Capturing the antecedents and aftermath of a family business process

The entrepreneurial journey of a displaced agricultural family in Colombia

Enrique Sandino Vargas
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Doctoral Thesis in Business Administration

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The entrepreneurial journey of a displaced agricultural family in Colombia  
JIBS Dissertation Series No. 143

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Publisher:  
Jönköping International Business School, Jönköping University  
P.O. Box 1026  
SE-551 11 Jönköping  
Tel. +46 36 10 10 00  
www.ju.se

Printed by Stema Specialtryck AB 2020

ISSN 1403-0470  
A Dios.

A mi esposa, María Fernanda.

A mis hijos, Santiago y Leticia.

A mis padres y a mi familia.
Acknowledgement

This thesis would not have been possible without Divine help and the presence and good energy of people who have encouraged me since the beginning of this intense adventure.

I will begin by thanking God and the Virgin Mary because their hand and guidance are in everything I have done. All the glory is to you, Almighty God.

María Fernanda, my driving force, this PhD is a dream that came true thanks to you and your unconditional support. You always had the power to say no, but, on the contrary, you welcomed my idea from the beginning, and once I started, you encouraged me not to lose heart, and although you have warned me that you are not going to read this thesis, I dedicate it to you. Santiago, thanks for the thesis nailed to my wall in the office that you gave me three years ago, it is very powerful because when I felt tired, I would look at it, and it revitalized me. A Leticia, por cada frase de amor en mi tablero de la oficina que me permite escuchar tu voz alentándome en todo momento. Mafe, we will again be able to dance many parties, Santi, count on my company again at soccer matches, and Leti, hazme un espacio durante las clases de ballet. I love you with my soul.

En Colombia, a mis padres, quienes aún después de sus 103 años decidieron esperarme, soy lo que soy gracias a ellos y me sentiré muy orgulloso cuando les entregue personalmente este libro. A toda mi gigantesca familia, mis tíos y primos, a mis suegros y la familia de mi esposa, a mis amigos del alma, gracias por cada oración y constantes mensajes. A los súper-geniales, por su diaria preocupación y a Juan Plazas, mi diseñador gráfico, por su talentosa ayuda con mi metáfora.

A la familia Cabrera, quienes generosamente aceptaron ser mi caso de estudio y consecuentemente compartieron conmigo su vida y dramas. Carolina Cabrera no tengo palabras suficientes para agradecer toda su ayuda. Consideren mi tesis como un respetuoso reconocimiento a su historia.

To the Universidad Antonio Nariño, my institution, to Dr. Marta Losada Falk, to the Directors, and my work team, because the trust placed in me has always been complete.

To my awesome group of supervisors. Professor Leona Achtenhagen, you are undoubtedly spectacular! For every idea, I counted on your support, also offering me all possible ways to overcome difficulties, even inviting me to write in Spanish. You are the ideal supervisor. To Daniel Pittino, optimistic and accurate, always ready to provide solutions to the challenges of my research. To Marcela Ramírez-Pasillas, also a discussant during my research proposal, who came to my research at the right moment displaying impressive energy and work capacity, worrying about even the smallest detail, working with you has been one of the most enriching experiences of my PhD. Thank you so much.

To my opponents and evaluators. To Professor Allan Discua Cruz, for every suggestion and advice to improve my research, both during my visit to Lancaster
University and in my final seminar. To Professors Bengt Johannisson and Howard Aldrich, it is an honor to have you as part of this. Thank you for agreeing to be part of my final defense. Likewise, to Punam Thakur for the great work done in editing the language of this thesis and to Stefan Carlstein, who patiently helped me with EndNote.

At JIBS, my thanks go out to all of my great professors. To Mattias Nordqvist, because I remember that on December 12, 2016, while we were enjoying a glass of wine after a CeFEO business meeting, you listened to me and encouraged me to develop the case study that today is the subject of my thesis. To Francesco Chirico for having invited me to be part of CeFEO, a research center to which it has been an honor to belong, to all its members from whom I gained inspiration, and to Massimo Baù, who has continually supported me in my projects. To Kajsa Haag, who constantly spoke and guided me through her thesis. To Ethel Brundin for her constant and timely words of encouragement. To Anders Melander, who went beyond academics. Thanks to Leif Melin, Magdalena Markowska, Henry Lopez Vega, Markus Plate, Lucia Naldi, and Duncan Levinsohn for being open to discussion. And to everyone on the sixth floor, Guénola Nonet, Mark Edwards, Rolf Lundin, Michal Zawadzki, Dinara Tokbaeva, Hanna Amlöf, Elvira Kaneberg, Brian McCauley, Manuela Schmidt, and Naveed Akhter, for their daily support.

To all my fellow students during this doctorate, and especially those with whom I have shared the weekends at JIBS; Shanyun Lu, Marta Caccamo, Thomas Cyron, Anup Banerjee, Mohamed Genedy, Bryan Malki, Rida Ijaz, Zanele Lurafu, Jiyoung Kim, Oskar Eng, Songming Feng, Andrea Kuiken, Samuel Kamugisha, Samuel Mutarindwa, Annika Ehlers, Sindi Sheri, Erika Arevalo, Gemechis Terfa, Yilma Geletu, Toli Jembere, and Andualen Deb. To Sarah Fitz-Koch, discussant during my research proposal, thanks for every suggestion. Thanks, Joaquin Cestino, for the good ideas shared and Matthias Waldkirch and Pierre Sindambiwe, who patiently listened to me. Prince Chacko Johnson, my best wishes to you on this new journey. You are all brilliant and persevering people who will forever have my admiration and appreciation.

To my great friend, Sumaya Hashim, a brilliant woman of unsurpassed human quality. Together we have shared joys and sorrows, supporting each other, wishing each other the best. I will always treasure your friendship.

Finally, at JIBS to Susanne Hansson, Katarina Blåman, Philippa Berglund, Barbara Eklöf, and Ingrid Aronsson, because with their support everything is achievable. And to Helena Lindell, Robert, and Mikael Radouch for their daily and enjoyable visit.

My thanks could not be complete without giving special recognition to Cesar and the three angels who gave me their hand and cared for me like a son; Emilia, Maria E and Amparito, Las Manrique, my eternal gratitude. To the Huertas Spiroli family, friends who became part of my family, infinite thanks for always being with us.
And to all those who at the time of writing these acknowledgments I could not name, but who in some way gave me their friendship and support and made this doctoral adventure more pleasant. THANKS!
Abstract

This study examines a displaced agricultural family during its entrepreneurial journey in Colombia using a single case study, following an inductive and interpretivist approach. The main objective of the dissertation is to explain how family interactions, historical events, and context influence the decision to start and potentially reactivate an agricultural family business. It adopts the family as a unit of analysis for examining the intergenerational dynamics between spouses and siblings, parents, and offspring, and explores the family’s influence on decisions about creating a farming business, being forced to leave the land, and using the restituted land to potentially reactive the family business. The case study was conducted between 2016 and 2019 and includes a snapshot visit to the field, face-to-face interviews with members of three generations of the Cabrera family and other stakeholders, as well as abundant secondary materials. The snapshot visit to Colombia was important for obtaining sensitivity and an understanding of the displaced agricultural family on its land and the violence and crime that its members were exposed to. The study adopts a narrative approach for presenting the accounts of the second and third-generation members. It adopts a window of time of the family-life context from 1958 to 2019. Family members’ life stories highlight critical events during the entrepreneurial journey of the displaced agricultural family.

Following the family through its life context, this study interprets the agricultural family members’ accounts of the formation of the family and its business, its land, displacement from the land, restitution of the land, and the potential reactivation of the business against the backdrop of violence, crime, and land evictions in the country. The Cabrera family’s entrepreneurial journey is interpreted along four phases making sense of the family history.

The study extends habituation as a perspective for addressing the underlying processes that influenced the family’s entrepreneurial journey before the family created its family business and after the business exit. The habituation perspective is interpreted considering how the family built its family capital and familiness. Familiness’ products, the family habitus, and the family business habitus are housed in the family’s experiences and knowledge. During its entrepreneurial journey as a displaced agricultural family, the family also adopted different organizational forms, for instance, becoming a family or starting a family business, and as a result, gained the attributes of the transition affecting the construction of what constitutes its family habitus and the family business habitus. This dissertation proposes that the habituation perspective can help us better understand the entrepreneurial journeys of displaced agricultural families. Habituation provides a bridge connecting a family’s past with its present and future. Recognizing the contextual circumstances, habituation allows us to communicate a family’s past and its relation to the land, the former family business, and its familiness with the possibility of
reactivating the farming business on its land or the family’s involvement in new businesses. Then, the familiness will not be lost in the past. In this way, the experience and knowledge of family members involved in the family business work for the benefit of the entrepreneurial activity and give the former family business a new and broader dimension of development.

This dissertation also sheds light on the entrepreneurial journey of creating and recreating family dynamics around the possibility of starting and potentially reactivating a family business considering the family’s land and observing the effects of its contextual circumstances. Taking into account that the family clings to the family business for developing the family business habitus, the influence of the family business gains a greater scope, suggesting that the family business exerts a positive influence on the family and its interactions in favor of entrepreneurship and the family business. Finally, this study draws attention to the importance of displaced agricultural families in developing countries as a relevant phenomenon for studies on family businesses in circumstances surrounded by violence and crime. Considering that agriculture is a representative activity with family involvement in business and close interactions within the family, it is important to investigate this aspect more.

**Key words**

agricultural family, Colombia, displacement, entrepreneurial journey, entrepreneurial process, familiness, family, family business, family capital, family-life context, family habitus, family business habitus, guerrilla, habitualization, habitus, farm, land, rural, violence.
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Imagine a beautiful land, in some places still virgin and unexplored, fertile, rich in pastures, with water coming from numerous rivers and streams, suitable for cattle with dense vegetation, diverse flora and fauna, and rains throughout the year. In short, a place where it is possible to cultivate almost anything, and that till today remains largely unexploited.

It is located in a region far away from the main urban centers of Colombia. In this land rurality is reality and access and communication are limited both by geography and by the destruction and abandonment of the few passable roads during the civil war. Here, the land belonging to the once well-known cattle farm ‘El Danubio’ is found. An unthinkable place where till 2008 mobile phones were barely known, and where even today you can still find people who have never watched television or seen a car with an AM-FM radio.

With approximately 40,000 hectares, this farm is an accurate reflection of the richness of Colombian land. Colombia is a country with plenty of minerals (e.g. gold and emeralds) and fossil energy resources (e.g. oil, coal, and gas) which is also known for its biodiversity and abundant water due in part to its strategic location on the continent that also provides coasts to two oceans, diversity of climate, and an auspicious solar luminosity because of its proximity to the equator.

Almost half the country is made up of land such as El Danubio, suitable for agricultural use. However, the production of crops in the Colombian countryside is currently restricted to less than one-fifth of the cultivable land.

Ricardo Cabrera, one of the colonizers of the region, founded El Danubio in the 1970s. He was recognized as a successful rancher with previous ventures in other areas of the country, and his surname was identified with a thriving family business.

The Cabrera family consisted of the founder, his second wife, seven children as the second-generation “founders” (cf. Beckhard & Dyer, 1983, p. 5), and the third and fourth generations in progress. An agricultural family, which as its members describe it, worked the land and owned a sizeable herd with 10,000 heads of dual-purpose cattle producing meat and milk with animals well valued and awarded on numerous occasions. A successful business which required a journey of up to 10 days during which thousands of cattle were driven through this land by up to 30 cowboys to the nearest urban center to market them. The prosperity of the business and the difficulties in entering the land at times demanded that the cattle to be transported by plane.
The founder was the center of the family; all family members tried to live close
to him and the farm. Therefore, the children’s houses were located around the
founder’s house. Life revolved around the founder, who was very close to his
grandchildren. The Cabrera’s family life was spent in the midst of agricultural
work, abundance, and family unity. For the family members, there was no better
time in their lives.

On December 1, 1985, the family including the grandchildren, participated in
a day’s work transporting horses to the village. In the evening, the members
dispersed as usual with each one heading to his or her home. The village had no
aqueduct so the older children went to the river to collect water and soon it was
time for dinner. At about 7 pm, two shots rang in the founder’s house while he
was having dinner. He was shot at point-blank range. When his children came
running, the founder was on the ground in a pool of blood; a bullet had penetrated
his neck. Chaos and panic took over the family.

In the days that followed, in the midst of a stupor and bewilderment, the threats
started coming in. The family was forced to leave the El Danubio land under
threats of reprisals against the rest of the family members if they decided to stay.
The murder of the founder went unpunished, and guerrillas took control of the
land.

From that moment, life changed for the Cabrera family. They abandoned their
land, their work, and their home and escaped death without time to organize. They
lost all their goods, even the smallest, going from abundance to scarcity. The
family dissolved, its sense of survival forced its members to follow separate paths,
and thus began their long journey as displaced persons. They became part of the
statistics; they became part of that sad number of people cataloged as ‘internally
displaced by conflict’ - a worldwide phenomenon affecting millions of people not
just in Colombia but also elsewhere. They became part of a group dispossessed of
their land through force, a widespread phenomenon during armed conflicts.
Paradoxically, the wealth of their land had become their curse.

The Cabrera family and its experience reflects the reality of the Colombian
countryside where armed conflict stretched for more than 70 years: thousands of
agricultural families that owned farms were affected, they lost their land which
for Colombia has meant an ostensible reduction in its rural population. For a
country with millions of hectares with agricultural potential, there was a decline
in productivity in the countryside which had an impact on the country’s economic
and social development. Thus, the depopulation of the countryside was costly both
for the country and for humanity. Families had to migrate to the cities and were
forced by circumstances to look for new ways of generating incomes; the
agricultural family’s vocation in the countryside became something from the past.

The tragedy of displacement also left deep scars on families, negatively
affecting their lives by reducing their opportunities due to economic limitations.
In many cases, family relationships - part of the essence of a family - weakened,
and in this way so did their dynamics as a family group.

Unfortunately for Colombia, violence became a recalcitrant issue, it lodged in
our national reality, permeated our conscience, and found shelter as an accomplice
in people and organizations’ power who suspiciously made use of force to seize valuable land in the Colombian countryside.

2016 ended with a peace agreement between the Colombian government and the largest guerrilla group in the country, FARC. The culmination of this process led to many reactions at different levels. But with the resolution of the conflict with this guerrilla group and its subsequent withdrawal from all the territories that it had occupied during the conflict, the government managed to recover thousands of hectares initiating the design and implementation of policies aimed at the restitution of land to those who had been affected by the conflict, and among them to the families who had been displaced. The government’s intention was solving the problems that afflicted the Colombian countryside and the issue of land was one such problem.

Appreciation for entrepreneurship can be seen in the initiatives undertaken globally by some governments (Aldrich & Yang, 2012, p. 3). On its part, the Colombian government identified entrepreneurship as a possible solution for combating the land problem. ‘Agro’, a typical agricultural family business, became a political priority (e.g., Semana, 2017a; Semana, 2017b).¹

In its essence, this government initiative has as background agrarian reforms promoted during the 1960s (CDC, 1961), and its foundation lay in the Colombian political Constitution, Articles 64 and 65 (PRC, 1991). It was put into effect by the president of the republic on May 29, 2017, through a presidential decree (PRC, 2017) and provided the possibility of returning to the countryside, something which was appreciated by thousands of families who like the Cabrera family (which is the focus of this study) had been displaced during the last 40 years. This governmental initiative was valuable. However, it has also been observed that institutional support is not a guarantee of success when it comes to entrepreneurship (Aldrich & Yang, 2012, p. 1).

Meanwhile, the countryside was waiting. It collected families who somehow managed to remain unnoticed and could avoid displacement and families who could return because their territories had been liberated either through the purchase of vacant land or through land restitution.

According to official accounts, there are currently more than 5 million Colombians living in rural areas. However, not all who live in rural areas are peasants. The dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy defines a peasant as someone who lives and regularly works in the countryside. According to Colombian statistics there are approximately 2.7 million producers in the countryside, of which 725,225 reside permanently in their rural businesses and 527,847 are heads of household, which on average have 3.32 members each

¹ The weekly magazine Semana specializes in socio-politics and is considered one of the most influential and widely read publications in the country. “It will be possible to make the Colombian countryside fertile ground for peace, which generates wealth and allows everyone, large, medium, and small, to coexist and progress. Countryside where at the end of the day the whole country wins” (Semana, 2017b).
(DANE, 2016, p. 719). Thus, the group of agricultural families that still lives and works in the Colombian countryside is made up of approximately 1.8 million Colombians. Typically, these people were raised in families working the land, farms, and businesses that passed on from generation to generation and could be identified by their surnames.

Legally everything seems to have been solved for the reactivation of the Colombian countryside. However, among the multiplicity of considerations faced by agricultural families, two in particular stand out and are the central theme of this research – the issue of land in Colombia and the institution of the family.

For the first, the existence of a farm and with it a family business, depends on land - without land available for work, a family has neither farm nor business. But the return of displaced agricultural families and the restitution of land to them met with great resistance from those who profited from the armed conflict often by using violence. Big companies and mighty lords used tricks such as front men, bribes, manipulation of power, and alliances with paramilitary groups to increase dispossession and took possession of large areas of land. This is how families trying to return found their plots occupied. Large mining companies were exploiting what was once their property and politicians and landowners had seized their land, cattle, and crops which formed the families’ legacy through third parties. For these families, the struggle was not over and the government’s commitment to the restitution of land gave them hope.

There are also agricultural families who were either actively forced out of possession of their property or those who abandoned their land because of war and violence and emigrated to cities, hid, and survived. However, without land there was no possibility of continuing with family businesses. For these agricultural families, the shadow of those who displaced them is always present, their land is valuable and attracts attention, and in some cases they have their victimizers as their neighbors.

Colombia’s issue of land constitutes the context of this investigation, providing the setting in which a former agricultural family has to contemplate and debate on the possibility of returning as offered by the peace agreement. This contextualization also requires recognizing several dimensions relevant throughout Colombia’s conflict such as gender discrimination and the murder of social leaders and land defenders.

The second consideration relevant for this study is the institution of the family. An agricultural family has its reasons for being on their land; its natural setting is rurality. For farmers, whether large or small holders of land, the farm is often their home and that typically means that it is home to several generations of the family. Working the land, their crops, and their livestock is their vocation so much so that an agricultural family tends to form a strong relationship with the land, which also acquires meaning through their work. In this way, by definition an agricultural

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2 Although not all are natural persons, the National Administrative Department of Statistics identifies that they are heads of households (DANE, 2016, p. 505), and their number is decreasing compared to the 2005 census.
family is a business family. However, during the forced displacement, families were expelled from the countryside, nullifying any possibility of a family business continuing; their land was snatched which in addition to amputating its agricultural nature, eliminated the link between generations that had constituted the business.

The possibility of return offers displaced families and their multiple generations the hope of reuniting with their land, revalidating their possessions, and recovering their place in the countryside, as well as returning to their essence of being a business family with an agricultural vocation – a rural business family. Recovering land is an unbeatable opportunity for the reactivation of the farms and the resurgence of family businesses. This is also the case of the family which is focus of this study. The Cabreras were displaced over 30 years ago. Displacement and violence transformed the family. Today, four generations of the family exist. The fourth generation is made of children and because of this, my study’s focus is on the first three generations. The recovery of land is a fact, but the decision to reactive the family enterprise hangs on a fine thread that is torn between the family name recognized as being entrepreneurial in the region and new family dynamics, which, fueled by more than 60 members, exert pressure on its members. The entrepreneurial process before and after displacement and its particularities augment the degree of complexity of this case, which too is the focus of this study.

The relevance of this study goes far beyond its being a single case study as the case it studies characterizes thousands of families in a similar situation in Colombia. This study is based on an example of a formerly prosperous family farm business, its context, and its possibilities: the family, business, the land and its ownership, the displacement, and an opportunity to start the business again. With an increasing number of displaced people around the world, this study can provide insights for entrepreneurs and policymakers in other countries trying to reactivate rural productivity.

1.2 Research problem and theoretical gap

Family businesses differ from other types of companies (Habbershon & Williams, 1999). However, there is limited agreement among scholars on a unified definition of what constitutes a family business (e.g., Diaz-Moriana et al., 2019; Hernández-Linares, Sarkar, & Cobo, 2018).

Based on some key tenants in previous definitional attempts (e.g., Chua, Chrisman, & Sharma, 1999; Litz, 1995) I propose a working definition of a family business as a business firm where a dominant coalition composed of a family or a small number of families owns and/or manages a business and strives to achieve, maintain, and/or increase family-based relatedness within the business

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3 It is essential to keep in mind that I am not referring to the term ‘displacement’ as is usually used in entrepreneurship literature that explains the loss of employment for a significant number of workers, as for instance, in Shapero (1981).
across generations. Thus in a family firm, the family represents “a dominant social group” with “strong commitment to the organization” (Arregle et al., 2007, p. 75). Hence, despite the heterogeneity in the definitions and the different possible forms of family influence and involvement (Ramirez-Solis, Baños-Monroy, & Rodriguez-Aceves, 2019) we can describe the Cabrera’s family farm business as one having key features of a family firm.

The violent displacement of Colombian agricultural business families, as exemplified by the case of the Cabrera family and its land, offers the potential of studying the dynamics of family relationships in an agricultural family: The family as a social entity comprising of several generations, their entrepreneurship, the business that created historical and societal dynamics, and their land as an economic resource are all closely intertwined.

The fundamental research problem lies in understanding the inherent complexity arising from the interplay of these dynamics as a prerequisite for the decision on whether to reactivate the family business. Insights on how to study these multidimensional dynamics and land’s influence can be drawn from literature on entrepreneurship as a process, family business, and agricultural business management. Some authors complain that some aspects of family businesses have not been sufficiently studied (Arregle et al., 2007). As we will see in more detail later, literature on family businesses to date lacks a clear understanding of family businesses’ multiple tie-ins with society (e.g., Melin, Nordqvist, & Sharma, 2014; Nordqvist & Melin, 2010) and the issue of family entrepreneurship in connection with land as a resource too is largely overlooked (e.g., Fitz-Koch et al., 2018).

Family business researchers have noticed “a skew of the field” in family business studies (Melin et al., 2014), observing a predominance of research conducted “on the firm level” (Nordqvist & Melin, 2010, p. 220) or “on a family business level” rather than “on the business family level” (Melin et al., 2014, p. 5). This bias can be noted, for instance, in Dyer (1986, p. xiii) when he emphasizes the need for more studies on the dynamics that take place in a firm, while neglecting the need for paying attention to the dynamics that occur in the family itself.

The importance of taking a contextual perspective when conducting entrepreneurship research has been highlighted in literature (e.g., Aldrich, 1979; Ruef & Lounsbury, 2007; Welter, 2011), acknowledging that regardless of the type of organization studied, it is always subject to the influence of multiple external forces, as “no organisation exists in a vacuum” (Krueger, 2002, p. 7).

“The understanding of entrepreneurship is dependent on the context” (Berglund & Johannisson, 2012, p. 14). The way I see context is inspired by Bengt Johannisson from a process perspective on entrepreneurship with its concept of ‘organizing context,’ and complemented by Pierre Bourdieu and his concept of “social space” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 88). For Johannisson (2011) the environment in which individuals move and act is “enactable” and “mouldable” (Johannisson, 2018, p. 2) and the opportunities to influence and shape it are uncountable (Johannisson, 2018, p. 5). This means that individuals build their environment as
they want and how they can – they shape their environment according to their intentions (Johannisson, 2011, p. 139). This environment is observable as the “scene visited daily,” which makes it their stage of life (Johannisson, 2011, p. 142). It is through relations that individuals socialize in their environment and share their intentions thus making them collective. It is from these collective intentions that individuals conceive their entrepreneurial activities (Johannisson, 2011, p. 142). Then, organizations emerge claiming their nature as “social units” (Aldrich & Lippmann, 2013). I see in Johannisson’s “organizing context” and Bourdieu’s “social space” what I call a ‘family social space,’ drawing on a family perspective. Stating this and proceeding to related concepts, the relationship that individuals have with the “organizing context” continues because according to Bourdieu (1989, p. 88), social spaces also exert an influence on individuals.

This relation can be explained as: individuals shape their environment to be conducive to entrepreneurship (Johannisson, 2011, p. 139). Collectively, individuals in organizations are exposed to and influenced by their context (Aldrich & Lippmann, 2013, p. 124) and the context also enriches those who move in it (Bourdieu, 1989). Building on this, I obtain that there is a dynamic connection of influence with individuals and organizations and their contexts through which the story of a fascinating, and still ongoing, process can be told.

Context can be an “asset and a liability” for entrepreneurship (Welter, 2011, p. 166) as it represents varying conditions and external barriers for the actors in entrepreneurship along different dimensions such as time and place (Welter, 2011). In this regard, Ramirez-Pasillas, Brundin, and Markowska (2017) observe that entrepreneurship literature, with its predominant focus on developed Western countries, tends to ignore dramatic events influencing entrepreneurship in other types of economies such as Colombia. This is unfortunate because the specificities of these countries are rich in possibilities of contextualizing entrepreneurship (Ramirez-Pasillas et al., 2017). Thus, the study of the context of entrepreneurship requires greater effort (Low & Abrahamson, 1997).

The unique context of a Colombian agricultural family is provided by the land problem in the country in relation to its specific history, though the land problem itself is an important issue in many places around the world. Entrepreneurs want their context to embrace and motivate their initiatives (Johannisson, 1990). Thus, positioning this study in a problematic and unique context like the Colombian one – so far rarely done in investigating family businesses – offers the advantage of being able to better understand the role of context as an asset or a liability (Welter, 2011). An appreciation and comprehension of this context is facilitated by my position as a Colombian, academically educated, trained as a researcher, and with different life experiences (cf. Ramirez-Pasillas et al., 2017).

This study builds on two dimensions: first, the family as the unit of analysis (e.g., Dyer, 2003; Melin et al., 2014; Nordqvist & Melin, 2010). Considering Aldrich and Yang (2012) finding that a family’s influence is not reduced only to

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4 These intentions are defined within the framework of ‘entrepreneuring’ (Johannisson, 2011).
the parents’ influence on their children, I proceed to understand its
tergenerational dynamics, i.e., from parents to their children (Criaco et al., 2017)
and transgenerational dynamics, i.e., across generations (Habbershon & Pistrui,
2002; Zellweger, Nason, & Nordqvist, 2012). Context provides the second
dimension, in which an agricultural family and its farming activities as a family
business are embedded (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003).

The phenomenon of displaced agricultural families returning to the
countryside with the possibility of reactivating entrepreneurship has certain
common characteristics including four fundamental elements that require better
understanding: the family and family interactions around exceptional events that
influence the family considering the specific circumstances surrounding their
business. The action taken when working individually is different from collective
action. When individuals work alone they do not have an opportunity to discuss
ideas (Haag, 2012) but when they are a part of a group, they can share and
exchange ideas and opinions. When a family works collectively, it interacts
(Haag, 2012). A study of families and their multiple generations considering their
contexts requires the researcher to familiarize and understand the entrepreneurial
process and visit the studied land.

This study integrates literature on family theories, family businesses, and
entrepreneurship for developing a better understanding of the phenomenon at
hand. Using a multi-theoretical perspective that visualizes the entrepreneurial
process as the guiding logic, enables me to follow the interactions and
relationships between different family generations, family dynamics and their
interplay in their context, and the relationship between a family and its land. More
specifically, the guiding theories are composed of the family systems theory and
the family development theory as theories acknowledging the principle of family
heterogeneity (Jaskiewicz & Dyer, 2017), relating to the levels identified by
family science theories (White, Klein, & Martin, 2015).

When it comes to an agricultural family and the family business, it is crucial
to understand the influence exerted by family relationships’ dynamics between
different generations. These could, for example, comprise of encouragement and
support (Welter, 2011, p. 169) to the family or its opposite; the influence that
members of the third generation have over members of the second generation
‘founders’ and their interactions, as well as their effects on the creation or
restriction of family entrepreneurship after having been exposed to forced
displacement.

The efforts I have invested in this thesis are my response to the call made to
academics urging them to contribute to the resolution of conflicts through their
studies (Nielsen & Riddle, 2009). It is a commitment I took up as a family
business researcher and it is an obligation and debt that I have to my country
which I have accepted as a Colombian.

This study answers the following research question: How do family
interactions, historical events, and context interact in influencing the decision on
whether to start and reanimate an agricultural family business?
Chapter 1

I intend to contribute to theories of entrepreneurship and family business. My contribution relates to the problem of investigating a family and family business using theories developed in the developed Western countries, in contexts which do not fit developing countries like Colombia, and the rapidly emerging research focused on developing countries (Discua Cruz, Hamilton, & Jack, 2020; Hashim, Naldi, & Markowska, 2020; Nordqvist et al., 2011; Ramírez-Pasillas, Lundberg, & Nordqvist, 2020). Scholars studying empirical phenomena in developing countries often apply those theories without adapting them to different settings, leading to a lack of accuracy in their findings and interpretations. Thus, in my study I complement current theories by acknowledging a unique context, rich in under-explored phenomena and problems and advances our understanding of displaced agricultural families. It makes a theoretical contribution to existing literature on family businesses and entrepreneurship by connecting and repositioning concepts and theories, theorizing about the involvement of agricultural families in the business. It also adopts the family as a unit of analysis, the context of the land problem, and the underlying violence in Colombia.

This study also draws attention to the importance of an agricultural family as a business family which is relevant for studies on family businesses. This family-based research makes a contribution by shedding light on the entrepreneurial journey of creating and recreating family dynamics around the start of the farming business and the possibility of reactivating a family business. In line with Aldrich and Cliff (2003), members of such families might obtain relevant insights into what it will mean to undertake a business both for the family and for the entrepreneurial activities. The study also makes a method contribution by developing ways of researching the family-life context in a family business (cf. Johannisson, 2011).

Lastly, the findings of this study are intended to be relevant for policymakers, who so far tend to focus on aspects other than family functioning even though they use the family as a standard model for a recovery of the productivity of the Colombian rural sector. If their policies for reactivating the countryside were successful, an increase of 2 million hectares cultivated by Colombian farmers could add 2.4 million farmers and their families to rural areas, which could mean that the entire domestic demand for agricultural products could be covered by own production.\(^5\) This potential social and economic impact of entrepreneurship makes it worth a try (Dana & Dana, 2005, p. 81). Thus, this thesis can provide essential knowledge for the government’s efforts to influence and increase the level of rural activities (cf. Alsos et al., 2011) by developing a better understanding of the

\(^5\) In the last national agricultural census, Colombia had 1,875,794 hectares planted with temporary crops, which reported production of 11,792,292 tons. Temporary crops are those with the possibility of harvesting in less than a year, after which they must be sown again; 99% of resident producers were natural persons who allocated 70% of their production for sale in the domestic market, and only 0.2% for exporting. According to the Colombian farmers’ society during 2015, up to October, 8.8 million tons of food had been imported.
under-explored concept of a re-nascent entrepreneurship (cf. Stam, Audretsch, & Meijaard, 2008).

Drawing attention to internal family dynamics between generations and their preponderance and effect on the reactivation of entrepreneurship can inform legislators for a better formulation of policies that encourage families exposed to the terrible phenomenon of displacement to engage and function as business families again. Otherwise, the most probable result for the country will be even more inequalities, fueled by a massive sale of land to large companies and landlords, and in this case, sadly, we might witness a renewed conflict in Colombia fueled by the problem of land.

For this study, I accompanied a former agricultural family during its epic journey through entrepreneurship for gaining a better understanding of the meaning and effect of the transformations resulting from its history. The exploration of the entrepreneurial process is, simultaneously, the investigation of the history of the family, based on the family members’ accounts – those who lived and suffered it. The study externalizes from their experiences and the underlying processes that influenced their journey towards/through entrepreneurship. The passion that the protagonists of the story show when sharing their narrations allows me to visualize in them mechanisms that are a part of their humanity, of their nature, and that, in turn, actively influence their progress through the business process.

Visualizing the entrepreneurial process as running simultaneously with the history of the family appreciates how the family, its context, and the events that contributed to its history converge over time. This convergence indicates two things: on the one hand, it captures how a family business in its possibilities of entry and re-entry depends on its past, going back to the family as the beginning of everything. On the other hand, in terms of re-entry, the role of the former business needs to be re-dimensionalized since it is also part of the family’s past and its influence is projected over time to a degree that the reactivation of the business will respond significantly to its presence in family history.

This study gives voice to an agricultural family displaced violently from its land, thereby allowing us to learn through its dramatic journey what it means for the family to come knocking on the door of entrepreneurship.

This thesis is organized in 9 chapters. This first chapter consisted of two parts, of which the first presented a panoramic snapshot of the case study, outlining the issues of the land and the family as objects of attention thus shaping the setting for the research. The second part showed the insufficient theoretical development that motivated this study, emphasizing the need to reconsider the agricultural family as a family business, and the theoretical need to explain its behavior in under-explored contexts that stand out through their complexity. This gives prominence to an agricultural family, positioning it as a key object of study for understanding entrepreneurship and family business.

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows. In Chapter 2, I outline the guiding theories used in this study. The chapter emphasizes the use of the family as a unit of analysis, farming as a family business, and a process and collective
perspective of entrepreneurship by drawing on family, family business, and entrepreneurship theories. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology and an exposition of my philosophical stance. It also discusses the research methods and the metaphor developed by this empirically and inductively oriented study research that makes use of an interpretivist single case study based on the narratives gained from life story interviews with family members, family history, and Colombia following a detailed contextual approach (Johannisson, 2011; Ramirez-Pasillas et al., 2017; Welter, 2011). Chapter 4 describes the complex context of this investigation, introduces Colombia as a country and its specificities, as well as its armed conflict and peace process. Chapter 5 gives the case overview, in which I trace the family in relation to the history of the land and its origins. The story goes back to the years of the discovery of America by the Spanish, and moves through history – the life and death of the founder, the family business and the family’s experience, the starting of the violence, the loss of land, and the end of the business till the peace process, and the family today. It is an application of what is more generally discussed in Chapter 4 to one family’s reality. I call Chapter 6 ‘A snapshot visit to the land,’ in which I present a chapter full of emotions that resulted from my need to sensitize myself to my study and the family’s reality. It is not an ethnography, but is instead, ironically, a snapshot that is full of sensibility, from which I was able to extract invaluable information, explicit and implicit, and that shook every last fiber of my being; for this I draw on Johannisson (2018) recommendations.

Chapter 7 gives the interpretation of the case, an exercise that has been developed first from the narrative strategy, building a narrative from the accounts of family members, and dividing them strategically based on the second and third generations. Through a temporal bracketing strategy, I unfold the produced narrative shaping around the life of the family demarcated by deep and meaningful events for its members. Here is the voice of the family, and with them, the voice of the displaced persons and the dramatic event surrounding the founder, a “script” (Hamilton, Discua Cruz, & Jack, 2017, p. 5) rich in details which is ideal for research. Chapters 8 present the analysis and interpretation of the narratives and introduces the habitualization as a processual perspective to better understand the entrepreneurial journey of displaced agricultural families in their life context. Chapter 9 is the final chapter of this study, in which I present the conclusions and discuss this study’s research implications, limitations and future research.
2 Guiding theories

There is a growing literature on family businesses (Melin et al., 2014) and entrepreneurial families (Nordqvist & Melin, 2010). However, research so far tends to focus more on studying a business than on studying a family which can be seen as somewhat ironic considering that without a family, there is no family business, while without a business, the family’s conditions remain.

My study focuses on the family as a unit of analysis. As pointed out by Fitz-Koch et al. (2018), family business and entrepreneurship literature has so far largely neglected agricultural and rural family businesses. These authors observe that existing literature on this type of family firm comes mainly from agricultural economists and rural sociologists, which is surprising given the longstanding call for developing a “comprehensive framework of rural entrepreneurship as a subfield of entrepreneurship” (Wortman, 1990, p. 332).

Farming is a family tradition (Glover, 2011), farms are businesses that belong to families, move through time passing through generations, and are worked and managed by family members (Jervell, 2011) “of a single nuclear family or several related nuclear families” (Fitz-Koch et al., 2018, p. 150). In other words, a farm is by nature a family business, and an agricultural family has historically been seen as an entrepreneurial family. Due to their particularities, family farms deserve to be treated as a separate category within what has commonly been understood as a family business.

Focusing on an agricultural family provides a significant opportunity to learn about ‘entrepreneurial families’ and ‘family businesses.’ I argue that an agricultural family marks the original type of entrepreneurial family, as it is the economic activity historically conducted by the family. In other words, an agricultural family represents the beginning of entrepreneurial families, and the economic activity identified as ‘agro’ is, in turn, the principle of family businesses.

Therefore, agricultural families deserve special consideration in a study of entrepreneurship and agro-businesses. Suess-Reyes and Fuetsch (2016, p. 118) see a more generalized modality of agribusinesses in family farms and define ‘agro’ as “an idiosyncratic model of family business.”

Studying an agricultural business family in a context like Colombia needs me as a researcher to consider different theories for understanding the family as a heterogeneous social group (cf. White et al., 2015) with intergenerational dynamics including transgenerational entrepreneurship, for a better theoretical explanation (Jaskiewicz, Combs, & Rau, 2015).
Chapter 2

Next, I present the theories\(^6\) considered for my research, which are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

![Figure 1 Guiding theories](image)

### 2.1 Process perspective of entrepreneurship

Action known in French as “entreprendre” (Ruef & Lounsbury, 2007, p. 14), comes from the terms ‘entre,’ meaning “entering into the space between two arenas for knowledge creation – scholarship and practice – where scholars appear as constant ‘searchers’ for further insights into entrepreneurship” (Johannisson, 2018, p. 5) and ‘prendre’ which means “to take” (Barringer & Ireland, 2010, p. 30) or “take up” (Julien, 1993, p. 166). If translated into one word, and considering the multiplicity of existing definitions of ‘entrepreneurship,’ it is essential for this investigation to establish an appropriate

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\(^6\) Jaskiewicz et al. (2016) see two frameworks as umbrellas that integrate other theoretical approaches: the first is the system’s framework that allows us to capture the interactions among family members, and the second framework of life course development allows us to study those family experiences that led to changes in the family’s history. Integrating these family science theories opens new avenues for my research on family business management.
description that takes us away from the existing divergent opinions (Krueger, 2002, p. 6) and one that also takes into account the activities of an agricultural family.

I have adopted the idea of entrepreneurship as a process, inspired by Bengt Johannisson. Johannisson (2011) calls this process ‘entrepreneuring.’ When referring to entrepreneurship as a process, Johannisson makes three distinctions. First, entrepreneurship is “social” (Johannisson, 2020, p. 141) and “collective” (Johannisson, 2011, p. 136), and relationships are fundamental for defining its scope. In this dynamic of human relationships, both emotions and the product of individual experiences are inevitably involved (Johannisson, 2011, p. 136).

Second, during this relational process of entrepreneuring, individuals will be permanently involved in a search for creative ways of organizing people and resources, drawing on creativity with an ethical sense (Johannisson, 2011). For an action to be ethical, individuals need to be aware that they are part of a social group, not isolated, and that their actions affect those around them. Only through such actions can our surroundings be made a better place (Johannisson, 2011).

Third, people mold their world through their actions (Johannisson, 2011). Individuals shape their contexts with their actions, which in turn have consequences for them. Building on these distinctions, I see in entrepreneurship a product of this process called entrepreneuring, conceived for producing beneficial outcomes in the everyday life by individuals eager to mold their contexts.

In the agricultural context and specifically in the countryside and working on the land, we find two types of families: peasant families and capitalist families. While the first is an “economic form” (Chayánov, 1986), configured mainly to satisfy a family’s self-consumption, the second is constituted as the materialization of a business. Let us consider that a family at this moment is in transition. In a peasant family, the entrepreneur sees his/her workforce in the family. Casson (2003, p. 116) argues that self-employment “is the most basic form of labour market internalization.” Thus, with the impossibility of being hired, self-employment entails a self-consumption project and the absence of wages (for labor) (i.e., also mentioned by Chayánov, 1986, p. xiii). With the growth of the initial project comes a second moment in which the entrepreneur requires, among other things, an additional workforce and the creation of a legal entity (Casson, 2003). The family business is no longer just an extension of the household, it materializes additional legal advantages and structural differences. Among other things, as a family business the firm has a different scope compared to the peasant family project (Casson, 2003).

Taking into account that entrepreneurship is part of human nature (Johannisson, 2010), I believe that ‘entrepreneurial capabilities’ are present equally in all people, and these are externalized not only in business activities but also in different scenarios such as work and family life (Johannisson, 1998, p. 4). The family, thus, also constitutes an entrepreneur (Nordqvist & Melin, 2010). Considering a family as an entrepreneur and integrating Casson (2003, p. 20),

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7 The verb “mold” will be essential for the interpretation of my case study.
Chapter 2

explanation, the case study of the Cabrera family offers a founder-entrepreneur, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo, as the first generation of the family, a second generation of entrepreneurs who are the current owners of the land in whom resides the function of taking judgmental decisions and deciding on the continuation and reactivation of the business, and land as a scarce resource. Thereby, I accept the results of the entrepreneurial action as an entrepreneurial process focused on “emergence” as suggested by Krueger (2002, p. 7), and on “action-orientation” (Andrén & Lundberg, 2009, p. 2). In addition, entrepreneurial exit is included as a part of the entrepreneurial process (DeTienne, 2010), which takes place when for some reason the founder or founders of a business stop participating in the entrepreneurial process; “the process by which the founders of privately held firms leave the firm they helped to create; thereby removing themselves, in varying degree, from the primary ownership and decision-making structure of the firm” (DeTienne, 2010, p. 203). Even when an ‘exit’ is unavoidable, ironically the research about this is in “a young stage” (Wennberg & DeTienne, 2014, p. 12), just emerging as argued by Salvato, Chirico, and Sharma (2010), and less researched than the other stages of the process as argued by DeTienne (2010).

Yet, what researchers tend to interpret as a negative outcome and failure of a new venture, an entrepreneur approaches as a dynamic and critical component of the entrepreneurial process (Wennberg & DeTienne, 2014). Both DeTienne (2010) and Wennberg and DeTienne (2014) have addressed the founder’s departure due to death. These studies have not considered extreme death situations like that of the founder of my case study; important considerations may follow from this.

However, entrepreneurship does not stop here. From an abundant flow of theories that continuously feed literature about entrepreneurship (Johannisson, 2011) arises the figure of those considered as ex-entrepreneurs, that is, individuals who at some point decided to exit entrepreneurship (Baù et al., 2017). They might take a decision to re-enter entrepreneurship, which has been called renascent entrepreneurship (Stam et al., 2008) or an entrepreneurial re-entry (Baù et al., 2017), a subject scarcely explored to date. For Stam et al. (2008) the possibility of a re-nascent entrepreneurship is related to various aspects including human capital, social capital, and the firm exit type. Though Baù et al. (2017) refer specifically to cases of failed entrepreneurs, their interest in understanding the reasons why former entrepreneurs become active as entrepreneurs again serves as an invitation for exploring cases of exit and re-entry other than only after failure. Such a special case is provided by former entrepreneurial families that left their businesses for reasons other than failure and are now considering reactivating their businesses; this is addressed in this study.

