of the collaborators and sympathisers of the M-19 in the popular neighbourhoods of cities like Bogota, came from the socialist ANAPO. Its commanders were dissidents of the *Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia* (FARC) and the Communist Party (Toro 52).

[4] Simón Bolívar was the 19th century liberator that resulted in independence o many Latin American nations from Spain.

[5] Starting with the (failed) cease-fire agreement (1983), searches for political negotiations included the agreement of *Truce and National Dialogue* (1984-1985), which allowed for the installation of 'peace and democracy camps' that served as the space for deliberation or creation of a *Commission of Democratic Co-existence* (1987), which was to construct a peace proposal for consideration of the government (Prieto Rozos 266-267).

[6] Carlos Pizarro was commander of the M-19 between 1986-1990. After the peace agreements, he became the presidential candidate of the *Alianza Democratica M-19* for the presidential term 1990-1994. He was assassinated during the election campaign on 26th of April 1990.