In the evolutionary course that exists between appreciating an opportunity and acting on that opportunity (Krueger, 2002, p. 8), there is a dynamic between different stakeholders such as “entrepreneurs, governments, potential employees, financiers, competitors” (Reynolds & White, 1997, p. 1), that eventually decides on the evolution of entrepreneurship. The decision to exploit an opportunity is part
of a process that requires people’s “willingness and optimism” (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p. 222). However, these authors also note that an opportunity can also be dismissed, which for Reynolds and White (1997) is a typical outcome in this type of endeavor.

Andrésen and Lundberg (2009) argue that resource allocations are important in the entrepreneurial process where dialogue and interaction between public and private actors becomes important – a collective process that relies on personal networks (Johannisson, 2011). But it is also important to note that a family that surrounds the entrepreneur is hardly explicitly included in the work of the aforementioned authors. I find it essential to consider an entrepreneur’s family because the family is part of the stakeholders who immediately surround an opportunity.

In my study, the entrepreneurial process is captured through the displaced family which recently recovered its land as a resource for possible entrepreneurial activities and which now has an opportunity to re-enter entrepreneurship, a choice further complicated through ownership transition (Nordqvist et al., 2013) that has taken place in the meantime.

2.1.1 Family participation in the entrepreneurial process

Johannisson (1998, p. 1) observed a lack of research on “the genuinely collective features of entrepreneurship.” Enacting entrepreneurship is a result of collective action in a social process (Low & Abrahamson, 1997). In the framework of collective action, an entrepreneur becomes a builder of the ‘community,’ which becomes so important for the business initiative that Johannisson (1990) describes it as a central context for entrepreneurship. Family is not included in his conceptualization of a “robust community” (Johannisson, 1990, p. 71), because unlike the other stakeholders an entrepreneur’s family is not located in the market and exists independent of the will of the entrepreneur. Recent literature recognizes the family as an entrepreneur (Nordqvist & Melin, 2010), acknowledging the relevance of the family as a group. However, a family’s integration into the entrepreneurial process depends on its construction by the entrepreneur. Thus, what differentiates the family as a group from other stakeholders is that the latter need to be convinced to participate in a new venture (Johannisson, 1998), while the family as a group exerts influence, whether invited or not, by interacting with the entrepreneur about the decision to develop an entrepreneurial idea (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003).

Using the concept of networks, Dubini and Aldrich (1991) locate the family in the entrepreneurial process and Aldrich and Cliff (2003) make a call for understanding the variety and richness of a family. A network exists in the “patterned relationship between individuals” (Dubini & Aldrich, 1991, p. 305). In the typology of networks, I highlight the existence of “personal networks” (Johannisson, 1988), which are defined by the direct relations that the entrepreneur has, and among which are those that exist between family members (Dubini & Aldrich, 1991, p. 307).
Applying a longitudinal process perspective in studying family entrepreneurship includes considering succession as a “process of entrepreneurial entry and exit” (Nordqvist et al., 2013, p. 1115). Succession itself is a collective exercise that tends to equate new owners with entrepreneurial entry and old owners with entrepreneurial exit (Nordqvist et al., 2013, p. 1087). The collective influence of the family as a group, which is often considered positive for the business (Brumana et al., 2015, p. 118), is present from the point of the gestation of the business (Johannisson, 1998, p. 8), if taking a perspective of phases in the one identified as conception and gestation (DeTienne, 2010). What separates this initial phase from the subsequent ones is basically that in this phase a business does not exist yet. Casson (2003, p. 165) argues that the beginning of a company is marked by the influence of the entrepreneur’s family; “the origins of a firm lie in the family – specifically, in the family of its founder.” This can be identified as normative forces,8 which according to DeTienne (2010, p. 209) are the forces that “refer to the individual’s perception of family or friends’ expectations regarding the venture,” and which are so strong that she discusses them as possible reasons why a decision is taken to end the entrepreneurial process.

Resurgent entrepreneurship draws attention to the founder’s family members: firstly, the generation that could be labeled ‘owners,’ and secondly the members of the nuclear and extended families, and their interactions, representing “interactive human conduct” (Johannisson, 1998, p. 5) as an expression of the collectivity on which the entrepreneurship is based. Stam et al. (2008) point out that re-nascent entrepreneurship is greatly influenced by prior entrepreneurial experience through human capital; by role models, as in this case the founder and some members of the second generation and also the presence of family members in the agricultural environment with all the influence that they bring through social capital; and by the type of exit from the business, here related to personal circumstances. According to Stam et al. (2008), the first two influences tend to have a positive effect while the third influence has a negative impact on the decision to re-enter entrepreneurship.

2.2 Family theories

“For those who are political activists, agitators for modest or revolutionary causes or the reduction of major social problems or even

8 DeTienne (2010) work is focused on the decision of entrepreneurial exit and gives us two important points that she has adopted from other authors: the entrepreneurial process has phases – conception and gestation, infancy, adolescence, maturity (Cardon et al., 2005) – that are influenced by different types of forces – alternative, calculative, normative (Maertz Jr & Campion, 2004), the last being those exercised by other people based on their expectations.
“staunch defenders of the world as it is or once was, theoretical knowledge about families can be put to fruitful use” (White et al., 2015, p. 10).

Family theories too guide my research. These consider the complexities and particularities of a family as a social group (White et al., 2015, p. 293). They are the product of the contribution of several disciplines, expanding knowledge related to the family and its processes, family relationships, and the development of the family in different contexts (James, Jennings, & Breitkreuz, 2012) and its outcomes (Jaskiewicz et al., 2016). Though all family businesses face the challenge of moving on the complicated path demarcated by the family business and relationships between family members (Dyer, 1986, p. 3), family business research so far has not capitalized much on the knowledge produced by family theories (Jaskiewicz et al., 2016).

According to family theories, a family is a social group with distinct representative features, namely longer duration and existence than social groups, i.e., a long-lasting social group; its intergenerational nature, i.e., connecting members of different generations; and relationships established between related members as either biological, e.g., by birth or by affinity (Nordqvist, Hall, & Melin, 2009), where all this leads to a group that extends beyond those who live under one roof or those who maintain permanent communication (White et al., 2015). From a more political perspective, the family is a human organization that influences the economic, cultural, and political environment that surrounds it through its actions (Roman-Alcalá, 2013).

In my research, the structure of the family is given by the generations that have appeared since the founder, including him. Family structure can be defined to include the nuclear family (i.e., a married couple with children) and the extended family (i.e., a nuclear family plus other adult(s), e.g., grandparents) (Jaskiewicz & Dyer, 2017, p. 112).

Theorizing about family, White et al. (2015) state that we require a concept that motivates us to do the study, in my case reflected by the interactions of the Cabrera family’s members. However, the heterogeneity of the concept of a family gives complexity to this study (Jaskiewicz & Dyer, 2017). This study focuses on family (member) interactions and the family events (cf. Jaskiewicz et al., 2016). Theoretical considerations underlying these choices are discussed in the following section.

2.2.1 Family members’ interactions

In general, entrepreneurship literature highlights the importance of interactions for a greater understanding of an entrepreneurial activity (Johannisson, 2011, p. 137). For Jaskiewicz and Dyer (2017), relationships and family members’ interactions constitute an essential dimension of a family; a family is shaped by the interactions among its members (Jaskiewicz et al., 2016) through which they exchange meaning and values on a regular, if not daily, basis (Discua Cruz et al., 2020).
Chapter 2

Given my focus on the family, it is pertinent to separate the two sub-systems of family and business without losing sight of the fact that they act together, giving rise to the family business system. But there is a third entity (Beckhard & Dyer, 1983) – the founder – whose role in my study is important from a historical perspective, framing the family’s early and abruptly disrupted interactions and influencing the family even after his murder. The context of the two sub-systems, of the Cabrera family and of their agro-business called El Danubio, provides important implications for my research. The analytical separation of the two systems allows distinguishing the family and business from their respective contexts. However, the influence that they have on each other also needs to be taken into account, or else the research might be affected by a myopic perspective (Danes et al., 2008). It has been suggested that each system has particular processes that remain unchanged through periods of change and stability (Olson et al., 2003). Thus, it is essential to delimit where the environment ends and where the system begins, and in this respect White et al. (2015) affirm that in the case of families, their context can commonly be delimit by ‘plots of land’ (White et al., 2015) – a delimitation highly applicable to my study.

How much can the family system influence the business system? According to Olson et al. (2003), this impact is especially significant economically, as family structures and relationships affect business possibilities, and a family can influence the business to the degree that it fosters or constrains its performance. Family members’ interactions have also been studied using the family systems theory for a better understanding of the family’s emotional processes and relationships (Hollander & Elman, 1988) and the family’s communication and interactions (White et al., 2015), thereby capturing family dynamics (Davis, 1983). The members of a family system are related to each other through communication, and these interactions produce reactions in the family that can motivate stability or change including how it perceives new challenges or opportunities (Jaskiewicz et al., 2016).

2.2.2 Family events

In conceptualizing family development and family change, “family development is a process following age- and stage-graded social norms,” wherein “family developmental change is only one type of many possible changes a family may experience” (White et al., 2015, p. 111).

In my study of the Cabrera family it is evident that certain events like the murder of the founder that unleashed a violent displacement from the land and influenced the lives of the family members are crucial for understanding the entrepreneurial re-entry process. Family development theory⁹ (White et al., 2015)

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⁹ Theory introduced as a conceptual framework for family studies by Hill and Hansen (1960, p. 300) who adopted the concept of “stages of the family life cycle” from “rural sociologists” (Hill & Hansen, 1960, p. 307). This is pertinent for my study of the Cabrera family and its experiences through the events that led to its violent
captures such crucial events following a sociological theoretical approach to life cycle models (Jaskiewicz et al., 2016, p. 6). This theory focuses directly on the family (White et al., 2015, p. 293), which makes it adequate for tracking changes in families and the relationships among its members (Jaskiewicz & Dyer, 2017), i.e., changes resulting from the experiences lived by the family members, also capturing the confusion, chaos, and resulting conflict that can negatively affect the family and its business (Beckhard & Dyer, 1983) when there is a crisis (Dyer, 1986).

A significant element provided by this theory is that it allows taking a particular interest in the family from a group perspective, that is to say, that the interactions and relations between the members are considered essential. It also encourages us to keep in mind both the time (Rodgers, 1964) and the history that surrounded the events and their effects on changes in the family (White et al., 2015, p. 102). The interplay between time and change offers a unique opportunity (White et al., 2015) to study the Cabrera family through three important events as they mark significant changes in the members and the family as a group: the murder of the founder and life before the crime, the violent displacement suffered by the family including the loss of its land, and the recent recognition of land ownership. All three were unexpected family events (Jaskiewicz & Dyer, 2017), which position the family in stages that involved dilemmas and crucial decisions (Beckhard & Dyer, 1983) the most pressing of which is the recent decision about reactivating the business or selling the land.

Using the theory of family events is essential for my intention to follow up on the evolution of the family and its members in the events described earlier. Family events lead to change (Jaskiewicz & Dyer, 2017, p. 114). Changes that have taken place over time require considering the facts historically, i.e., considering life histories and individuals’ experiences in the different roles that family members have played, e.g., as children, parents, siblings, and cousins. The use of this theory imprints a dynamic to the research thanks to a follow-up of the events and the changes registered during the development of the lives of the family members: “Developmental processes are inevitable and important in understanding families” (White et al., 2015, p. 107). I conceptualize ‘family life course’ as composed of all the events and periods of time between the events experienced by a family (White et al., 2015, p. 116). To observe the Cabrera’s family life course I also adopt suggestions regarding the life course perspective considering the patterning of events as a process shaped by interactions among individuals through their history (Aldrich & Kim, 2007).

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displacement from the land and influenced its members’ lives after the founder’s murder. It also allows me to appreciate the trajectory of the family and its relation to the agro-business (Jaskiewicz & Dyer, 2017).

10 For Rodgers (1964) situations of change can also be because of society.
Chapter 2

2.3 Familiness

Familiness is a concept in family business research (Pearson, Carr, & Shaw, 2008) that was originally proposed by Habbershon and Williams, who said, “family business resources as the ‘familiness’ of a given firm. More specifically, familiness is defined as the unique bundle of resources a particular firm has because of the system’s interaction between the family, its individual members, and the business” (Habbershon & Williams, 1999, p. 11). Drawing on Pearson et al. (2008, p. 955), “familiness is defined with respect to the resources and capabilities that are derived from the involvement and interactions of family relationships.” Thus, the concept of familiness stands out in a family business (Ramirez-Solis et al., 2019).

Literature addresses the concept of familiness in different ways. For instance, Pearson et al. (2008) include it in the cognitive dimension of familiness, Donnelley (1964) addresses it as a set of unique attributes in a family involved in a business (i.e., also as in Tagiuri & Davis, 1996), suggesting the presence of essential resources without explicit reference to ‘familiness.’

Despite the popularity of the concept of familiness in family business research, explaining how familiness evolves in a family business remains a challenge; this has also been described as the “black box of familiness” (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 953). Exposed to a process of continuous change, it requires an effort to maintain familiness’ potential since it could be modified for good and also for bad (Habbershon & Williams, 1999). Familiness is considered important for their contribution to the necessary conditions that enable a business to survive. Once a family is involved in a business, it is possible to observe the development of an active interaction between the family unit, individual members, and the business entity from a process perspective (Habbershon, Williams, & Macmillan, 2003). This interaction is dynamic and creates special and unique conditions for a family business (Habbershon et al., 2003). This interaction is of special relevance since it influences and configures family capital.

In literature, we find various definitions of family capital and there is no agreement regarding its conceptualization (i.e., Sharma, 2008; Zellweger, Eddleston, & Kellermanns, 2010). For example, Arregle et al. (2007) applied the social capital theory to elaborate on family social capital and organizational social capital. Pearson et al. (2008) identified the components of familiness from the perspective of social capital focusing only on the interiors of a family business. Instead, Sharma (2008) broadened the focus of analysis from within the family business to the outside and included the family and the family business’ interactions with the environment. Existing research concentrates on investigating familiness and family social capital taking for granted the existence of a family and a business. However, each family and each business goes through an entrepreneurial process. This dissertation advances our understanding of these issues because when context is brought to light, new aspects need to be addressed.
2.4 Habitus

The final theory guiding my research relates to habitus. Berger and Luckmann (1991, p. 71) argue that “all human activity is subject to habitualization” while Bourdieu (2005, p. 213) describes habitus as an “economic principle of action.” Thus, habitualization can be viewed as a natural response of a human being, both individually and collectively, when performing an activity. Habitualization should not be confused with habits. Habits and habitus have been handled differently by sociologists, philosophers, and theorists, resulting in the impossibility of creating a single definition for both concepts (Crossley, 2013). Complexity increases when using the concept of habitus, considering that one of the characteristics identified in Bourdieu’s work is that the author distanced himself from the definitions (Nash, 1999) and gave meaning to the term from different perspectives adopted in his writings (Reay, 2004). Although the origin of both the words is found in the Greek word hexis, translated in Latin as habere, or ‘to have,’ to differentiate between them it is necessary to know that philosophers like Aristoteles and Aquinus referred to habit as being interested in the psychology that led to action, “a disposition to act,” unlike Bourdieu who used the term habitus while being inclined towards a sociological approach (Nash, 1999). These terms are sometimes used interchangeably (e.g., MacMillan, 1986; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2008) or, as in Haag (2012, p. 184), when she affirms that the family will move “guided by their habituated sense for their family business.” Habituated is, however, an adjective related in its meaning directly to habits, “being in the habit” (MWD, 2020). From the perspective of entrepreneurship, Aldrich and Yang (2012) state that habits are an aspect that has not been sufficiently investigated, and in fact could specifically contribute to an understanding of entrepreneurs’ behavior at the beginning of their entrepreneurial initiatives.

Bourdieu (1989, p. 170) argues that with habitus, individuals express a “necessity internalized and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions.” But the meaning of this disposition was not generated by chance, and instead explains its existence using individuals’ past (Bourdieu, 1993). I interpret a procedure based on their life experiences in a family that works the land as imprinted deeply on the individuals which is possible to explain only through their essence, “having the feel for the game is having the game under the skin; it is to master in a practical way the future of the game; it is to have a sense of the history of the game” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 80). Inspired by Bourdieu’s view of habitus, I see a repetitive response from the individual in habits which is more mechanical than intelligent in a situation that requires him/her to reason economically. I want to stress that habits only emerge under particular circumstances demarcated by specific situations (Aldrich & Yang, 2012). Habitus is a more structured response on the part of an individual, a collection of purposeful habits that could be seen as routines in which (s)he has invested experience and knowledge obtained through previous experiences, for instance, acting as part of a family business. Drawing on Johannisson (2011), who suggested incorporating habitus in a study of
entrepreneurship and in line with Bourdieu my dissertation focuses on how families act in relation to a business.
3 Research methodology

“We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”

— Elie Wiesel 11

3.1 My philosophical stance

Writing a dissertation requires the researcher to be clear about what is reality and how s/he interacts with it, which is especially crucial when using a process perspective (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013). This dissertation is based on an inductive single case study of the Cabrera family in Colombia during the period 1958 to April 2019. Since I wanted to develop a thorough understanding of the dynamics within a former agricultural family which after facing violent displacement now has an opportunity to reactivate its business, I adopted an inductive and interpretivist case study approach undertaking several visits to Colombia. I now present my presumptions regarding “the nature of the social world” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 1) and how I investigated it.

Defining a specific philosophical orientation in practice is not an easy task (Leppäaho, Plakoyiannaki, & Dimitratos, 2016). Morgan and Smircich (1980) work of the adequacy of research methods in social sciences serves as a good point of departure for putting forth my ontological and epistemological assumptions, which is a crucial step in defining my approach to theory building (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). When entrepreneurship is used for influencing a country’s transformation, Brundin et al. (2009) recommends viewing it as a social phenomenon rather than as something strictly economic. In this sense, I adhere to the idea of reality as socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1991), or metaphorically speaking, as a social building resulting from arranged movements (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). Alternatively, it can also be viewed as a world in which the existence of human beings is conditioned by their ability to inter-relate and communicate with their peers (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Then, reality is malleable, changing, and a result of a continuous process during which humans set up each encounter considering what it can mean for them and for others (Morgan & Smircich, 1980), and it is susceptible to being influenced by the “theoretical constructions” of some sufficiently structured individuals (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p. 33).

Following a continuum (Morgan & Smircich, 1980), I want to produce knowledge based on a subjectivist view of reality wherein the real world builds

11 Nobel Peace Prize recipient and Holocaust survivor.
on an image of humans’ imagination. What is crucial here is an understanding of how individuals are related to their world, i.e., a phenomenologically-oriented perspective, which can become complicated if we consider it as a product that originated from the subjectivity of people; whatever their interpretations, the result will always come from a “coherent world” (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p. 33). Thus, human activity does not have an end point, and the same goes for the generation of knowledge. Therefore, my construction of reality is continuous and dynamic and the result of my interpretations of the recreation of individuals’ experiences who, in turn, actively work based on the generation of knowledge (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014).

A task for me as a researcher is identifying and positioning myself in the appropriate paradigm (Dana & Dumez, 2015). Metaphorically speaking, it works like a unidirectional conveyor belt; people produce reality, interpret it, and then, I study this and interpret it again (Nordqvist, Hall, & Melin, 2009). However, I am the one who interprets the phenomenon and I find its meaning in a procedure that has been identified by Nordqvist et al. (2009, p. 299) as assuming a “relativist approach.” Such a multiparadigm perspective (Gioia & Pitre, 1990) offers important possibilities when taking aspects from different perspectives that enrich the study (James, Jennings, & Breitkreuz, 2012) and this is what enriches my study. Assuming multiple views can produce clarity of those stances which are markedly opposed by being in the limits between two paradigms, or a “transition zone” (Gioia & Pitre, 1990, p. 592).

In my research, this allows me to follow an interpretive paradigm but in proximity to the radical humanist paradigm as my research deals with forced displacement caused by violence, the phenomena which frame the problem of land in developing countries and the internal armed conflict in Colombia embedded in Colombian history (Rodriguez Garavito & Rodriguez, 2010). I want to produce theory useful for fostering entrepreneurship and business in such a context, and also to expose the inadequate distribution of land in my country. This requires a thorough contextual analysis and acknowledging that “specific social contexts” contain specific collections of reality and knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p. 15). The transition zone provides me with unique advantages such as being able to broadly convey the social constructions and structures that stand out in Colombian reality. Hence, I can generate a theoretical explanation that might trigger future change based on my findings.

In my search to intentionally understand family farms in this unique context of displacement (Huff, 1980), I choose to represent my epistemological position through a metaphor; a simple representation of the composition created from melting the complexities of multiple concepts and key variables into one image (Daft, 1983), providing enough clarifications and meaning to provoke more researchers (Huff, 1980). However, my motivation for achieving a metaphor did not come from literature, nor from the classes I took during my doctoral studies. This idea was a result of a meeting with my friend Jesús Suárez Pineda, a philosopher and PhD on July 10, 2017 in Bogotá, Colombia. Dr Pineda invited me to reflect on my research in terms of graphic representations. One such
representation was the chrysalis, or Don Quixote's shield which has scars from each of his crusades, for exploring the symbolism of the indigenous people of the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta, the Kogui, and the U'wa. After the meeting, I realized that a research idea is not clear in a researcher's mind when it cannot be expressed graphically.

In my research work, the family, the land resource, the family involved in the economic activity recognized as agriculture, and the violent Colombian armed conflict stand out. By exposing the narratives obtained from the interviews to the NVIVO ‘word cloud’ option after excluding, among others, the names of family members and words that denote kinship, different words stood out as representative: ‘farm’, ‘family’, ‘Danubio’, ‘land’, ‘region’, and ‘guerrillas’. There was no doubt that my metaphor had to include the farming family’s relationships with each other and with the land and farm in the context of violence in Colombia.

In my metaphor, a tree grows in an old boot (see Figure 2, see p. 41). My research seeks to show the reality of an agricultural family, encrypted in its unique social order manufactured through its normal ongoing human activities (Berger & Luckmann, 1991), its current fragility as a result of its exposure to a savage context which despite all the tragedies it has had to face through the struggle for land and conflict, stands out as a priority in the country’s economic and social recovery. Metaphorically, my core assumptions about ontology and human nature (Morgan & Smircich, 1980) are represented as:

Imagine a seed sown in a boot. Over time, a tree germinates, and its roots seek their way through the boot, which becomes its domain. At first, the tree adheres to this soil, and then, to the boot. However, with time, the tree invades the boot, not only on the inside, but also on the outside. It spreads out through the lace holes, down and up the boot tongue taking advantage of every hole, and plant and boot become one. Any attempt to extract the tree from the boot puts at risk the existence of the plant and the fragile boot, basically threatening to break it and destroying its roots. If a hand were to tear it off, the tree would suffer terribly, and if it still managed to survive, it would never be the same.

The old boot symbolizes the antique, ingrained, and traditional meaning of a farm for families and farmers. It is a military boot, which represents the existence of an armed conflict. In its essence, the boot transmits the inexorable movement of time. The tongue of the boot has the word ‘Colombia,’ indicating a unique context, rarefied by a violence that has managed to permeate its entire society. Violence penetrates and invades daily life recalcitrantly in such a way that context and violence become one.

The boot looks old and serves as the ground for a lush tree. Judging by the tree, it is ruled out that it came from the last massacre, which may have been a few hours or a few days ago. It could have come from any moment in the Colombian violence, which offers a range of almost 80 years. It could even be older, as is the social inequalities that characterize the land problem in Colombia and that go back to the arrival of the Spaniards to the continent. The boot has
been filled with the land of a country rich in natural resources. The soil in the boot represents the land and the minimum size required to live and to work. The tree is life. It represents a family from the countryside that has germinated in this environment rarefied by violence, those who live from the land and who work on it for generations. The land is their life, home, and livelihood; it is their greatest treasure. And in this relationship between the land and the family, with its roots deeply buried in the soil, that it clings to the boot as an existential necessity.

Among so many lives embedded in this tree, three faces stand out: one face is looking towards the ground; it shows sadness. It is the face of a displaced person. The tear on its cheek is for the many mourned since the land was taken away, perhaps killing loved ones. The life of the displaced is a socially ignored lament. The second face is looking forward; it means hope. Moments like the one during the peace process offered a sign of hope. Land restitution and a lost promise of just land distribution in the country guide its gaze. The third face is looking towards the sky; it is shouting. It mourns the impotence of displaced persons that scream about the injustices and inequalities. The displaced persons want to return, but despair because peace does not come. While waiting for restitution they are threatened and risk being murdered because the government does not help, it is absent, and instead they feel lost in a sea of corruption. The face sees how life goes on in the middle of this exile that nobody ever deserved.

Figure 2 Metaphor: A tree sown in a shoe
As a qualitative researcher my work required considerable sensitivity for understanding the families that have been affected by forced displacements, their dramatic experiences, and now the struggle for reactivating their businesses. I next describe how as a researcher I proceeded, respecting and recognizing my own process and the everyday life of a family in its reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

3.2 Research design

For developing my research design, I accepted Johannisson’s suggestive invitation: “It seems that if we want to further our understanding of entrepreneurship we have to retreat from conventional research methods and rather associate with everyday sense-making, which builds common sense” (Johannisson, 2018, p. 1). I have been fascinated by the idea of keeping an open mind to different possibilities while developing a case study of the Cabrera family.

 Warned by Johannisson (2020), I am aware that my limited experience as a researcher could lead to the rejection of my daring, but if not now ... when? In Colombia, my job is becoming the Dean of a business school, a highly absorbing administrative position that leaves little or no time for research. It is for this reason that I see in this dissertation an opportunity that I am happy to take. It is how I, nervously, considered my basic knowledge about research to undertake this journey. This also meant that I ignored what was judiciously transmitted to me in my qualitative research methods course. Hence, because of the research problem and my philosophical stance, this thesis is empirically and inductively oriented; it examines the relationship dynamics between spouses and siblings, parents, and offspring; those who lived at the same time, those others who preceded and the ones who followed (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). It also explores the family’s influence on decisions about using the land restituted by the government for relaunching the business or selling the property and taking the money. The preceding indicates that there is a transition involved (Martinez, Yang, & Aldrich, 2011), for which I followed some suggestions from the evolutionary perspective for my research design (Aldrich, 2011).

Taking into account my ontological and epistemological stances (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009), a single case study, seen as an umbrella under which several methods can be chosen (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), seemed ideal for this type of foundational inquiry (Fletcher, Massis, & Nordqvist, 2016) and its underlying reasons (Reay, 2014). This dissertation relies on a single case study combined with multiple methods following an inductive and interpretivist approach, which is specifically used for examining the Cabrera family and its land in Colombia during the period 1958 to April 2019. I relied on an umbrella of overlapping methods to ensure dependability (i.e., Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Dependability is important to allow researchers follow how my study is conducted and how they can potentially repeat it.
Chapter 3

The single case study is described by Stake (1995, p. xii) as “a disciplined, qualitative mode of inquiry” in which “the qualitative researcher emphasizes episodes of nuance, the sequentially of happenings in context, the wholeness of the individual.” Case studies are also identified as an expression of qualitative research with high acceptance with regard to a study of family businesses (Leppäaho et al., 2016) with an appropriate level of demand that is sufficient for motivating essential questions in the researcher’s mind (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2014).

The inductive reasoning method is an exciting approach to go from the particular to the general that requires the investigator to take the persona of a detective who is immersed in the arduous task of constructing a rich description so detailed and complete that it can become a platform for identifying and supporting the interpretations (Dana & Dana, 2005; Locke & Latham, 2005; Mintzberg, 2005). Since the development of this single case study was motivated by ‘how’ questions, it assumed an explanatory need which was better captured by an explanatory case study (Yin, 2014, p. 10).

At the same time, the approach chosen for the case study should be in harmony with the philosophical position regarding the nature of the social world and its reality and knowledge (Leppäaho et al., 2016), which in the present investigation led me to assume an interpretivist case study approach, relying on context (Nordqvist et al., 2009) and narratives (Atkinson, 1998; Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004).

During family businesses’ transition between generations in which spouses, siblings, and children take part, Nordqvist et al. (2013) advise seeing all the individuals involved as an entrepreneurial team, an inter-generational one, linked by kin and observing their socio-psychological dynamics. Considering that my research interest revolves around studying interactions between family and business systems (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014) and context (Aldrich & Kim, 2007; Ramirez-Pasillas, Brundin, & Markowska, 2017), choosing the Cabrera family as a case study provided me an opportunity to capture this. I first met the Cabrera family as a child in my hometown and their stories of farming and displacement were familiar to me. Thus, choosing the Cabrera family became a natural choice for my dissertation research. The Cabrera family, as a former agricultural family, served as the unit of analysis (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). The Cabrera family’s experiences were developed over the years in an environment rarified by violence. To gain a better understanding of the phenomenon resulting from the interactions between the Cabrera family, its business, land, and context, I disentangle the levels of analysis in my case. The case was studied with the purpose of understanding the dynamics of a family in its efforts at reactivating its business: (a) a former agricultural family trying to decide whether to revive its family business in which the farm, the family Cabrera, and its land serve as an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995), (b) the reconstruction of this allows us to appreciate the daily life of its interactions as a group (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014), (c) a recognition of the family’s evolution as a family life based on its exposure to the immediate conditions of its context (Stake, 1995), and (d) developing a broader understanding of the empirical context (Ramirez-Pasillas et al., 2017).
Thus, documenting and grasping the single case was a complex, risky, and labor-intensive activity (Dana & Dumez, 2015).

The design of the case considered a close examination of the phenomenon of displacement from the family and business points of view (Hamilton, Discua Cruz, & Jack, 2017). Drawing on Cabrera’s family members – both, collectively as a family and individually as family members – allowed me to obtain insights into what was happening in the family concerning the dynamics of their relationships (e.g., Fletcher et al., 2016), the influence exerted among its members, and their interactions with the land. These dynamics are representative of social actors in a social world (Fletcher et al., 2016), in which they struggle to function as a family as crises push the family to react (LeMasters, 1957). In the Cabrera family case study, interactions and relationships were exposed through events and the children, once sons and daughters, are now parents themselves, and even some of their offspring have descendants, representing the complexity generated by the multiplicity of intergenerational relationships. To this group, we have to add spouses, who also exert some pressure. Collectively, the family members have the same history, which means that even when they individually observe and interpret it differently, the family’s life history is the materialization of their collective social effort that also inevitably ties them together (Haag, 2012).

However, a family life story is something unique, and that includes its dramas (Hamilton et al., 2017) and potential tensions (e.g., Ramírez-Pasillas, Lundberg, & Nordqvist, 2020). The uniqueness of the family and each of its members while performing a specific role feeds the dynamics of an entrepreneurial family in an unusual context.

When designing my research, following Dana and Dumez (2015), I defined family as my unit of analysis by highlighting the protagonists of my case study (i.e., individual members of the Cabrera family). It is a priority for me that you, as readers, can hear them and almost see them. In emphasizing on this I took the following considerations into account. There is abundant entrepreneurship research focused on what entrepreneurs do (Dana & Dana, 2005) at the venture and team levels, and also the antecedents of entrepreneurship, i.e., by whom and under what conditions are ventures founded. However, entrepreneurship researchers in search of achieving greater understanding, typically limit their attention to researching entrepreneurs (e.g., MacMillan, 1986; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2008). Researchers, preconditioned to the presence of a business, restrict their research by focusing on the people involved with the business. Literature tends to stick to business as a unit of analysis, and this becomes an obstacle in an understanding of a family business (Martínez et al., 2011).

Broadly, research on family businesses is divided into those studies which seek to establish distinctive features between a family business and a non-family business and those which investigate the different ways in which family businesses proceed when facing their activities (Zellweger, Eddleston, & Kellermanns, 2010). Hence, researchers assign a business a leading role in their studies. However, when a family is the unit of analysis, this is equivalent to
working with an incomplete history. On the one hand, it means distancing myself not only from the antecedents of the family's involvement in the business but also from the history of the land and the family itself. If I do this, I lose the opportunity to observe the influence that resources had on the family historically. On the other hand, once a family’s involvement in the business ends, it leaves the area of attention of entrepreneurship research thus denying that significant developments still take place since the future may mean reactivation of the business. I refer to this as a narrow vision of family business research. Instead, by delving into the influence that a family has on the business prior to and after the existence of the business, I can open new research avenues. This is what I call focus on the family-life context (i.e., Aldrich & Kim, 2007; Jaskiewicz & Dyer, 2017).

The family, as a unit of analysis, is convenient considering that a family has a dominant presence and is a very dynamic social group (Arregle et al., 2007), which makes it a unique research setting. In my case study of the Cabrera family, I visualized the central panel of a triptych of the entrepreneurial process, and I am momentarily referring to the experiences gained by the family from the family business. On the same panel are the shared experiences and interactions of the family during the business developed linearly over time. Standing in front of the triptych, in the panel to the left I see the family before the business, with shared experiences and interactions. On the right panel, I see the family without the business, including experiences and interactions from the two previous panels. Theoretically, the triptych is complete, and we have a full picture of the family and its history. However, from my case study and theory of the entrepreneurial process it emerged that this is not the end. Instead, with the possibility of reactivating the business – re-entry – it may be necessary to add a new panel, i.e., getting an extended quadriptych. Through family development theory and temporary bracketing, we can appreciate the complete process in Figure 3, integrating all the panels, which shows the entrepreneurial journey of the displaced agricultural family in its entirety. With a quadriptych, family business researchers will be able to choose any of the panels according to their interests, or even the entire process, for a more challenging and comprehensive study, sustaining attention on the family-life context.

To understand a family’s involvement in its business, Habbershon, Williams, and Macmillan (2003, p. 454) study focused on the area demarcated by the overlap of the family and the business in which they identified three “subsystems” that interacted with each other: the family, the business, and family members as individuals. I propose that there is also a phase that involves all members of a family in a process that precedes the existence of the business. From the perspective of my research, the scenario compromised of the interactions goes beyond the business and family overlap and also includes interactions with those family members who are outside the business and this is the family-life context.
Considering this, and in accordance with Dana and Dumez (2015), in exploring the Cabrera’s family-life context, I constructed Figure 4. The figure integrates the work of Habbershon and Williams (1999) and Habbershon et al. (2003) regarding the “unified systems model,” as defined by Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma (2005), the “essence of involvement,” and Zellweger et al. (2010) “dimensions of familiness.” To observe the merging of the two entities, family and business, it was essential to adjust the lens of my study to look for processes from the interactions of the small sub-systems within the family firm (Habbershon et al., 2003) and also the dynamic interactions through the production of social capital (Arregle et al., 2007). The product of interactions will be subject to the same dynamics that can be achieved between the groups involved while interacting. At this moment I am distancing myself from the “static” photo provided by the overlapping circles models (Habbershon et al., 2003, p. 453). Then, the dynamics of interactions will emerge when exploring the Cabrera’s family-life context. On the one hand, from a process perspective, interactions are considered as one of the dynamic factors in the production of social capital (Arregle et al., 2007). And on the other hand, social interactions are considered one of the dimensions of familiness, or they are the structural dimensions of familiness (Pearson, Carr, & Shaw, 2008).

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12 Abandoned land leveling road construction machine, invaded by nature. The photo was taken during my trip to Los llanos del Yarí.
I visualized that resources are separated into four groups, or levels (i.e., Habbershon & Williams, 1999). The bridge from the family to the business is visible through Arregle et al. (2007) study which integrates generators of social capital from prior research and their influence on the family in its production of family social capital. Arregle et al. (2007) do this assuming a process perspective that begins, conveniently for my research, from the family when there is no business. It visualizes a process that goes from the family engaged in the construction of the family social capital to the family business, where existing
family social capital influences the production of new organizational social capital. The process perspective is confirmed and originates in the family.

With the introduction of social capital, a definition of human capital is also necessary which is convenient because it allows me to consider essential definitions regarding the process we are visualizing. Then, I embraced the three dimensions of familiness (Zellweger et al., 2010), adding an organizational identity dimension to the model proposed by Chrisman et al. (2005) and further elaborated on by Zellweger et al. (2010). With this, I could visualize the Cabrera’s family structure in the family business and locate the events linked to the interactions between the sub-systems that explain how the family can act and exercise influence. Specifically, following Ramírez-Pasillas et al. (2020, p. 5) and Jaskiewicz and Dyer (2017), I restrict myself to the ‘interactions’ between the family unit, individual members, and the business entity in the family-life context (see Figure 4, p.47). For me, it is necessary to be able to visualize these interactions in the case of the Cabrera’s family-life context to shed some light on the entrepreneurial process carried out by this family. I also complement this visualization by capturing the narratives (Atkinson, 1998) of individual family members to dwell further on our understanding of the entrepreneurial process in the family-life context.

### 3.3 The Cabrera family as a case

The Cabrera family and its land were selected as the case considering their life’s experiences in Colombia. They were one of the thousands of families affected by violence and displacement in the country. However, the case was also chosen because of the family’s accessibility (Stake, 2005) and willingness to share abundant information about their family-life context. Figure 5 present the second generation of the Cabrera family and Figure 6 introduces the third generation (see p. 49). Over 30 years ago, the Cabrera family was a prolific and recognized family business. Unfortunately, the family business, the farm El Danubio, closed abruptly due to violence and the armed conflict. Today, from the founder-grandfather and his direct successors, the family has reached the fourth generation which might have the possibility of reactivating the family business. Yet, from the second generation onwards each nuclear family suffered from the death of the founder and subsequent displacement in its own way, and the nuclear families developed different perceptions about the former business and the land. However, all these individuals grew up facing a destiny marked by violence.
Chapter 3

Figure 5 The second generation of the Cabrera family

Photo provided by Carolina Cabrera

Figure 6 The third generation of the Cabrera family

Photo provided by Carolina Cabrera

13 These are the sons of Ricardo and his first wife Lucy. He later adopted the two children of his second wife.
By letting ourselves be carried away by all the events that make up the Cabrera’s family-life context, we will not be distracted by the interference of events in the history of the region. Instead, this setting is represented by the fertile land belonging to the Cabrera family. It is ideal for capturing the context of violence in Colombia and the land problem faced by agricultural families. The history of the region remains to date poorly reconstructed, but it is important to understand as it is the land which was the domain of indigenous communities, who were extinguished by the new settlers acquiring large areas of land. This land attracted the attention of drug traffickers, guerrillas, and paramilitaries. All the violence in the Colombian conflict is linked to the same land. Therefore, when it comes to a family business it is possible to visualize two very different periods for the family at the heart of this study; one, in which agricultural activity generated significant economic results in favor of a united and wealthy family; and one, in which the family was violently displaced and dispersed and it lost all its wealth.

The recent Colombian peace agreement offers an unusual moment, restitution and the possibility of returning to the land once usurped by force. It is an opportunity for the reactivation of the business, a propitious moment to observe and understand the family and its dynamic relationships, while its members decide whether to reactivate their rural business or not.

3.4 My field study

I did a field study of the Cabrera family during December 2016 and April 2019 with three visits to Colombia (and interviews with additional stakeholders) in which I gathered 54 videos or 1,284 minutes of recorded material. The field study was used as a method for collecting observations, narrative interviews (Atkinson, 1998), and secondary material that I used for interpreting and reconstructing the sequence of events in the Cabrera family since its early years, i.e., before the displacement and from the founder till today. This focus is consistent with the suggestions made by Aldrich and Cliff (2003). I designed the field study in this manner to meet Lincoln and Guba’s criteria of trustworthiness.

From an embeddedness perspective, Aldrich and Zimmer (1986, p. 3), argue that entrepreneurship is observable “embedded in networks of continuing social relations.” According to Aldrich and Zimmer (1986), network information is transmitted and exchanged, influenced by normative forces. Considering that the Cabrera family is primarily a social group, I see in it the main network of relationships that I need to consider in my research. This network of relationships in the Cabrera family has now been extended to the fourth generation which suggests the extent to which my unit of analysis can be potentially expanded (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986).

However, following Dubini and Aldrich (1991, p. 306), the concept of “network” by itself will not allow me to perceive it as a part of a process. I solve the limitation of movement initially offered by the concept of a network by considering it as part of the entrepreneurial process. I position it in the family-life
context (i.e., Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; White, Klein, & Martin, 2015) of the Cabrera family for analyzing it under the lens of the entrepreneurial process. Aldrich and Kim (2007, p. 36) indicate that the life course perspective “refers to the social patterning of events and roles over a person’s life span, a process shaped by the interaction of individuals’ behaviors and changing historical contexts.”

Following Aldrich and Kim (2007), I paid special attention to recording the years in which events occurred in the Cabrera family, being as exact as possible and obtaining in detail how the interactions were during each event and recording contextual circumstances that had an effect on the family. Inspired by Aldrich, Renzulli, and Langton (1998), I followed how the involvement of each generation of the Cabrera family with the land and the farm mattered and also how the second generation, and those others who knew the farm, influenced the third-generation’s perceptions of the issues mentioned earlier.

In the process of identifying the life trajectories that I had to follow during the study of my unit of analysis, I ruled out including the fourth-generation as they were too young and also taking into account the implications of working with minors. Then, the main focus of my field study became the second generation or the current owners and the third generation. To gain access to the family, I contacted my “prospective informant” (Stake, 1995, p. 4), Carolina, a 37-year-old, young member of the third generation and daughter of the oldest of the founder’s children, ‘his right hand,’ according to interview accounts. In the first instance, she put me in contact with her father, Ricardo Jr, and two of her uncles, Hernando and Rodrigo, and in this way, I succeeded in accessing the second generation’s members.

Nordqvist et al. (2009) suggest that in family business research, respondents ideally do not belong to a single generation. So, once the first three interviews had been conducted, and with the authorization of each interviewee, it was less difficult for me to access their respective core families; it was like a domino effect and I was able to interview children, couples, and even ex-partners during my visits to Colombia. Access to the third generation as future successors was also gained.

In Figure 7, using an online genealogy platform,14 I reconstructed the Cabrera family tree (see p.52). The tree shows that the second generation ‘owners’ – seven members with their respective spouses – are followed by a third generation that exceeds 20 members and involves more than 10 spouses. The fourth generation already exceeds 20 members without counting their partners.

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14 https://www.myheritage.es/site-446190531/cabrera
Following “historiographical concepts” as discussed by Lippmann and Aldrich (2016, p. 658), the field study also helped me identify the second generation of the Cabrera family, and those members of the third generation who knew the farm and the founder – the ‘generational units’ of the family which have been in charge of passing on memories to the other members of the third generation. Figures 8 to 13 illustrate the generational units (see pp. 52-54). According to Lippmann and Aldrich (2016, p. 658), shared memories, printed as “collective memories” are a living expression of how the past and historical events during the family’s development influenced its entrepreneurial actions.

Figure 7 Genealogy of Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo\textsuperscript{15,16}

Figure 8 The founder’s oldest son Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera and his nuclear family\textsuperscript{17}

Image taken from the website www.myheritage.es

\textsuperscript{15} Fallecido(a)’ in Spanish means deceased in English
\textsuperscript{16} Image taken from the website www.myheritage.es
\textsuperscript{17} Family members identified by their names and photographs in the family tree were the members I interviewed.
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Figure 9 Javier Cabrera Cabrera and his nuclear family

Image taken from the website www.myheritage.es

Figure 10 Jaime Cabrera Cabrera and his nuclear family

Image taken from the website www.myheritage.es

Figure 11 Hernando Cabrera Cabrera and his nuclear family

Image taken from the website www.myheritage.es
Adopting an ‘enactive approach’ (Johannisson, 2011, 2018, 2020) is as sophisticated as it is demanding. During my field study, I activated a family business in the socio-spatial context of Colombia, as a Colombian. Thus, I made myself “visible” as a researcher in the context (Johannisson, 2018, p. 89) or declared my “familiarity with the concrete empirical context” (Johannisson, 2020, p. 153). To achieve this, Johannisson advises, for example, obtaining membership of representative associations. This activity was my permanent job. Making myself visible was important because my research gained relevance and recognition, which allowed me to reach key people in politics and the family. It also opened a lot of doors in government organizations.

Since the first quarter of 2017 and to date, I have been invited to a number of activities where I have discussed my research. I have been interviewed for print magazines and radio and television programs. I have also written 16 opinion articles for the most widely read newspaper in southern Colombia as a columnist. These articles were, in fact, beneficial in obtaining clearance for traveling to the post-conflict zone. The articles also allowed me to communicate with the context since my name and membership of the JIBS’ Centre of Family Entrepreneurship and Ownership (CeFEO) appears at the top of the articles, opening the possibility of having discussions with the local community. Finally, I would like to emphasize that I managed to organize and carried out a research event in Colombia which was attended by approximately 40 researchers. Five academic
members of CeFEO accompanied me. The purpose of organizing this event was promoting research on family businesses in Colombia. The event was preceded by a session in which I presented my research, which was transmitted through streaming to more than 30 campuses of my university in Colombia.

Johannisson (2018, p. 3) uses the term “amalgamate” which in my case allowed me to build my role as a researcher and merge it with Cabrera family case. He further suggests accompanying actors during their journey through what he identified as ‘entrepreneuring’ (Johannisson, 2011). Since I live in Sweden, and the Cabrera family case is in Colombia, the option of adopting enactive research did not seem plausible. Hence, in my efforts to accompany the family during the process, techniques such as ethnography and shadowing were ruled out. Instead, I created network affiliations and connections that allowed me to conduct a field study with repeated visits to Colombia.

Johannisson (2018) also advises researchers to get involved in the research not only as an academic but also as a person. This means that (s)he is expected to act and interact in the research setting (Johannisson, 2020). This also includes acknowledging your private life experiences and interests (Johannisson, 2018). With my academic background, understanding the context seemed straightforward but to my surprise, as the case progressed I realized that I did not understand the Colombian armed conflict and the violence that accompanied it. In hindsight, I understand that this cannot be learned from books. Understanding the context demands personal involvement and that demands a lot from you not only as an academic, but also as a human being.

As a Colombian, I know violence. I have read of its origins and different interpretations. I have observed it from afar, in newspapers and newscasts, and also know about the dramas in the lives of those who suffered. Once I also picked a side. But my research observed the Cabrera family on its journey through a context of violence that is linked to the problem of land in my country. This experience forced me to understand violence and that meant challenging my convictions.

Therefore, I took on the task of contacting influential people with different ideologies to listen to varied interpretations of the conflict. For instance, while visiting Los llanos del Yari (i.e., the Yari plains), I met a former guerrilla fighter and a victim of the conflict, who explained his perspective of the conflict and with whom I am still in contact. Many voices helped me understand that I was wrong, and that the enemy was not my enemy and that in reality there were neither good nor bad people, only Colombians. But this is another matter.

I traveled five times to Colombia, and I interviewed the Cabrerás at home or online. I was able to contact five of the seven Cabrera brothers and other family members including ex-wives and we achieved an intense pace of communication. They would communicate with me late at night and write to me; Ricardo and Javier sent me photos of the farm, the animals, and they even proposed starting a business with me. One family member, Ana Milena, offered me 250 hectares of her land for sale. During one of the interviews, a member of the third generation asked me about the rest of the family and asked me to organize a Cabrera family
meeting so that everyone could get to know each other. My trip to Los llanos del Yari, to the Cabreras’ farm El Danubio, was inspired by Johannisson’s notion of amalgam (Johannisson, 2018). Through my research, they remembered. They spoke, cried, and shared their private lives.

With my experience as a researcher of the Cabrera family, I now understand what it means to be displaced, violence, a peasant, and a farmer; I also understand the tremendous social problems that Colombia has. In other words, now I can say that I understand the drama of the Cabrera family during its journey towards the reactivation of the family business in the context of Colombia. For Burrell and Morgan (1979), this implies that the study of the subjective experiences of individuals allows a researcher to focus on and understand their uniqueness and particularities beyond their generality and universality. Research on the Cabrera family and its land over time allowed me to understand the behavior of the family with regard to how it confronted and shaped its world from a family business perspective within issues of the Colombian land problem and armed conflict.

I interviewed 30 family members and I met some of them more than once (see Table 1, see p. 57). All the 30 family members interviewed were of legal age: five (out of seven) were siblings from the second generation, 15 were members of the third generation, one was a member of the fourth generation, and nine were spouses. Three brothers from the second generation were interviewed more than twice, and some other members were contacted twice. The interviewees live in four cities of Colombia: Bogotá, Neiva, Barranquilla, and San Vicente del Caguán. In total, I collected 54 videos with narrative interviews conducted with family Cabrera (1,284 minutes). My first and last meetings recorded with family members were on December 20, 2016 and on April 4, 2019, respectively.

I conducted face to face narrative interviews (Atkinson, 1998) that were carried out in the form of a “life story,” a qualitative research method that allows one to see life from a “subjective” perspective (Atkinson, 1998, pp. 4, 8). The importance of my research is that this interview format is based on life stories and crucial events and episodes (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014), told by its protagonists and expressed in their own words (Atkinson, 1998). I ensured that the interviewee was at home, enabling the interviewee to be in his/her context which helped enrich their stories with more details. Further, two objectives were achieved through the interviews: first, housing conditions and quality of life could be verified and linked to stories of the daily context, and second, their family relationships could be seen. Finally, the life stories and their narratives were intertwined, verifying and complementing each other.

As an investigator, I was only the facilitator of the interviews. I obtained the approval of family members to record and transcribe all conversations and interviews. All narrative interviews were conducted in Colombia, some in the cities and others in the Colombian countryside, and they were conducted and recorded in Spanish. I offered all family members the possibility of maintaining their confidentiality by ascribing pseudonyms for their names. This led to reaching a level of trust that gave me the privilege of gaining access to memories and stories of precious and delicate moments including emotional challenges.
### Chapter 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews with the Cabrera Family</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Time - Minutes</th>
</tr>
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<td>Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera</td>
<td>December 28, 2016</td>
<td>Neiva - Hula</td>
<td>House</td>
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<td>Dioselina Sanchez</td>
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<td>House</td>
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<td>Neiva - Hula</td>
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</tr>
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<td>José Ricardo Cabrera Sánchez</td>
<td>April 6, 2019</td>
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<td>House</td>
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</tr>
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<td>April 6, 2019</td>
<td>Neiva - Hula</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Hernando Cabrera Vargas</td>
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<td>Family home</td>
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<td>Finca “El porvenir”</td>
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<td>Elsa Bautista (Esposa Jaime Cabrera Cabrera)</td>
<td>July 3, 2019</td>
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<td><strong>Total minutes recorded</strong></td>
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Table 1 Members of the Cabrera family interviewed
However, so far, no family member has expressed the wish for anonymity or the use of pseudonyms. They argued that they saw my research as an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between their surname and the land.

As I conducted the interviews, I interpreted them within the Cabrera’s family-life context. The narrative interviews conveniently started with Rodrigo and Ricardo, the youngest and the oldest of the founder’s five natural children in December 2016. The interview with the oldest brother, Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera, allowed me to define the period in which all other interviews fit in the Cabrera’s family-life context. The interviews revealed a chronological order (Hamilton et al., 2017), and were done individually, which meant that integrating them into a general family history offered equally rich details but high complexity for interpretation. Five interviews were conducted via Skype while all the remaining ones were face-to-face interviews. The interviews were open-ended and guided by some basic questions to allow each family member to talk about his/her life, the land, their thoughts, fears, and relationships, and allowing for relevant themes to surface. I invited the interviewees to talk and reflect on their economic and social history and their relationship with the two generations involved (Aldrich & Kim, 2007). I thus assured a diversity of perceptions which is highlighted by Stake (2005, p. 454) as being important in qualitative research.

The typical narrative interview structure was asking about the personal background, inquiring about different people in the family and the genealogical history, and then continuing with the topics of displacement and the pending decision regarding what to do with the land. The interviews allowed family members to talk about aspects like their age, family tree, personal aspects, education, experience, socioeconomic level, and their influence over other members of the family. I asked those family members who had lived the farm’s experience to deepen their stories regarding life and role on the farm, the family, the business, and their life with the founder (Aldrich & Kim, 2007). I asked the five members of the second generation interviewed and Dioselina – the wife of the oldest of the Cabrera family members – about the origins of the land, the beginning of the farm, and the role played by their father and founder (Aldrich & Kim, 2007). All respondents were members of the family including ex-spouses, meaning that biological and non-biological linkages were included. The interactions (Atkinson, 1998) between family members and their context became evident through these narratives and could be anchored intergenerationally and transgenerationally.

Today I can say that my access to the family was a privilege since I am still communicating with its members. Ricardo, Rodrigo, Hernando, Javier, and Milena continue to share with me family dialogues regarding land and also share photos and progress with me. As for the third generation, I have even received a proposal to organize a meeting that allows the cousins to get to know each other. Now I understand why Molano (1998) says that when investigating using the life story, an emotional bond is created between the researcher and the interviewees which becomes almost loving.
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Besides the interviews with the Cabrera family members, I conducted 17 interviews with additional stakeholders during my visits to Colombia which led to 600 minutes of material which was complemented by archival records (see Table 2, see p. 60). Each day that I spent on that land and each conversation with these additional stakeholders informed me about the armed conflict, peace, displacement, and the Cabrera family. I organized meetings with stakeholders who work with different governmental agencies, peasants, and an ex-guerrilla member in Colombia. For instance, most governmental agencies and the headquarters of the Ministry of Agriculture are located in Bogotá. Experts in peace and the Colombian peace accord are from the Kroc Institute in USA, and the farm workers and inhabitants are in Llanos del Yari. I interviewed people with different backgrounds and ideologies including public servants in the Ministry of Agriculture; some counselors of the Vice Minister of Agriculture; and three members of the ‘Group of attention to victims of the armed conflict.’ All of them at that time belonged to the government of the then president of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, who, in turn, was the promoter of the Colombian peace process. I also met with an advisor to the Mayor of the city of Neiva, and with the Head of the Office for Competitiveness and Productivity in the same town.

During 2017, I met one of the front figures in political science in Colombia, Dr Francisco Leal Buitrago. I also held a meeting with an official of the office of political scientist María Fernanda Cabal, who stands out for her persistent opposition to the peace agreement, a position that is widespread in the current government. Today, María Fernanda Cabal is a Senator for the Republic of Colombia on behalf of the political party Movimiento Centro Democrático.

With the purpose of understanding the perspective that the Colombian political left has about the conflict, I had several meetings both in Sweden and in Colombia with Colombian-Swedish political activist Imelda Daza Cotes. She was part of the negotiating team for the peace agreement, and after the agreement she became a candidate for the presidency on behalf of the newly created FARC guerrilla political party. She officiated as representative of the political movement of FARC’s ‘Voices of Peace and Reconciliation’ and was hence greatly involved with the implementation of the peace agreement. Being the spokesperson of the FARC political movement, she helped me understand the guerrillas’ position in the conflict. Contacting her was not easy and convincing her to have a dialogue with me due to my military past was even less so. However, she understood my present situation and my research work accompanying a family victim of the conflict and she helped me better understand the conflict and the violence. A few months after our first encounter, Imelda was chosen as the vice-presidential representative of the political party created by the demobilized guerrilla movement and was even considered a candidate for the presidency of Colombia on behalf of the same political group.
My efforts to understand the Colombian armed conflict ended with four meetings. The first one happened at the end of March 2019 during my visit to Los Llanos del Yari, where I met Freddy, an ex-combatant and member of the FARC guerrillas, with whom I spoke several times about the conflict as we explored the vast plains of the Yari. After meeting Freddy, I got an idea of who a guerrilla fighter was, the way he thought, and I could also learn about guerrillas’ origins and their lives. I am still in touch with Freddy who periodically tells me how he is doing with the hectares of land that the government has allowed him to work on after being recognized as demobilized by the FARC guerrillas. The second and third meetings took place at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies of
the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, United States, where I met with Elise Ditta (Research Technician) and David Cortright (Director of Policy Studies), members of the ‘Peace Accords Matrix (PAM) Team at the Kroc Institute,’ a group of researchers responsible for monitoring the ‘State of Implementation of the Colombia Peace Agreement.’ My last meeting was with William E. Graf, Chair of the Religious Studies Department at St. John Fisher College, USA. Dr Graf helped me understand the role of land in the conflict from the perspective of religion. My interview with Dr Graff took place at the University of Notre Dame, USA.

Given the highly complex political and socioeconomic situation in Colombia, the interviews with family members were triangulated with information from other stakeholders to get a better understanding of the policies related to the process of land restitution, the conflict, displacement, peace agreement, and the return of families to their land. Triangulation is “a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (Stake, 2005, p. 454) which I used during my research. To meet Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) criteria of confirmability, I triangulated the interviews and material in the reconstruction of the history of the family, the farm, and the land. I also triangulated the interviews and material for a thorough understanding of victims’ perceptions of the Colombian armed conflict and the ensuing violence. As secondary material, both current and archival documents were used for further triangulation of the case study history, events, and interpretations (Leppäaho et al., 2016, p. 169), especially of its development over time (cf. De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). Additional sources of information included publications on the history of the region, books and reports about violence and armed conflict in Colombia, the founder’s biography, and newspaper articles. All these helped me triangulate the interviews, allowing me to obtain different points of view and interpretations (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014, p. 21) which complemented, confirmed, or refuted the information that I had collected during the interviews.

3.5 (Un)raveling narratives

“The story of anonymous people is as vigorous, as engaging as the story of heroes. In general, we look for the story of heroes, and we leave in the background the anonymous stories of ordinary people”

(Molano, 1998, p. 72)

I now explain how I interpreted and composed the narratives of the entrepreneurial process of the family in the business from the point of view of the second and third generations’ family members. Considering that the entrepreneurial process communicates movement (Johannisson, 2011), I developed a data analysis strategy that followed several steps adopting an inductive and interpretative approach. As suggested by Aldrich and Kim (2007), I focused on capturing the family-life context through its specific and broader
I first focused on listening and understanding the narrative interviews. Inspired by Hamilton et al. (2017), my inquiry focused on understanding and capturing individual family members’ life stories in detail. For understanding how interactions are important in creating family businesses, Dawson and Hjorth (2012, p. 342) suggest adopting a narrative approach in examining the family business phenomena by embracing the “lively, creative and dramatic characteristics of family.” Following Hermadi (1987), Czarniawska-Joerges (2004) adopted three ways of reading text in a simultaneous manner, which in my case was interview transcriptions. These ways are explication, explanation, and exploration. Applying these ways to family business research, Dawson and Hjorth (2012) propose that explication means interpreting the story and posing the question: what does the interview transcript say to myself? This implies understanding critical events in the family-life context and how these issues evolved over time (i.e., Nordqvist & Melin, 2010).

The second way, explanation, meant that I needed to consider how does the interview transcript say what it does? and why does it say this. In my case, I focused on unraveling the story to understand how it evolved in such a way. Finally, exploration means considering the theoretical framing and building insights obtained by processing and composing the narratives and addressing the question: what do I think about the text? This final step is “closer to writing than to reading” (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004, p. 2).

To start with the explication (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004), I marked the significant events in each account and built up the narratives as accurately as possible (Atkinson, 1998; Dana & Dumez, 2015). The case of the Cabrera family and its land is rich in history and draws on two sources — the history of the conflict builds mainly on secondary sources while the stories of the land and the family are obtained through the narrative-interviews with members of the family. The richness of the case lies in interweaving the narratives of the family in their own family-life context (i.e., before, during, and after the family business) and that of the history of the region (i.e., including the violence and armed conflict). By doing this, I was able to appreciate the family in all its magnitude and describe the meanings and effects of events and life experiences (Atkinson, 1998).

The interviews, their transcriptions and their translation from Spanish to English, and their subsequent interpretation were done by me. The Spanish translation sometimes required assistance so as not to lose the intentionality of the words. The translation of the interviews, facing the difficulty offered by the use of language, idioms, and even by the presence of different social classes, which is reflected in the way the people expressed themselves and in the meaning given to words and expressions, demanded great meticulousness from me, e.g., jargon used in the countryside is complex. I knew farming (i.e., agriculture and livestock on farms) since my parents owned a farm during my youth. As a Colombian, I am also familiar with the vocabulary related to issues of violence and conflict. In addition, the interviews were loaded with emotions linked to painful moments in the family’s life and were conducted in the homes of the interviewees which added
visual richness that was important for subsequent interpretations (e.g., confirming information).

Taking all this into account, I decided to discard the use of any software recommended for organizing and analyzing the material, an essential step in most research, as for instance in Clinton, McAdam, and Gamble (2018) using NVivo. Its convenience restricted my opportunities of gaining sensitivity regarding the interviews and, therefore, would affect the information and its interpretation. So, I preferred organizing my material manually, which meant more work, but allowed me to stay closer to the accounts.

To proceed with the explanation or answering the questions ‘how does the interview transcript say it?’ and ‘why does it say it?’ (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004) I compiled the answers in a database per individual at the completion of the first four interviews with Rodrigo, Ricardo, Dioselina, and Carolina in December 2016. This database allowed me to understand how common events cropped up in their memories which were accentuated by their stories. I started reflecting on their meaning and relevance in the family-life context. Thus, I focused my attention on these events to start building a timeline. I asked each interviewee to tell me about his/her life from birth, which allowed the events to appear in an organized chronological manner, and in this way, they revealed a timeline. By July 2019, the database reported a diverse and rich number of events. The most representative themes recurred across family members. A focus on these themes allowed me to reduce the information obtained through a constant comparison of responses (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The recurrent events centered around four themes: the land, the founder, the business or the farm, and the displacement that marked the development of the family-life context.

Setting family events in a logical timeline takes work (Hamilton et al., 2017). There were certain key events in the lives of the interviewees which they did not voluntarily or involuntarily recall otherwise but which came to light during the narrative interviews, sometimes in a disorderly way. They adjusted their narrative mixing time – past, present, and future (Hamilton et al., 2017). Although some interviewees showed discrepancies in dates and times when remembering (Hamilton et al., 2017), it was possible to integrate and triangulate the information to accommodate them in the Cabrera’s family-life context, preserving a logical sequence, thus confirming dates and information.

When interpreting the Cabrera family case, critical phases were delimited by events with and without the business El Danubio around which the family’s narratives were woven from the perspective of the second and third generations; this also portrayed the entrepreneurial process of the Cabrera family’s development over time. The presentation of the process by the second and third generations allows us to understand how the family-life context in the business evolved over time as understood by individuals. Composing the narratives as the process evolved, reflects a temporal bracketing exercise suggested by (Langley, 1999). The narratives of the second and third generations dug deeper into the meaning of the events. The narratives are presented with accounts of the Cabrera’s family. Thus, I am not the one telling them. The story of the Cabrera family is
narrated with direct quotations obtained from the accounts that the members of the family shared about their experiences in line with Atkinson (1998) and Czarniawska-Joerges (2004). In this way, the events gain color and meaning, allowing us to have an unsurpassed and thick description of the process (Dana & Dumez, 2015). Thick descriptions are important to ensure transferability that allows a reader to ‘transfer’ my interpretations to other contexts (i.e., Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Hence, the narratives of the second and third generation members enable us to learn from the protagonists of the family-life context. The narratives led to a multiplicity of realities and possibilities for the Cabrera family. The case, thus, offers a distinctive and extraordinary setting in which to observe the phenomenon under investigation (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014).

When you have done your research and re-read the narratives, you cannot avoid visualizing the interviewee. In this mental reproduction, you recognize his/her voice when you understand the narrative during reading. Also, you will imagine him/her making his/her particular bodily gestures while speaking. If this happens to you as a researcher, you will know that you have achieved the appropriate level of interaction with your interviewees and their narratives. Only then will you be sure that you have gotten to know them and your text.

3.6 Periodizing key events in the family-life context

To continue with the visualization of the entrepreneurial process (Dubini & Aldrich, 1991; Johannisson, 2011; Reynolds & White, 1997), I interpret the family members’ interactions in the Cabrera family and also with land over time as “discrete significant occurrences” (White et al., 2015, p. 112). The identification of these interactions was important for understanding how family members were influenced by the presence or absence of resources, and how such interactions translated into the integration, separation, and progressive reintegration of the Cabrera family. Following the historical context (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986), key events of the family network emerged from the dataset throughout the entrepreneurial process. This allowed me to portray the sequential events in a timeline (see Figure 14, pp. 67-68). This is what Langley et al. (2013, p. 7) call a “longitudinal replication.” By displaying the events on this horizontal line and creating a grouping by phases, a field of maneuvers and meanings opened based on the temporality of the case. To follow Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) criteria of credibility, periodizing events helped me ensure that the accounts were significant, and confirmed by different participants.

The resulting Figure 14 shows the movement and trajectory of my analysis unit, the Cabrera family from 1958 to 2019 (see p. 67-68 and appendix 1, p. 260). It illustrates the family's heterogeneity; specifically, it includes events in the lives of individual family members as they occurred in the trajectory of time. In the figure, the events are broken down according to the units of analysis into individual family members, who are represented by shapes (i.e., star, triangle, and rectangle). Each ‘shape’ represents a family member who moves through time and
through the maneuvering field on a trajectory demarcated using the events. Additionally, the trajectory lines represent the generation to which each individual belongs (i.e., the solid black line corresponds to the first and second generations and the black line with dashes to the third generation). In Figure 14 symbolizes the richness and increasing complexity of the Cabrera family. It allows me to understand that only members across generation made an appearance in the entrepreneurial process and once an individual was included in the timeline, (s)he disappeared only in the event of death. I was also able to observe that the only family members who were present through all the family developments and in all the events, were the founder’s eldest children.

As I continued interpreting the events, I identified nine ‘moments’ when the individuals moved away, approached or interacted with the land and the farm during a particular event. In Figure 14, the nine ‘moments’ in which the family interacted are divided into 14 columns (9x14), that is, 126 squares. Appendix 1 provide a closer look at each period. Here, interpreting the accounts, familiness (Habbershon et al., 2003; Habbershon & Williams, 1999) emerged as a useful concept to make initial sense of the entrepreneurial process. However, literature on familiness takes a family business exiting as a must, which a reconstruction of the Cabrera’s family-life context showed was not the case. A family business is formed with the involvement of a family. Thus, I organized the period of into four phases: Phase 1: Before familiness / pre-familiness (1958-1970), Phase 2. Through familiness – the family business (1970-1985), Phase 3: Post-familiness (1985-2017), and Phase 4: Re-entry? (2017-2019).

Considering the land Los llanos del Yari and the business El Danubio, the movement of individuals gained greater mobility in the entrepreneurial process. Thus, in Figure 14 horizontal and diagonal movements were visualized through the maneuvering field of the process. When individuals, moving from one event to the next, remained in the same ‘moment,’ the movements are horizontal. The diagonal movements between events indicate how individuals and the family became closer to or distanced themselves from resources.

Except for the founder and his two wives, the individuals in Figure 14 belong to two generations. Thus, it is possible to follow their trajectories individually and it is also possible to observe the paths of the generations from a collective perspective. To give the reader an example of an individual’s movement between events, I describe the path followed by Carolina Cabrera Sanchez (i.e., called ‘car’ and her trajectory has a black line with dashes in Figure 14) and Ricardo (i.e., called ‘Jr’ who has a solid black line trajectory in Figure 14). In the figure, Carolina appears in phase 2, square 5, i.e., she was born when the farm and the family business were operational. From her account, Carolina knew both the land and her grandfather and founder. Due to her young age, she did not work on the farm then. Carolina’s position in the figure changes during subsequent events, according to her relationship with the land and the farm. When the founder was killed in 1985 and the family was evicted from the land, Carolina is located in the same area as the other family members who had a relationship with the farm (square 50). Influenced by her father, in November 2016 and very close to the
peace agreement Carolina revisited the land Los llanos del Yarí (square 82). This movement is represented by a diagonal line and shows how Carolina got closer to the resources, engaged in conversations about the land, and the farm’s reactivation. As of 2019, Carolina continues to be involved and positioned in the same area ‘moment’ (square 84).

Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera Jr’s position in the figure is initially in the beginning of Phase 1: pre-familiness in square 1. He was a boy next to his father, and later accompanied him in the acquisition of the land during Phase 2, through familiness (square 74). In 1985, during Phase 3: post-familiness, he was stripped of the land (square 50). He was reunited with the rest of the family during the displacement. However, the founder’s right-hand man, according to family members’ accounts, was the first to approach the land again in 1999 (square 80), a movement reflected in a deep diagonal. After his release and during the peace process, he started working on the land, getting closer to the resources. His movement becomes even more profound from 2017, when he is legally recognized as an owner (i.e., square 111).
## Chapter 3

### Grupo 1: First Generation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Founder</th>
<th>Ricardo Cabrera Pérdamo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Founder’s wife</td>
<td>Lucy Cabrera Puentes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Founder’s wife</td>
<td>Hermila Cruz Peña</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Grupo 2: Owners (Second Generation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera Jr.</th>
<th>JAV</th>
<th>JAM</th>
<th>HCC</th>
<th>RCC</th>
<th>MCC</th>
<th>OCC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dioselina Sanchez (wife)</td>
<td>Ana Vargas Tovar</td>
<td>Elsa Bautista (wife)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy Cabrera Sanchez</td>
<td>Luis Felipe Cabrera Vargas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina Cabrera Sanchez</td>
<td>Hernando Cabrera Vargas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose Ricardo (Jimmy) Cabrera Sanchez</td>
<td>Magda Vidalés</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanessa Cabrera Sánchez</td>
<td>Angélica Cabrera Correa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Javier Ricardo Cabrera Cruz</td>
<td>Ivan Cabrera Correa</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Javier Hernando Cabrera Fuertes</td>
<td>Carlos Felipe Cabrera Cabrera</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adriana Trujillo Cedeño (Ex-wife)*</td>
<td>Maria Lucia Cabrera Cabrera</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adriana Catalina Cabrera Pascua (4 Generation)*</td>
<td>Naibiz Pastrana Monroy (Husband)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Grupo 3: Third generation

- Leader
- Jr.
- JAV
- JAM
- HCC
- RCC
- MCC
- OCC

### Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>RCP&amp;Jr arrival to the lands (employees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Land inherited Satia &amp; El Casil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Land acquisition El Danubio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Life on the farm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Kidnapping of Diosa &amp; Lucy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Hermila.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Acquisition of two farms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Selling of &quot;Satia &amp; El Casil&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Displacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Violent displacement of HCC’s family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>RCC is kidnapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>RCC is released.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Colombia’s peace dialogues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Colombia’s Peace agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>New leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Land Restitution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Family members not included in the figure.*
Figure 14 Cabrera family’s life events in their entrepreneurial process
3.7 Raveling the entrepreneurial journey with the family-life context

Moving towards exploration (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004) as the interpretation of the entrepreneurial process continued, I focused further on making sense of the Cabrera’s family-life events that make up the family history. I considered that family events could have led to change (Jaskiewicz & Dyer, 2017). In the case of the Cabrera’s family-life context, events had a direct or indirect effect on the ongoing production of family capital (Coleman, 2003; Jaskiewicz & Dyer, 2017). Family capital was generated individually and collectively by the members of the Cabrera family in their attempt to forge and adapt to an adequate social context (Lippmann & Aldrich, 2016) for collective family purposes, i.e., it was sensitive to the social context adopted by the Cabrera family. During the production of the social context, based on the dynamics of the interactions and socialization of the family, the production of different capitals stands out such as social capital (Arregle et al., 2007) and human capital (Becker, 1993). Human capital and social capital positively motivate displaced people to undertake entrepreneurship (Williams & Krasniqi, 2018). Human capital and social capital originate in change; “in persons that bring about skills and capabilities that make able to act in new ways,” and “in the relations among persons that facilitate action” (Coleman, 2003, p. 62).

However, from my interpretation two different types of capital emerged as being relevant to the family and to the business ‘family social capital’ which was collectively generated through interactions among family members given the socialization of relationships, values, and norms and their interaction with the land prior to the existence of the business. The production of family social capital occurred during the initial period of the Cabrera family’s life in which the business was not present (i.e., Phase 1: before familiness / pre-familiness, 1958-1970). Family social capital preceded the business and was produced through interactions during the absence of the family business. As the process continued, interactions among members of the Cabrera family related to the business were pervasive and different from when the business existed. Yet, according to Arregle et al. (2007) organizational social capital is produced as something opposite to families. My interpretation suggests the emergence of an organizational social capital that I term ‘familyFB’ organizational social capital.’ Such capital is collective and dependent on the interactions and socialization between family members and corresponds to ‘Phase 2: through familiness - the family business’ (i.e., 1970-1985). During this phase, the new agricultural family existed given that the family business El Danubio existed in Los llanos del Yari.

Human capital played a role in the entrepreneurial process. Such capital is fused in the human being and it cannot be taken away (Becker, 1993, p. 16). It is made up of all “knowledge” and “skills” accumulated by a person during his/her life through education and training (Becker, 1993, p. 17). Contextually,
agriculture as an economic activity finds a propitious setting for providing knowledge to those who see an economic reason in it.

Referring to the very beginning of the production of the human capital in the Cabrera family, human capital formation was related to the history of the founder. It emerged during his life experience and several events represented the development and use of knowledge by the agricultural family in Colombia, where its knowledge was a result of the fusion of life with the activity of the land Los llanos del Yarí. The concept of ‘Human capital – Generic’ (see Figure 15, p. 72) is linked to the development of Ricardo Cabrera, who lived in Los llanos del Yarí. ‘Human capital – Generic’ surfaced as a construction that started with an individual who transferred his experiences to the family, thus enabling them to adopt an even more complex and specific family organization as required by the family business El Danubio. Thus, the individual ‘Human Capital – Generic’ started being formed when Ricardo Cabrera inherited the land ‘Satia & El Casil’ in Phase 1: before familiness / pre-familiness (i.e., 1958-1970).18 Later, when the Cabrera family sold the two farms in 1986, it activated the development of the collective human capital formation in Phase 3: post-familiness (i.e., 1985-2017). When the land was restituted, collective human capital development was activated for the Cabrera family in 2017 (i.e., Phase 4: re-entry?).

When the Cabrera family became involved in a family business, it was not possible to refer to capital in generic terms. The events showed the experiences of the family in developing activities and exploring the land. I label this ‘Collective Human Capital – Specific.’ Thanks to family socialization, everything became a collective production, but the family also remained individually in the memory of the members of the family. For instance, the acquisition of the land El Danubio in 1970 marked the start of a new agricultural business (i.e., Phase 2: through familiness - the family business), and also the culmination of Phase 1: before familiness / pre-familiness.

As my interpretation proceeded, two final types of events became evident and the concept ‘property events’ emerged which corresponded with the acquisition or sale of properties by the family, here referred to as ‘physical capital resources.’ In my case, the property events were significant and pervasive during the family life. For instance, the ‘sale of the farms Satia & El Casil’ in 1982, and the ‘acquisition of two farms’ in 1984, are examples of property events that influenced the family organizational social capital.

The concept ‘contextual circumstances’ refers to those occurrences which were a result of the combined political and social settings in Colombia. The ‘kidnapping of Diosa and Lucy’ in 1983, and the ‘founder’s murder’ in 1985 are examples of contextual circumstantial events due to the armed conflict.

Figure 15 presents the events linked to family capital, property, and the contextual circumstances affecting the entrepreneurial process either directly or indirectly (see p. 72). At this point, I made sense of the entrepreneurial process throughout the family-life context and realized that certain events had a distinct

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18 The land ‘Satia & El Casil’ is discussed in Chapter 5.
place in the family or the family business. I term this ‘family habitus’ and ‘family business habitus.’ In Figure 15, the events corresponding to family habitus are presented in the lower part and events linked to the family business habitus are presented in the upper part. Understanding the family-life context led to the formation of the family habitus and the family business habitus which I term the greater entrepreneurial journey as the habitualization of the family in the business. As portrayed in the figure, the family’s habitualization to the business is an ongoing construction that took place during the development of the family-life context. This, in turn, contributed to the family’s attempts to forge and adapt a habitus suitable for its purposes by means of family capital production.

Following my inductive and interpretative approach, next chapters are organized as follows: Chapter 4 presents the broader context of Colombia. After that, I introduce the Cabrera’s family-life context and land over time in Chapter 5. Then, I explain my snapshot visit to the land in Colombia in Chapter 6. In Chapter 7, the narratives of the entrepreneurial journey of a displaced agricultural family are elaborated based on the accounts of the second and third generation members. Chapters 8 present the interpretation of the narratives and introduces the habitualization as a processual perspective to better understand the entrepreneurial journey of displaced agricultural families in their life context. Chapter 9 is the final chapter of this study, in which I present the conclusions and discuss this study’s research implications, limitations and future research.
Figure 15 Habitualization of the family in the business
Colombia as a context of violence, conflict, and hope

Contexts are identified by their unique characteristics, delimiting the movement of individuals, influencing and being influenced by entrepreneurial actions (Welter, 2011; Welter, Baker, & Wirsching, 2019). For a researcher studying the context is a priority for perceiving and understanding unique characteristics that can eventually explain the observations made (Smith & Hitt, 2005). Even though information regarding family businesses in Colombia is scarce, it is reported that in 2017, 37 of the 500 largest family businesses in the world were in Latin America, including two Colombian firms, which generated 7.9% of the Latin American gross domestic product (E&Y, 2020, p. 144). However, like all organizations in the country Colombian family businesses too are exposed to a context characterized by a multiplicity of social and economic problems embedded in violence, conflict, and displacement, unleashing problems of property rights, injustices, and crimes. Although displacement is a typical problem across Latin America, the Colombian context is unique with its current land restitution program and the peace process that is underway (Meertens, 2016). Aldrich and Lippmann (2013, p. 124) characterize such an environment as "socio-historical." Colombia represents a socio-spatial context particularly appropriate for investigating the topic of my study. Its national and historical context offers a lens for understanding distinct family and family business dynamics in such a setting.

For developing this chapter, I made multiple efforts to obtain all the relevant information in line with Lincoln and Guba (1985). However, I felt frustrated when at the time of my research proposal, my discussant Marcela Ramirez-Pasillas asked me about the origin of the lands of the Cabrera family and I felt that I did not have an appropriate answer. When a researcher is faced with the need to find valuable information, Aldrich (1979) suggests grounding the study in its historical, societal, and political context. I believed that the context of my case would resemble what we colloquially describe as a half-truth, i.e., the information available was not enough. Thus, my discussant’s question was relevant and forceful which helped me understand that I should not depend exclusively on secondary information for contextualizing my case study. Instead, to establish credibility (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), like a detective, my visits to Colombia helped me reveal the circumstances that surround it and even give visibility to some obscure sections not found in books. This made the contextualization of my case study an exhausting but extremely exciting exercise.

This contextualization chapter begins with general information about Colombia, some essential statistics at the country level, and a general presentation of what its natural wealth is. Subsequently, I present what has been the scourge of violence in the country, a dense and complicated topic both to understand and to
explain even for many Colombians. Then I explain the peace process, discussing its meaning and the impact that the victims’ law and land restitution have had. I end the chapter by explaining what an agricultural family and a displaced agricultural family are in the Colombian context.

4.1 A voyage through (in)equality

“God began his creation here, Colombia was his workshop”
Wade Davis ¹⁹

Colombia is in the equatorial zone of northwestern South America. It has coasts of two oceans, and is privileged by its climate and luminosity which give it a unique fauna and the possibility of producing products impossible to find elsewhere (DNP, 2007).²⁰ It is also one of the 17 ‘mega diverse countries’ in the world (LMMC, 2020)²¹ since it is the number one country in terms of the number of species that are not found naturally anywhere else, for instance, birds, orchids, and butterflies; number two in freshwater fish and amphibians; and number three in reptiles and palms. It is also the second most biodiverse country in the world as it houses 20% of the plant species, 10% mammal species, 14% amphibian species, and 18% of the bird species of the world (SiB, 2020). Such variety is possible due to Colombia’s tropical and humid climate, with the highest average annual rainfall in the world at 3,240 mm p.a. (TWB, 2020).²² As a result, it is one of the countries with the most hydric resources in the world, with more than 1,000 rivers (DNP, 2007).

Colombia has approximately 63.2 million hectares of natural forest, even though the area covered by the forest differs according to different sources, e.g., ranging between 56.7% (DANE, 2016, p. 47) and 52.2% (Minambiente, 2020)²³ – in any case, the forest covers more than half the country. The Andes mountains mean that the country has a very rugged and diverse topography and climate,

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¹⁹ Canadian anthropologist and ethnobotanist. https://noticias.caracoltv.com/colombia/colombia-fue-el-taller-de-dios-el-naturalista-wade-davis-en-el-pais-que-queremos
²⁰ DNP: Departamento Nacional de Planeación or National Planning Department.
²¹ LMMC: Like-Minded Mega Diverse Countries.
²² TWB: The World Bank.
²³ Minambiente: Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible, or Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development.
covering humid jungles, tropical plains, as well as paramos\textsuperscript{24} (moorlands), perennial snowfields,\textsuperscript{25} (DNP, 2007) and glaciers.\textsuperscript{26}

According to the Colombian census (DANE, 2016), the country has approximately 111.5 million hectares of land, of which 43 million has been demarcated for agricultural use, i.e., it is suitable for sowing or livestock. Of the land ideal for agricultural use, approximately 80% (34.4 million hectares) has pastures or something similar, which in other words means that it is dedicated to livestock (Etter et al., 2006), occupied, for example, by Colombian cattle, which amounted to 21.5 million units (DANE, 2016, p. 48). Regarding production in the Colombian countryside, the 2013 census reported close to 34 million tons of agricultural production, in which agro-industrial crops stood out with a 79.2% contribution (e.g., sugarcane, African palm, coffee, cotton, tobacco, cocoa, and rubber), tubers,\textsuperscript{27} bananas (e.g., banana, yucca, and potato), cereals (rice, yellow corn, and white corn), fruits (e.g., pineapple and avocado), vegetables and legumes (e.g., tomatoes, peas, onions, and beans), and flowers (DANE, 2016). In 2017, the agricultural sector contributed 6.3% to Colombia’s gross domestic product, of which 58% came from farming activities and 37% from livestock activities (Flórez, Gáfar, & Poveda, 2018, p. 2). The agricultural sector stood out for exhibiting a higher growth rate than the rest of the economy and for being the main generator of employment in the country (Flórez et al., 2018).\textsuperscript{28} Agricultural production in the Colombian countryside only uses less than one-fifth of the land recognized as suitable for such use.

According to the Colombian population census,\textsuperscript{29} in 2018 the estimated total population of the country was 48,258,494 people; it was projected that by 2020 this would increase to 50,372,424 (UN, 2020a).\textsuperscript{30} In 2020, life expectancy at birth is 77.02 years which could reach 77.87 years in 2025, a considerable increase

\textsuperscript{24} Paramo: a high bleak plateau or district (as in the Andes). Specifically: “alpine meadow of northern and western South American uplands” (MWD, 2020a).

\textsuperscript{25} Perennial snowfields: “accumulation of snow and firn (granular snow) that did not entirely melt during previous summers. Snowfields can be quite extensive and thus representative of a regional climate, or can be quite isolated and localized” (USGS, 1976, p. 27).

\textsuperscript{26} South American glaciers: “Our glaciers are located on the mountains that have peaks above 4850 meters above sea level. They become a rarity; therefore, a privilege, being under the influence of the Intertropical Convergence Zone and not stations, which characterize regions of higher latitudes” (IDEAM, 2020).

\textsuperscript{27} Tubers (tubérculos in Spanish): “a short fleshy usually underground stem bearing minute scale leaves each of which bears a bud in its axil and is potentially able to produce a new plant” (MWD, 2020b).

\textsuperscript{28} Banco de la República or Bank of the Republic of Colombia.

\textsuperscript{29} DANE: Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, or National Administrative Department of Statistics.

\textsuperscript{30} Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda 2018, or National Population and Housing Census 2018.
from the 51.83 years in 1955 (UN, 2020b). The Colombian population is distributed in 1,122 municipalities; the largest city is capital Bogotá with 7,412,566 inhabitants, followed by Cali and Medellín, with populations of over 2 million each, and Barranquilla, with a population of over one million people. In 2018, 14,243,223 households, on average, had 3.1 members per household and they occupied 13,480,729 homes (DANE, 2020a). The average number of people who form a part of Colombian households in rural areas has decreased significantly if we consider that in 2005 it was 4.23, and in 2016 this figure dipped to 3.32 (DANE, 2016, p. 719). This implies that despite all its richness, Colombia is a land with abundant inequalities which impact the quality of life of its inhabitants in many ways. For instance, with a stable democratic government during the last few decades (Gaviria, 2000), Colombia is a country with a very long electoral tradition (DNP, 2007). However, during election time, 40% of the voters say that they received bribes in exchange for votes (TI, 2020). This is further evidenced in the ranking of Colombia in the 96th position among 180 countries in a recent corruption index (TI, 2020). Rampant corruption has tremendous effects on the country and society.

For years, Colombia has been seen as one of the countries in the world with the most unequal wealth distribution (e.g., Ríos Sierra, Bula Escobar, & Brocategui Pirón, 2013). According to the Gini index, Colombia is the twelfth most unequal country in the world, surpassing only two countries in Latin America – Paraguay and Guatemala (CIA, 2020). Since the 1950s, there has been dramatic urbanization in the country. Even though there is a worldwide tendency of migrating from rural areas to the suburbs, migration in Colombia has been accelerated by forced, non-voluntary migration, resulting in significant inequalities throughout the country (CNMH, 2015). In 1950, 61.3% of the Colombians lived in the countryside, in 1993 this percentage had fallen to 31.4%, and it was expected to decrease to 23.5% in 2010 (DNP, 2007). In 2018, the percentage of Colombians living in rural areas reduced to 24% (DANE, 2020a). FAO’s numbers are even alarming as it says that the Colombian rural population was 9.5 million people, i.e., 19.14% of the total population (FAO, 2020). In 2014, 725,225 producers permanently resided and worked in the countryside of which 527,847 were heads of households: 404,399 (76.61%) men and 123,448 (23.38%) women (DANE, 2016).

32 TI: Transparency International.
33 “Distribution of family income - Gini index measures the degree of inequality in the distribution of family income in a country. The more nearly equal a country’s income distribution, the lower its Gini index, e.g., a Scandinavian country with an index of 25. The more unequal a country’s income distribution, the higher its Gini index, e.g., a Sub-Saharan country with an index of 50. If income were distributed with perfect equality the index would be zero; if income were distributed with perfect inequality, the index would be 100” (CIA, 2020).
34 The Central Intelligence Agency - United States of America.
35 The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
Poverty is pervasive, e.g., 50% of the inhabitants of Bogotá are underprivileged (Cigüenza, 2019)\textsuperscript{36} In rural areas, living conditions can be severe, as 15.7% of households do not have any domiciliary public services.\textsuperscript{37} While electrical services and aqueducts reach 82.9% and 42.5% of the houses respectively, only 6% are part of a sewage system (DANE, 2016, p. 691); 79.7% children between 5 and 16 years of age have access to education (DANE, 2016, p. 773). Among 17 to 24-year-olds, only 26.3% are reported to attend school or higher education (DANE, 2016) and 12.6% of the population over 15 years of age is illiterate (DANE, 2016, p. 787). In addition, according to Decree 2360 of December 26, 2019, the legal minimum wage in force in 2020, is daily minimum wage COPS\textsuperscript{38} 29,260 (approximately USD\textsuperscript{39} 8), and a minimum monthly salary COPS 877,803 (approximately USD 251) (BR, 2020). In January 2020, Colombia had a working population of 21.5 million, and the unemployment rate was 13%, or 3.2 million unemployed people in the country of which 10.4% were men and 16.5% were women (DANE, 2020c).

Regarding family businesses, in 2001, a survey analyzed 8,930 companies of which 68% were identified as family businesses; in 2005, this study was repeated with 19,109 companies of which 70% were family firms; and in 2018 there were 50.81% family businesses in the 6,204 companies surveyed (Supersociedades, 2019).\textsuperscript{40} There are , however, no statistics available about the number of family firms in the agricultural sector.

4.2 Living with violence in Colombia

For many decades, the country has lived with an internal armed conflict which has led to the displacement of a large number of people. Colombians are currently submerged under a blanket of polarized ideas. Peace and war continue to divide us deeply, a division that became evident on October 2, 2016, when during the referendum on the peace accords, 50.21% of the voters rejected the agreements. Shadowed by ignorance, a large part of the Colombian people take refuge behind a dark cloud of ideas belonging to the left and right wings to camouflage their lack of understanding of what the conflict means and what its real causes are.

\textsuperscript{36} As a result of the classification of the population into six strata in the same city, you can find homes as dissimilar as those that go from slums that express the misery of their inhabitants, to mansions or palaces that show an enormous accumulation of wealth. The same happens in the rural areas with homes ranging from shacks without walls to ranches or farms having large productive land and recreational estates with luxury amenities (DANE, 2020b).
\textsuperscript{37} Colombian Law 142 of July 11, 1994, established that domiciliary public services are essential for the following: water and sanitation services, sewage, waste recollection, electric energy, fuel gas, and public telephony (CDC, 1994).
\textsuperscript{38} COPS: Colombian pesos.
\textsuperscript{39} USD: US American dollar.
\textsuperscript{40} Superintendencia de sociedades or the Superintendence of Companies.
When I started this research, my view of the conflict was rooted in my educational and life experiences. During my field study to understand the Colombian violence contextually I gained access to stories, views, and experiences of violence from different stakeholders. I now introduce an account of the most representative aspects of the Colombian armed conflict including Colombia’s land problem, forced displacements, killings of land and environmental defenders, and violence against women.

4.2.1 Colombia’s armed conflict

Territories demarcated as conflict zones tend to be scenes of all kinds of crimes (Elo et al., 2018). Unfortunately, there is a worldwide tendency of tropical forests becoming hosts for armed conflicts (Castro-Nunez et al., 2017). Only overtaken by two conflicts, the Israeli-Palestinian and the Indian-Pakistani ones, the map of today’s global conflicts has the Colombian armed conflict as one among the longest (Camacho & Rodriguez, 2013), and has been the subject of a large number of writings (Rios Sierra et al., 2013). The conflict has been called one of the most massive humanitarian tragedies of the western hemisphere (Aparicio, 2017). Officially, the armed conflict in Colombia started in the 1940s (Castro-Nunez et al., 2017) which means eight tragic decades of devastation and bloody violence. However, historically we know that even before the 1940s the indigenous people Paeces and Pijaos were already involved in a struggle to recover the land that they had lost to the Spanish crown (Molano, 2016, p. 14).

In the violent Colombian conflict, different types of groupings are involved in a deadly crossfire: illegals as guerrillas and paramilitary groups, and also legal forces, entities, and members of the state security, leading to the most prolonged armed insurgency in Latin America (Cujabante Villamil, 2016). Founded in 1960, the leftist guerrilla FARC, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, is the leading rebel force in Colombia (Meertens & Zambrano, 2010) and the oldest guerrilla group in Latin America (OACP, 2016a). FARC is followed, in terms of power, by another big guerrilla movement, the National Liberation Army (ELN), a guerrilla group also founded in 1960 (Meertens & Zambrano, 2010). Since the 1980s, paramilitary forces, later known as the United Self-defense Forces of Colombia, AUC, have emerged as an independent force, created as a self-defense group mainly from private armies belonging to landowners and drug barons (Meertens & Zambrano, 2010). Paramilitary and different guerrilla groups were distributed throughout the country and exercised control over its regions, economically and politically (Etter et al., 2006), also being involved in the cocaine trade (Angelo, 2017). This bloody picture of the Colombian conflict was joined by drug-dealing cartels (Camacho & Rodriguez, 2013) such as the Medellin and Cali cartels and others violent movements such as the Urabeños, the Rastrojos, the Aguillas Negras, and the Bacrim, all involved in organized crime, drug trafficking, and gang violence (Angelo, 2017).

The Colombian civil population, individuals and entire communities, ended up in the middle of the fight. They were victims of selective assassinations,
extrajudicial killings, legal false positives, kidnappings, massacres, and as if this was not enough, they were also accused of supporting the ‘enemy,’ an effective way that is commonly used for gaining power over people (Meertens & Zambrano, 2010). The devastating violence during the conflict managed to nest in Colombian society, becoming one of its distinctive features (Averis, 2015). Colombians were victims of different types of attacks against the people and private and public infrastructure such as explosive and incendiary attacks, terrorist attacks, ambushes, harassment, armed incursions into towns, road blockades, and land piracy (Camacho & Rodríguez, 2013). According to the Colombian government, as of February 2020 nationwide a total of 8,953,040 people had been victims of the conflict, (4,486,364 women and 4,460,898 men), including 37,347 cases of kidnapping, 10,801 of torture, 488,086 of threats, and 179,799 cases of enforced disappearances (RNI, 2020). The Colombian conflict was the most violent during 2001-2005 with 3,474,381 victims, and the least violent years were 2016-2020 with 707,842 victims (RNI, 2020).

Violence in Colombia is not only related to drugs (Averis, 2015), but it also has other objectives, one of which is expropriating or expelling people from their land (Caicedo Delgado et al., 2009). Surrounded by threats and attacks, rural settlers live in a context of high tension that is used, among other purposes, to force the abandonment of their properties (Céspedes-Báez, 2010), leading to their subsequent displacement (Caicedo Delgado et al., 2009).

### 4.2.2 A continuous struggle for the land

For rural communities, the importance of land varies from being a material resource required for satisfying human consumption to having a spiritual meaning, being part of their history and cultural identity (PBIC, 2017). Resource-rich land means power (PBIC, 2017), as numerous products can be exported widening economic interests in accessing the land (PBIC, 2017). According to PBIC (2017, p. 31) land in Colombia, is “so fertile that a wide range of crops can be produced on it due to the high concentration of minerals in the earth. The presence of these minerals means that the land is also full of natural resources, which are in high demand in the rest of the world. This richness is at the centre of tensions between different interests over land usage and is the fuel that generates the many different conflicts identified in the country.”

Since the beginning of the armed struggle, some regions in Colombia called attention to their natural richness, stimulating conflict around land possession and its use, which in turn led to violence (Angelo, 2017). Strategically, following the aim of controlling territories socially and economically makes conquering land from displaced people an attractive booty due to potential economic exploitation and accumulation of resources and land (CNMH, 2015). With minerals under the soil, natural richness, and geostategic advantages, some territories have historically attracted attention (Bello, 2003), resulting in some regions seeing more propensity to displacement than others. IDMC (2018) also argues that
investments in agriculture have the potential to increase or decrease displacement risks.

In 2008, 10.8% of the Colombian agricultural land was taken by force (Machado & Meertens, 2010). In 2010, official sources said that 8.3 million hectares had been taken from the people by force (CNMH, 2015). As a result, land disputes led to socioeconomic problems which lasted for decades (Castro-Nunez et al. (2017). Territories previously used for harvesting, were instead used for planting illegal crops, drug trafficking, and kidnapping (Meertens, 2010), and are now desolated areas, illegal plantations of coca, or properties occupied by palm farmers or miners (CNMH, 2015). The use of soil has changed and since the 1970s illicit crops (like marihuana, coca, and poppy) have transformed the national economy, increasing the fight for controlling territories and eventually leading to the repopulation and transformation of territories due to forced displacements (CNMH, 2015). The illegal use of the soil and land taken away from people distinguishes the Colombian displacement phenomenon from displacements in other countries where they might be due to political, ethnical, or religious reasons (CNMH, 2015).

The areas with massive displacements share as a common characteristic their importance in the economy and the economic development of the country. (CNMH, 2015). For instance, the Magdalena Medio region is geographically located in the heart of the country with the Colombia’s principal river Rio Magdalena running through it enabling communication between essential centers of production and consumption (especially the Andina region) and principal ports on the Atlantic coast and the Colombian Caribbean (CNMH, 2015). For example, the Uraba region is at the frontier between Colombia and Panama, rich in mountain systems and jungles which offers communication with the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, has natural ports, and important port infrastructure. This region specializes in the production of bananas (also called the banana axis) and wood (CNMH, 2015). The Occidente antioqueño region has an economy that centers around the exploitation of Carboniferous and cattle raising, Suroeste antioqueño is the connection with Choco and Nordeste antioqueño and is the main area for gold mining, Norte de Antioquia is a hydro electrical center, and the Andén pacifico sur region with important natural ports such as Tumaco and Buenaventura shows extensive palm plantations and mining activity (CNMH, 2015).

Unfortunately, influential people behind important companies in mining, hydro, and agro-businesses with projects supported by banks have become a nightmare for those who live in rural areas. Through a strategy of forced displacements they have gained control over land (CNMH, 2015). Following the exodus of people, once abandoned territories are now occupied by new megaprojects or are being used for mining and exploitation of coal, gold, and oil (CNMH, 2015). Statistics regarding this type of displacement, although not complete, offer interesting insights. Globally, the IDMC41 2018 report included

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41 IDMC: Internal Displacement Monitoring Center.
displacements caused by ‘development projects,’ and based on information about 115 projects estimated that these were affecting 265,000 people, among whom 19,000 were at risk of being displaced (IDMC, 2018).

One example of such forced displacements is a project in 2008. The Italian electricity and energy giant Enel Group “is the leading producer of electricity in Colombia.”42 It currently has “twelve hydraulic generation plants and two thermal power plants”43 in the country. One of these power generating plants is the El Quimbo hydroelectric plant. El Quimbo44 started being built in November 2010 and came into operation in November 2015, with an investment of more than US $ 1.2 billion.45 Since the beginning, it was a controversial project blamed for environmental disasters46 such as the mass death of fish,47 the destruction of thousands of hectares of forest reserves, and also forced displacements affecting more than 30,000 people.48 Recently, El Quimbo was described in a national newspaper as a disgrace49 to the region.

Another project is Hidroituango hydroelectric. “It will be the largest generator in the country and a highly competitive energy marketer in the national and international market,” the project’s vision states.50 However, its construction is controversial51 since it will flood 3,800 hectares and has had continuous emergencies52 that have mobilized and displaced thousands of people.53 In May 2019, hundreds of farmers marched through the streets of Medellin rejecting the project.54 Since the start of the project, Cauca River, the second most important

42 https://www.enel.com/company/about-us/where-we-are
49 https://www.diariodelhuila.com/el-quimbo-una-desgracia-para-el-huila
50 https://www.hidroituango.com.co/hidroituango
51 https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/medellin/epm-se-refiere-la-realidad-de-hidroituango-429356
53 https://www.prensarural.org/spip/spip.php?article23999
54 https://www.lespectador.com/noticias/nacional/campesinos-se-declaran-desplazados-de-hidroituango-articulo-424688
river in Colombia, has reduced its flow by 80%, affecting all the communities in its path. Despite all this, the project continues.

American coal multinational Drummond and mining company Prodeco, owned by the Swiss multinational Glencore are two more cases that led to forced displacements that have been investigated by the National Center of Historical Memory. The two coal mining multinationals started operations in Colombia in 1995 according to their web pages, which coincides with the arrival of paramilitary groups to the Cesar region. Paramilitary groups are private armies supported by businessmen, politicians, and even members of state security, created as a means of protecting themselves from the guerrillas, but turning into an initiative that has become one of the bloodiest in the conflict. Drummond and Glencore acquired thousands of hectares of land for their operations. However, numerous judicial processes suggest that the two multinationals had relations with paramilitary groups who pressured the civilian population to sell them their land, a process during which many murders, disappearances, and displacements occurred. “If you won’t sell it to me, I’ll buy it tomorrow from your widow,” was a phrase widely used during those days (PBIC, 2017, p. 103). Both multinationals have denied the judicial allegations and charges. Many hectares and properties are currently involved in land restitution claims (IDMC, 2018). Drummond is currently the largest mining company in the country, and Prodeco-Glencore is the third largest.

4.2.3 The displaced people, neglected and forgotten

Forced displacements are a severe violation of human rights, an offense under the international humanitarian law and a war crime according to international criminal law (OIM, 2016). They are also considered a major development issue (Williams & Krasniqi, 2018, p. 307), described by Kofi Annan as “the great tragedy of our times” (UN, 2001). Being a historically recognized phenomenon worldwide which is linked to conflicts (Elo et al., 2018), it has as one of its aims expropriation or expulsion (Caicedo Delgado et al., 2009). In 2017, IDMC (2018) reported events in 147 countries and territories that led to approximately 30.6 million new internal displacements, 11.8 million due to conflict and violence and 18.8 million due to disasters. It was estimated that at the end of 2017 the number of internally displaced people affected by conflicts in the world was 40 million. That year, some of the people – 8.5 million in 23 countries – managed to return.

55 https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-47169139
56 https://www.business-humanrights.org/es/columbia-pese-a-certificaci%C3%B3n-de-una-aseguradora-siguen-dudas-por-reubicaci%C3%B3n-de-desplazados-y-viabilidad-de-hidroituango
57 http://www.drummond ltd.com
58 https://www.glencore.com/who-we-are/our-history
but the conditions they found typically forced them to continue being displaced (IDMC, 2018). Most often, solutions for the displaced never arrive (Rodríguez Garavito, 2010). In 2017, 10 countries had more than 70% of the internally displaced people (IDP) worldwide, standing out among which are Syria with 6.8 million IDP, Colombia with 6.5 million, and the Democratic Republic of Congo with 4.5 million IDP (IDMC, 2018, p. 48).

In Colombia, the process of displacement often began economically, before physical removal (Cernea, 2003). Then, people were forced to abandon everything, their land (Céspedes-Báez, 2010), homes, and livelihood (UN, 2001) and sent from place to place, looking for survival and welfare. They became forgotten and neglected people, pushed to the cities looking for a safer place to start again (Osorio & Ortega, 2008). They are now demanding justice, truth, peace, and guarantees of non-repetition from both the state and society.

Violent processes of displacement and expulsion are part of Colombian history (Bello, 2003) – 13.4% of the displaced people in the world are Colombians, which corresponds to more than 13% of its entire population (IDMC, 2018). Historically, displacements can be traced back to the time of colonization and independence during 1948-1958, when Colombia’s population was approximately 11 million people (DANE, 1993, p. 81), and 2 million were forced to abandon their territories due to violence (CNMH, 2015). This violence was caused by paramilitaries (45.67%), guerrillas (12.32%), and the State’s armed forces (0.65%), and the action of other armed parties (19%) (Bello, 2003). Between 1980 and 2010, forced displacements affected 434,099 families (CNMH, 2015). Farming communities violently attacked had no choice but to abandon their land and plots (PBIC, 2017). During that period, the Ministry of Agriculture identified 352,847 families who had abandoned their land, 358,937 properties, and 312,000 households (CNMH, 2015). According to Machado and Meertens (2010), each family lost an average of 14.3 hectares of land. The third national survey estimated that between 1980 and 2013, among the displaced families almost 2,490,201 people lost their jobs when abandoning their crops and farms which is equivalent to 11.5% of the total employment in Colombia in 2013 (CNMH, 2015).

Over time, the armed conflict reached 99.2% of the 1,122 municipalities in Colombia (DANE, 2020a), and only nine municipalities remained unaffected by it (CNMH, 2015). By February 2020, the number of Colombians who had become victims of forced displacements because of the armed conflict had reached 7,976,412 (RNI, 2020). It is estimated that 87% of the displaced Colombians previously lived in the countryside, meaning that 9 out of 10 displaced people were rural inhabitants and mostly peasants (Osorio & Ortega, 2008). This also explains why agrarian productivity in Colombia has decreased to a such a low

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60 Generally, before being evicted from their properties people were victims of extortion and theft of their belongings and assets.

61 For a better picture, imagine the entire populations of countries like Denmark or Finland forced to an exodus (CNMH, 2015).
level that now it can no longer cover the food demand of the country (CNMH, 2015, p. 27). The total cost of Colombian displacements, estimated for 1980-2013, amounts to 159 billion Colombian pesos, or 1.2% of the accumulated GDP of the economy in that period (CNMH, 2015, p. 491).

Displaced people in Colombia are a very heterogeneous group; often, they are impoverished peasants or part of ethnic minorities, afro-descendants, and indigenous communities (Bello, 2003). They typically moved to small municipalities and main cities, where anonymity was easier (Bello, 2003). Some entire communities ran away temporarily, hiding in the jungles and returning to their land when the violence decreased (Bello, 2003). Some moved to neighboring countries, mainly Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama (CNMH, 2015). Through the case study of the Cabrera family, it is possible to see that the group of displaced persons includes affluent families with a wealthier past who lived and worked in the countryside. Displacements as a consequence of the armed conflict explain why before the signing of the peace agreement in 2016, in most Latin American countries forced migration from rural areas to cities had decreased. Instead in Colombia, the trend was the opposite, considering that approximately 12% of the population had been denied their right to ‘set roots or settle down’ (CNMH, 2015). Thus, people displaced by force are hoping that they will not be forgotten or neglected.

4.2.4 The killing of land and environmental defenders

Not all people reacted to the threats by leaving their land: “Land and environmental defenders are people who take peaceful action, either voluntarily or professionally, to protect environmental or land rights. They are often ordinary people who may well not define themselves as ‘defenders.’ Some are indigenous or peasant leaders...” (GWO, 2017, p. 10). Some individuals acted as social leaders, leading the defense and restitution of land and faced those who wanted to appropriate the land that belonged to their communities (DDP, 2018). Even though exposed to regular threats of torture, disappearance, and murder they did not falter in their mission. They carried their own crosses, and their death often brought ruin and disaster for both the rurality and also the families of farmers living in the defended countryside.

The Global Witness Organization (GWO)63 claims that in 2016 almost 20064 land and environmental defenders were murdered across 24 countries including Colombia, an increase of 10% as compared to 2015. In 2016, 37 defenders were killed in Colombia, of which 22 were suspected to have been executed by paramilitary forces (GWO, 2017). Since 2010, this organization has reported

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62 DDP, Defensoría del pueblo or the Office of the Ombudsman of Colombia.
64 The countries with the maximum number of land and environmental defenders assassinated were Brazil, Colombia, the Philippines, and India; 60% of these crimes occurred in Latin America (GWO, 2017).
almost 1,000 murders, though this figure is probably higher considering that many of these crimes are never reported (GWO, 2017, p. 8). In Colombia, this organization has documented 108 killings related to the use of land and natural resources, 23 of which were linked explicitly to agribusinesses (GWO, 2017, p. 10).

The killing of land and environmental defenders tend to be fueled by the eagerness of agricultural and hydroelectric companies to gain access to land and natural resources (GWO, 2017). The murdered activists are often the voices of their communities, trying to protect or recover expropriated land or are opposing projects by multinationals, paramilitaries, and governments (GWO, 2017). They even assert that commercial banks as well as some development banks back these exploitation projects. Communities often see no other way to protest when their voices are ignored in decisions about the use of their land and natural resources when their family land becomes a target of those who want to exploit it and take to ‘land grabbing,’ violence, or forced agreements for removing them from their plots (GWO, 2017). Organizations like PBIC (2018)⁶⁵ argue that small-scale farming communities are suffering from a security crisis on their land.

In Colombia, a country with a *post-conflict context* after the peace agreement signed between the government and FARC in November 2016, the targets of the attacks mainly became social leaders, small-scale farmers, and human rights defenders (PBIC, 2018). The situation continues to worsen, with displaced farm families and land claimants struggling to reclaim their land and trying to return. Presently, it looks like there are no guarantees of protection and security for land claimants (PBIC, 2017, p. 103). Those who apply for restitution of land i.e., land claimants, by activating the legal mechanism to return to their land, need to denounce the circumstances, crimes and their perpetrators, who were responsible for the loss of their properties in the first place. They are also opposing the projects currently being built on their land, the economic interests of these companies, and the illegal sale of land. In September 2013, the Human Rights Watch⁶⁶ said that since January 2012 more than 500 claimants and land defenders had been threatened (HRW, 2013) and according to the Land Restitution Observatory,⁶⁷ 49 land claimants had been killed during 2005 and 2015 (ORRDPA, 2017, p. 55). The Colombia Ombudsman’s Office reported that between January 1, 2016 and February 27, 2018, 282 social leaders were killed in Colombia, at an average of 11 leaders murdered every month (DDP, 2018, p. 35). Of these, 56% were murdered in areas considered highly rural (DDP, 2018). The office found that the murdered leaders were often linked to campaigns or initiatives as: “*Defense of the territory and natural resources, processes of restitution and return of land, and defense of the territory against private interests*” (DDP, 2018, p. 44). The killings of social leaders and land and environmental defenders are directly linked to the

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⁶⁶ HRW: Human Rights Watch.
⁶⁷ ORRDPA: Observatorio de restitución y regulación de derechos de propiedad agraria or Observatory of restitution and regulation of agricultural property rights.
phenomenon of displacement. According to the Ombudsman's Office, when social leaders are murdered one of the reactions of those around them and their family members is accepting forced displacements because there is very little that the State has shown it can do about it. For instance, the same office presented a case where a social leader, Plinio Pulgarín Villadiego, was murdered by an illegal group on January 18, 2018, and as a subsequent act the illegals gathered the community members and warned them that they should leave the area immediately, as it was considered a “disputed territory.” As a result, 133 families comprising 425 people were dispossessed and violently displaced from that region (DDP, 2018).

4.2.5 Violence against women

“Writing the history of violence in Colombia, omitting the violence to which half of its population - women - is subjected, is undoubtedly limiting the scope of this history in a significant way” (Uribe, 1995, p. 348, my translation).

In Colombia, 51.2% of the population or close to 24.7 million is women. Of these, almost 5.7 million live in smaller cities and rural areas (DANE, 2020a). In 2014, 123,448 women were producers in the countryside, i.e., they lived and worked there, and were also heads of households (DANE, 2016). The definition of a ‘rural woman’ given by the Law 731 of 2002 is, “By which rules are dictated to favor rural women”, “(...) rural women are all who, without distinction of any nature and regardless of where they live, have a productive activity directly related to the rural, even if this activity is not recognized by the information and measurement systems of the State or is not remunerated” (CDC, 2002). The peace agreement adds: “This definition includes peasant, indigenous and afro women, without land or with insufficient land” (OACP, 2016a, p. 10). Women are considered one of the most vulnerable groups in the conflict (Rodríguez Garavito & Rodríguez, 2010). It has been observed that among the displaced population there are more female households heads than their average in the population (Guataqui, 2009). An astonishing 4,486,364 women have become victims of the Colombian armed conflict (or 50.1% of all the victims) (RNI, 2020). Between 2005 and 2015, 59 women considered rural leaders were killed (ORRDPA, 2017, p. 27).

During war, sex and violence are often used with the political purpose of maintaining the subordination of a specific community by reinforcing hierarchies (Boesten, 2010). Even when an armed conflict presents dangers and disadvantages for both men and women its long-term effects harm women more often (OIM, 2016). In Colombia, aggression against women is aggravated by societal roles attributed to men and women, which typically assume male superiority over women. During conflict, this assumed superiority triggers all kinds of abuse including sexual violence (CNMH, 2011a). Sexual violence, used strategically in war (Boesten, 2010), is one of the most widespread and least
recognized problems of the Colombian armed conflict (Céspedes-Báez, 2010). Being mainly sexual, violence against women is used for exercising dominance (Caicedo Delgado et al., 2009) affecting women disproportionately (Céspedes-Báez, 2010) due to the trauma caused by violent experiences (Osorio & Ortega, 2008).

“A few months ago, a woman approached me and told me the following story: A Colombian town was being besieged by a paramilitary group, or as they are called in the official media, by an emerging criminal gang [Bacrim]. Its strategy had been to kill leaders, one after the other, to intimidate the population. One day they returned without wanting to kill and told them: ‘Does the death of your leaders not hurt you? Then we will give them where it hurts the most.’ That day they raped the women of the community, that day they said they would return to rape those who were absent, that day many people became displaced” (Céspedes-Báez, 2010, p. 275, my translation).

In Colombia, women are a historically discriminated group (Céspedes-Báez, 2010) and are preferred victims of the paramilitaries and their discriminatory sexual violence (CNMH, 2011a), the crudest form of showing dominance for maintaining a patriarchal order (Caicedo Delgado et al., 2009). Throughout the conflict, women were subjected to violent carnal access, forced nudity, sexual torture, forced sexual relations, sexual and domestic slavery, (CNMH, 2011a) and aggression by all armed actors (Caicedo Delgado et al., 2009). However, lack of information is synonymous with the impunity that hangs over this type of violence. This can be seen if we consider that 81%68 (Valdés, 2020) of prostitution in Bogotá involves women from other parts of the country. However, the data available does not establish a relationship between displacement and conflict.

Somewhat paradoxically, women have played an important role in Colombia’s history, for example, in the country’s independence (Cherpak, 1993) and also during the recent armed conflict. In 2005, between 30 to 40% of FARC was estimated to be women (Obregón, 2005), and the paramilitary forces had women in roles positioned to capitalize on the political advancement of the movement like public relations, finance, tax collection, extortion, and sometimes also as commanders (CNMH, 2011a).

Throughout the war, visible female warriors were killed while other women became visible in their resistance (CNMH, 2011a). Women also represent most of the exodus triggered by the conflict (Lamus, 2010), but many of them are not captured in the official statistics – as heads of households, they were either in fear or simply lacked knowledge and thus never claimed their official status as displaced and victims of the armed conflict (OIM, 2016). For women, displacement meant the disappearance and death of family members (Osorio & Ortega, 2008) including husbands or partners, children, parents, relatives, and friends. Family and life changed. When the head of the household, the primary source of income, was killed, disappeared, or maybe even abandoned the family,

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68 https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/justicia/verdad/pobres-desplazadas-y-en-prostitucion-de-la-violencia-de-la-guerra-a-la-expplotacion-sexual/
the woman became the new leader of the household with fewer members and lesser income (Ibáñez, 2011). Being in charge of the family and the home, she faced a multiplicity of roles and was pressured into accepting them (CNMH, 2011a); suddenly, she became the main source of household income (Ibáñez, 2011), acted as mother and father while mourning the loss of her loved ones (CNMH, 2011a), performed roles for which she was not prepared (Ibáñez, 2011), and in this way she became an intermediary for the authorities looking for resources and security for her family (CNMH, 2011a), authorities that often did not have adequate support schemes to respond to her needs (OIM, 2016). She was in charge of an extremely vulnerable family, a condition accentuated by her status as a woman (Ibáñez, 2011), and she was forced to continue living in extreme vulnerability (CNMH, 2011a).

Women who survived unemployment, poverty, and discrimination (Osorio & Ortega, 2008) and settled in peripheral neighborhoods were confused with the locals and they became part of unknown processes (Lamus, 2010) as they assumed that these were required for adapting to the new social environment (OIM, 2016); they struggled, and managed to adapt (Osorio & Ortega, 2008).

Beyond the structural violence of the Colombian conflict that unleashed poverty, insecurity, and lack of opportunities for women, one must also consider their feelings, their great sadness and fear, which accentuated their vulnerability (Uribe, 1995, p. 353). Violence against women can be felt through the interviews done for this thesis. I perceived the shadow of violence through Dioselina’s eyes when she talked about the possibility of her returning to the land, or in her solitary drama with the family during the displacement. In Ángela’s memory, when she remembers the drama of displacement. I also saw Carolina’s tears when she remembered the night her grandfather died. Also, in Lucy’s tears and in her regret at not having a better future. Or, in Edna Victoria’s sadness when sharing the grief that motivated the dramas shared by her mother. I heard many accounts of sadness, which are valid as a representation of violence against women in Colombia.

The peace agreement represents an excellent opportunity to vindicate women in the face of so much violence that they have suffered. The document seeks to give prominence to women in “the structural transformation of the countryside” (OACP, 2016a, p. 22). It also requests considering their social role (OACP, 2016a, p. 36), strengthening their central role as a part of organizations and social initiatives (OACP, 2016a, p. 42), and encourages the construction of a scenario in which women are respected and live free from violence (OACP, 2016a, p. 46). The parties requested that the role of women in the building and permanence of peace be considered essential (OACP, 2016a, p. 55). However, impunity and the risk of re-victimization remain for rural women. So far, Colombia has not achieved equality for women in general, and in relation to the land problem in particular (Céspedes-Báez, 2010).
4.3 The peace agreement

Negotiations for peace in Colombia have been going on for almost as long as the conflict itself (Belloso Martin, 2017; Cujabante Villamil, 2016), though transitions between different negotiation processes led to even more violence (Gomez-Suarez & Newman, 2013). More than 30 years ago, former president Belisario Betancur intended to bring peace but failed (Cujabante Villamil, 2016). In 1984, an agreement between the government and FARC was signed, the Agreement of La Uribe-Meta, which allowed FARC members’ transition to civilian life. Between December 1998 and March 2002, during the presidency of Andres Pastrana, a military-free zone was established (Etter et al., 2006), known as the zone of distension, comprising 41,440 km² which included San Vicente del Caguán. However, due to the failure of the peace talks, the same president abolished the area in 2002 (Crandall, 2011). Later, during the presidency of Alvaro Uribe Velez (2002-2010), 32,000 right-wing paramilitaries participated in a demobilization and reintegration process (Angelo, 2017, p. 137).

Today, the progress towards peace has come a long way in Colombia. One of the issues where agreement could be reached relates to rural development with FARC promising to take on a political role for promoting social and economic change in the countryside (Gomez-Suarez & Newman, 2013). The peace dialogues that gave rise to the recently signed peace agreement began with an exploratory meeting between the parties in Cuba in August 2012 (OACP, 2016a). Previous attempts had failed. In October 2012, peace talks were officially initiated at a meeting in Oslo, Norway. Cuba and Norway served as witnesses and guarantor countries while Venezuela and Chile acted as accompanying countries (OACP, 2016a). The peace agreement is a political document signed by the Colombian government and the FARC guerrilla group which outlines the terms for ending the conflict for both sides and it also comprises their contribution towards the reconstruction of the country. The document is 310 pages in the Spanish version (OACP, 2016a) and 323 pages in the English version (PRC, 2017) and is dated November 24, 2016. It is important for the country’s development that this agreement is not the result of a military victory over rebel forces, but represents a triumph of politics based on forgiveness and forgetfulness (Belloso Martin, 2017).

The peace agreement addresses the victims’ right to know the truth and preserve their memories, the power to punish the ones responsible for the atrocities, and reparation (Castro-Nunez et al., 2017). Reconciliation after conflict demands reparation (Firchow, 2017), and thus this peace agreement includes land restitution to victims of displacement (Meertens & Zambrano, 2010), guaranteeing the victims an opportunity to go back to the situation before the violence started (Belloso Martin, 2017). Additionally, rural land reforms, with a plan of reassigning 10 million hectares of land to agricultural projects, has been decided on (Angelo, 2017).

Over the years, both the delegations changed: among the Colombian government’s 10 negotiators, there was only one woman, María Á Holguín
(CIDOB, 2017), with temporary support by Maria P Riveros (Semana, 2016) and Nigeria Rentería (lasillavacia.com, 2017). On FARC’s side, of the nine negotiators, there was one woman, Victoria Sandino (CIDOB, 2017). However, in September 2014 a gender sub-commission was set up (PRC, 2016c) as a result of the pressure exerted by feminist movements and women’s organizations (CHC, 2015) demanding the inclusion of a gender perspective in the peace process (PRC, 2016a). This sub-commission, consisting of 10 female members, five from each side, presented its results on July 24, 2016 (AFP, 2014; PRC, 2016b). Its recommendations included comprehensive rural reforms (Colombia2020, 2016). All the agreements contained in the peace agreement and its implementation over the subsequent 10 years are followed up by the ‘Commission of follow-up, impulse and verification to the implementation of the final agreement, or CSIVI’69 (OACP, 2016b). This commission was created in 2016 and its primary goal is guaranteeing transparency in the implementation of the final agreement (OACP, 2016b). It is comprised of three government and FARC representatives each, with government representatives appointed directly by the President of Colombia (PRC, 2016d). For both sides, this peace agreement is an expression of goodwill and intention to finally accomplish peace (OACP, 2016a).

4.4 The law of victims and the ongoing restitution of land

Till the middle of the 1990s, the Colombian government lacked public policies to deal with displacement and instead blamed natural and economic conditions as the reasons for the displacements. Only in September 1995, did it recognize that displacements were intrinsically bonded to violence, but it took till 2000 to classify forced displacements an offense by the criminal code (Rodriguez Garavito & Rodriguez, 2010). During Ernesto Samper’s presidential period (1994-1998), the need for a program considering, among others, the handing over of land to people displaced by violence and their return was recognized for the first time (CNMH, 2015, p. 78). In 1996 data on mass displacements in Colombia started being recorded (Rodriguez Garavito & Rodriguez, 2010). In 1997, Law 387 – which defined the category of ‘displaced’ and delimited the phenomenon to those people escaping from violence - was approved as the first law addressing displacements in the country (CNMH, 2015). In 1999, an action plan was approved to prevent future displacements and to pay attention to those displaced by violence. One of the aims of this plan was promoting and guaranteeing voluntary return (CNMH, 2015).

In 2000, a new criminal code including ‘displacement by force’ as an offense against people was approved (CNMH, 2015). Nonetheless, the number of forced

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69 CSIVI: Comisión de Seguimiento, Impulso y Verificación a la Implementación el Acuerdo Final.

In 2005, the government promoted preferential access to land to displaced people, and in 2008 the Ministry of Agriculture regulated procedures for displaced people to handle complaints and claims (CNMH, 2015) through Decree 2467.\(^{70}\) The Congress of Colombia declared 2008 as the Year of the Promotion of the Rights of People Displaced by Violence\(^ {71}\) (CNMH, 2015; CRC, 2008). In 2009, the Constitutional Court instructed the government to formulate a policy to protect and return abandoned land to displaced people (CNMH, 2015) and in the same year the government launched the program ‘Returning is to live’ (CNMH, 2011b). In June 2011, the government introduced Law 1448, known as the ‘Law of victims and restitution of land.’ The law included land restitution and the definition of ‘victim of displacement by force’ (CDC, 2011), strictly directed at those who were violently dispossessed of their land during the conflict (PBIC, 2017). It recognized victims of the armed conflict and called attention to the restitution of violated rights, including reparation programs (CNMH, 2014). In addition, special administrative units were created as ‘units for the restitution of land,’ with the task of managing abandoned areas and answering the claims of displaced people (CNMH, 2015).

Restitution of land “is the right of victims to have their property returned to them when it was stripped or abandoned because of the armed conflict” (CDC, 2011, p. 6). Article 74 of Law 1448 refers to forfeiture and forced abandonment of land as:

“Dispossession means the action by means of which, taking advantage of the situation of violence, a person is arbitrarily deprived of his/her property, possession or occupation, either in fact, through a legal transaction, administrative act, sentence, or through the commission of crimes associated with the situation of violence. Forced abandonment is understood as the temporary or permanent situation to which a person forced to move is obliged, which is why he/she is prevented from exercising the administration, exploitation and direct contact with the properties that he/she had to neglect in his/her displacement during the period established in article 75” (CDC, 2011, p. 37).

The law also stresses that families are victims of the conflict: “Victims are the husband or the wife, the permanent partner, same-sex couples, parents or children (including adoptive) of the direct victim when the latter has been proclaimed death or missing. If these relatives are not present, grandparents will be considered as victims” (CDC, 2011, my translation). This law is relevant for my study, as it explicitly refers to the family, my unit of analysis from an entrepreneurial process perspective (Moroz & Hindle, 2012).

\(^{70}\) Presidential Decree 2467 from 2005 (July 19) (PRC, 2005).

\(^{71}\) Law 1190 de 2008.
The procedure for the restitution of land by a person who is considered a victim is voluntary, or at the request of the interested party. Cases that will be considered for restitution start with a registration request by the displaced person or his/her relative in the ‘register of land stripped and forcibly abandoned’ (CDC, 2011). According to the law, those who were evicted from their land due to the armed conflict between January 1, 1991 and June 10, 2021, will have the right to restitution.

The impact that Colombia’s land restitution program has had on Colombians in terms of numbers and statistics, is useful for getting an idea of the magnitude of a peasant family’s drama, its displacement, and the possibility of its returning to the countryside. Thus, before introducing the case of the Cabrera family, I discuss the national results of the implementation of the chapter on land restitution (UAEGRTD, 2012). Seven years after its approval and sanction, the situation had developed as follows: since 2011, the Land Restitution Unit has received 124,758 requests linked to 113,989 properties and 94,579 people (URT, 2020). In June 2014, 29,185 hectares corresponding to 1,277 claims for restitution of land were restituted to the people. At that time, this land and claims were equivalent to 1% of land claims made and to 2% of the claims filed and processed with the Unit of Restitution of Land (CNMH, 2015, p. 23). Although the results of these first three years illustrate the slowness of the processes, a more positive view is that by early December 2014, 1,791 cases had been solved and 11,688 persons had benefited with a total of 84,770 hectares restituted to people victimized by forced displacements (CNMH, 2015, p. 237). By September 30, 2018, the Special Management Unit for the Restitution of Stripped Land or UAEGRTD, had received registration requests from 81,066 victims: 33,228 women and 47,628 men, who claimed a total of 104,404 properties. During the administrative process, 90,076 requests (77%) were authorized by the Ministry of Defense. In more than seven years, the land restitution process, reporting 49,675 cases, issued the order to return 316,935 hectares of land to victims – territories now waiting to be returned (UAEGRTD, 2018b). Numbers continue to increase, and as of January 31, 2020, the balance land restitution shows that there were 5,370 sentences, 10,601 applications resolved, and 30,355 people benefited from 370,252 hectares thanks to restitution orders (URT, 2020). These figures do not include the results achieved by Decrees 4633 and 4635 of 2011 regarding the restitution of ethnic territories. According to government data, as of April 2, 2018, 4,004 beneficiary families had been registered (MinTic, 2018).

This is the result of an ambitious challenge addressed by the government of outgoing President Juan Manuel Santos. For systematically increasing the productivity of the Colombian countryside through land restitution he said in 2015: “The goal is that by 2018 we will have a million hectares planted in

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72 “Who has the right to land restitution? Persons who own or own land or exploiters of wasteland that have been or are victims of the forced dispossession or abandonment of their lands due to the armed conflict, from January 1, 1991, until June 10, 2021,” translated from: https://www.minagricultura.gov.co/atencion-ciudadano/preguntas-frecuentes/Paginas/Restitucion-de-Tierras.aspx
Colombia in addition to what we have today... This will generate more than 280 thousand jobs... What do I want? That... all the peasants who were stripped of their land at gunpoint by the violent, return to their lands and have the possibility of having productive projects” (PRC, 2018, my translation).

The restorative nature of the law in favor of productivity becomes evident when the text of a land restitution decision is read. As an example, I translated a paragraph corresponding to a land restitution decision as:

“to order to the Special Administrative Unit for the Management of the Restitution of Dispossessed Lands to include, once only, Mr. XXX and his former permanent companion, XXX, together with her family in the program of productive projects, once it is verified the delivery or the material enjoyment of the property object of the present request, in order to implement the creation of productive projects and provide the corresponding technical assistance, taking into account, on the one hand, the vocation and the rational use of the land, as well as their possible effects, and on the other hand, the activities that the beneficiary population develops, in order to ensure their economic recovery” (UAEGRTD, 2018a, my translation).

Although the number of land restitution cases is not as large as the number of displacement cases because of the armed conflict, it is an effective exercise that cannot be ignored. Land restitution is an advance in the search for solutions to the origins of the conflict, a response to the need for equal opportunities. The slowness that characterizes the processes and the enforcement of sentences are true reflections of the power and strong resistance from those who dispossess people of their land and the forces that support them. We also need to consider that since 2012 more than 500 threats to peasants who are in the restitution process have been reported (Aparicio, 2017). By now, Colombia has one of the most advanced legislations in the world taking care of displaced people (Salinas Abdala, 2010). However, it appears that it has not yet been effective enough in taking the displaced population back to the places from where it was evicted.

4.5 Land and farming as a way forward

In rurality, there are those who work the land and those who perform activities other than working the land. The third National Agricultural Census of Colombia (CNA)\(^{73}\) defines the “Use of the land” as “the utility that lends the land for the development of a productive activity, in this case, agriculture or livestock. Agricultural use is related to the sowing and harvesting of agricultural crops (including forest plantations and nursery plants) and forages crops; the use also covers natural pastures, crops, and stubble for the development of livestock

\(^{73}\) 3er CNA Censo Nacional Agropecuario.
activity’ (DANE, 2016, p. 45). Because of this richness, Colombia sees land and farming as a way forward and as an instrument of prosperity.

The third CNA carried out a census in 2014 that “covered all agricultural and non-agricultural productive activity in the country” (DANE, 2016, p. 16) and thus allows us to know the population of those who worked the land and those who did not. It established that 43 million hectares, or 38.6%, were used for agricultural purposes (DANE, 2016, p. 43), 63.2 million hectares were forests, 2.5 million hectares had non-agricultural applications, and 2.8 million hectares had other uses (DANE, 2016, p. 47). In the 43 million hectares fit for agricultural use, there were 34.4 million pastures, 8.5 million were intended for other agricultural uses, and of the latter, only 7.1 million hectares were occupied by crops (DANE, 2016, p. 51).

For statistical purposes, the two communities that inhabited the Colombian rural territory were divided into Agricultural Production Units (UPAs)74 and Non-Agricultural Production Units (UPNAs).75 A UPA “produces agricultural, forestry, livestock, ... for continuous consumption and/or business, ... a single natural or juridical producer” (DANE, 2016, p. 20). In addition, it is understood as “agricultural producer ... the natural or juridical person who directs the agricultural production unit and makes the main decisions about the cultivation of plants, animal husbandry, agricultural practices, use over the means of production and sale of agricultural products” (DANE, 2016, p. 20). In contrast, the “non-agricultural production unit (UPNA) ... consists of a property...dedicated to the development of activities exclusively non-agricultural” (DANE, 2016, p. 21).

The 2014 census established that the dispersed rural area in Colombia had 2,913,163 million producers, of which 2,370,099 million were UPAs (DANE, 2016, p. 64). These UPAs had 108,993,335 hectares (DANE, 2016, p. 71). However, interpreting the figures provided by the third CNA referring to UPAs (DANE, 2016, pp. 64, 67, 70, 71), I withdrew the 58,159,290 hectares destined for natural forests. This meant that Colombian producers only had 50,834,045 hectares available for agriculture-related activities (see Table 3). All this land is in the hands of more than 2 million producers; 41% of this land is used for productive agricultural activities that exclude livestock, and 59% is used for activities mostly related to livestock.

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74 UPA: Unidad de Producción Agropecuaria.
75 UPNA: Unidades de Producción No Agropecuaria.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Producers</th>
<th>UPAs - Producers</th>
<th>UPAs % Producers</th>
<th>Rural area occupied - Hectares</th>
<th>Rural area occupied %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producers use their land in predominantly agricultural activities.</td>
<td>817,714</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>20,614,415</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producers use their land in mostly livestock activities.</td>
<td>1,341,247</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>30,219,630</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,158,961</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>50,834,045</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3 Data extracted from the third CNA (excluding natural forests)*

The problem of land in Colombia is more easily observed when analyzing its tenure. The dispute over land among owners led to a huge imbalance of land distribution (Castro-Nunez et al., 2017). For instance, in Table 4 it can be observed that most of the land ownership (i.e., 26,751,910 hectares or 52% of the land) is concentrated in only 0.2% of the owners, and 72.1% of the producers in Colombia together own only 3.9% of the land suitable for agriculture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How is the land suitable for agriculture (livestock activities included) distributed in Colombia?</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>UPAs - Producers</th>
<th>UPAs % Producers</th>
<th>Rural area occupied - Hectares</th>
<th>Rural area occupied %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producers with less than 5 hectares.</td>
<td>1,555,941</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
<td>1,973,040</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producers with more than 1,000 hectares.</td>
<td>4,208</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>26,751,910</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producers with land between 5 and 50 hectares.</td>
<td>505,000</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>7,715,164</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producers with land between 50 and 500 hectares.</td>
<td>89,336</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>11,288,259</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producers with land between 500 and 1000 hectares.</td>
<td>4,476</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>3,105,672</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,158,961</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>50,834,045</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4 Data on land owners and producers in Colombia* (extracted from the third CNA)
This analysis shows that although land is presented as a way forward, it is unlikely that with such high concentration of land in a few hands, farming will create prosperity for a majority of the people in Colombia in the future.

4.6 The institution of the agricultural family in Colombia

Johannisson (1998, p. 14) argued that in various parts of the world the ‘family’ is seen as a ‘dominant institution’ (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). However, the invisibility of the ‘peasant’ and the ‘agricultural family’ in Colombia is typical in official studies and reports. The Board of Directors of the Bank of the Republic’s account submitted to the Colombian Congress about the agricultural sector in Colombia (BR, 2018), mentioned neither ‘peasant’ or ‘family.’ According to the Food Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (FAO, 2013b, p. 2),

family farming “(which includes all family-based agricultural activities) ... is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family labor. The family and the farm are linked, co-evolve and combine economic, environmental, social and cultural functions” (Garner & de la O, 2014). When FAO characterizes family farms, it accepts that land extension is varied and conditioned by its location: “On one end ... are very large land holdings of several hundred hectares in high-income economies where farms can be easily cultivated by one or two family members with the use of labor-saving machinery and hired labor. On the other end ... in low-income economies, family farming usually consists of small holdings of a few hectares or less, often oriented towards subsistence with low marketable surplus” (FAO, 2013a).

When considering a definition of family farming, it is necessary to study more than the third CNA to establish the participation of a family as a “basic collective form of entrepreneurship” (Johannisson, 1998, p. 14) in agricultural activities in Colombia. The census reports state that among the producers there were 725,225 heads of households living on the land (DANE, 2016, p. 505) and is the only information that allows us to think about the same number of families. Family participation and activities as part of what producers do are not even included in the definitions of ‘collective work’ associated with production. Yet, there are many forms in which collective work is performed, including “convite, mamuncia, minga, yanama, mano volteada, get together” (DANE, 2016, p. 89). These collective forms of organization are important since they “develop agricultural activities and specific works in the indigenous, black, Afro-Colombian, raizales, palenqueras and peasant communities, in order to achieve a benefit for a person, a community or a territory” (DANE, 2016, p. 89).

I argue that farmers and families working the land, whether involved with agriculture and/or livestock, should be included in this group of producers. Also,

76 FAO: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
http://www.fao.org
the census defines the owners of UPAs as “producers,” and not as peasants, which is consistent with our Colombian political constitution, Article 64, in which peasants are included in the group of “agrarian workers” (PRC, 1991).

Ironically, the definition of peasants in Colombia is not clear. The use of the word ‘producers’ only obscures the existence of rural workers who work their land with their families. Sadly, it can be concluded that the information in the national agricultural census tends to favor economic and social inequalities in our country. When formulating policies that only visualize the countryside in productive terms, its social dimension and potential are lost. Here, I prefer to move away from the position expressed by the current government on December 17, 2018, when during the 73rd Assembly of the United Nations, the Colombian government abstained from voting on the adoption of the ‘Declaration of the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas’ (UN, 2018). This declaration was passed thanks to the favorable vote by 116 countries that remained firm. However, Colombia’s stance means that many people and their families became voiceless and did not receive recognition. With my study focusing on an agricultural family, I seek to return to how this figures both in literature on family businesses and in the national economic scenario.

Hence, I differentiate and define a peasant, a peasant family, and a family that works the land without being considered a peasant family. In his theory about the peasant economy, Aleksandr Vasilievich Chayánov argues that there are “peasant family farms” and “capitalist farming,” also introducing the former as an “economic form” (Chayánov, 1986). This is a useful differentiation as it considers how families might be influenced by capital motivations to expand their farming businesses. Motivated by his anti-capitalist ideas, Chayánov (1986) defined a peasant family as one who works the farm using the family as the workforce, i.e., it does not incur hiring costs and thus it should not be related to the business concept. However, this definition overshadows the productivity achieved by a peasant family nowadays which is visible in the numbers in the Colombian agricultural census.

Given the importance of peasants in this research, it is essential to establish clarity around this concept. Edelman (2013) explains how its meaning is adapted to different situations following specific purposes over time. I find it useful to complement the definition of peasants given by Chayánov with the one provided by the United Nations in the recently adopted Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas: “a peasant is any person who engages or who seeks to engage alone, or in association with others or as a community, in small-scale agricultural production for subsistence and/or for the market, and who relies significantly, though not necessarily exclusively, on family or household labour and other non-monetized ways of organizing labour, and who has a special dependency on and attachment to the land” (UN, 2018, p. 3).

Then, we can define those people who work the land, characterized by limited production and for whom the family represents an essential part of the workforce as peasant families. At some point, a peasant family faces a decision of whether to hire additional workers and to work the land by constituting a business when it
can no longer be considered a peasant family and it instead takes on a kind of capitalist form,\textsuperscript{77} dedicated to more capitalist farming, similar to other forms of business that do not include the family. However, family characteristics are not lost when moving from being a peasant family to capitalist farming. This was observed when the Economic Research Service (ERS) of the United States Department of Agriculture introduced a typology for family farms in 1998 (Hoppe & MacDonald, 2013, p. 1), identifying them as “agricultural businesses” (Lowder, Skoet, & Singh, 2014, p. 6).

I must also consider that in terms of ‘agricultural production’ the scope covers “not only crop and livestock production activities, but also forestry and fisheries production activities, as well as other food- and agriculture-related activities” (FAO, 2017, p. 46). This allows me to refer to such business families as ‘agricultural families.’

For Chayánov (1986, p. xiii) the presence of four main factors of production is essential for differentiating capitalist farming from peasant families: “wages (for labor), interest (on capital), rent (for land), profits (of enterprise).” These four factors are relevant for agricultural families. Land is an essential resource for agribusinesses, and its possession constitutes a necessary condition for carrying out rural entrepreneurship. However, ownership of land does not guarantee the right to exploit it as shown by Colombia’s armed conflict and land problem. Positioning the Cabrera family in this agricultural-economic definition is complicated when considering its current situation. Its possession of thousands of hectares could be a reason for taking it away from the peasant family. However, there is no unanimity about the property’s extension when defining family farming (Graeub et al., 2016). Although today the Cabreras have the family and the land in terms of production, they lack the other factors: wages and profits.

Theoretically, resources acquired through inheritance suggest a favorable position towards entrepreneurship (Casson, 2003). In the Cabrera case the land has not been producing at minimum levels due to the violence to meet its self-consumption needs. The Cabrera siblings emphasize their origins as peasants, as rural people, and insist on their peasant vocation. Right now, their land, whether small or large, makes no difference when the possibility of getting any benefit from its possession is nil. They were not allowed to continue with the family business, the farm – a path they did not choose – and now they are a part of a large number of agricultural families abruptly and violently separated from their properties. For my study, these families originating in the countryside and now displaced require to be labeled differently to differentiate the displaced agricultural families from the usual peasant families and agricultural families. I recognize them as ‘displaced agricultural families,’ a label that appreciates their different reality that generates unique needs.

\textsuperscript{77} With the forgiveness of those who maintain that according to Chayánov’s thinking, family farms cannot be aligned with capitalism (Roman-Alcalá, 2013, p. 127).
Chapter 4

The next chapter gives an overview of the Cabrera family case, beginning with the history of the land involved. Then, it presents the life of the founder of farm El Danubio and his offspring, the family business, the founder’s murder, the violent dispossession from the land and subsequent displacement, recovery of the land, living in Los Llanos del Yari, and finally the family at present.
5 Tracing the Cabrera’s family-life context and land over time

Behind any entrepreneurial journey there is a history that needs to be told (Johannisson, 2018, p. 8) – in my study of the Cabreras this comprises the Cabrera’s family-life context and its land. Tracing the history of the land that today makes up El Danubio, I reached 1595 after a number of inquiries when the first ancestor of the Cabrera family arrived on the American continent and to whom the Spanish crown granted land in Colombia because he was a Spaniard. This happened at the beginning of the settlement and the granting of properties in Colombia from Spaniards to Spaniards. My next step was building the Cabrera family tree. The information provided by the founder’s children during the genealogical work was substantial, but it was not sufficient. Consulting several online genealogical platforms (myheritage.es, genealogiasdecolombia.co, and geni.com), I reconstructed the Cabrera siblings’ family history going beyond their knowledge and memories, establishing who their ancestors were, and the relationship between them and their land. As a result, I was able to establish a line of succession for the land and specifically of the hectares that formed part of El Danubio. Tracing the Cabrera’s family-life context and land over time – based on the history of the region, the family, and the land – helped me contextualize their entrepreneurial journey. On the one hand, it represented the struggle for land in Colombia, and the violence and drama experienced by those involved in the armed conflict and on the other, I introduce the tremendous influence that the Cabrera siblings’ ancestors exerted historically in the region and still do on the family today.

With the help of the Cabrera siblings, I discovered and resolved some inaccuracies that appeared in some writings of the founder’s biography, the origin of his properties, and how he managed to establish the famous cattle ranch El Danubio, which was also the family business. In such a large family, history can become confusing and blurred in people’s memories: names, places, dates, and important events. It was necessary and useful to corroborate the information provided by family members for confirming it and complementing it. Rodrigo, Hernando, Ricardo, and the others who were interviewed and the information gathered from books about the region helped me confirm, discard, or correct accounts about the Cabrera’s family-life context and its relationship with its land. In my last search for dates, facts, and names, I visited the central cemetery of the city of Neiva where the Cabrera family grave is located. All these were worthwhile efforts in tracing the Cabrera family’s history and its land as well as the drama suffered by the displaced family in its struggle to develop the family business.
5.1 Origins of the land of El Danubio: Los Llanos del Yarí

The descriptions of the founder and his family, their business El Danubio, and the region Los Llanos del Yarí, which are at the heart of this investigation, gain color through the narrations of those who have been to the land and who also knew the founder. Figure 16 presents a panoramic view of Los Llanos del Yarí in Cabreras’ land in Colombia.

![Figure 16 Panoramic view of the Yarí plains on the Cabreras’ land](image)


The Llanos\(^{78}\) of the Yarí are territories described as “natural savannahs\(^{79}\) found to the south of the Sierra de la Macarena, a huge ecosystem on the Andean foothills, the Amazon rainforest and the Orinoquia plain ... region ... part of the Meta, Caquetá, and Guaviare departments” (Espinosa Menéndez, González Vélez, & Ramírez, 2012, p. 329). This geographical description frames a controversy which claims that the region belongs only to Caquetá (KAS, 2017). The region, which covers 364,000 hectares (Caquetá, 2018), has been a living stage and a silent witness to a multiplicity of conflicts that have arisen around its natural and strategic wealth. Three great rivers bathe the territory: Guayabero, which becomes Lozada, Tunia, and Apoporis (KAS, 2017). Its beauty appears almost ironic, given the dramas experienced on its soil. In its history of conflict,

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\(^{78}\) Plain (Llanura - Llano): “Equal and dilated field or terrain, without highs or lows” (RAE, 2020a). Both terms refer to the same ‘plain’ characteristics; however, the former defines a more extensive extension than the latter.

\(^{79}\) Savannah (Sabana): “Plain, especially if it is very dilated and has no arboreal vegetation. It is also used to refer to a person when there is ‘excess of resources’” (RAE, 2020a).
violence, and land grabbing it has seen indigenous communities, settlers, peasants, drug traffickers, and armed forces passing through it. “Through the Yari has happened ... all our history” (Molano, 2016b). Unfortunately, through time, the region has also served as a stage for all the actors in the Colombian armed conflict.

The first land conflict in the region occurred after the foundation of the city of Espíritu Santo del Caguán, around the 1600s (Díaz Jordan, 1960, pp. 16, 53). At that time, the land was occupied by an indigenous group known as the ‘Tamas,’ which was later conquered, kidnapped, and sent to work on the vast cattle ranches in the region which experienced a great boom in the cattle business around 1686 (Tovar Zambrano et al., 2012). According to Perdomo Lozada (2009) in 1782 a new episode was added to the fight for land in the Yari region when a commission of Portuguese arrived on the territory searching for indigenous people and products. In the years that followed, the Catholic church took control of the land, displacing the commissions that had come from other countries. However, in 1850, after its independence from Spain, the Colombian government expropriated the land from the Catholic church and decided that it would be used for agricultural purposes. In 1863, it initiated the colonization of the area leading to a conflict between peasants and colonists. Around 1905, the San Vicente del Caguán region, of which the Yari is a part, received an economic boost from the rubber business when the Colombian government gave away 60,000 hectares of land to rubber extractors (Perdomo Lozada, 2009, p. 25). Unfortunately, rubber extractors, and more specifically La Casa Arana, which had been operating in Colombia from 1899 to 1929, were responsible for the massacre of more than 80,000 indigenous people in the region (CNMH, 2013, p. 5).

The Caguán Colonizing Society Foundation or the Fundación Sociedad Colonizadora del Caguán was founded in Neiva in 1912 with the intention of encouraging the livestock business and grouping numerous partners who had established farms with significant land extensions (Perdomo Lozada, 2009). Soon, the conflict over land entered a new and bloody phase. The last name Perdomo, and the name of the cattle rancher Oliverio Lara played an important role during this phase. Caguán was an indigenous reservation recognized through “royal cedula” and “national decree” with its territory falling in well-known landowner Ricardo Perdomo, “a kind of viceroy’s” land (De La Sierra, 2003, p. 57). In his eagerness to establish dominion over the land, the landowner gained police support and in the vicinity of La Gabriela (his favorite hacienda<sup>82</sup> that bore the name of his mother Gabriela Cespedes<sup>83</sup>) he struck a heavy blow to the aborigines:

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<sup>80</sup> Quote taken from the national newspaper *El Espectador*.

<sup>81</sup> La Casa Arana, owned by the Peruvian Julio César Arana, was the initial name of the sadly remembered Peruvian Amazon Rubber Company. This company, dedicated to the exploitation of rubber, is part of Colombian history because it has been accused of an indigenous genocide in the Colombian Amazon (Hardenburg, 1913).

<sup>82</sup> Hacienda: farm or cattle of a farm (RAE, 2020a).

<sup>83</sup> See Figure 18.
“The large estate of the Perdomo family was divided into farms and cattle ranches, and one of those portions of land was the famous hacienda La Gabriela, located near the Caguán; (...) when the police arrived at La Gabriela, their blood boiled because of the rush of the march and the effects of alcohol. They did not remain to guard the hacienda as was their duty, but they continued to the place where they were told that the indigenous meeting was taking place (...) The police did not say anything; they did not announce themselves or requested their surrender. Hidden in the night, the police officers surrounded the site, put the gun barrels through the fence and opened fire at will. The massacre was massive and in it fell adults, old people, women, and children” (De La Sierra, 2003, pp. 58,59).

Cattle started arriving in the Yari region in 1920, with 50 animals being brought by cattle ranchers from Huila; they were helped by a group of indigenous Huitotos. The beauty of the region impressed them so much that in five years the number of cattle had tripled in the Yari (Perdomo Lozada, 2009). Once in the Yari, the colonists met an indigenous group of the region the ‘Tinigua’ (Perdomo Lozada, 2009). According to Perdomo Lozada (2009), in 1932, while on the one hand, the government policy recognized the land as public, on the other hand, the Ministry of Industry continued promoting colonization. The parceling of land with its excellent quality fueled desires for expansion, resulting in a race and competition for its possession. In 1943, international oil company Shell established itself in the sector today known as Los Pozos, confirming rumors about the presence of oil in the region and paving the way for the arrival of other oil companies such as Cobras, Texas Petroleum, Casa Blanca, Western, Petty, and the British Emerald Energy (Perdomo Lozada, 2009). With Shell and the oil boom 40 trucks and machinery arrived in the region to open the road that 30 years later became the official road and the first landing strip in the region located in the Jalisco cattle ranch. The first animals left the area through that airstrip and rumors about how promising the land was and how it was suitable for livestock aroused interest in the region (KAS, 2017).

Over the years, other airstrips were built by ranchers; “Los Falla (Hato Caquetania) ... they associated with several well-known merchants ... who bought a DC-3 plane from the company Sadelca and took out cattle and pigs every day. As for the pig trade, it was constant, since the plane made up to three trips in a day” (Perdomo Lozada, 2009, p. 55). Competition between settler farmers and incoming Huita landowners was interrupted only by the yellow fever that scared away many of them.

In 1948 came the era of violence. According to Perdomo Lozada (2009, p. 53), “the rich Yari cattle region became a cemetery for lots of dead cattle, a number of children killed, raped women, burned herds, assaults on the roads; domestic fowl, dogs, and pigs, killed by shots or by being torn apart.” After a rapid peace

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84 Hato: a word in Spanish that identifies a “countryside Hacienda destined to the breeding of all kinds of cattle” (RAE, 2020b).

The use of both terms can be confusing, but generally the term hacienda refers to an extension of land with agricultural and livestock production, and the term hato refers exclusively to a farm specializing in livestock.
process, in 1953 the dissident Hernando Palma arrived with other guerrillas and declared war on the Tinigua indigenous people who were inhabiting the region (KAS, 2017). The indigenous people were killed (KAS, 2017) and their land was occupied by the new settlers, including Oliverio Lara, who was then recognized as a millionaire coffee entrepreneur (Molano, 2016b), and friend of the president of the republic of Misael Pastrana (KAS, 2017). Motivated by the idea of a large farm (hacienda), the famous rancher acquired properties from other settlers amassing approximately 140,000 hectares (Bolaños, 2017) and 50,000 heads of cattle (KAS, 2017). In 1963, Lara acquired the farms El Recreo, Tinajitas, and Mejico (KAS, 2017). On April 27, 1965, Lara was murdered by his workers (Bolaños, 2017).

During these years, Colombia registered a high presence of what we know today as guerrillas – illegal armed groups which had a direct relationship with communist self-defense, or autodefensas, promoted by the Colombian Communist Party which had managed to mark a presence in regions such as Pato and Guayabero (Sánchez, Wills O, & Gutiérrez Sanín, 2006). On May 27, 1964, the government responded with a counteroffensive (Sánchez et al., 2006, p. 178), with military operations among which one is remembered as "Operation Marquetalia" ... one of the bloodiest operations of the army" (Sánchez, Meertens, & Hobsbawm, 2002, p. 233; Sánchez et al., 2006). These combats became mobile guerrillas calling themselves “frente sur,” or “south front” (Sánchez et al., 2006, p. 178). A few years later they adopted the name ‘Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia’ identified by the acronym FARC (Pécaut, 2008; Sánchez et al., 2006).

During its first phase of expansion from 1968 to 1974 the guerrilla movement started deploying towards regions far from the main urban centers which had been abandoned by the government, and this is how they came to be established in the south of the country (CNMH, 2013).

The colonization of the Yari continued. With the boom in cattle ranching in the 1970s, the region had approximately 50 large cattle ranches and seven airstrips. Simultaneously, the landing fields combined with the region’s richness in natural resources, attracted the attention of drug traffickers. During the years that followed, drug traffickers such as Carlos Ledher, Pablo Escobar, and Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha ‘El Mexicano,’ came to the region and took control of the land. They arrived with their armies, later known as paramilitaries, killing to protect the cocaine processing laboratories, now located on the land. The domain of drug traffickers, including invaded cattle ranches, gave rise to the emblematic Yariseñse ranch of the Medellin cartel known as ‘tranquilandia,’ the place of origin of tons of cocaine exported by drug traffickers (Bolaños, 2017). With the arrival of drug traffickers, illicit crops increased dramatically in the area leading to a deadly partnership between drug traffickers and guerrillas, in which FARC

85 “A region that since then sounds like war, not without reason because military confrontations between the guerrillas and the army are frequent until today.” Molano (2016a, p. 14), before the signing of the peace agreement.
facilitated the relationship between drug producers and traffickers, thereby strengthening the subversive group financially (CNMH, 2013, p. 8).

FARC’s presence in the area was ratified, and in some way strengthened, with the 42,000 square kilometers, or 4,200,000 hectares that the government forces cleared with the aim of carrying out peace talks for approximately four years beginning on November 7, 1998 (CNMH, 2013). However, between 1987 and 2006, the indisputable presence that the guerrillas had achieved in the area attracted other paramilitary groups that sought to fight for land ownership – armed groups typically sponsored by drug traffickers (CNMH, 2013, p. 11). Thus, for some years the region was submerged in a bloody cocktail of violence marked by the actions of the guerrillas and their bloody confrontations with paramilitary groups and the presence of the Colombian military forces that arrived in the area intending to fight both illegal groups and drug traffickers. Finally, FARC gained control over the region and exercised its authority over all the land that according to them had been under the control of drug traffickers; all farms in the area were occupied and considered a kind of war trophy (Bolaños, 2017).

The years between 2002 and 2010 framed the presidential term of Álvaro Uribe Vélez, during which a strong military offensive was launched that sought to reduce the power of the guerrillas. In 2012, the President of the Republic, Juan Manuel Santos, initiated the peace agreement which was finally signed between the government and FARC guerrillas in 2016, which would allow the return of peasants and families violently displaced by the conflict.

5.2 Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo – The founder (1917\textsuperscript{86}-1985)

To find out about the source of the land owned by Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo, I had to move back in time to the origin of the Cabrera surname, to arrive at the composition of the land that is currently part of the founder’s legacy (see Figure 17, p. 106). The founder and El Danubio are both a result of the Cabrera’s family dynamics over time. The story begins with the arrival of Francisco Manuel Perdomo de Betancourt to Colombia. He was born in 1595 in Canary Islands. Francisco Manuel represents a good starting point considering that his arrival on the American continent occurred approximately 100 years after the discovery of America by the Spaniards. Being a Spaniard and European, a ‘chapeton,’ Perdomo de Betancourt was considered to have ‘purity of blood,’ which gave him privileges such as being governor or supreme authority in the provinces and being worthy of having land. This last right was extended to his descendants derived from their influence and political power and as a result of their economic activities (Tovar Zambrano et al., 2012). They participated in the early distribution of the

\textsuperscript{86} It was not possible to establish the founder’s date of birth with the help of his children. On his grave, the information can hardly be read. 1917 is the year suggested by Perdomo Lozada (2009, p. 62).
land of the new kingdom, a historic moment in the beginning of the demarcation of properties in the country. The descendants of these Spaniards – Europeans, born in America, inherited the ‘pure blood’ allowing them to occupy other distinguished positions and influential titles (Tovar Zambrano et al., 2012).

![Photo](image.jpg)

*Figure 17 The founder*

Photo provided by Carolina Cabrera

Hence, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many members of Perdomo’s family, descendants of Francisco Manuel and his Colombian wife Agustina Mendez, directed the region politically. They exercised authority and dominance over the region through the roles that they played and were also responsible for rotating these roles between the family and its descendants. This is why some of them had military ranks such as captain, ‘maestre de campo’, and sergeant. Francisco Manuel Perdomo de Betancourt was an ordinary mayor and also ‘alférez real’ (1658 and 1659). His brother Jorge was an ‘alguacil mayor’ and ‘alférez real’ (1662) and authority of the city hall ‘el cabildo’. His brother José was ordinary mayor (1677). These roles were even passed on to the following generations, where we see Perdomo being authority of

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87 Maestre de campo was an intermediate Spanish military rank between captain and sergeant.

88 Junior officer, immediately below the lieutenant. Alférez carried the banner or royal banner in the king’s army (RAE, 2020b).

89 Like a senior sheriff. A subaltern officer of the local justice administration who exercised the function of the resolutions of the mayor of cities and towns, and being under his orders the junior sheriffs (RAE, 2020b).

90 City hall, municipal corporation (RAE, 2020b).
‘el cabildo’ (1696), mayor provincial de la ‘santa hermandad’\textsuperscript{91} (1697), mayor of Neiva (1702, 1706), ordinary mayor (1703), ordinary judge (1706), priest, ‘comisario de la santa cruzada’\textsuperscript{92} (1716), first mayor, second mayor (1726, 1733, 1750, 1760), priest of the city (1730), and general attorney (1770, 1772) (Tovar Zambrano et al., 2012, p. 12). Over the years, the influential Perdomo family though both hated and loved became involved in the revolt of the Comuneros,\textsuperscript{93} which became evident from their permanence in various high positions.

The lawfully acquired land meant that they became a part of the rich in the region in a society that was basically divided into three groups corresponding to social levels: governors and mayors at the top of the social scale; landholders, landowners, and those who performed activities related to livestock; and the plebs, comprising all the rest who were considered without wealth – they could be peasants, artisans, or small merchants, but also included those who could be bought as slaves and indigenous people (Tovar Zambrano et al., 2012).

Advancing a few generations through the Perdomo line, we find Luciano Perdomo Rivera, who was born in 1841 and will probably be remembered as the most significant landholder of the time as he received land in recognition of his services as a general during the civil wars. According to Tovar Zambrano et al. (2012, p. 95) Perdomo Rivera managed to accumulate at least “thirty plots, farms and real estate” among which were some ranches, a fortune achieved due to his profitable businesses farming quinoa and poultry that allowed him to extensively expand his domain (Tovar Zambrano et al., 2012, p. 94). Army General Perdomo Rivera had two sons, one of whom died very young, leaving Ricardo Perdomo Cepedes as his only heir. Ricardo later married Maria Josefa Serrano Borrero. They had eight children, seven girls, and one boy. Of the seven females, I pay special attention to two: Elvira Perdomo Serrano, who later became the mother of the founder, and her sister, Maria Josefa.

According to De La Sierra (2003, p. 56), Elvira with her sisters and her brother Arcadio were heirs to the abundant land coming from “the richest man in Huila,” who had land equivalent “to half of what is today the department of Huila.”\textsuperscript{94} Elvira married Luis Felipe Cabrera García, and it is from him that the surname Cabrera appears in our history. Cabrera García, later the founder’s father, was the son of a civil engineer, Emilio Cabrera and Zoila García, of whom there is no mention as having land tenure. Luis Felipe, a famous medical doctor who specialized in internal medicine at the French University of Sorbonne, was recognized as one of the “outstanding young people of the region” (De La Sierra, 2003). He was also a congressman, “first liberal senator of Huila by popular election,” and close friend of the president of the country, Alfonso Lopez

\textsuperscript{91} Its functions were contributing to justice without jurisdiction like prosecuting criminals, imprisoning them, and collecting fines (RAE, 2020b).
\textsuperscript{92} Curator of the holy crusade.
\textsuperscript{93} A protest movement which originated in 1781 against the tax burden of the colonial regime. It is an essential chapter in the history of the independence of Colombia (Pico, 2011).
\textsuperscript{94} Which means equivalent to roughly 10,000 km\textsuperscript{2}.  

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Pumarejo. Luis Felipe is also mentioned in regional literature as the brother-in-law of the murderer of the popular Huila leader Reynaldo Matiz, Arcadio Perdomo Serrano (De La Sierra, 2003, p. 62).

In 1924, the founder Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo, was a 7-year-old boy. Despite what has been said about Luis Felipe, it was only through the founder’s mother, Elvira Perdomo Serrano, that young Ricardo became a landholder by heritage, which is an aspect widely ignored in literature. In an interview Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera, explained that his father, founder Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo, inherited from his mother Elvira Perdomo Serrano Satia “a ranch with more than one thousand hectares,” El Casil, and two haciendas located in Algeciras, Huila, “because the owner of the money was Elvira Perdomo Serrano.”

The legendary farmer Don Oliverio Lara, owner of the Hacienda Lara - better known as ‘Larandia,’ was already present in the Yari region. According to historian Orlando Mosquera, this iconic hato exceeded 30,000 hectares and was founded by Oliverio’s father, Leonidas Lara. Leonidas, supported by his son Oliverio, managed to position Larandia as the largest agricultural company in the country through successful movements and investments such as the innovative import of Aberdeen Angus cattle from Scotland in 1937 and 1939. Oliverio Lara Borroso married Maria Josefa Perdomo Serrano, also known as Pepita (Molano, 2016a, p. 81), aunt of the founder and Elvira’s sister, who also inherited large tracts of land. Thanks to this marriage, a relationship was established between the founder, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo, and the wealthy rancher Oliverio Lara. In 1944, Oliverio Lara and his father decided to buy some land from his sisters-in-law, the daughters of Ricardo Perdomo Cespedes and sisters of Maria Josefa and Elvira. At the beginning of the 1960s, the company Compañía del Sur Limitada or Company of the South Limited, was created in partnership between Lara Perdomo and Lara Rueda, which bought more land in the Llanos del Yari.

Figure 18 facilitates an understanding of the dynamics of the land according to the last name (see p. 109). However, it should not be confused with a family genealogical tree because it only depicts those who, in my interpretation depending on their representative positions, contributed significantly to the creation of large tracts of land, among which is El Danubio.
Figure 18 Genealogy of the land
Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo, “Arrived at Yari from a very young age” (Perdomo Lozada, 2009, p. 62). According to Hernando and Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera, their father started working as an administrator for Don Oliverio Lara, helping him with the Larandia farm. “There my Dad was the manager and handled everything,” Ricardo says. According to Javier Ricardo Cabrera around January 1963 his grandfather received a farm in Los Llanos del Yari as part of his job. “He received a farm I think of 20,000 hectares, with 5,000 heads of cattle, and then his work was raising the cattle there. We raised the cattle that were taken out to San Vicente to fatten, there were more than 30 cowboys, there were stewards, more than 250 horses, mules and everything else, that made the dairy because roads did not exist,” he explains. The founder arrived on the land by plane, landing on the landing strip of farm El Recreo. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera remembers that on this trip, his father and Don Oliver were accompanied on the plane by farmers who had sold land to Lara. “Mr. Moreno, ..., Don Claudio Montero, and those who sold them these farms: El Recreo, Mexico, Tinajas, which was the first land that was bought,” Ricardo says.

On April 27, 1965, Oliverio Lara Borrero was kidnapped from his farm Larandia and subsequently murdered (CNMH, 2013, p. 7). Some years later, Oliverio Lara’s heirs, more specifically “Don Oliver, the son of Don Oliverio,” as Dioselina says, decided to sell some properties. “Oliverio Lara was murdered... and my father bought what the Lara (descendants) had in the plains of the Yari in 1971; these were the following hatos: El Danubio, Canadá, Manila, Jalisco, El Recreo, Tinajas, Ucrania, Albania, México...and Acapulco,” Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera says, in a business that apparently had a cost of, “6 million pesos and 120 horses” (Perdomo Lozada, 2009, p. 62). Ana Milena Cabrera justified this monumental acquisition of land explaining that Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo always thought about his family, “that’s why he (the founder) bought that amount of land... huge...because he said that he saw his children and his family there.” This land was purchased in partnership with Drigelo Mora Rubio in equal parts, through the ‘Society Cabrera and Mora.’ “And this was the stamp... it was the leg of a horse,” Rodrigo says also confirming that there was no written evidence about this business, as indicated in Bolaños (2017). According to Rodrigo CC, in the part belonging to Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo were El Danubio and other hatos. But trouble started soon. As Rodrigo explains, “My father sold some hatos and Drigelo sold the other hatos unfortunately to drug dealers. Drug trafficking entered and ended everything. (The Mexican Gonzalo Rodríguez) Gacha bought the Mejico Hato, bought El Recreo, and bought all of Drigelo’s part... and with the entry of the narcs, the guerrillas entered as well, and then it was all over.” “My dad only retained El Danubio,” Hernando Cabrera Cabrera says. Rodrigo continues: “In El Danubio my dad had 3,300 cows... and the guerrillas started bothering him and then my dad decided to buy some farms in San Vicente.” This is when the founder acquired “more farms, apart from the land of the plains, close to the town (San Vicente),” Lucy says.
Chapter 5

In some way, the proximity of these last properties to the town offered him more security in terms of public order. Once the guerrillas took control of the region, “the cattle were taken out...the ones that could be taken out, the rest were taken by the guerrillas. The guerrillas stole almost all the cattle that belonged to everybody,” explains Rodrigo CC. According to the two brothers, Rodrigo and Hernando’s accounts, in 1982 Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo sold El Casil with the aim of investing in irrigation systems and infrastructure in Satia. “In Satia he had a hacienda with more than 1,000 hectares, a dairy with 150 cows that supported the hacienda fattening cattle. He had some personal problems, and we went to Los Llanos del Yari,” explains Javier Ricardo. After some time, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo decided to sell Satia “because violence had made him desperate.” Rodrigo says, and he remained with his land in the plains of the Yari.

Today, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo is remembered as one of the colonizers (Perdomo Lozada, 2009), “one of the oldest inhabitants” of Los Llanos del Yari, as Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera says. Ricardo explains that his father was part of “the second colonization that took place in that area,” after the first wave led by Hernando Palma. The founder was “influential in those land,” adds Lucy, and “highly appreciated in the community,” adds his grandchild Jose Ricardo. According to Javier Ricardo, he was not only a landholder, he also brought development to the region through the construction of roads and bridges. Considering his life and work, there is also no doubt that, “Don Ricardo Cabrera was passionate about horses and deeply liked cattle” (Perdomo Lozada, 2009, p. 62). Through the narratives which his descendants shared with me, we can observe that, on the one hand he was a hardworking and robust person: “He would order people to sleep and to wake up, he would get up at 3:00 am, and at 4:00 am people would be drinking coffee and getting ready for a meeting to plan the day,” and on the other hand, he had a most human face: “My grandfather was extremely pampering, he was the best,” Lucy says. “We were lucky to have our childhood next to Don Ricardo who provided us with everything we needed, from employees and nannies and everything to please our whims,” adds Javier Ricardo.

Those who had an opportunity to know him, refer to him with great appreciation: “Don Ricardo was our sun; he was the heart of the family,” says Javier Ricardo. Certainly, his presence can be felt in each narrative, as for instance in what Carolina said, “Every day, my grandfather and I got up early to go to the town market; that was our hobby before leaving for the farm to work. We went to buy provisions for workers, or medicine for livestock. He came by and picked me up at 5 o’clock in the morning, and then we went to the marketplace, we ate an envuelto (wrap), and finally he took me back to the house. It is something that marks one for a lifetime. I have that memory alive in my mind, and every time I see a person eating an envuelto, that image comes to me.” “Growing up with that man was spectacular,” adds Javier Ricardo, who believes that the founder taught them, the grandchildren, to work the land and the farm: “He taught us to sow the grass, to sow the cane, to plant the yucca, to look after the land... what could be sown, how it was to be planted... love for the land... knowledge about raising
animals,“ and in his role as grandfather, the founder went even further ... “grandfather was much better than a dad.”

5.3 The hato El Danubio: The agricultural family business

![Image](image_url)

*Figure 19 The founder flying over his land*

Photo provided by Ana Milena Cabrera

Regarding the differentiation between a farm and hato, Hernando Cabrera Cabrera emphasized to me, for the fifth time, that we were talking about hato El Danubio, which made me reflect on how significant the difference between a farm and hato can be, and also the importance that comes from owning a farm considered a hato. Though the founder, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo, sold some of the hatos, he kept El Danubio; this is the land on which he built the family business. I see the Cabrera family’s farm business as one in which ownership and management were influenced by and tied to the family (cf. Dyer, 1986).

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95 Remember when talking about a hato, the emphasis is on the fact that it is a large extension of land used for cattle breeding. When someone tells me about a hacienda, it means that it is a large area of land that can be used for crops but does not rule out that it also has cattle. When someone tells me about a farm, he is not informing me about the activities carried out there, nor about the extension of the property. This was emphasized by Hernando. Then, El Danubio was an hato, and now it is a farm. What it is called depends on the perspective from which you look at it.
According to Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera, El Danubio is the most representative hato of the land that belonged to the founder, but the hato in its entirety is a conglomerate of farms: “The largest hato is El Danubio, it is the hato that has the most water, it is the one that is most endowed with the countryside, the one with the greatest prosperity for agriculture.” “It is the most beautiful farm of the Yari savannahs,” says Javier Ricardo Cabrera Cruz. It was acquired initially by the ‘Compañía del sur’ in 1964, and was transferred to the founder, “in 1970, when he bought everything from the Lara descendants,” adds Hernando Cabrera Cabrera. The property, according to public deed 1502 issued on July 11, 2017, includes the land, “located between the rivers Arenoso and Paujil, until the river’s mouth of la Túnia.” The measurements of the hato are not exact and in fact they differ quite a bit because, “there has never been a real measurement process,” explains Rodrigo. However, he adds, that we are talking about, “approximately between 25,000 and 30,000 hectares according to the boundaries,” and its natural borders. Whatever the size, it is a significant extension. It explains why the vastness of the founder’s land left a deep impression on his grandson Leonardo Francisco, who remembers, “...I stopped at a certain point, and I asked my uncles, ‘Uncle, how far does father’s land go?’ And they responded, ‘As far as you can see.’ And yes, we rode horses, and sometimes it took us 5-6 days touring the farm.”

The public document says that the farm is, “composed of natural savannahs.” In the words of brothers Rodrigo and Ricardo respectively: “It is a savannah, a high plain next to the Sierra de la Macarena,” and “Llanos del Yari ... the municipality of Cagüán. Land very rich in petroleum.” Ricardo explains to me that there are areas where the savannah is interrupted by dense forests: “It is a clean jungle, with mountains and trees. It is the place where the water is.” It includes varied vegetation such as “palms, morichales and cananguchas,” adds Dioselina. “The weather is wonderful,” explains Carolina Cabrera Sanchez, who was impressed by the pure air in the area and all the food available, “potatoes, yucca, rice, beans, lentils, peas, and even wild meat,” which comes from the region and is hence entirely free of chemicals. Dioselina remembers, “‘There is a (place) called the ‘corner of the devil.’ There lived a man that Ricardo had sent to work, and he got some big bananas harvested. It is great land to cultivate, and now it is unoccupied.” Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera adds, “The variety of wild fauna in the region is intact.” This is why, according to Ricardo, you can see various typical animals of the region there: “The animals go out from the jungle to the savannahs ... and there you can look at tapirs, cañuchos, sajinos,”

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96 A land populated by Moriches, a tree of inter-tropical America of the palm family (RAE, 2020a).
97 Fruit of the tree of bread. A kind of chestnut.
98 Other names are manaos and tayassu pecari, which look like wild pigs.
99 Pecari tajacu: looks like a small wild boar with small fangs.
there are tigers, cougars, bears, armadillos, many varieties of birds.” “Parrots and toucans,” adds Dioselina, nodding her head, while listening to her husband speaking.

When dealing with agricultural activities, an obligatory topic related to the potential of the land and a farm in Colombia is that of the availability of water resources, and in descriptions of El Danubio there are a lot of references to this precious liquid. As an example, Hernando Cabrera Cabrera describes the hato as: “The land that is there...has a rainfall intensity in nine months of winter and three of summer.” “It rains all year, in the period with the least rainfall (January) there is 108-150 mm of rain, and in the rest of the months 250-300 mm, meaning that per year there is 2,500-2,800 mm of rain, spread throughout the year, not as in the Meta and the Casanare that have 2,500-3,000 mm of rain but there is also an arid time of more than three months, which hits the crops very hard.” Hernando affirms that it is a land that has 2,000 hours of light per year, “because nowadays the water and the sun are the most important factors, land without water and without sun is useless.” This description is relevant, given his expertise in working the countryside, obtained as director of palm plantations. As if the quantity of rainfall was not enough, Javier Ricardo tells me that the hato, “is surrounded by three rivers.”

For Lucy, a member of the third generation, the productivity of the land is indisputable. This is something that her uncles Hernando and Rodrigo share with her. They mention some possibilities for its reactivation: “That land is good for everything, it is good for planting rubber, cocoa, palm oil, livestock, rice, for timber, it is pretty good land, much better than Llanos Orientales, Meta, and Casanare,” explains Hernando, while Rodrigo adds, “Trees produce oxygen, and oxygen can also be sold.” For Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera there is no better land: “There, the only thing you don’t get is what you don’t plant. If you sow corn, you will get corn. However, even if this land is not the best for coffee, if you sow coffee you will get coffee, of course, it will not be of the best quality, but for sure you will get coffee. Cocoa is found naturally in the plains (i.e., without planting it). However, if you use some technology, you get great cocoa. For rice, the land is great. You can plant all the grass you want (for cattle). It is better land than that in the eastern plains of Meta and Casanare. This land has a better vegetal layer.”

Today, the descriptions of hato El Danubio during its productive time are also accompanied by nostalgic accounts: “When I think of El Danubio, I only think of good things. I remember...it was a very productive farm, with lots of livestock... horses... animals, we had everything.” remembers Lucy Cabrera Sánchez, who was only a girl back then. Leonardo Francisco Cabrera Cruz, who was a little older, too has happy memories about the farm; “I was about 9-years-old... our

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100 Mammal with some lateral teeth, a body 30 to 50 cm in length protected by a shell formed of bone plates covered by movable corneal scales so that the animal can wrap itself. Typical of South America (RAE, 2020a).

101 The Cabrera brothers are referring to the carbon offsetting market, for example, carbon credit and forest bonds.
childhood was there... I remember so much from that first time...that was beauty.” “Paradise,” adds Lucy.

Productively El Danubio was much more. According to Hernando Cabrera Cabrera El Hato, “Produced pure cattle, only livestock. My dad had 9,500 cattle on El Danubio, they were double purpose cattle providing milk and meat.” A memory that fits perfectly with that of his brother Rodrigo: “Every six months 700 calves were born, were weaned,102 and a few were sold... other calves replaced breeding cows... and part of the cattle needed to be removed from El Danubio to be fattened at Algeciras’ farm... that was the business of cattle and horses.” At the end of a period of staying at the farm, in recognition of the effort of each one, the founder usually let them participate in the business by granting “two or three cows to each, (or) one, two, three heifers, (or) a bull, (or) horses, ... we were still very young, we were grandchildren, but to his children, he gave large quantities of cattle. To Milena, for example, he gave a farm, to Orlando another farm, to the adults he gave more because they were the ones who worked the most,” says Javier Ricardo.

The days of work were an adventure and depended on where the cattle had to be taken. When the final destination was the main city, Leonardo Francisco Cabrera Cruz explains, “A journey could last 20 days, a month, collecting cows, vaccinating, and marking since there were cows, bulls, and steers which were unmarked. They were then marked, selected, and brought to Neiva; 100 or 200 cattle.” When the destination was the nearest town, San Vicente del Caguán, Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera explains, “We had to go on horseback from San Vicente, four days... to get to the farm, and from there we took the cattle to sell back to San Vicente. It was eight days, sometimes 10 days.”

For some cattle ranchers like Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo, there was another way of transporting cattle and avoiding the long and exhausting journey through Los Llanos del Yari by using a DC-3 or DC-4 aircraft, which usually took off loaded with animals from the multiple airstrips located in different farms in the region. As Hernando Cabrera Cabrera told me, the founder had at least two aircraft of DC-3 and DC-4 types in partnership with Drigelio Mora and Giovanni Bordé. Dioselina names the most famous tracks: “The best runway located in the Llanos del Yari was at hato El Recreo, a very large track where big planes could fit, Hercules, any plane.” These runways were also used by drug traffickers such as those located in the Caquetania and Tranquilandia farms.

However, of all this very little remains today or there are “only abandoned runways,” as Dioselina says. “Those runways have all been bombarded and no longer work,” adds Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera. Since then, “That land has practically been abandoned,” affirms Hernando Cabrera Cabrera, and with it the airstrips. In the gloomy words of Dioselina, “el Recreo, Mejico, Tinaz, Canada, Sevilla, Albania, La Dispensa, all that land that belonged to society Cabrera and Mora... ...none of that exists now.” “Most of it is now empty land that belongs to

102 Wean: “to accustom (a young child or animal) to take food otherwise than by nursing” (MWD, 2020b).
the nation,” affirms Ricardo.\textsuperscript{103} Considering the peace at that time, Ricardo reflects, “Previously there were no roads, neither bad ones nor good ones.” Now there are at least bad ones. He shows optimism when he tells me, “Now that’s going to improve,” and smiles.

Finally, amazed by their accounts of the land and everything else they told me, I could not avoid asking them how much that property was worth today. The value is somehow uncertain; its valuation is an exercise that is not backed by appraisals or experts: “After Dad’s death we knew that the farms were there, but that the land could not be sold. The great impediments were that it had no price, and also if someone wanted to buy it, the guerrillas would not let anyone who was considered a stranger enter the region,” explains Leonardo Francisco. “The land had lost all its value. Now, with the land given back, it is again recovering its value,” Rodrigo adds. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera, tells me, “At this moment, there is land that has been sold at 600,000 pesos per hectare. It means, for our land, 8,000 million pesos,” which is equivalent to approximately 3 million US dollars. In another interview Hernando\textsuperscript{104} told me, “Some people offered us 1,000 US dollars per hectare, maybe because there is not much land in the market, and it is good land for any crop... the land has gained value again.”

5.4 Don Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo’s death

“Dad was killed.” “The axis of the family.”
Leonardo and Javier R Cabrera Cruz.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{cabra.png}
\caption{Cabrera’s family grave}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{103} This statement was made by Ricardo on December 28, 2016, before the land restitution.

\textsuperscript{104} The interview took place in April 2017.
The founder’s eldest son, Ricardo, tells me that his father, “was murdered,” after which he insists that, “he was a victim of violence.” He had been verbally warned, “Don Ricardo you are on a list, they will kill you, you must leave San Vicente,” his grandson Leonardo Francisco tells me. He adds that his grandfather decided not to leave the region, always arguing that, “He was not going to leave the plains, that the things he had achieved with effort belonged to him, and he did not have to give those to anyone.” So, fleeing was not what he contemplated.

On December 1, 1985, the family arrived in San Vicente del Caguán after a usual work day on the farm. “The job consisted of catching horses, for which, everyone, including the grandchildren, had to ride a horse,” says Lucy. At that time, recalls the founder’s granddaughter Lucy, the town did not have running water in the houses and so her father Ricardo, the oldest of the founder’s children, was put to the task of going with the horses to the river to fetch some water. Leonardo explains that even when it was customary to have dinner early in the villages, particularly on that night the founder decided to sit down to eat alone, a little later than usual. “... It was 15 minutes before 7 o’clock at night,” he says. The moment is still very clear in Lucy’s memory: “I was at my house, and I told my mommy, ‘Mommy, I’m going to my grandpa’s house.’ We lived very close, let’s say we lived in one corner and my grandpa in the other corner. But I did not go to my grandfather, instead, I went to the house of a girl next door to play. I was there when the shots rang. I do not know...several shots, and then everything was confusion, chaos. It was horrible. I ran, and when I reached my grandpa’s house, he was...my Dad (Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera) was picking him up from the ground. My grandfather had received a shot in his neck, he was at the dining table, he was eating and ...” (at this moment, Lucy started crying and we paused the interview).

For the brothers Leonardo and Javier Ricardo, who were with Uncle Orlando in the room next to the dining room, the scene was dramatic. “He was sitting when the bandit entered,” recalls Leonardo, “Our father was killed in front of us, at the dining room table ... we lived that moment, to see him die, to see him fall killed”, adds Javier Ricardo.

The next day Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo’s body was sent to the city of Neiva, where he was buried in the central cemetery in the town in the family grave with his parents. However, it remains unclear who murdered Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo and why he was killed. Two critical events in Colombian history preceded the death of Don Ricardo: the murder of the Minister of Justice, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, on April 30, 1984, and the attack on the supreme courthouse of justice in Bogotá by the guerrilla group M-19 on November 6, 1985. Both these acts of violence shocked the country and led to different reactions in the government in its desire to fight both drug trafficking and the guerrillas.
In 1984, the situation in the Colombian countryside was already complicated. With different legal and illegal armed groups walking around in the region and frequenting the farms, the owners of the land became directly involved in the conflict without any intention of doing so (in the following paragraphs I disguise the sources of the statements to protect the identity of the interviewees).

Someone remembered: “The big cattle ranchers ... they were obligated to finance the guerrillas. Typically, when guerrillas arrived at a farm, they just said they were hungry ... and usually, the answer (from the owner of the land) was: ‘take a cow and eat it’... What else could be said?... If the rancher said no, then, 10 to 50 cows were taken or his children could be taken to join the guerrillas to go to war... and the same thing would happen if the army arrived.” The owners of the land had no other option but becoming financiers of the conflict: “If you gave the guerrillas a cow to eat, you were a supporter of the guerrillas,” and the same held for the army, and the paramilitaries. Everything depended on the group visiting the farm. Thus, the founder and his land were involved in the conflict. “He lived in a territory where there were guerrillas,” which implies that he knew the inhabitants of the region who also included the subversives. “He knew them, because Don Ricardo, knew everyone.”

Someone told me that the ‘Cazadores’ battalion of the Colombian army in charge of surveillance of the region, knew that, “Manuel Marulanda Velez (Leader of FARC) was in the savannahs of the Yari,” and, in addition, “Leaders of the towns in the municipality,” and “cattle ranchers” were in contact with the subversives and also supported them. Thus, some people said that the Colombian
army killed the founder because he was considered a source of income for the guerrillas. One of the interviewees argued a little more about this hypothesis: “What would the heads of the (Colombian) state think? What is needed? So, weakening the incomes of the guerrillas was a priority, thus we removed the sources of financing for the guerrillas. Those are the people who want to finance them and the people who have to finance them ... let’s kill the sources of direct financing or indirect financing, let’s sacrifice any person who in one way or another helps the guerrillas.”

I was told that Don Ricardo, the founder, was good friends with the commander of the battalion ‘Cazadores,’ and that in 1985 the military base saw a change in the commander, a replacement that in turn could have brought new orders: “Some say that this replacement was the one who took the decision or executed the order to kill the cattle ranchers of San Vicente.” “It could have been a national decision of a purge of cattlemen who paid extortions, those who had some direct or indirect links with payments of extortions to the guerrillas.”

An alternative explanation is also provided: “He is believed to have been killed by the guerrillas.” According to this reasoning, FARC was responsible for the crime of murdering the rancher. Two different arguments are made here: “The founder was killed for not allowing to be bribed,” for not “paying for the vaccine.” In the region, nothing happened without the guerrillas knowing about it, and for that reason, somebody argued, “The guerrillas killed him... because they had asked him for some things and he had not wanted to give those to the guerrillas ... we know that it was FARC that was in charge of the region and killed those who did not collaborate.” One more explanation is that Don Ricardo was accused by the guerrillas of being an informant of the army telling them about FARC’s activities: “The founder had been called to be questioned... by the army ... because they knew that he talked to the guerrillas. He had to answer whenever the army requested information, he told them who was there, how they were and all that, because he saw them frequently, every time he went to the farm. So, I think, that’s the reason they killed him.”

Was it the Colombian state, and in its name the army, that ended Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo’s life? Was it the guerrillas who murdered him? The Colombian justice system never managed to determine the authorship of the crime, and none of the parties mentioned earlier were officially identified as being responsible: “They never found any suspects or caught anyone.” For the family, there was never an official explanation about it: “We never knew the reason why he was

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105 The pressure that is exerted on someone through threats to force him/her to act in a certain way thus obtaining money or other benefits (RAE, 2020a). Illegal groups such as guerrillas or paramilitaries demanded money from people in exchange for security, that is, in exchange for not hurting them.

106 It is a very colloquial way of calling the periodic payment of an ‘extortion,’ i.e., “Once they became owners of vast haciendas, drug traffickers needed protection from guerrillas, whose primary fundraising techniques involved boleto (extortion), vacunas (‘vaccination’ against guerrilla attacks), and, increasingly, kidnapping wealthy rural landowners” (Brodzinsky & Schoening, 2012, p. 400).
killed.” “At some point, the prosecution said ... that many criminal groups operated in San Vicente,” said one voice, who disapproved immediately of this reasoning. “In San Vicente, no criminal groups were operating, only guerrillas and the state were active, so there were no chicken thieves, there was not an egg lost. Why? If you were a chicken thief, they would kill you, you knew that for sure.”

Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo happened to be one of the numerous victims of the Colombian conflict and its crossfire, and the drama of the Cabrera family is typical of the one lived by thousands of other families in the Colombian countryside: “Don Ricardo Cabrera was not the only rancher who died in that period of time. Before him, another important rancher had died in San Vicente, and after him, another two or three large cattle ranchers died in San Vicente del Caguán.”

5.5 The displacement

“The land was taken from us... We had to leave, otherwise, they would have killed us,” Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera.

Quoting what literature defines as displacement is very different from hearing about it directly from those who suffered and lived the drama. “How to define the displacement?” Javier Ricardo Cabrera Cruz asks me surprised. However, he quickly responds, “Fear, because they took us out of our habitat, destroying it, threatening us. We had to run away, scared, despairsed, the anxiety of remaining with empty hands, not having food for a month because there was no money. You could not go back to the house, you could not go back to the farm.” Ana Milena remembers what it felt like to be displaced. “It was a terrible thing,” she says describing the feelings generated by not having resources. “You arrived wherever you went with nothing, without a future,” she adds. Suddenly, those who had earlier been relatively affluent farmers were in the middle of high tension and their perspective of life changed dramatically. “Being a farmer, the way to work in the countryside is on the farm, and if you are stripped of your work tool, but you only know how to work on the farm, negotiate with livestock, raise livestock, go out with cattle, or with beasts, or with whatever, to be a peasant, then the day they take everything away from you, you are left with your arms crossed and you become displaced.” Rodrigo CC says.

“As children, it was not the first violent death that we saw in San Vicente,” Leonardo Francisco CC tells me, referring to his grandfather’s murder adding, “In

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107 “Huila’s ranchers that had their properties in San Vicente,” says Leonardo Francisco Cabrera Cruz.

108 Staying with ‘folded arms’ or ‘arms crossed’ is a saying which people use for explaining that they were left without any belongings or value and/or without the possibility of taking any action.
that year and a half, we saw many violent deaths. While we bathed in the river, about once a month we saw a body with signs of torture; they always arrived at that spot in the river, the deceased, the dead." In 1986, the year after the founder’s death, Los Llanos del Yari had already changed drastically. “That region was unprotected and at the goodwill of the guerrillas,” explains Rodrigo, “Then arrived El mono Jojoy and Romaña...commanders of the guerrillas.” The situation was further complicated with the presence of drug traffickers and paramilitaries. “There was war, violence, the mafia entered, starting a big mess – they started killing people, many people ran away, many innocent people fell victim, people who had nothing to do with the mafia or anything,” says Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera. With the guerrillas and drug traffickers interested in the coca business, the fertile region of Los Llanos del Yari turned into an attractive war booty. Rodrigo explains that the land gained even more value considering its landing strips and airports that facilitated, “the transit of coca,” and where conveniently the presence of the Colombian army was not the strongest, and thus “there was no God or law.” “Drug traffickers and the guerrillas,” dominated in the area, adds Rodrigo. After the death of the founder, says Hernando, “They practically took control of everything”.

What happened next is described by Rodrigo as a debacle, “The cattle started getting lost.” “They were stolen,” corrects Rodrigo. Then, remembers Leonardo, “the creditors arrived. Dioselina adds, “They even took my ironing table, the furniture, and what we had in the house. They left us with folded arms, and I cried a lot.” The quality and standard of living of the family changed drastically. “He died and everything was gone,” says Carolina. “Life changed 90%,” says Milena, adding “We lived happily, and we had both sentimental and economic support.” Leonardo Francisco remembers: “There was no more enjoyment of childhood. Before the murder, other people set the table for us, cooked, and served us food. Afterwards, we had to prepare our food, we had to wash the dishes ourselves, and we had to wash our clothes on the riverbank. Later we tried to find opportunities to study, but the conditions were no longer the same,” to which

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109 Henry Castellanos Garzón alias ‘Romaña,’ commander of FARC Eastern Bloc.

110 ‘Creditor’ does not necessarily refer to a bank. It also refers to those persons or warehouses that provide supplies for a business. In the countryside, farmers reach agreements with local providers of medicines, provisions, veterinarians, tool stores, and transportation, among others. These accounts are open, i.e., the farmer requests everything he needs during the month, and at the end of the month, makes the total payment for the month. In a cattle hato like El Danubio, with 10,000 cattle, consumption in one month should have been considerably high, and once the business and, therefore, the cattle disappeared … who would pay these bills and how?

111 After the founder’s murder, only Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s wife Dioselina and children; also, the founder’s widow (his second wife), their two children; and Javier’s two children stayed in San Vicente del Caguán. The five older brothers, among them those who had handled the business of El Danubio, left the region.
Javier Ricardo adds, “Without him, the situation changed radically, the prospect of attending good schools was gone, thousands of things were over.” This is summmed up by Milena with a gesture of sadness, “We had everything, and from one moment to another we lost everything.”

The pressure that the illegal armed groups exerted on the inhabitants of the region was constant and intense. “Those who did not want to leave were killed,” says Rodrigo, and over time they achieved their purpose. “We had to get out of there,” points out Hernando Cabrera Cabrera. “The entire family was affected,” remembers Javier Ricardo, and in its escape, the family disintegrated, as Carolina and her father Ricardo, respectively say, “My father, as almost all Cabrera family members had to leave San Vicente and Caquetá, and leave everything behind.” “Everyone dispersed in different directions.”

For Leonardo Francisco, it is clear that, “The adults did what they had to do,” referring to the multiple directions taken by the different family members. “My grandmother depended on the founder,” says Javier Ricardo, who also explains that she was in charge of many people after her husband was murdered. In the end, however, it was a question of survival, which Leonardo Francisco remembers as: “Our grandmother decided to return to Neiva because she knew that with the beginning of our adolescence we were in danger in San Vicente. We lived in Neiva for a year, but then returned to San Vicente, because we decided that everything we owned was there. We stayed there for a year, but things were no longer the same; anxiety, fear, terror, constant threats, and the death of other ranchers made us return to Neiva. I left in a truck with my godfather. One day he invited me to accompany him to Medellin. I did not realize that this had been my last trip to San Vicente. I went with him that December. I had just finished first grade, and we did not return. I never came back to Los Llanos del Yarí.” “We began rolling,” exclaims Javier Ricardo, “To study in one place and in another ... the possibility of good schools was finished ... thousands of things were over ... sufficient and suitable clothing... we were a burden for everyone; life became complicated.”

There are also stories from the family nucleus composed of Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera and Dioselina. When they had to move, remembers Carolina, “We moved from there, from the neighborhood where we lived, to another place in the center of town.” However, “The drama began because we had to leave, leaving everything in Caquetá,” says Lucy. Dioselina, Carolina, and Lucy’s stories overlap and their drama resembles a long pilgrimage. Dioselina recalls, “I stayed in San Vicente with the children, and then I said to myself, dammit! everyone has left, and I’m going to be stupid to stay here, so they kill me later? Then I came here, to this house (in Neiva), with the boys.” Lucy says this about this time, “I remember the whole process of leaving. My uncle Hernando, known as Mono, with whom I had a good relationship proposed to my parents that I should go with him, and then I went to live with my uncle Hernando.”

Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera and his daughter Lucy went to live on the coast, and Dioselina was left alone in Neiva, with her two young children, Carolina and Jose Ricardo. She had to face all the challenges and needs by herself: “My mother had to work full time to support my brother and me,” recalls Carolina. Dioselina adds,
“(Ten months) later, Jaime, my brother-in-law called me and told me to come to the coast, they had gone there to work.” Carolina explains to me that following her uncle’s invitation, “All three of us moved to the coast. We arrived in Copey.” “We were there for about 2 months,” says Dioselina. Carolina adds, “From there, we went to live in another town called Algarrobo. My dad worked in a rice processing plant,” and they managed to find a bit more stability. “There we stayed for 10 years,” says Dioselina. However, she tells me that her husband, Ricardo, decided to go to work in, “Villa Nueva, Guajira ... to manage some haciendas,” and because of this, she was left alone again, and decided to move again, “from the coast. We went to the Llanos del Meta, Acacias ... and were there for another five years.” While Dioselina was living in Acacias and Ricardo in Villa Nueva, the Colombian government implemented the distension zone. “Ricardo went there,” says Dioselina, who continues explaining, “Then it was when I, oh! already alone in Acacias, said to myself, but what am I doing here, alone, struggling? and I decided to move to Neiva ... so I came here to Neiva. I was here for eight years, alone, without Ricardo. Carolina was working in Florencia, Lucy in Ibagué, and me here with Vanessa and Jose Ricardo. Ricardo was away for eight years without coming home, not even for an hour. After eight years we received news from him, and he said he wanted to come back home. ‘So, come back,’ I told him, this is your home.”

Since then, “We have not visited El Danubio,” says Rodrigo. “We could not return to the land that Dad left us on the plains,” adds Ana Milena. Without cattle, house, or any property, the Cabreras saw no point in going there and exposing themselves. “We knew that if one wanted to visit the land the person had to give an account of everything to the guerrillas, and then there was no reason to go,” points out Hernando. Only three of the seven siblings have visited the region again, “my two older brothers” and “my half-sister,” affirms Rodrigo CC, that is, Ricardo, who visited El Danubio frequently, Javier, who continued with the livestock business in the region, and Milena, who settled in San Vicente del Caguán.

5.6 Legalization of the land

“Yes, we expected that one day they would give us back the farm, we never lost the property. All the neighbors there, the settlers, and people in the town, everyone knows that El Danubio belongs to Ricardo Cabrera,” Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera said in December 2016.

When inquiring about the legality of the possession of the land, family members talked about two critical events. The first was the recognition of ownership of the land granted by the guerrillas during the time when the region

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112 What Hernando is trying to say is that if a member of the family had wanted to visit the land, (s)he would have had to first to contact the guerrillas, appear before them, and explain the reasons for visiting.
was under the domination of subversion and second, the recognition of the property given by the government and supported by written documents.

In the first scenario, if a displaced person wanted to recover his/her property, (s)he had to comply with a process before the guerrillas which took as long as they were brave enough to appear before FARC. It is vital to bear in mind that since the consolidation of FARC in the 1960s it was considered, “the only regulatory force of social order,” in the region (CNMH, 2013, p. 8). Once FARC regained control of the area after its confrontation with paramilitaries and drug traffickers, “people started coming back, trying to return,” explains Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera. Nevertheless, not all the people managed to recover their land. He explains, “The guerrillas gave the land back to some people but not to others, not to those who were associated with the paramilitaries; they did not let them in, they threw them out.” Here, Ricardo is referring to those who had collaborated with the paramilitaries and drug traffickers in some way when they were in the region.

This is what Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera told me about what happened during his meeting with the guerrillas: “First, you, as the owner, came before FARC, with your documents and you explained: ‘This belongs to me.’ Then, they checked the documents. After that, FARC gathered all the settlers, and they asked them: ‘Do you know Mr. Ricardo Cabrera?’ The settlers answered, ‘Yes, sir, we’ve known him for a long time, they are the owners of El Damubio.’ Then, FARC called others and asked the same thing. And if everyone knew you, FARC told you: ‘Oh well, then take that land and work. We already knew that this land belongs to you.’” However, FARC did not support its decisions through written documents. “Everything was by word,” Ricardo explains to me. He also told me what could happen if the land did not belong to the person who occupied it or who claimed it. “Then FARC proceeded to ask: ‘Why are you on that land if does not belong to you?’ And the person could answer: ‘It’s because I rented it.’ And they would respond: ‘No, no, no, go away, we decided to place another person here.’ FARC’s word was a public deed.”113

The process was similar when wanting buy or sell land in the region; the seller needed to present himself before FARC along with whoever was interested in buying the property, and the guerrillas, “did their study,” and approved or disapproved the transaction, explains Ricardo. After obtaining authorization from FARC, people could stay on the property; it was something that did not admit doubts. “It was an order, and everyone complied,” explains Ricardo. If FARC’s orders were not obeyed, people had to leave the region to avoid being killed. “FARC had that gift; they had that power,” Ricardo tells me.

For the Cabrera family, the results of the negotiations with the guerrillas are summarized by what Ricardo CC says: “We went back, collected the land, and recovered the land.”

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113 A signed and usually sealed instrument containing some legal transfer, bargain, or contract (MWD, 2020a).
In this way 14 years after their displacement and just at the beginning of the demilitarized zone or “zona de distension,” Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera obtained the approval of the guerrillas to recover the family’s property: “I returned in 1999, 14 years later, when the distention zone of Pastrana started.” However, Ricardo’s return had a bittersweet taste. Although he managed to get to the farm, appear before the guerrillas, and even receive recognition from the guerrillas as the owner of the property, FARC prohibited him from leaving the region. This is how Ricardo became a hostage of the guerrillas, but a hostage for whom no ransom was asked for. Forced to stay in the distention zone without even the possibility of communicating with his family that he was still alive, Ricardo simply disappeared. “Eight years without coming to the house, not even an hour,” says his wife, Dioselina.

His years in the area allow Ricardo to share the particularities of what life was like there. “The guerrillas ... they had their rules. For example, one could not walk ... at night. You could walk till 6 pm, at 6 pm you had to stop, with a house or without it. If you were in a car, you had to turn it off, and you had to stay there, till 5 in the morning. At 5 o’clock, you were allowed to start the engine and to continue on your way. If you drove during the night, they would stop you; guerrillas would come out and ask you why you had not followed the orders. Then you would be taught to adhere to the orders. The government also did the same when the army was out there they also stopped people after 6 pm. Why? They explained ... ‘to avoid confrontation, suddenly we move and you walk and maybe a guerrilla comes out, and you are stuck in the middle ... we could accidentally kill you.’ All were rules to favor the peasants, they said.” During the years that Ricardo was forced to stay, he was allowed to move around in the distention zone, always with prior authorization by the guerrillas. He was living on his land, and from what he implies in his conversations, he was able to produce food for self-consumption and exchange it with other inhabitants. Ricardo was considered another inhabitant. However, being inside the demilitarized zone, he knew the movements of the guerrillas and their way of living, so I assume that guerrillas allowing him to leave would mean information about them getting out.

Finally, Ricardo became critically ill, perhaps malaria, and the guerrillas decided to contact his family, more specifically Dioselina, so that his family could receive him again at home. In this way, Ricardo regained his freedom.

The peace agreement signed in 2016 represents a second critical event. Once FARC withdrew from the territories under its control, the land was returned to the state, which took possession of the land. However, the government announced that it would recognize the owner of the land if (s)he could prove to be the owner. This meant that the Cabrera family was required to present such evidence. Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera describes how the land was recovered from the government. “First, as the Cabrera family we had a certificate of tradition and freedom or registration number, and then the government gave us the declaration of the property tax ID number, that is, we had a record that in Colombia means that you have the ownership of a property. The record is from the year 1964, and the property tax information was then updated. We received that document on
December 12, 2016 because we had presented evidence that this property belonged to us. The land was never invaded; the only thing is that the Mono Jojoy\textsuperscript{114}, a guerrilla commander, used it for his cattle. When the Caguán region was cleared, people suggested to Jojoy that he should give all the land back to its original owners. He accepted and then left for Macarena, but then another guerrilla commander, Romaña, arrived and took over everything. Right now, in the peace dialogues, they have started giving back land not only to us, but to a large number of settlers, but the guerrillas still govern there,” he tells me.

The ownership of the land was recognized by the government in favor of the Cabrera family, with a public deed issued on July 11, 2017. This document is essential for the family considering that when the founder acquired the land, back in the 1970s, which then belonged to the Compañía del Sur or Los Lara he did not sign any document and thus no written evidence of this purchase existed. The follow up on the document was surrounded by expectations on the part of the group of siblings which is evident in Hernando Cabrera Cabrera’s interview on June 27, 2017, when he affirmed: “And then the Compañía del Sur was going to pass it to us, to all the siblings ... but then something happened with the notary and the matter was not done\textsuperscript{115} ... we started again with the process, and I hope that in 20 days we will have it signed, if God allows it to us.”

In Figure 22, I present the evidence of the property, a public deed that was shared with me by the second generation’s members (see p. 127). As can be seen in the public deed, the land till then belonged to the Nation which after the relevant process transferred the property, called Arenoso, to the Cabrera family. The name Arenoso awakened my curiosity, and Rodrigo explained to me that it was the name of the property before it became known as El Danubio. Now the land officially belongs to the Cabrera family. There are no longer rules imposed by the guerrillas. “They have already removed that, and you can walk around at any time you want. It is Colombia again,” says Ricardo, and for him, there is no reason not to consider the idea of returning, as he points out, “I can go there whenever I want.”

\textsuperscript{114} Víctor Julio Suárez Rojas, alias Jorge Briceño Suárez better known as Mono Jojoy. A Colombian guerrilla fighter, commander of FARC Eastern Bloc (Semana, 2010).

\textsuperscript{115} At least in Colombia, a notary - public officer is the owner of the law office, and he/she can decide on the times and procedures there. He/she can delay a process by taking a decision.
5.7 Living in Los Llanos del Yarí through the armed conflict

The Cabreras are not alone when it comes to returning to their land. “Other families are trying to reactivate themselves,” says Leonardo Francisco Cabrera Cruz, a member of the third generation. According to Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera, among them are those who worked for the founder and also lived in the neighboring farms of El Danubio.
The armed conflict in the region offered its inhabitants two alternatives: leaving the land\textsuperscript{116} and losing everything, or keeping a low profile to remain safe without losing their property. However, when alternatives were presented, forcing decisions, there was often not enough time to think. Violence entered the region and although it affected all its inhabitants, it was experienced in different ways. Let us remember that, in principle, the families in the countryside saw different armed groups arriving on their land.

Being the owners, they were forced to feed them, a situation that later evolved into continued extortions. The extortions were proportional to what the family owned, and the greater the properties and productivity, the higher their visibility; in these terms, the Cabrera family was very visible. Families and landowners had to decide in principle whether to oppose or agree to extortion. When a family agreed to pay the extortion, they also accepted the order established by the extortion group and came under the ‘protection’ of the insurgents. But if they opposed payment, the death of one of its members served as a warning for the family and the community. In the case of the Cabrera family, there was an additional problem – no armed group assumed responsibility for the crime. Therefore, fear was added to the uncertainty of who could be next on the list of executions, and thus the natural reaction was to run away and stay away from the land.

Another problem is that during an armed conflict, one does not know how long it will last. In general, people living in the countryside have lived there generation after generation and are hence dependent on the countryside and often there is total ignorance about what life in the city is like. Families sacrifice their productivity and produce what is necessary to live by maintaining a barter system with neighboring farms, since there is no point in producing just to become a victim of extortion. But, working the land becomes complicated, because during armed conflict, the youth of the family either stay and end up being forced to be part of the conflict by joining the ranks of the armed groups, or leave to find better opportunities. Both alternatives leave the countryside without enough hands for work.

Those who decided to stay despite the violence, clinging to their land and farms, are described by Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera as, “People who have been living there for 40 years...people whose predecessors had lived and died there. Their children were there, and also their grandchildren. Those are the people who remained there.” Selling the properties could have been another option for these families. However, and unsurprisingly, buyers for land that was immersed in insecurity and violence were scarce. “Nobody was interested in buying their properties,” adds Rodrigo.

\textsuperscript{116} “... undertake an unwanted or imagined journey into the unknown. It begins with the rush to get out, of fleeing to protect their lives - and that of their families and communities -, between fear and helplessness, after the victimization, threat, persecution or imminent danger that war represents” (CNMH, 2018, p. 42, my translation).
Chapter 5

So, these people faced adverse conditions because they were surrounded by multiple restrictions because of the conflict: “Those people suffered a lot because they could not finance themselves, they could not take loans, they could not leave the region to make any transactions. They had to work without tools... to survive, they had to talk to the neighbors and barter. For instance, give me 10 cows and I will give you milk and something else. This is how they subsisted,” explains Ricardo CC. “It was an area without much civilization,” Hernando CC explains to me, and for those who stayed, it seemed as if time had stopped. “There are families with children who are around 6 or 7-years-old who run around naked,” Ricardo CC tells me. His daughter, Carolina CS, a third-generation member and who visited the land in 2016 explained it as: “There are people who have never had a television in the house... children who have never seen a car with an AM/FM radio...there are a lot of children who have never been to a school, children who cannot read or write.”

Ricardo CC understands Carolina’s surprise well because he also felt the effects of being isolated and without any communication when he was not allowed to leave the distension zone for eight years, being close to others who had been kidnapped during the conflict, some of them known politicians, soldiers, and police members. “I lived with them there,” he tells me adding how in 2008, when he was freed, one of his first surprises was seeing a cell phone.

Today, in Los Llanos del Yari live those, “families whose parents have already died, but who were born, brought up, and live in that region, the Ayala, the Linares, the Serrato, ... all of them have their piece of land over there. Most live by selling milk and cheese, and those who do not sell milk, sell pigs, calves, livestock, and agricultural produce on a small scale because of lack of mechanization and tractors. They are people without resources,” explains Ricardo. And now there are also those who are returning. “Of the old families, 12 have returned to their farms,” says Ricardo. “The Guevara, the Pérez, the Falla, the Mora, and Guzmán,” points out Rodrigo.

5.8 Cabreras’ family memories

“We lived well and happy with my family, and my brother.”
Ana Milena Cabrera

Relationships also have a history (Johannisson, 2018, p. 59). Before El Danubio, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo worked as a farm steward for Oliverio Lara. His wife and children lived with him on the land belonging to La Hacienda Lara,117 better known as Larandia. The founder’s relationship with his eldest son, who received his name, was very close and based on unconditional trust. “When they went to take over the business of the land that years later became El Danubio, Don Ricardo said to his son, ‘If you follow me, Ricardo, I will take over the business,’

117 Usually, a farm steward lives with his family on the farm where he works.
and his son answered, ‘Yes Daddy! and we are going to live in San Vicente,’’ remembers Dioselina who clarified that her husband was always on the founder’s side. “He left him alone only when he was buried,” she says.

“I arrived in January 1963. I came with my dad and Don Oliverio Lara,” remembers Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera. Once Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo acquired the land that belonged to the Lara family, the Cabrera family decided to settle there to continue working, Ricardo CC explains. “We lived on a farm called Mejico,”118 remembers Dioselina. The founder and five of his seven children as the second generation settled down in the region and some of them were accompanied by their nuclear families, meaning that there were already four of his grandchildren there. Meanwhile, Rodrigo and Hernando, who were the youngest children from his first marriage, were living in Bogotá. “There was Ricardo, my father, Milena, Orlando, Javier, Jaime; they were there with him. In Bogotá were Rodrigo and me, studying at the university. I lived there from 1970 to 1975,” explains Hernando Cabrera Cabrera. However, Ricardo emphasizes that everyone worked on El Danubio.

As he promised, Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera and his nuclear family, “bought a house in San Vicente,” which Dioselina adds was only a few meters from the founder’s house. “My parents had their house there,” says Lucy. “We lived near my grandpa, and we were neighbors,” adds Carolina, and like her father, her other uncles and cousins also settled near the founder’s house. “We lived very well,” Lucy adds, “We had everything.” The founder was interested in the general welfare of the family. “He always worried that we would lack something,” points out Lucy, and therefore he is remembered by his grandson Javier Ricardo as a very generous man. Says he, “Grandfather always gave us horses, cows ... but we never paid attention to their economic meaning, the most important was the love that we felt walking anywhere next to him.” His grandson Leonardo reflects, “We did not know about the magnitude of the wealth that Dad had.” Carolina Cabrera recalls that important dates were celebrated as a family, insisting that this happened, “in the time when grandfather was alive.” “Childhood was great living there,” Lucy Cabrera says, closing her eyes and smiling.

Christmas changed, Lucy Cabrera tells me. “I remember that Decembers were incredible, we received many gifts, it was the best period, but after all that happened, Christmas was ruined. That caused me significant trouble. I swear, I remember that I was capricious. My grandpa always gave me four or five gifts, whatever I wanted, because I was his oldest granddaughter. Then of course when all that happened I remember the first Christmas without him, he was not there because he was killed on the first of December. There were no gifts. We no longer chose the gifts. Over the years, Christmas improved but it was never the same. They always told us that baby Jesus came when the father and the mother were

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118 Mejico was one of the farms that was part of the land that was known as El Danubio. El Danubio was a set of farms, and each farm had a main house. When buying a neighboring farm, it was integrated into what was recognized as the hato, and in case it was sold, it simply ceased to be part of the land that made up the hato. Dividing the large extension of the hato into farms made land management easier.
together and baby Jesus arrives when the family is united, then one remembered that someone was missing, one believed that story... and Christmas never was the same.”

Leonardo Francisco, talks of a typical day in 985, when he was 11-years-old and living in San Vicente: “A day of a student... once school finished the rest of the time was spent in the park, on the soccer field, and then by the river. At 4 pm... the whole neighborhood went to the river, to a place called las peñas.” Through the school’s session, the family’s children visited the two farms near the town, since going to El Danubio took much longer due to difficult access and distance. Usually, in those two farms they also met with the grandfather and the adults of the family. Leonardo explains, “One farm was 4.5 km from San Vicente, and the other was 8.5 km away” via the plains. We stayed in the main house on each farm.” “Sharing with the grandfather the weekends on the farm,” are memories of what for Lucy was the best part of her childhood, and it is possible to see Lucy’s happiness as she remembers as she moves from one side to the other like a little girl, and she smiles. Consistent with Lucy’s description is that given by Javier Ricardo who was 14-years-old then: “A delightful childhood, full of love from my grandparents who never abandoned us or left us alone, and who taught us the meaning of life, to respect animals, and the elderly, and he taught us how to work.”

During the long school breaks, the third generation joined the second generation on the farm. “We usually went to the plains,” remembers Leonardo Francisco. The two young university students of the second generation, Rodrigo and Hernando also remember the same thing. “For all the vacations we went there,” says Hernando CC. This is how Lucy describes those days on the farm: “I remember the plains... when the grown-ups undertook journeys to get cattle... then, my dad, my mom, the whole family joined in. I remember it was the entire family, my grandpa, my grandma, my uncles, it was nice. It was the whole gang.” There was work for everyone. Javier Ricardo explains, “The work was done on horseback or walking, watching the cattle, vaccinating, marking, healing, supervising and more than anything else accompanying him. We always went with him.” However, he clarifies, “We worked only because we wanted to, if we got tired we stopped like the boss’ sons, not like normal workers.” For the second generation, the stay on the farm was much longer. “Once we went there, we had to stay six or eight months without leaving.” Hernando Cabrera Cabrera explains to me. This is understandable considering the problematic access to the land. At that time, life in the hato for the whole family was without problems or dangers. “We went to the farm... we lived quietly,” says Ana Milena.

After the first of December 1985, there was a significant change for the Cabrera family. Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera explains that he was living in Bogotá because he was attending university, while the rest of the family, “remained in the countryside, but no longer in the plains, no longer in the Yari.” After the death of the grandfather, father, and founder of El Danubio, Don Ricardo Cabrera

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119 The farms’ names are La quinta and Finlandia.
Perdomo, each of the siblings was forced to decide what next step to take for themselves and their family nucleus. "Each one looked for a home. All my uncles were married. Let’s say that we grandchildren lost because we lost uncles, they never returned. They got married and all of them organized themselves according to their needs," says Javier Ricardo. Rodrigo CC, who at that time was in Bogotá studying at the university, describes the multiplicity of paths taken by the seven siblings: "One went to work on the coast, my brother Hernando went to plant African palm and continue working on farms, and Hernando took our brother Jaime along; they were not there as owners, but as employees. We went from being owners to being employees. Jaime went to work in livestock. Ricardo and Javier were left wondering what to do, moved from one place to another, without direction, working here and there. We have a half-sister, Milena, she is in San Vicente del Caguán, in the town. She got married there and stayed there."

About the 7th brother, Hernando adds, "Orlando went to study in Bogotá and then ended up living in Florencia." Lucy CS sums up her view, "My uncles and aunts grew up, everyone made their own lives, they met very rarely after that. There was one phone call, yes, but only once in a while. Everyone had their lives, they were married and had children." This is still the case when the opportunity to reactivate the family business is becoming a reality.
6 A snapshot visit to the land

Observation is a “social experience” (Stake, 2005, p. 455) so examining the physical context is an essential step for a researcher (Stake, 2005, p. 449). I was not present during some core events that are of interest to my study. For Nordqvist, Hall, and Melin (2009), such a situation demands that the researcher makes an effort to visualize the empirical data as if (s)he had been present, as if (s)he had been part of the observers. This sounds very logical. So, in my research role, I went to those who were there (Stake, 2005, p. 455) and I also visited the land without which the decision on whether to re-enter family farming would not be needed.

A snapshot visit is inspired by ethnography (Knoblauch, 2005). When compared to ethnography, the scope of visits like mine, also called snapshot visits, is more limited, as for example, reported by Wigren (2003). Drawing on Knoblauch’s insights, I argue that unlike ethnography a snapshot visit is not a methodology (Gobo & Marciniak, 2016, p. 104), nor a qualitative social science practice (Madden, 2017, p. 16). A snapshot visit is a research tool, and as its name indicates it has the distinctive feature that covers only a relatively short period. It is part of a research strategy, a powerful tool to immerse in the context, to gain sensitivity to it in a way that interviews and secondary sources would not be able to. A snapshot visit, like the one presented in this chapter, is an exercise that is more related to sensitivity to the context than understanding the research question per se.

Through the interviews I had seen that the land called El Danubio continued to exert considerable influence on the family and its interactions after the disappearance of the business. A relationship had been established between the Cabrera family organization and its immediate environment, a link that had the ability to influence the decision to reanimate the family business. According to Aldrich (2011, p. xiv) this constitutes a confirmation of the central premise of an evolutionary analysis. I saw in El Danubio the essence of the farm and the interrupted family business. Through the accounts told to me with pain, tears, laughter, and fear, I recognized that the land was also the stolen locus that once was the space for interactions, for life. In their stories, life and farm intertwined in a complex way. I saw in the land the ideal business scenario for the farming Cabrera family. I understood that the land and the farm constituted what Johannisson (2011) refers to as, “organizing context.” Thus, the value of visiting the land for me was less related to directly theorizing about the family business and more about getting a feeling for the emotional bond that the family felt to this land, which is at the core of their decision regarding re-entry into the family entrepreneurship. Thus, from the perspective of a researcher, I had to witness for
myself, the organizing context (Johannisson, 2011) and “the family social space” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 88) of the Cabrera family.

When I started planning a visit to the Cabrera land, several challenges surfaced. When it came to direct observations, I did not have a reference point regarding the minimum time required. The only thing that was clear was that the land at the time of my visit could not be defined as a family business even though 30 years ago, it had been the basis of the family business. Therefore, during the nine days I spent on the land, I was not “observing and experiencing the organizational life in a firm” (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014, p. 20) as that firm no longer existed. Different aspects needed to be considered vis-à-vis the money invested in the observation period. First, as a PhD student living in Sweden visiting the land that aroused an interest in my research meant not only traveling to another continent, but to a very isolated area of the Colombian countryside not only geographically, but also socially. Second, uncertainty by its very nature is difficult to prepare for; uncertainty is inevitable when visiting a region that has been dramatically impacted by the violence of an armed conflict, but nine days of total isolation can also be challenging. Thus, effectively conducting ‘direct observations’ as part of my empirical study required a substantial investment in terms of money and time (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014, p. 20).

My innumerable observations of the El Danubio land were invaluable because besides other things they confirmed the information that family members had shared during their interviews regarding what their life was during and after the existence of the family business, stories that were enriched by both, participants and non-participants of the case study (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014, p. 20).

“And, very calm, he will remain entrenched in his ignorance, because this poor country is not known even by its own children, not even its geographers.”

(Rivera, 1946, p. 298, my translation).\textsuperscript{120}

Even after reading a lot about the land issue in Colombia, I could not really understand what the land and the conflict meant for the Cabreras or their motivation for reactivating the family farming business. I had already managed to get close to the family, but now I needed to get closer to the land, i.e., go beyond all the secondary sources and the interviews despite the risks that this could entail.

I was forced to reflect on this while finishing the 2\textsuperscript{nd} year of my doctoral studies. During dialogues with some of the members of the Cabrera family who knew El Danubio, I often heard that I would understand them better if I were familiar with the land. Also, presenting my work in a different setting and involving different people became an uncomfortable exercise when trying to

\textsuperscript{120} José Eustasio Rivera is a prominent Colombian writer. His novel The Vertex (La Vorágine) is considered a classic in Latin American literature, through which he tells us about the exploitation of rubber in the Amazon jungle and the drama experienced by indigenous communities who were victims of mistreatment inflicted by cruel exploiters.
describe the ‘wonderful’ region – did this beautiful land really exist, abundant in resources, a land called Los Llanos del Yari? How true could it be that this land was wasted, economically speaking, to this day? And if this was correct after so much violence widely exposed in my work was the return of displaced families to this land even possible? I was worried because these questions meant that I needed to gather more information that was enough to support and provide a better understanding of and credibility to my research. At times, the questions seemed more like accusations: how could I be talking about the possibility of returning to one of the regions most affected by the Colombian armed conflict without being sure that the possibility of returning was real? I started feeling an urgent need to visit the region which was once the home and business of the Cabrera family, land that had been under the dominion of different illegal armed groups for more than 40 years. Certainly, my decision to visit Los Llanos del Yari was preceded by some discussions with my supervisors who were concerned about my visit, but after receiving advice and some warnings, I felt a strong urge to carry out my trip: “That’s nice. The Yari! Security has always been good there,” or “What are you doing there?” or “You are looking for trouble, and you might find it... you are going to need an armored truck and tinted windows,”121 were the typical comments I heard about my decision.

Once the decision was made, I initiated the necessary contacts to make my visit as fruitful as possible for my research. First, I made contact with Carolina Cabrera and told her that I planned to visit the region and the land, now belonging to her father and uncles. She agreed quickly after getting her father’s approval and agreed to accompany me on my visit to the land. With Ricardo’s authorization and traveling with Carolina, I also got Ricardo’s company. Ricardo’s presence was essential because he knew the land like the palm of his hand. He also knew the people who lived there; Ricardo is famous in the region. All this was significant in a place where the atmosphere has been rarefied by violence, and where fear is still in the air. With Ricardo’s help, I was also able to obtain the company of a recently demobilized FARC member, which gave me peace of mind when considering the possibility of encounters with outlawed groups. This person’s company, whom I call Freddy,122 a former guerrilla of the demobilized 62nd Front of FARC, was very convenient for my visit because he knew the region and the violence because of his 10 years’ experience with the guerrilla movement. He could show me places where I should or should not go such as areas where I could risk stepping into minefields. Appendix 2 includes photos taken during the snapshot visit (see p. 267). Now I present the snapshot of my visit, for which I use the style of a diary.

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121 Messages sent to my accounts in social networks and in reaction to my articles published in the Colombian newspaper *La Nación*.

122 Freddy is a pseudonym for his real alias which I have gave him to protect his real identity. Among the guerrillas, a combatant is known by an alias, and real names are often unknown. In other words, an alias is more important than the real name.
There are two paths to reach El Danubio from Neiva via San Vicente del Caguán. The first route passes through the city of Florencia and has a good road. The second route is via Balsillas, Huila. Due to a national indigenous civic strike, several roads are blocked, including the one passing Florencia, and Ricardo Cabrera is unable to get to the city of Neiva to pick me up, as was initially agreed. Thus, as the only alternative, I am forced to take the second route, i.e., passing through the small population of Balsillas and crossing the eastern mountain range through Guayabal in a 4x4 Toyota truck, which can conquer the rough trails. I am sharing the transport with Carolina, as well as with a school teacher, a university student, and several farmers, all of whom have been travelling on the same route for years. This road has never been considered an official route, and in fact it was used by the guerrillas usually to take kidnapped people to their domains – the zone of distention, i.e., the mountains and plains of the Yari.

At 2:30 am on March 20, 2019, I am at the transport terminal of the city of Neiva, and I can see that three transport companies cover the route to San Vicente del Caguán, my first destination. Astonished, I observe a large number of people who make this journey every day, and being there I understand the reason for the suggestion that I should be standing at the ticket office at such an early hour in the morning if I wanted to travel in the cab and not in the cargo area of the truck. Between the dust of the road and the uneven ride of the car due to a beaten off track road, I can already predict that the seven hours to San Vicente will be never ending.

At 11:30 am, I am onboard the truck, traveling in the cabin and I begin my trip to Los Llanos del Yari.

First part of the journey: From Neiva to Balsillas.

Route 30: 58.7 km. Section 3001. The route is in an awful condition, which is confirmed by Google Maps providing only the option ‘walking’ for it.

Second part of the journey: From Balsillas to San Vicente del Caguán.

Route 30: 143.18 km. Section 3002. This route is problematic and is not even registered in Google Maps; however, it can be found using the interactive map of the Colombian road information system. Unfortunately, the information is not authorized to be reproduced. What I can say is that Route 30 follows Guayabal, Santo Domingo, and after Las Perlas, it becomes Route 65.

Third part of the journey: From San Vicente del Caguán to La Macarena. 159 kilometers.

This route can be found using Google Maps which indicates that it can be traveled in 8 hours and 45 minutes. The Colombian road information system does not have information about this road. It is impossible to travel on this road in something other than a motorcycle, a 4x4 truck, a big truck, or a Chiva.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{123} La Chiva is a means of public transportation. It is a bus that has a very particular rustic design, adapted to resist the roughness of the roads found in rural Colombia. I would define la Chiva as a 4x4/off-road bus.
Chapter 6

Considering that the guerrillas built this primitive road, it is not surprising that Google Maps does not register its existence.

The landscape changes abruptly and turns green, and there is an abundance of vegetation. Rain accompanies us throughout the trip. On the way, we pass an army checkpoint.

The warning about the possibility of landslides on the road reminds us that the road will be rough.

The beauty of the forest reserves of the river basin Las Ceibas is the first beautiful landscape of the journey.

At 1:54 pm, the plains of Balsillas appear, and Carolina tells me that the land I am seeing belonged to her great-grandfather, Luis Felipe Cabrera. A second army checkpoint named ‘Balsillas Military Base - High Mountain Battalion’ stops us on the road. The soldiers ask us to get out of the vehicle, and they proceed to check it thoroughly. They also check our IDs and luggage, and we are carefully searched by the soldiers. After showing our IDs, we are taken to a military tent to answer some questions about the activities and reasons for entering the area. My name and identification are judiciously written down by a soldier in a notebook, and they also ask me to show them my identification card from Jönköping University.

Even when, for personal reasons, I usually feel calm while I am with military members, I must confess that in this place, there is tension in the air and the seriousness of the soldiers makes me feel nervous. The controls are hardly logical, as we are entering the region known as ‘El Pato,’ recognized as a place of FARC’s incubation (González Arias, 2011).

From this point on, the poorly paved road ends, and an unpaved road begins.

A few minutes later, we stop to have a small snack and rest before starting a very moving journey through the mountains to ‘Guayabal.’ We park next to a heavily used truck that transports cattle. Observing it, I imagine the roughness of the road that awaits us while its driver curses because the leg of one of the animals has crossed the floor of the truck and is stuck.

At 3:55 pm we arrive in the town of Guayabal,124 whose entrance has a welcome banner that invites you to the ‘bean festival.’ The locals say that this is one of the most important bean producing areas in the country with an annual production of more than 1,500 tons (Molano, 2016a, p. 83). We stop here for lunch, which is of course beans. There are some posters on the walls of the restaurant of the peasant movement which read: ‘We are all the peasant guard.’\footnote{125}

\footnote{124}{One hundred fifty people live in the town (...). There are four restaurants, three stores, two residences, a disco, and a chapel. There is no health post, it lacks an electrical connection to the national system, the public school is supported mainly by the community, a radiotelephone works with a car battery, and in fact, nobody uses the internet’ (Molano, 2016a, p. 83).}

\footnote{125}{‘Todos somos guardia campesina,’ Peasant Guard of the Peasant Reserve area of the Pato River Basin and the Balsillas Valley. The peasant guard is a social and political movement of the Colombian peasants that, aims to ensure the interests and}
The posters have, among others, the logo of the Municipal Association of Settlers of El Pato and Amcop and inform that the Norwegian Embassy is financing the peasant movement.

In the middle of the dusty street and the parked trucks, a group of children are having a passionate marble competition.

On leaving Guayabal, we find the first position of the ‘communal action board,’ jokingly called by some as the ‘criminal action board.’ These checkpoints were initially created by the guerrillas to collect money from cargo and cattle trucks that traveled on the roads in the region, an amount of COP 50,000 and 10,000 respectively per vehicle. This money was meant for the maintenance of the roads. The communal action boards continue to command this charge, and without it, it would be impossible to travel on these roads, forgotten and denied by the Colombian government.

At 4:59 pm, we arrive at the cemetery of the Andes, which is FARC’s cemetery but it is not hidden as some sources say (e.g., AFP, 2014). It is fully visible, as it is next to the road. It has a magnificent structure, a paved entrance surrounded by a fence and electric lighting, its elegance, and impeccable appearance contrast with the poverty of the hamlet near it.

At approximately 7:00 pm, we arrive in San Vicente del Caguán. Once in the city, we walk a few blocks, eat, and head towards the central square, which is very beautiful, where we meet Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera, who, in turn, introduces me to the ex-combatant who from that moment accompanies me during my stay in the Yari.

That night we walk a little through the town, and I can see the police post located near the main square, and also the army battalion, which is situated on a mountain that rises on one side of the town.

I meet and talk with some farmers and locals. People are friendly. However, conversations in principle usually begin slowly and with some caution. Although the atmosphere of the town is calm, some people warn me that with FARC’s departure very strange people have arrived in the city referring to paramilitaries,

autonomy of the peasantry, for the comprehensive implementation of the agrarian reform” (ZRC, 2018).

126 “One of the first and most significant peasant reserve areas, made up of 36 scattered settlements, an area of 111,000 hectares and a population of 6,000 inhabitants, was created by the Samper government ... with money from the World Bank” (Molano, 2016a, p. 91).


128 “A man... came to invite me to visit a very rare cemetery ... 20 minutes from Guayabal. Four hundred carefully pruned pine trees surround it. There are two mausoleums with 20 tombs, ... a little further down, 16 tombs on the ground without any cross. People say that the mortars that the army fires at night have not been successful in impacting it or have not wanted to, I think” (Molano, 2016a, p. 93).

129 See photo of the cemetery of the Andes and its surroundings in the photographic appendix.
demobilized gangs, and land invaders, among others. I assume that I will have to work harder to gain the trust of my interlocutors so that I can engage in more in-depth and more beneficial conversations for my research.

That night we stay at a local hotel located in the city center.

At 7:00 am, the first thing we do is visit the central market, which is approximately 200 meters from the hotel. The emotions are visible on Carolina Cabrera’s face as she has many memories about this place and her grandfather, the founder. For me, it is essential to visit this place because it allows me to triangulate the information that Carolina has given me in an earlier interview.130

From the marketplace we head to Milena Cabrera’s house where we meet the only woman of the second generation of the Cabrera family who decided to stay in the region, talk to her, and interview her daughter, Edna Victoria Pastrana Cabrera, who has lived in the region all her life.

At 9:22 am, we start on our way to the farm that is the center of my interest, the properties of the Cabrera family, which only three years ago were under the control of FARC’s Eastern Front.

The magnificent Caguán river frames the exit to the town. Carolina enthusiastically shows me the pedestrian suspension bridge with her index finger that runs parallel to the side of the vehicular bridge and tells me that it existed when she was a child. Likewise, Ricardo tells me that we are only a few blocks from where they lived, and in silence I conclude that this is the point of the river where Ricardo was when the founder, his father, was killed, as he had told me in the interviews. We stop to refuel the car, and I take the opportunity to buy drinking water, four bags of 6 liters each.

At approximately 11 am, we arrive at Los Pozos, a small town that has developed around the oil fields described earlier in this thesis. The influence of the oil industry is evident considering that this is the reason why the road between San Vicente and Los Pozos is in an acceptable condition. “Located on the Macarena road, San Vicente del Caguán, at kilometer 106 (approximate) and has the geodetic coordinates Latitude 02° 07’ 23” N, Longitude 74° 33’ 16” W” (GD, 2019).

After eating a refreshing snack in Los Pozos, we continue on our journey along a trail worsened by constant rains.

Shortly, we arrive in the vicinity of the village of San Francisco de la Sombra, more simply known as La Sombra. “Located on the road that connects La Macarena with San Vicente del Caguán at kilometer 85 (approximate), with geodetic coordinates Latitude 02° 03’ 45” N, Longitude 74° 22’ 08” W” (GD, 2019).

At 12:19 pm at the point on the route better known as ‘La Ye,’ close to Playa Rica, I can see on a sign on the road: ‘The Red House,’ emblematic of a FARC property that has a swimming pool, and two buildings, one of them with two floors. The house belonged to ‘Mono Jojoy,’ though, it also served as the home of one of the founders and commanders of FARC, Manuel Marulanda Vélez, also

called Tirofijo. As per stories, this house was the most important meeting place of FARC leaders, and according to Navarrete and Calle (2015), guerrillas used the site for their livestock.

I tell my travel companion and guide, the demobilized former FARC member, that if possible, I would like to take some photos of the abandoned place. Freddy approves my request, but asks me to wait for him while he makes sure that the property is safe, referring to checking that there are no people and that no landmines have been placed there. Freddy gets out of the car, explores a little and beckons me, indicating that it is safe.

With this caution, I get an opportunity to visit and film the ‘Red House,’ a place that is abandoned after the peace agreement. Its walls are standing, impacted by some bullets, and you can see the holes that the ‘guaca’ seekers have opened everywhere; barrels that used to be full of money from extortions, kidnappings, and drug-trafficking, among other illegal activities that FARC buried and hid in places considered strategic such as under the house floor. You can also see the rubble of a vast and deep pool in which Freddy tells me the guerrillas had a good time, but which is out of use now, destroyed, according to him, first by the bombings of the Colombian armed forces and then by the Guaqueros.

A short distance away, we see the ruins of another of the farms occupied by FARC, ‘El Taller’ at 1:07 pm. Shortly after that, we arrive at the hamlet known as ‘El Morrocoy,’ “by the route that connects La Macarena with San Vicente del Caguán, it has approximate flat coordinates N 718053, E 1008364” (GD, 2019). Now we are in a hurry because we are tired after the long journey. Days later, I return here with one of the farmworkers on his motorcycle, since we need to buy water and some food.

In this region it is better not to ask anything related to the guerrillas and this is much less advisable in this place, where it is known that they concentrated large numbers of cattle. It is clear that the topic bothers the locals, and they have their guard up when it comes to talking about them, since a stranger interested in these issues may well be a paramilitary.

‘Sede El Recreo: 25 km,’ says the sign on the side of the road, where it is possible to visit the farm with the same name and appreciate the abandoned house of the late drug trafficker Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha – el Mexicano. For me it is

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131 Huaca/guaca/waca: Hidden or buried treasure (RAE, 2020). This was the name given to the places where the indigenous people buried their dead surrounded by valuables. However, this is also the name of barrels full of money that illegal groups buried in hidden places.

132 Those people looking for guacas.

133 A small village (MWD, 2020b). “A village is a small settlement usually found in a rural setting. It is generally larger than a "hamlet" but smaller than a "town." A hamlet has less than 500 inhabitants (NG, 2020).
a representation of the horrible passage of drug-trafficking and the dark characters representing through this region, a silent monument now flooded by vegetation:

“In the same farm founded by Don Oliverio, El Recreo, Rodríguez Gacha, the Mexican, had installed one of the laboratories of the cocaine production complex - 19 laboratories and nine airstrips - that would be known as Tranquilandia, belonging to the Medellín cartel, formed in company with the brothers Ochoa and Pablo Escobar,” as reported by journalist Molano (2016b) in the Colombian newspaper El Espectador.

We continue on our path for a little more than an hour and sporadically it is possible to appreciate pasture plantations. However, surprisingly Ricardo Cabrera diverts from the route and we head down a new path, barely noticeable but to those who know it and utterly invisible to an outsider.

At 2:14 pm we arrive at a rudimentary wooden bridge that barely fits the truck, I could say that it is tailored to our vehicle which allows us to pass over the creek known as Agua Azul. On the other side, a spectacular Yuca plantation welcomes us to this beautiful land; from now on, we are in the land of El Danubio.

At 2:25 pm, we arrive at the house that will serve as our lodging during my short trip and which is located on a 3,400-hectare site. The farmworkers receive us, and one by one I meet each member of the family composed of the farm steward (Alejandro) and his wife (Graciela), their eldest daughter (Ana María) and her husband (Didier) with their small 4-year-old daughter (Daynara), two other children of approximately 15 and 11 years (Tocayo), also a grandson of 18 years (Breiner) and a 4-year-old granddaughter (Cristina). The last two members live in a nearby indigenous town. Except for the two little ones, all the others are considered an active part of the farm.

Alejandro arrived at the farm accompanied by his family more than a year ago, when he was hired. The farm steward’s job consists of settling on the property and keeping a small number of animals and cattle that produce for daily life and self-consumption. The house, the workers, the animals, and the activity are in themselves an act of sovereignty.

In days, I gain the trust of the family and interview them. They tell me that when the family first arrived here, the house did not exist, they had to build it, cut the necessary trees, and arrange everything to make it their home. The one floor house is a wooden structure elevated by almost a meter, thus avoiding the humidity of the soil and the water due to torrential rains. Below the house, domestic animals, ducks, chickens, pigs, and dogs, find shelter.

On entering the house is the dining room and kitchen. A 22-caliber carbine, which the workers tell me is only for hunting, a radio, and a flashlight hang from the wall. For cooking, it has a wood stove, and its furniture has been built with

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134 It is one of the natural limits of the Cabrera land, mentioned on page 2 of the property deed as: “To the west, the creek continues upstream to the mouth of the Agua Azul creek, bordering the Vallejo property.”

135 Yuca root is also known as cassava. It is an essential food in Colombian cuisine.

136 El mayordomo or farm steward is a peasant who lives on the farm. The farm steward’s family lives and works on the farm as well.

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the same wood used for the house. Three rooms plus a room for tools make up the house along with a long corridor where there are two hammocks. The house is entirely open, that is to say, that when you are in the kitchen, in the dining room or in the corridor, there are no walls that separate you from the outside, you can feel the wind, see the whole landscape, and it is also only a few steps from the downpour. Wooden walls close only the bedrooms entirely.

It has a bathroom outside the house with a shower, which works thanks to a gravity water system, and a septic tank for waste and drainage, because there is no aqueduct. The water tanks are located about 300 meters on high ground, which are filled permanently with rain water and also with a motor pump that draws water from the river. The system works well; however, one must get used to the murky water of the river and, also to the fact that while taking a bath, the water comes with more than one insect. One night it rained so hard that in the morning, the water is so full of insects that I could not finish my shower.

They have an open laundry space in which, except for only the two 4-year-old girls, everyone washes their clothes after each workday, and thus a friendly and informal meeting takes place there, daily, at 5 pm.

In these places, there is no public electric power service. The farm has a power-battery that works with a pair of solar panels that is enough to run a television, a motor pump, illuminating strategic parts of the house, and providing energy to the fence that divides the pastures. Note that so far, we have not talked about electric stoves, water heaters, or washing machines simply because there are none. Solar energy is vital and is prioritized for the most essential uses only.

Transmission and reception of information in Los Llanos del Yari is impossible since there is no signal for cell phones, there is no internet, and due to the armed conflict radio phones are still banned by the army. Only through radio and television can the family know what is happening in the country and the world. In the radio transmitter, the only station that works is Linda stereo, which transmits from the municipality of San Juan del Doncello. For the television service, they pay for hours and receive the signal from a small satellite dish in the backyard of the house. I would say that one could die here and no one would find out. At this moment, I understand how Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera was trapped and held in the area without the possibility of communicating with his family for eight years.

The farm has an old tractor and the absence of roads has made motorcycles an invaluable means of transport since they can be used both for work and for visiting nearby hamlets in search of food and other things. There are also some horses and mules.

At 3:20 pm, we move to the grounds of the ‘Manila’ farm, 15 minutes by truck, where Ricardo Cabrera shows me a house under construction. He plans to live in this house with his wife and anyone who wants to accompany him in an attempt to return. Ricardo explains that the idea is to build houses on each farm to exercise

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137 Better known as El Doncello, it is a small town in the department of Caquetá that, in 2012, had 20,955 inhabitants (GC, 2020).
dominion over all the property.¹³⁸ ‘The construction of the house is well advanced, I would say that it is 70% finished, the cattle corral¹³⁹ is almost ready, and Ricardo believes that two months later he would be able to move to the house with Dioselina.

At the moment, there are some workers in the cattle corral. I am surprised to see them drawing water from one of the holes opened by them in the ground. The workers explain to me that one of the problems of this land, ironically speaking, is that due to water on the ground coming from rainfall when they try to open holes they fill up immediately due to the natural drainage of water. They laugh at my surprise and at the same time they fill a couple of bottles of water, a little cloudy for my taste. They offer me a little, I don’t accept, so all of them drink with satisfaction, and again they laugh at me. They are pleased to see me surprised and in my understanding that with their demonstration they have shown me the richness of this land.

In a torrential downpour, which we often have in the plains during my visit, we return to the house where we are staying. We gather in the laundry area to wait for the heavy rain to subside, and while the conversation flows, we enjoy some delicious camarones or as they call it uva caqueteña, or local grapes. The topics are varied, they tell me about their motorcycles as a working instrument, about the exotic fruit we are eating, and they also ask me about my camera; I allow them to use it and film a little. I am gaining the confidence of the group.

5:00 pm. The lady of the house, ‘Graciela’ or ‘Chela,’ is cooking dinner. ‘Didier,’ a farmworker, invites me to accompany him to the nearest yuca plantation of cassava trees to collect a few for dinner. We get on his motorcycle, the road is quite slippery from the recent rain, and additionally Didier’s extra weight does not help much. Didier is a kind, young character, and I would say that he is not more than 30-years-old. His swollen limbs accentuate his fatness, he walks with difficulty and, according to his relatives, often feels pain in his body. However, he has not yet considered visiting a doctor.

Didier is an expert in driving the motorcycle. However, three times I get very close to kissing the ground, fortunately the speed is slow and I manage to land standing on the road.

We arrive at the yuca. It is nice to be in the middle of a plantation extracting food from the ground. What a feeling! In the distance, I can hear many voices and curious I ask Didier why so many children can be heard in that direction, and he answers, “Those are not children, they are royal parrots ... those who speak.”

We put our precious cargo, the delicious yuca in a large bag. With the bag in one hand and clinging tightly to the motorcycle with the other, we start back.

The yuca is eagerly awaited. In only 30 minutes the food is ready! I will describe it as a regional banquet: chicken, avocado, bananas, cassava, and

¹³⁸ A rancher tends to have houses with workers distributed throughout the property. This facilitates the control and supervision of both land and cattle. It is a logical and necessary precautionary measure when you have large tracts of land in developing countries.

¹³⁹ An enclosure with an open framework for keeping animals (MWD, 2020a).
oranges, all of which come from the farm. Rice and potatoes come from other farms. In addition, they serve us lentil soup. In the countryside, hard physical work requires an abundant diet.

After 7:00 pm, if possible no light comes on for conserving maximum battery power. Everyone has their own flashlights, a practical and mandatory accessory, which is greatly missed when you do not have one, for example, to go to the bathroom at night. At 9 o’clock at night, everyone is asleep, the darkness is total, and only the sounds of animals can be heard; of those in the distance and those under the house. Sometimes it seems that a pig or a duck is sleeping under my bed.

Here in the countryside, the activity in the house starts early. The workers are up at 4 am and the day begins with a good coffee.

Uncertainty during the times of violence, and the lack of infrastructure in the area taught the farmers that they should at least produce for self-consumption.

Milking is a priority because the milk obtained is sold daily. Alejo, the farm steward, is in charge of this daily task and today he is being helped by ‘Brainer,’ and by an 11-year-old boy, better known as ‘Tocayo.’ The corral is outdoors and is a complete quagmire. Milking is manual, there is no technology, and while Alejo is milking, he explains that cows provide an average of 4 liters per day. During the conversation, they offer me some of the frothy fresh milk, an invitation that I accept and enjoy.

I allow Freddy, my guide, to film a bit with my video camera. I take advantage of his comfort to ask him some things about his life as a guerrilla. He tells me a little about how he learned about explosive landmines, he shows me his left hand and the scars that his clumsiness in handling the explosives and more precisely the trigger cord during one of the classes have left behind.

The conversation with Freddy and Alejo flows, and we talk a little about the armed conflict, the kidnappings, and the ‘before and now’ of the region. According to them, now it is possible to invest in the region as people only need to have the approval of the ‘communal action board.’ According to Freddy, there are no more combats in the region, “maybe one per year.” with the guerrilla dissidents.

Alejo also tells me about the displaced people who have returned: “For instance, those on farm Japón, displaced during the time of paramilitaries, have now returned.” This case is interesting for me because Alejo tells me that the owner’s children returned and the father divided the farm of approximately 1,200 hectares and gave each one a share. As for the Cabreras, Alejo tells me that they are well known in the plains and, in his opinion, they would not have any problems returning.

The task of milking is over. Didier arrives on his motorcycle after working a few hours on the construction of Ricardo’s new house. This indicates that it is time for breakfast, and we head towards the house.

After breakfast, milk that cannot be sold must be converted into cheese, since there are no refrigerators to keep it. Alejo and his daughter Ana Maria do this
manually. This cheese is sold in ‘El Morrocoy,’ where it is taken by motorcycle by one of the workers.

10:10 am. We go inside the plains in the truck. Ricardo explains that a daily task in starting a farm like this one is getting wood to build the houses, the corrals, the furniture, and the fences for the pastures. That is why we are heading to the place from where the workers get the wood.

During the journey, Ricardo tells me about the land, how the government has forgotten them and for that reason, the 300,000 hectares of Los Llanos del Yarí, in his opinion, have been abandoned. According to Ricardo, people do not go to Yarí basically out of fear of violence, and the big problem with peace agreements is that the government does not comply with what was agreed.

Ricardo tells me that for many years, the land was abandoned but currently he has 670 cattle. People returned to invest in the region three years earlier, an investment that did not get any help from the government: ‘‘Somehow we advanced, organizing and struggling again, to see if suddenly someone will come and invest to recover these plains that once were very rich in cattle,’’ Ricardo says. For Ricardo, not getting the government’s help is the most significant difficulty.

During the journey, Ricardo explains to me the livestock business and, for example, tells me that for every 1,000 cows 700 calves are obtained annually of which 30% do not survive due to diseases or they are killed by tigers\textsuperscript{140} or for other reasons. It is a business that he says requires little investment compared to the profit.

While we are talking about the prices of land and other aspects, Ricardo loses the way.

With the help of the workers who are accompanying us in the truck, Ricardo manages to correct his course till we can see a point in the plains, right at the entrance to a forest, where stacked wood can be seen.

We stop, and while they load the truck with the wood, I decide to explore this area of the jungle of Los Llanos del Yarí. Of course, it is essential to pay attention to warnings such as leave the jungle before nightfall because that’s when the wild cat hunts, or be careful with the wild boars that come in packs and can be very aggressive.

Carolina accompanies me and Tocayo acts as a guide, as it would be easy to get lost; two dogs, Nato and Tarzan, also accompany us. The weather is very humid; the copious vegetation and the tall trees make it difficult for the light to enter, there are multiple sounds of the jungle accentuated by birds and monkeys. During the exploration and in the middle of the forest we find the remains of a tree from which the workers have extracted the wood (10:38 am), and I cannot

\textsuperscript{140} In Colombia, there are no tigers, but there are six species of felidae or wildcats. Three of these species of wildcats can be seen in the plains: puma - also called the mountain lion and red tiger; oncilla - also called wooly tigrillo and jaguar; and ocelote (Payán Garrido & Soto Vargas, 2012). Colombian peasants tend to refer to these wildcats as tigers.
help but comment that this is the trail of a human being. Carolina immediately
tells me that this is the only way to build in these places.

Carolina tells me while we walk, “Do you think that when I came here I did
this?” She is referring to walking in the jungle, and to my surprise, she adds, “I
came along only because you are here,” a comment that catches my attention and
that shows how much people respect the jungle.

I ask my young guide to lead us to the nearest water source which we arrive at
after walking for a few minutes. It is a small creek with very cloudy water,
adorned by a fallen log that crosses it from side to side and which, after discussing
its fragile appearance, we decide not to use as a bridge. This is enough exploration,
and after inspecting a rubber tree, we decide to return where we left the others
carrying the wood.

In the truck and on the way to the new construction on Manila’s farm, where
we will unload the wood, a danta crosses our path, running through the plain
trying to reach the nearest jungle point. Danta is the Amazon tapir, and my
colleagues explain to me that for them, it is an essential source of meat, which
they like to hunt.

On the way, Ricardo tells me many stories about the land, Don Oliverio Lara
and his murder, the arrival of his Dad to the Yarí and his death, about his brothers,
and life as a peasant. We also criticize the lack of road infrastructure, a source of
repeated complaints.

We repeat the extraction and transportation of the wood several times. The
rain accompanies us permanently (4:37 pm). However, an increase in its intensity
forces Ricardo to end the workday, as it is necessary to return as soon as possible
because the terrain will be difficult to navigate in the downpour.

We return to the house and immediately the usual meeting around the laundry
place begins. Dinner is as usual, and at night the inhabitants of the house ask me
to teach them some English, which for them turns out to be something very exotic.
There are many laughs during the session, and now I am better known as the
‘professor.’ This is how we end the day.

Thunder and lightning announce that during the night a strong storm will join
us.

The next morning, I receive a quick explanation of what a wood stove is and
how it works (6:47 am). The stove was built by hand and is made of mud,
concrete, and four metallic burners. On the left side it has a compartment for
storing some potatoes and large onions and a few pots. It has been affected by use,
is full of food and ready to start cooking. On the right side is a table with all the
essential utensils, cutlery, dishes, and the kitchen sink. The kitchen area is wide,
and we share it with a small pig, a few chicks, and a couple of little ducks that
walk close to our feet. The lady of the house, an expert on the subject and in
charge of the kitchen and the family’s food, asks the child of the house to bring a
bunch of wood and proceeds to explain how to light the firewood using plastic
bags. Her expertise was gained when she was very young; now she would not be

141 Carolina visited the land in November 2016.
more than 30-years-old. In addition to this skill, her exposure to this daily task has also meant painful arthritis that is reflected in the permanent pain she feels in her hands.

Then we begin the preparation for delicious arepas stuffed with the cheese obtained from milking. “Real cheese,” says Carolina, and while we cook, I interview Chela whom I ask to define who a peasant is.

I excuse myself from Chela, and I quickly go to the corral to look for Alejo, whom I interview while he is milking, and he also gives me his definition of a peasant, and also differentiates a peasant from a rural worker. And somewhat exciting for me and my writing is that for Alejo, Don Ricardo is a peasant. This is very important for me since Alejo is a farmer who tells me who, in his opinion, can be considered a farmer.

We proceed for breakfast, and while we eat, we laugh watching one of the girls who, in an arduous attempt to feed the little pig, almost drowns it in a bowl of milk.

After breakfast, Ana María is in charge of preparing the cheese today. She sits with all the tools in the middle of the kitchen. A dog, a chicken, and the little pig are very attentive to any pieces of cheese that fall to the ground. During the procedure, she explains what she is doing.

After most of the morning is spent like this, I decide to explore another jungle area of Los Llanos del Yari (11:04 am). Carolina, Freddy, the three children, and the dogs join me on my walk. During our small expedition, I observe a place that looks similar to the one we visited the previous day; lots of vegetation and small streams.

11:45 am. With my guide, Freddy, we get ahead of the group. He, armed with a machete, is making his way and as we walk, I interview him. Freddy, begins his story by telling me, “I was a guerrilla, now I am a civilian, a guerrilla from FARC Front 62.” Ten years in the subversive movement that ended with the signing of the peace agreement. The conversation is fascinating. He tells me about his participation in a war he did not understand, about the government’s inability to keep its promises, and hurries to add that he has no idea of politics, “I don’t like politics, because politics is for stealing, to extort.” I ask his opinion about families that, like the Cabreras, had to leave their land out of fear, and he answers: “Yes, the guerrillas also screwed up, kidnapping and all that, the guerrillas made a mistake, we made that mistake.” We talk about the future, about the possibilities that he now has as a demobilized subversive, taking into account that he has received the option of working with four other demobilized persons on a 300-hectare property from the government which was one of those given back by the guerrillas to the government. “We are going to plant some crops; oranges, tangerines,” he says. In his opinion, people’s fear about returning is unjustified because what is said about the insecurity in the area, “is pure lies; if you come to work, you can do it normally.”

Never before have I spoken to a guerrilla, and for that reason, taking advantage of the mutual trust and camaraderie that we have achieved, I ask him all the questions that come to mind and we also have time to discuss amicably. I am so
curious because I think, like Freddy, I have never understood the Colombian conflict, but I will leave this reflection and many others aside.

Freddy considers himself a peasant and also gives me the definition of what that means to him. He is sure that the peace process will continue, "I don’t want more war ... for me, that conflict is already dead ... I want my quiet life to continue on these plains ... that’s what I want ... if we survived the war we have to continue moving forward as we are doing today, I do not ask my God for anything else."

In the middle of the jungle, we stop before the remains of another tree cut down to extract wood. For some reason, the dogs become very restless and bark fiercely towards a point in the vegetation before which we regroup and wait cautiously. After some minutes, the dogs calm down, we resume the march, and shortly after that, we reach another river.

We walk for over an hour and arrive back at the house where Ricardo is waiting for us with the truck ready to go back to the savannah. During the journey, the extensive savannah of intense green color looks like a sea, and the long grass the only evidence of the absence of cattle. We stop to admire three buffaloes bathing in a lake (3:47 pm). According to stories, the guerrillas came to have a large number of these animals, but due to their aggressiveness they became an obstacle in patrolling for the army and a risk for the locals and so it was decided not to encourage their breeding.

We visit some of the boundaries of El Danubio with the cattle ranches, La Zorra and La Argentina. We stop several times to observe the vastness of the plains. From an elevated point, Freddy tells me where the boundaries of the hato are going and also indicates the place where they are going to fish and from which we are separated by about 30 minutes.

On our way to the cattle ranch La Argentina, Ricardo passes along the side of a farm slowly. He looks at the house, and with a frown he explains that there are land invaders there. I am surprised. Till now, I had heard a lot about these people who unscrupulously get into others’ properties and settle down with the fundamental objective of stealing the land. I would have expected to see limited construction showing a lack of resources of these people; however, the reality is different. These people choose an area of the farm and quickly build a large house, with corral and everything necessary. They arrive with machinery and all the tools required and have a couple of hectares plowed and, maybe, planted. These people do not come alone and are financially sponsored by someone who wants to take over the land and is taking advantage of the fact that the guerrillas have already retired from the region, and that the government has so far been unable to make its presence felt. We move away quickly, because the illegals have noticed our presence and, naturally, they can be aggressive.

We arrive at La Argentina, where we stay for a while. The farm steward’s wife invites us for a coffee. I wander around a little and take a few pictures, among others of a domesticated cafuche and also of a borugo that they have recently
caught (which is a rodent the size of a cat, appreciated for its meat), and a deer that remains tied.

At approximately 5:30 pm, and before the sun goes down, we begin our journey back to our farm. During the return, we meet a pair of deer running across the plain.

During early morning, at about 2:00 am, dogs barking wake us up abruptly. In the middle of the darkness, we leave the room and outside we find the farm steward and Didier. The dogs are barking in the direction of the stretch of jungle that passes about 200 meters through the farm, but it is not possible to see what the dogs are barking at because the night is very dark. The workers explain that in the best of cases, it could be an army patrol crossing the area, and in the worst case, it can be an outlaw group. We do not light the lanterns; it is not a good idea to bother whoever is there. Once the event is over, we go back to sleep.

A new day. While the lack of internet and cell phones is relaxing and pleasant to some extent, the lack of listening to my family is beginning to take effect. According to the farmers, due to the conflict the use of private radio telephones is prohibited. There is no internet or cell phone signal – nothing to do about it.

At 10:19 am, we are again rolling to visit other farms. The landscape is beautiful! And since it did not rain last night the path is clear and calm, without any frightening moments.

10:45 am, a motorcycle comes from the opposite direction and Ricardo stops to greet the driver, Melesio, who lives on ‘Canada’ farm which is our destination. He tells us that we are welcome there and that his wife, Patricia, is waiting for us. Melesio is going to the nearest town to buy supplies. We say bye and continue on our trip.

11:00 am. We arrive in the vicinity of Canada farm. We are stopped by an electric fence, which we open very carefully. At the entrance, a couple of hectares have been recently plowed and sown with pastures where a group of employees is working.

The farmhouse on Canada is almost a photocopy of ours, made of all wood. However, it is larger and is surrounded by fruit trees of anon, oranges, marañon, and guama. We give ourselves a banquet.

Immobilized due to lack of spare parts, a car can be seen next to the entrance to the house. I can also see a television antenna, the only window to modernity in these places. At the rear of the house, a plastic tank with a capacity of 5,000 liters is installed to collect rainwater.

“It has rained very much,” says Patricia, the lady of the house, who welcomes us.

We sit around the dining room table, which is handmade. The furniture made of wood from the region is mixed with a few red plastic chairs.

While talking to us, Patricia enters the kitchen to make us coffee. The wood stove is in operation with cooking going on for lunch. The kitchen is separated from the dining room, but we can communicate with her through a window. However, in essence, it is the same as that in our house and only differs because of the two plastic barrels of 55 gallons each, filled with clean water that is needed
to wash the kitchen utensils and for cooking because of the absence of pipes and
which is also needed to clear the smoke that floods the kitchen because the stove
does not have a smoke extractor or something similar.

Having a coffee, Patricia tells me about her arrival in the region because she
was born in the city, more precisely in Puerto Rico, Cundinamarca and Melesio
is from Bogotá. They have a 22-year-old son who is no longer on the farm since
he now lives in the village. “He is already independent, even more because he
decided to get a partner,” she says smiling.

They came here because their parents took them to the region, and now,
together, they have been here for 13 years in the area and for 11 on this farm.
“When we arrived, we had to live under a rubber tree, we set up a small campsite,
and often I saw how the storm took everything, the plastic that covered us, the
tent, everything. Once the plastic was entangled in some trees and broken.
Imagine, us all wet, our clothes, the blankets, everything. I did not know whether
to cry or what to do. I asked Melesio, ‘Is it that I killed a priest or what?’ And
Melesio asked me, ‘What do we do?’ And I said, ‘We are going to go forward with
God’s help’ … and you can see us now… here we are. Well, it’s not that we’re
super fine, but if you knew all that we had to go through. We had to go through a
lot of sadness. We had a year when Melesio went fishing and we had to exchange
the fish for gasoline, food, and everything we needed.”

She remembers the conflict. “One lives between a rock and a hard place if you
live between the guerrillas and the government. How are you going to live? You
do not live well. At that time, you do not know what to do. You cannot go for any
side because if you pick a side, they can kill you.” Living there, they have also
grown coca and have also been disappointed with the government’s crop
substitution program.

I continue with the interview, and Patricia gives me her definition of a
‘peasant.’

Then I ask her, what her advice to an investor would be if he asked her about
the possibility of investing in Los Llanos del Yari? She answers, “People who
have money to invest are not coming to these places as they are afraid. They say
that it is because of the conflict and all that stuff. But they are wrong. Everything
has changed here, and it would be great if people who have the possibilities to
invest came to employ people, to improve the future. It would be good.”

We say bye. We leave Canada farm behind while we observe a teenager who
is sowing corn (12:38 pm).

1:00 pm. Ricardo stops the truck on the plains. He points into the distance
showing me a destroyed airstrip. Private airstrips became a military target and
were destroyed because they were used by guerrillas and drug traffickers for their
operations. However, the runways also represented a means of transportation for
the farmers in the region, and the entry of food, spare parts, and machinery, among
other things.

We continue on our way. Suddenly, Ricardo points to an area full of trees and
tells me, “There was the house on the farm, we were living there.” However, there
is nothing, just trees and grass, and I immediately remember Dioselina when she talked to me about that place.

1:12 pm. During the journey, Ricardo tells me when we move from one property to another, “From that fence there is Canada, and there is la Zorra.” At another point on the road, Argentina is on the left and La Zorra on the right, and shortly after that the limit between Argentina and Manila farms.

We arrive at the farm just at the moment when Freddy and Breiner return to collect the cattle that will be milked the next morning. Both workers invite me for a horse ride and to help them, which I do with a few laughs due to my poor abilities. About 50 meters away, the farm steward Alejo, smiles.

It is time to bring the yucca for food, but this time Didier invites me to accompany him on the tractor. The old tractor works well, and this time we are back in a short time.

8:30 pm. After dinner, Didier grabs the carbine that hangs on the wall near the dining room and invites me to a small expedition with the aim of hunting. Another day comes to an end.

4:30 am. A new morning and I wake up because Ricardo is in the truck with the radio on, listening to the news. Being without any means of communication, not having my laptop, my cell phone, WhatsApp or Facebook messages, makes me lose track of dates.

In any case, it is a new day, and at 5 am, in the middle of the darkness, we are ready to continue with the daily journey. Ricardo sympathizes with my need for communication with my family and decides that we will go to La Macarena. Farmworkers take the opportunity to request provisions or, as they call it, la remesa.

In this land everything is much more expensive, there are no price regulations or anything similar. What comes here, whether medicines, food, or clothing is greatly affected by the distance and lack of roads, and the prices reflect that. The resigned farmers only know that they must pay for what they need. Farmers have three alternatives for stocking up: buying in small quantities in the nearest village where the prices are even higher, and the variety is less, or move to one of the two cities San Vicente or La Macarena because both have runways of the army and the range of products reflects this. La Macarena, also known as ‘El Refugio,’ according to its website GD (2019) has 4,056 inhabitants at the head of the municipality and 22,984 in the rural area and its coordinates are Latitude 02 ° 11’01 “ N, Longitude 73 ° 47’05 “ W.

The road to La Macarena is in terrible condition due to recent rains.

Along the way, we pass a toll of the ‘communal action board.’ In some of these tolls, my attention is drawn to the warning to not drive at night.

Besides, we a military post without soldiers, very different from the one at the entrance to the town, which denotes the importance of La Macarena. I am not sure, but considering the distance from the town, this military post could be ‘El Borugo,’ a site that FARC used as a concentration camp for their hostages.

At 7:55 am, we arrive in the town and we move directly to the central square. We park the truck, walk one block, and we reach the shore of Guayabero River
where we appreciate the departure of an army speedboat which I think belongs to the Omega task force. I film, and a couple of soldiers kindly greet us, and they suggest that if I want to see the boat again, I must wait about 30 minutes for its return.

We return to La Plaza de la Macarena, and I allow Freddy to take care of the camera and film everything we see. It is colorful, beautiful, and clean. In the center of the park, we find solar panels and the figures of the representative animals of the region. There is also the village church and the well-known ‘Virgen de la Macarena.’

The atmosphere in the town is calm.

There is also the office that manages access to public internet. It is possible to access public internet at a strategic point in the park. That way, I manage to communicate with my family.

We have breakfast, and then we proceed to buy the supplies in a place that has a good variety of primary products. Then we drive around in the truck through the town looking for a veterinary warehouse to buy some medicines.

We return to the farm and arrive at 1:30 pm.

In the house, a typical *llanero* is visiting. How to differentiate a typical *llanero* from a horse rider in general terms? They do not wear shoes and ride the animal without using a saddle. The man, whom I have seen before in Morrocoy and who lives on one of the nearby farms, stays for coffee, says bye, walks a little away from the house, gets on his horse, and leaves. Only a few minutes later Tocayo, the 11-year-old boy, is about to complete the task of going to collect the cattle, I tell him that I am going to film it and the smiling kid nods with satisfaction, because it is what he wanted. Barefooted he leaves for a few minutes, and returns riding a mule without a saddle. He asks me the time and starts his task galloping at full speed. Approximately after 30 minutes Tocayo comes back, having fulfilled his duty.

3:00 pm. Freddy and me head on his motorcycle to cross the plains. Days before, during my tour of the plains, I had seen abandoned houses and touched by curiosity, I had asked to be taken to an abandoned farm, one of many in that region.

We arrive at one of these abandoned properties; I can say nothing more than the fact that even after the ravages of loneliness and time it is still beautiful. It is a small house located on the top of a hill; it has three rooms and an area that perhaps was the living room. It is not possible to differentiate the spaces in which the bathroom and kitchen were. Now the house is occupied by a few hives and wasps that restlessly receive us, and although the construction is elevated the grass has managed to penetrate the wooden floor.

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*142 Llaneros* are people who were born and live in the plains of South America. However, in the context of the countryside, a good *llanero* is a good cowboy, which means that he/she is good at riding horses.
Chapter 6

Figure 23 A small abandoned farm in Los Llanos del Yari

Colombia, March 26, 2019.

I listen carefully to Freddy telling me what could have happened on this farm that was once the home and business of a family and that, for some reason - whether it was because of the fighting between the army and the guerrillas, or as victims of paramilitaries, were maybe extorted, kidnapped or killed or at best simply expelled. They are no longer here. I cannot avoid feeling sad.

He also tells me how the guerrillas made use of these abandoned properties disguised as civilians to camouflage and deceive air force aircraft. I talk to Freddy for a while about the clashes, and he tells me how a bomb thrown from a plane broke one of his legs and hurt his arm, showing me the scars on his limbs. We throw a few jokes about it and laugh.

We explore a little and move to the corral. The tall grass that invades it shows that it has not been used for a long time. The corral is so well built that time has not damaged it and it can be used again easily.

We return to the house. Once there, I feel encouraged to walk a little along the nearest jungle section, and I invite Tocayo to come along. During the journey, I find a bullet shell. Judging by the size, it seems to be a .50 caliber that could have been fired from a military helicopter. Bullet casings can be easily found in the region and are traces of the armed conflict, so I decide to keep it as a souvenir. We return to the house.

During sunset, we relax. I have fun learning how the guerrillas prepare one of their staple foods; the popular cancharina, low-cost food that Freddy says is very nutritious. After a fun hour, the food is ready for everyone. After eating we

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143 Known as ‘la cancharina fariana,’ thus indicating that it is a flagship food in the life of a FARC guerrilla. Cancharina are fried tortillas made with wheat flour and sugar.

“A corn arepa and raw sugar cane – panela” (Molano, 2016a, p. 56).
meet for a while in the dark to talk a little about everything, and there is time even for one last class of English because we are leaving the next day.

Very early in the morning, we say bye, and I thank all the workers for their kindness. I promise Freddy some shirts that I will send as a sign of gratitude, and I wish him the best of luck. After a coffee and strong hugs at 4:00 am we leave towards La Cristalina. “It is located on the right bank of Losada River, approximately 63 km from the urban area; with approximate flat coordinates N 732348, E 976897; It is part of the Inspection of San Juan de Losada” (GD, 2019).

The darkness on the road is total, and I am surprised by Ricardo’s ability to drive on this road that is almost invisible. During the journey, I have a constant conversation with Ricardo, and he shares some of the difficulties he faced during the conflict and stories about other people.

We quickly get to the main road which provides slightly less extreme conditions. A banner that gives information about a Colombian government project financed by USAID\textsuperscript{144} announces that a town is nearby.

6:35 am. At La Cristalina we stop for breakfast in the town’s cafeteria. I decide not to film to avoid disturbing the people there. According to GD (2019), as of 2011, La Cristalina had 650 inhabitants. The town has wide streets, but they are not paved. The quagmire reflects frequent rains.

7:00 am. We go in the direction of the property owned by Milena Cabrera named ‘El porvenir,’ located in the county of La Florida. A torrential downpour is unleashed; the road condition is unfortunate. Even more surprising is seeing children walking to school through the mud or being taken by their parents on motorcycles. Ricardo, in the middle of the torrential downpour and on the run, points out a motorcycle coming from the opposite direction with two people who are covered with plastic ponchos and who are raising their legs to cross a puddle that reaches almost half the motorcycle. He tells me that it is Lina Milena Pastrana, Milena’s daughter who at this moment, most likely, is taking her son to school. I wonder how they will reach.

7:20 am. We reach the farm, a property of 160 hectares. It is still raining, and now we have to wait for Lina Milena, whom I am going to interview. The country house is built of wood, but its floor is made of cement. It has many leaks in its roof and is in poor condition. Milena’s daughter, her husband Carlos, and their two small children live here. At the rear of the house, about 5 meters away, are the laundry and the bathroom. Fruit trees surround the house. Next to the house is the cattle corral and a cooking banana plantation. On the other side, there is a clearing among the marañon trees. Carlos tells me that they had planned to plant cocoa there, but lack of resources postponed their plans. A few meters away there is the river ‘la cristalina,’ well-grown due to the rain. As I observe it, I can see a pair of babillas, small alligators, resting on the shore.

While we wait for Lina Milena, I watch her dad, Nalbíz, cutting and preparing the meat that will be sold today. The main activity on this farm is the sale of meat,

\textsuperscript{144} US Agency for International Development.
and this is why pigs and cows are regularly slaughtered. This operation is performed on the dining room table, shirtless, using a sharp machete, and holding a small flashlight with his mouth. Half the table is covered with pieces of meat. I see how people arrive over the next few hours to buy meat.

Nalbiz stops his task for a moment to prepare coffee for us, which we drink while he resumes his work. In the house is also Julio Cortez, peasant and neighbor.

While waiting for Lina Milena, I proceed to interview her father, Nalbiz Pastrana Monroy, husband of Milena Cabrera. Nalbiz puts on his shirt, and we proceed. He has an old and tired appearance, further accentuated by the aggressive diabetes that afflicts him. We are at the entrance to the house for the interview during which we talk about the family, the founder, the land, and he also gives me his definition of a ‘peasant.’

During the interview, Julio Cortez is very attentive and seeing that I have finished with Nalbiz, he tells me that he also wants to talk, so I proceed to interview him, and he also gives me his definition of what it is to be a ‘peasant.’

A motorcycle arrives at the farm; it is Carlos Roa, Lina Milena’s husband, who is returning after delivering an order for meat. I greet and immediately take the opportunity to interview him.

The rain stops, and at that moment arrives Lina Milena Pastrana Cabrera, a member of the third generation of the Cabrera family. She is the one who runs this farm with her husband where she has lived for 27 years. Lina is a young woman, smiling and friendly. Among other things, she tells me that she is part of a group of women of the town and that they are currently seeking support for a project. We start the interview immediately. At the end of the interview, the rain comes again.

Lina Milena had invited us to lunch, so she hurries to the kitchen and I follow her. We continue talking in the kitchen. This time it is not a wooden kitchen, everything is cement. They also have a small stove with two gas burners. Quickly we go to the cooking banana plantation and bring a few. I tell her that abroad cooking bananas are not very well known, and she immediately asks me, “And then, what do they eat?”

The food is ready, and the meat workplace, already clear and clean, gives way to lunch.

1:00 pm. It is time to leave La Cristalina. Milena contacts me a couple of days later and tells me that she is selling the property, 120 hectares, for 3 million pesos per hectare, negotiable. She needs to sell it because Nalbiz’s disease requires money for him to be treated.

On our way, Ricardo shows me another farm, about 800 hectares, and explains that they are selling it because during the violence, the young people left and only the old ones remained, and now in peacetime, no one works the land.

At 3:00 pm, we have already passed two rivers, and we are approaching the point at which the La gualdalsa creek flows into the La Algeria stream. During
this journey, I have time to talk to Ricardo about the murder of his father and several other ranchers.

Now we approach the military post that controls the entrance to San Vicente del Caguán. We pass slowly, but this time they do not stop us.

3:10 pm. Already in San Vicente, Ricardo allows me to see the house in which his father was murdered, the founder’s home. The house no longer belongs to them, and according to Ricardo, it has changed a lot. I can understand that it is not easy for him to go there, and his face shows the many emotions going through his mind. He looks at it and sighs. One block away, he shows me the house where he lived with his wife Dioselina and their daughters, Lucy and Carolina.

We go to Milena Cabrera’s house to say goodbye and thank her for allowing me to interview her family. Milena is waiting for us with the usual coffee but what also surprises me that she has a lot of family photographs that she wants to show me. I can see several photos of the founder and the family, and Milena tells me the details. It is a fascinating session during which she authorizes me to use the images in case they interest me.

Very tired, we head to the hotel, leave our luggage, and go for a walk and to eat something in the central square.

6:30 am. On March 29 in San Vicente we go for breakfast very early at the family business of Dioselina’s brother in the central square, where I again talk a little with Carolina about what the old days were like in that place.

Then we go to the facilities of Cootranscaguan, San Vicente with two objectives: first, to meet Luis Roberto Cuellar, Edna Victoria Pastrana’s husband, who five years ago started working as a driver in the aforementioned company and should be arriving from Neiva, and second to buy tickets for Carolina and me, to go back to Neiva. Ricardo also decides to go with us to Neiva.

Luis Roberto arrives very punctually. He greets Ricardo, who, in turn, introduces us. We look for a place in the cafeteria of the transport terminal and immediately start the interview.

At 11:00 am, we proceed to board the Cootranscaguan truck and begin our journey back. It has been nine days since I started this adventure, the best trip I have ever had.

On the way back, we pass the silent and imposing cemetery of the Andes. We pass a sign that reads ‘Humanitarian civil demining in progress,’ announcing a minefield, one of the many that remain in the region, which reminds me of Carolina’s cousin, Paola, who works detecting landmines.

On the way back I can see, among other things, a lonely house with the symbol of ‘medical mission,’ and a little later an abandoned house with its roof fallen resisting succumbing to the passage of time, and a large machine excavator left on the road already invaded by vegetation. For me, all these are symbols full of meaning that have remained in my memory and continually invite me to reflect.

The military post controls the entry into the region and we will be crossing it on our way out. The army represents a government but the state’s presence has
been limited to the military camps that we encountered along the way. Out of the road, the government’s presence seems to fade.

Of the government, the people of the region only know that it gave them peace, and they certainly appreciate it. However, they are still waiting for that peace to come with roads, schools, and development.

For now, I say goodbye to this other face of Colombia that took me 47 years to visit, that has suffered from violence, and that today during this peace process deserves all the possible support – it is a right earned with blood, it is a national debt.
7 Narratives of two generations

In this chapter, I introduce a “detailed narrative” (Langley, 1999, p. 695) following an entrepreneurial process perspective with an emphasis on the family as a collective actor. However, following Langley et al. (2013) this does not imply that I reduce my attention on individuals. Adopting an entrepreneurial process perspective (Johannisson, 2011), I distinguish the accounts of the 2nd and 3rd generation members and highlight the evolution of relationships within the family, between the family members and the farm business, and between the family and the resource (land) (e.g., Dawson & Hjorth, 2012). By processing and writing the narratives, I organize the accounts of the Cabrera family according to four phases of its entrepreneurial journey. From an interpretation of the Cabrera’s family-life context and its relation to the land, in line with Czarniawska-Joerges (2004), I was able to make sense of what the process meant for family members during their production of reality.

By admitting the processual view of the Cabrera’s family-life context and its relation to the land, I also assume that time plays a decisive role (Aldrich & Kim, 2007; Langley et al., 2013). The Cabrera’s family case represents a challenge due to its complexity, which is addressed by defining the four phases as an extensive amalgam of events that started in 1595. I identified this year as the starting point of the land before it was intertwined with the family history, to finally reach the days (i.e., see chain of events Langley et al., 2013, p. 10). The sequence of the time units was marked by significant moments that were identified by family members, and that also maintained a connection with facts representative of the historical context of the case at all times.

As my fieldwork progressed, more voices of family members were added, and a robust family narrative took shape. Each member of the family gave me his/her life story, and with each story, their voices and feelings in the face of the events that have surrounded their existence became clearer. I listened to the voices of 30 family members and with each interview the stories intersected and mixed, sharing space and events, collectively building the family-life context. However, aspects that went beyond the dramas also emerged from the resulting narrative. In the same family, the same spaces, and events, the family members’ perspectives were different. Of course, each person has her/his own reality. The diversity of perspectives communicated by family members was significant in my attempt to understand the family in the process of reactivating its business. At the same time, it added more complexity to the case study.

Agreeing with Nordqvist and Melin (2010), I took advantage of the differences in perspectives of the two generations, and constructed a narrative that is made up of the stories of both the generations. The narratives include interview extracts with family members (Hamilton, Discua Cruz, & Jack, 2017); they also highlight the interactions of the family with the surrounding historical and societal context.
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Hence, I do not sacrifice the richness of the narratives and include voices from the family in their corresponding generation. The narratives of the 2nd and 3rd generations have the same origins in time and are projected on the present day. As the narratives of the two generations progressed simultaneously, they confirmed each other’s information and they also complemented each other. The simultaneity of the two narratives became an important element in my interpretations since it provided evidence of the evolution of their perspectives.

For me as a researcher it was like listening to and following two different conversations, but at the same time they also allowed me to understand the two generations, their positions, and generational perspectives individually and as a family. I share these two narratives; I present them simultaneously, but divided by generations. First, I give the second-generation conversation in Gill Sans MT font. Conversations with members of the 3rd generation follow in Times New Roman font. The conversations can be read individually or jointly, as if you were in a room with both generations, allowing them to confirm and complement each other.
The 2nd generation’s narratives pertaining to the events in ‘Phase 1: before familiness/ pre-familiness’ started more than four decades ago when Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo arrived on the Los llanos del Yarí land. His arrival was not fortuitous.

Young Ricardo’s ancestors on his mother’s side, were part of what was suggestively known as ‘the clan of the Perdomo,’ a descendant lineage of Spanish blood that in principle was strongly linked to the possession of extensive tracts of land because of the crown of the Iberian country. Benefitting from historical reasons based on the independence movement in Colombia, the family was able to preserve its properties and land.

Ricardo’s mother, Elvira Perdomo, had seven brothers, and they were the heirs of the land and were recognized as the richest man in the region.

In 1958, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo inherited a few thousand hectares from his mother represented by two properties located near the small rural town of Algeciras: ‘Satia’ and ‘El Casil.’ By that year Ricardo’s nuclear family was already made up of his first wife Lucy Cabrera Puentes and their five children, who from oldest to youngest are: Ricardo Jr (the eldest, born in 1951), Javier (*1953), Jaime (*1954), Hernando (*1956), and Rodrigo (the youngest, *1957). Lucy Cabrera Puentes died on April 17, 1963 because of a diabetic coma.

For the five brothers, contact with life in rural areas started at a very young age. “We were born in Neiva, but in general terms, we were raised in Algeciras” (Jaime Cabrera Cabrera, July 2019).

The 3rd generation’s narratives in ‘Phase 1: before familiness/ pre-familiness’ started with the arrival of Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo and Ricardo Jr to the land. The other members of the Cabrera family joined them slowly.

The first to arrive on the land was Dioselina Sánchez, originally from the Balsillas region, a woman who was born and grew up living in the countryside: “My mother lived all her life there” (Lucy Cabrera, July 2017).

At that time, Dioselina’s father worked for the landowner Oliverio Lara. However, his duties were carried out under the orders of Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo: “When I met Ricardo, we (Dioselina and her parents) had been working for Don Ricardo for many years” (Dioselina Sanchez, July 2017).

Due to her father’s work, when Dioselina was still very young she lived on one of the properties on Yarí land. “We lived on a farm called Mejico,” “We left for the plains in 1964,” she says. She later went to the other farms, which over time were bought by the founder: “El Recreo, Mejico, Tinaz, Canada Sevilla, Albania, La Despensa, all that land belonged to Ricardo’s father (to the founder), to the society Cabrera and Mora.” Dioselina knows the land that belonged to the founder. Her account talks of the family’s entry into ‘Phase 2: through familiness - the family business.’
The Cabrera brothers’ childhood was peaceful, living in the main house on Satia farm; the countryside was a constant in their lives.

Founder Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo’s activities and his work in the countryside was divided into two fronts. On the one hand, there were his own two farms, and on the other hand, there was his activity as a farm steward for one of the iconic men of the region, landowner, and cattle rancher, Oliverio Lara. The rancher was married to Ricardo’s mother’s sister.

In his role as an employee, Ricardo CP managed several of Oliverio’s properties in the region. During this process, little by little, the Cabrera Cabrera brothers became involved in the activities on their father’s farms, initially only on weekends and school holidays.

Over the years, the brothers shaped their roles in the family and gained their own space with their father. This is how, in the early 1970s the three older brothers were immersed in farm activities, and Ricardo and Jaime became their father’s right-hand men.

In 1964, Ricardo CP received several properties located on Los llanos del Yari from Oliverio Lara as part of his work as a farm steward. Among these was a property known as ‘El Arenoso.’ Ricardo CP carried out the administration of this land with the help of his eldest son, Ricardo Jr.

Dioselina went to live with Ricardo Jr after the founder bought the Los llanos del Yari land. Ricardo Jr worked as the administrator of the El Danubio cattle ranch. “And then, Ricardo, they, bought a house in San Vicente and went to work there” (Dioselina Sanchez, December 2016).

The founder’s children arrived first at the hato El Danubio and with time, came their wives and children.

The arrival of the older children of the Cabrera Cabrera brothers to El Danubio marked a significant difference between those descendants who did not know the land, and those who knew the cattle ranch and lived and worked on the farm. They were witness to how prolific the business was, and additionally, they met their grandfather, i.e., the founder.

Being a part of those who were in El Danubio meant that they experienced a period in the family which was highlighted by a buoyant economic situation. This also meant that they saw the founder being murdered, the end of the business, and the drama of the subsequent displacement.

The spouses of the three older brothers too arrived in El Danubio – Dioselina (Ricardo’s wife), María Esperanza (Javier’s wife), and Elsa (Jaime’s wife), and with them came their eldest children for a total of nine family members.
Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo decided to buy some land of his murdered boss, Oliverio Lara, in Yarí, properties that Ricardo already knew and had managed with the help of his son Ricardo Jr. As part of this decision, Ricardo decided to take Ricardo Jr with him, and they left Satía farm under Jaime’s responsibility. With this determination and consequent family movement, the Cabreras entered ‘Phase 2: through familines – the family business.’

To manage their new properties, which over time were collectively recognized under the name El Danubio, Ricardo CP settled in the rural town of San Vicente del Caguán. With time, we find that Ricardo CP (who from now on is called the founder) acquired a house where he later lived with his wife and some of his relatives. Just a few meters away, separated by a small park, lived Ricardo Jr with his family. Ricardo Jr met Dioselina, his sentimental partner, while visiting the Yari in the mid-1960s. She lived in the region and was the daughter of one of the stewards under his father’s orders.

While administering the Satía farm, Jaime met Elsa Bautista, originally from Algeciras, whom he married in 1979. Later the founder sold the properties Satía and El Casil, to invest the money in improving the properties in Yari. Without farms in Algeciras, Jaime, his wife, and his newly born son, Jaime Andrés, decided to move to San Vicente, where they lived in the founder’s house.

Elsa Bautista is Jaime Cabrera Cabrera's wife. For Elsa, life in the rurality is not something new: “I was born in Algeciras,” “I used to go to the farm with my Dad.” Living in the rural town of Algeciras, Elsa met Jaime while he was working as the administrator of Satía farm, which in fact belonged to his father, the founder. “I finished high school and then got married,” says Elsa.

When the founder sold the properties he had in Algeciras, including the one managed by his son Jaime, the Cabrera Bautistas had to move to San Vicente del Caguán, where Jaime continued to live and work alongside the founder in El Danubio.

“There was a built-up area I don’t remember the name, it was after the river and he (the founder) had bought a house there, and we lived in his home.”

“Diagonally (to the founder’s house) lived Ricardo Jr lived with Dioselina, and when they were going to bring wood, pigs, or anything else they went to the plains to bring cattle, the first shelter in civilization was his (Ricardo Jr) house” (Elsa Bautista, July 2019).

Thus, in San Vicente del Caguán the Cabrera family was distributed in two houses very close to each other. In one house were the founder and his wife Hermila, also the couple constituted by Jaime and Elsa accompanied by their little son, and finally Javier and his two children, Javier Ricardo and Leonardo Francisco. Living in the other house were Ricardo Jr and Dioselina with their three children: Lucy, Jose Ricardo, and Carolina.
Javier, the 2nd of the founder’s eldest sons who has been noted for his peculiar nomadic reputation, sometimes lived on the farm and at other times in the founder’s house. When Javier moved to Los llanos del Yari, he was accompanied by his two oldest children, Javier Ricardo (*1972) and Leonardo Francisco (*1974) who were born on Algeciras’ Satia farm.

Ricardo Jr and Dioselina’s children Lucy (*1976), Carolina (*1979), and Jose Ricardo (*1978) came to live with them. Ricardo Jr’s house became an important reference point for the daily activities of the farm and the family, mainly because it was very close to the river and in proximity to the founder’s house.

The family business grew and consolidated, gaining an outstanding reputation in the region for both the property and the last name Cabrera.

The three eldest sons of the founder, Ricardo, Javier, and Jaime decided to devote themselves entirely to working on the farm. His two younger sons, Hernando and Rodrigo, moved to Bogotá to continue their university studies. In the following years, Rodrigo got a degree as a Civil Engineer and Hernando, after struggling with his studies, decided to accept a work proposal in another region of the country where he later moved to work with palm oil.

Arriving at the El Danubio farm was an adventure. Jaime’s wife Elsa remembers:

“I was 23-years-old when I had Jaime Andrés, my oldest son, and I also had an adventurous spirit. We lived in San Vicente del Caguán, and an opportunity arose to go to the plains. I prepared everything for the child: milk, diapers, and medicines, and we left. We took two or three days to get there. It was a part of a virgin forest, and it was not possible to see the sky due to the giant trees. I used to tell my children that to enter the plains you needed one day to get to La Sombra. On the 2nd day, you had to get up early and on the 3rd day you would arrive on the El Danubio land on the plains” (Elsa Bautista, July 2019).

Even though the two youngest members of the family, Carolina and José Ricardo, have vague memories of life in those times, there is evidence and accounts of the elders about how the founder managed to involve all family members around his activities. “I am in almost all the pictures, on every trip, because he always took me there to explore the land with my big cousins,” says Carolina.

“Childhood there was the best,” says Lucy Cabrera remembering what her life was like in the region. As the interviewees recounted important celebrations they became emotional. “The most special dates, celebrating as a family in my grandfather’s time” (Carolina Cabrera, July 2017).
In the early 1980s, the founder started a new relationship with Hermila Cruz Peña. Hermila was originally from the region and came to live with him accompanied by her two children, Ana Milena and Orlando.

On weekends and holidays, the family met at the farm. The young brothers who lived outside the region integrated with those who lived in the region and worked full time in El Danubio, and that included the two grandsons of the founder, i.e., Javier’s children.

There are multiple accounts about the long and strenuous working hours.

However, the atmosphere in the area started changing due to the presence and activities of guerrilla groups, which in turn attracted the attention of the Colombian military forces to the region. The founder and all the landowners in the area were inevitably involved in the conflict that was about to erupt. The founder was nervous and restless, and that was evident in some meetings which he attended accompanied by his sons.

“The problems for my Dad started when the guerrilla arrived and asked us for two tractors to transport some people. My dad lent them the tractors with two drivers. From that moment, they started saying that my father was a guerrilla supporter. They arrested two workers (the drivers) and hung them up, and for that reason, we were in San Vicente arguing with a general,”

Everyone was involved in the farm, and everyone remembers it in their own way:

“I remember the times on the farm and our journeys, ... It was fun time” (Carolina Cabrera, July 2017).

The members of the 3rd generation were very young. However, the farm, El Danubio, was where they met with the adult members of the family, i.e., with their parents and uncles, and also with the founder. It was a place to visit during holidays and sometimes on weekends.

“My grandfather’s farms were vast” (Lucy).

“I really like that savannah” (Javier Ricardo).

For Javier Ricardo and Leonardo Francisco, who lived in the founder’s house in San Vicente, El Danubio was also a place where they met with their father, Javier, periodically: “We didn’t grow up with him. We saw each other during the holidays, where grandfather lived and he (my father) taught us about animals and agriculture” (Javier Ricardo).

The grandchildren’s relationship with the founder developed extraordinarily framed by the activities carried out on the farm. “He was attentive to us learning to swim, run, ride horses, to tie cattle, sow grass, learn about crops, learn about the movement of the moon, respect for employees” (Javier Ricardo).
“And from that moment, the discord began. There was a strong discussion between the general and me, and a captain accused us of being guerrillas (Jaime Cabrera Cabrera, July 2019).

In the mid-1980s the founder acquired other properties seeking closer proximity to San Vicente, which he registered in the names of his children, Ana Milena and Orlando.

Due to security problems in the area, Jaime decided to move with his wife Elsa and their little son to the Colombian Caribbean coast region, accepting an invitation to work for his brother Hernando.

On the evening of Sunday, December 1, 1985, the founder and the family finished a typical day at the farm working with cattle. That night, as he usually did, the founder was in his house along with some members of his family.

The story of the founder’s death is simple when told by his children. Putting together their accounts results in the following:

Jaime CC: “When my father was killed in San Vicente Milena, Hermila, Orlando, one of Javier’s sons, my father’s grandson Javier Ricardo were with him.”

Hernando: “In the city (Bogotá) were Rodrigo and me studying at university.”

Ana Milena: “I was 19-years-old when he was killed.”

Jaime: “Two men crossed the river and arrived at the house, and he was shot from the door.”

The minor children, those who were studying in Bogotá, and the grandchildren, rode horses, and went on long trips that lasted several days during which they surrounded the cattle, or with the help of a large group of cowboys, transported the animals for sale from the farm to the village.

However, times started changing, and some incidents announced the arrival of violence to the region.

Dioselina and her daughter Lucy witnessed the arrival of subversive groups to the region. Lucy was very young but both she and her mother still remember that episode in their lives well: “Once I left alone with Lucy ... and that was when the guerrillas held us, we were detained there for nine days” (Dioselina Sanchez)

“When I was 7-years-old, I went to the plains with my mother, by plane. We left with a group from Neiva. When we reached the plains, the guerrillas kidnapped us. We were kidnapped for about 15 days. The guerrillas knew that I was a granddaughter of the founder and that my mother was Ricardo’s (Jr) wife. My grandfather was very influential in that land. That was good for our protection, and they never hurt us.”

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Ana Milena: “When we heard the shots, I was outside Ricardo Jr’s house, with him and some friends, very close to the home (of the founder), and we started running towards the house.”

The Cabrera family took decisions quickly. “We took his body to Neiva” (Ana Milena) by plane the next day. The youngest children of the founder, Rodrigo and Hernando, joined their brothers in Neiva to bury the founder.

For the founder’s youngest son Rodrigo the situation was alarming and he believed that everyone was at risk of being killed like his father, and that is when he decided that it was not possible to return to El Danubio. Thus, Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera never returned to the region. Amid panic and pain, the family was entering, ‘Phase 3: post-familiness.’

Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera, the eldest of the brothers agreed somewhat with Rodrigo’s decision: “They displaced me, they ran us out because death was not for him (the founder) but for me.” In his position as the administrator of the farm and the founder’s right-hand man, Ricardo was visible and he thought that he could be next on the murderers’ list. “He was the one who was most related to El Danubio” (Jaime Cabrera Cabrera, July 2019). Thus, Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera decided not to return to the region and preferred staying in Neiva: “With my decision not to return to the farm, everything was abandoned there.”

“I think they killed someone (from the group). And then they had us there, locked up, until they negotiated, or I don’t know what happened. We walked, heading to my grandfather’s farm, supposedly they were going to pick us up from there, but then something happened, there was fighting between the army and the rebels, and then we got lost in the savannah. I spent three nights with my mother sleeping on the ground; my mom covered me with a little blanket and we ate guavas. We slept in the savannah because my grandfather’s farm was far away. We arrived at a farm and someone helped us. From there they took us on horseback, and we arrived at the farm. My feet were full of blisters and thorns. It was horrible for my mom” (Lucy Cabrera). As a result of this, we have the first two members of the family who took the decision not to revisit the farm: “After the kidnapping my mother never returned to the plains. I never returned to the farm, nor to the plains” (Lucy Cabrera).

“A lot of guerrillas started arriving and they asked for tractors, money, supplies,” explains Hernando Cabrera’s wife, Angela. But FARC was not the only armed group in the area, drug traffickers and their private and paramilitary armies, as well as the Colombian military forces had also arrived who tried unsuccessfully to take control of the region.
Three of the siblings returned to San Vicente del Caguán after the funeral -- Hernando, Milena, and Orlando. The first returned with the purpose of attending to legal matters of their deceased father, and the other two strictly because they had to follow Hermila, their mother and now the founder’s widow.

The situation was drastically different. The founder had died, the older brothers were not in the region and refused to return, and the business, the cattle ranch, was abandoned.

With two women as the heads, two households remained in San Vicente: one was Hermila, who was in charge of her two children (Milena and Orlando) and two grandchildren (Javier Ricardo and Leonardo Francisco), and the other was Dioselina, Ricardo Jr’s wife, along with their three children (Lucy, Carolina, and Jose Ricardo).

For her livelihood and without income from the farm, the founder’s widow used the properties that the founder had acquired and registered in Milena and Orlando’s names. “What did we do? We sold those farms and the cattle we had there.” However, the situation became unsustainable, and Hermila decided to leave San Vicente and move to Neiva.

Milena stayed in the city for only a few years. Her older brother Ricardo moved in to live with them. During her stay in Neiva, due to the limited financial resources, Milena could only take some technical education courses.

With an increase in the sense of insecurity in the area, in addition to Dioselina and Lucy, three other family members decided to leave the region. “One day I said that I would not like my oldest son to be raised in this environment,” says Elsa Bautista, “The drug trafficking, guerrillas...”. And this is how their nuclear family made up of Jaime, Elsa, and their little son, decided to leave the region and head for the Colombian Caribbean coast where Hernando Cabrera Cabrera was waiting for them.

The violence visited the founder’s house very soon. From the perspective of the members of the 2nd generation and the two older grandchildren, everything happened after a typical workday on the farm at nightfall. The youngest, who had not gone with the others to work that day remembers:

“I clearly remember my grandfather’s death. I was 6-years-old, my birthday is in November. My grandfather was killed on December 1st. I remember everything that happened. I didn’t understand much because I was very young, but the only dead person I’ve seen in my life in a coffin is my grandfather. I remember that day, a Sunday. My grandfather, like other people at that time, had his routine. I always arrived at dimertime, and I sat next to him. He told me, ‘It's late, go home and I’ll pick you up tomorrow.’”
While in Neiva, Milena decided to marry her boyfriend Nalbiz who was originally from San Vicente del Caguán and who lived on a farm in the region. And that is how Milena again returned to Los llanos del Yari: “We got married, and I returned here (to San Vicente), and we bought our little house.”

Since then, Milena has lived in the region moving between her house in the village and the farm that Nalbiz inherited a little later. Despite living in the region, Milena decided not to return to El Danubio. Today, Milena and Nalbiz have three daughters: Lina Milena (*1987), Edna Victoria (*1989), and María de Los Angeles (*2000). “I have three daughters, two are married. They studied child pedagogy, and now they are teachers and the youngest is finishing high school” (Ana Milena, September 2017).

According to Jaime, the absence of the founder and the farm affected those who lived in the plains of the Yari more intensely: “The ones who felt the most impact were Ricardo and the others because they lived with my Dad and lived on what my Dad produced.” After being in Neiva for a few years, both Ricardo Jr and Javier, decided to follow Hernando and Jaime, who had moved to the Colombian Caribbean coast before the founder died. The two older brothers went to live in the city of Magangué.

“An hour after arriving at my house, my grandfather was killed. ... I saw everyone running, but I didn't understand what was happening. I have the image in my head; it's very clear. When I arrived at my grandfather's house, I saw a lot of blood, my mother was crying, I remember it. They took me out from there, I don't remember who.”

“The next day, I remember I got up, and I wanted to follow the usual routine with my grandfather but my mom didn’t let me go out (Carolina breaks down in tears for a few seconds while remembering). I started crying without understanding what was happening” (Carolina).

The family members’ accounts agree that the founder was having dinner. In the room were his youngest grandchildren, Javier Ricardo and Leonardo Francisco, and also his youngest son, Orlando. The founder’s wife, Hermila, was in the kitchen, and her children, Ana Milena and Ricardo Jr were outside the house talking with some friends. Carolina was at home with her mother Dioselina, preparing to go to bed. Lucy had asked Dioselina for authorization to visit her grandfather, but she had gone to a friend’s house in the neighborhood.

The 3rd generation tells what happened next as follows: Somebody else came into the house, a stranger that the children had met days before, someone they invited to the house and introduced to the grandfather. The founder, the children, and the stranger chatted a bit. At some point, the children went to the kitchen and left Grandpa alone with the stranger. It is at this moment that the grandfather was assassinated, and the stranger disappeared as mysteriously as he had appeared.
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In the following years, Ricardo and Javier lived and worked in different cities and regions, always moving in search of jobs.

Till the end of the 1990s, Ricardo remained on the coast, in principle living alone, but some years later Dioselina and their daughters, Lucy, Carolina, and Jose Ricardo, joined him. A few years later, his 4th daughter Vanessa was born.

The other brother, Javier, did not remain on the Colombian Caribbean coast, he also worked in Cundinamarca. “Javier was running away and went to work at Guabio dam” (Hernando). “Javier knows about machinery, he has experience” (Ricardo). In the following years, Javier formally separated from his first partner, Javier Ricardo and Leonardo Francisco’s mother, and had two other relationships from which his other five children were born.

When I interviewed Jaime, he was in his apartment in Barranquilla. However, he, along with his family, live in Magangüe till today: “I came to where Hernando was, and I stayed to work here on the coast.”

His brother Rodrigo remembers: “Jaime went to work with cattle.”

“I worked as an administrator for a cattle rancher, and they sent me to another place, and from Valle I had to come to Atlántico to work with a company called Camagüey slaughterhouse. I started working with them and (later) they sent me to Magangüe” (Jaime).

“Hernando had to go to the plains along with his siblings to collect the body (of the founder)” (Angela). The decision to take the body to Neiva was taken quickly and that is why the next day the family, especially those who could not travel, said their last goodbyes to the founder:

“Approximately at noon, my father arrived to pick me up. When I entered my grandfather’s house, I saw the drawer, the coffin in the middle of the room. I remember that my father lifted me up and told me, ‘Say goodbye to your grandfather.’ I have a very vivid image of my grandfather, with pieces of cotton in his nose, here, on his neck, and I remember that he had a guayabera shirt that was used at that time, white. That day they took my grandfather by plane to Neiva. It’s the last image I have, that’s why I hate seeing someone dead in a coffin. [Carolina is crying]” (Carolina).

The founder’s sons and widow also travelled in the plane in which his body was taken to Neiva. The rest of the family stayed in San Vicente. However, after the founder’s funeral, not everyone returned to the region: “My dad had to leave town. He came here to Neiva, for grandfather’s funeral and he never went back,” “because they (guerrillas) supposedly were not going to kill my grandfather, but my dad” (Jose Ricardo). At that time, little Jose Ricardo was unaware that a decision had already been taken and that the business, the hato, would become part of history. This is how the Cabrera family began ‘Phase 3: post-familiness.’
His other two children Martha Lucía (*1986) and Juan David (*1990) were born when he was living on the coast:

“I had three children, one of them was killed, the eldest Jaime Andres. Marta Lucia is a physiotherapist and the other Juan David is a mechatronic engineer. He is a math teacher, he is married, but has no children. Marta Lucia works at Magangué hospital and has three children” (Jaime, July 2019). When he was in his 20s, Jaime Andres was stabbed and killed by tennis shoe thieves on the streets of Barranquilla.

Jaime told me in the interview that during the first years of distancing himself from the farm he always thought about returning, but he never did, he never returned.

By the time the founder was killed, Hernando was already living on the coast. “Hernando studied six semesters of civil engineering” (Rodrigo). “But he did not succeed in the university” (Jaime). In December 1985, after dropping out of university, Hernando worked on a farm in Copey, Cesar: “I have 36 years of experience working with palm oil as a director of palm plantations.” Shortly after his father’s murder, Hernando married Angela, whom he had met in Neiva, and while they were living on the coast, his sons Luis Felipe (*1988) and Hernando Jr (*1989) were born: “About my children, one is a medical doctor, and the other is a member of the Colombian army.”

Hernando stayed at Neiva for a few days to help his brothers, “while they put everything in order, denounced the case in front of the authorities, and organized the issue about the farms” (Angela).

Without the founder, and in the absence of the five older brothers, and also restless with panic about the recent crime, the family business no longer existed in a few days. “We never returned to the farms, never again” (Carolina).

With Ricardo’s decision not to return, Dioselina was left alone and in charge of the house at San Vicente and her three children: “Everything was distorted following my grandfather’s death. There were many problems, I remember that, with my mom, with my dad’s stepmother, my dad with my mom, my dad with the others. I remember many people who went to the house to collect debts (Carolina). “My dad was gone” (Carolina).

In Ricardo’s absence, Dioselina had to face severe economic limitations. Without income and still taking responsibility for the debts left by the operations at El Danubio, which her husband had been in charge of.
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After the founder’s death, Hernando never returned to El Danubio. However, in the early 1990s, violence revisited him, this time on the farm where he then lived and worked in Cesar, and from where he was violently displaced. That is when Hernando and his family moved to the city of Acacias-Meta, where he is currently working on farms and oil palm plantations.

Rodrigo was also living in Bogotá the day his father was killed.

“From that moment, I dedicated myself to studying. Fortunately, I lived with my uncle Guillermo, and he helped me study. I finished my education thanks to him” (Rodrigo, December 2016).

Rodrigo managed to finish his university studies in civil engineering. Years later, living in Neiva he founded a road construction company that, according to his estimates, had 250 employees. Rodrigo never returned to El Danubio, and residing in Neiva he got married twice. His eldest son, Nicolás (*1989), was born from the first relationship and Carlos Felipe (*1994) and María Lucía (*1996) were born from the 2nd relationship.

“I got my children to move ahead, to be professionals. Only Maria Lucía remains, but in a year she will finish her professional training. Also, the three of them have walked the world, they are bilingual” (Rodrigo, December 2016).

Terrified by all the violence that she had lived with till then, Dioselina had no choice but to leave the region with her three children: “Then one started walking. We left San Vicente and came here (Neiva), and then we moved to the coast. We went to the coast and we lived there for approximately 10 years, and after that we left for Acacias-Meta. There we grew up, and finally we came back to Neiva. I was 17 or 18” (Jose Ricardo).

Lucy, the eldest of Ricardo’s daughters, lived with her uncle Hernando for a few years in Copey, where she later met with her family nucleus. Sometime later she moved to the city of Ibague.

They studied as far as the possibilities allowed, according to their stories:

“(In San Vicente) I studied till 3rd grade, then we went to the coast and there I finished 5th grade, that is, I finished elementary school. I went to high school in Villanueva, Guajira, and then we went to Acacias, and there I finished high school and in Ibague I finished a trade technician diploma, from an Ibague institute. Now I am dedicated to elderly care, geriatric care” (Lucy).

“I did only high school” (Jose Ricardo).

“My primary and secondary education, 80 % I did on the coast in La Guajira and Algarrobo. Here I studied to become a systems technician. And I did some English courses” (Carolina).
Of the seven siblings, the youngest is Orlando whom I never got to contact. But thanks to the information I received from his brother Hernando, I know that after living in Neiva with his mother Hermila, he settled in Bogotá where he managed to complete his university education by graduating as a communications engineer, and he currently lives in the city of Florence, Caquetá. I also know that Orlando never returned to El Danubio.

The Cabrera family heard about El Danubio again in the late 1990s, thanks to the older brother, Ricardo. By then, what was politically known in Colombia as the distention zone or demilitarized zone had been granted to FARC guerrillas by the then Colombian president. This political act was part of the failed peace process started by President Pastrana, and was seen by Ricardo as an opportunity to recover the family’s land. “I came back in 1999” (Ricardo, December 2016).

Ricardo was accepted by the guerrillas in the zone of distention and the guerrillas also recognized the Cabrera family as the owners of the land. However, there was only one problem – FARC guerrillas did not allow him to leave the area again. Ricardo was trapped in the distention zone for more than eight years.

During this period, the Cabrera family had no news of him until 2008, when Ricardo regained his freedom. “I lived near the kidnapped (police and army members and people) in the distention zone, and when the guerrillas released me in 2008, I didn’t know what a cell phone was!” (Ricardo, December 2016).

The Cabrera Sanchez siblings did not go to university. “They had to flee, abandon everything. They had many economic difficulties and could not study at the university” (Angela).

During the time of displacement, Dioselina and her family nucleus moved continuously. They lived in Neiva, Algarrobo, El Copey, and Acacias ending in Neiva in the house they now own and in which I did my first interviews. It is a very modest house located in an area of the city that is known for being inhabited by low-income people. Dioselina and her four children, Ricardo and their grandchildren live in this area.

Hermila, the founder’s widow, accompanied by her two children and her two grandchildren, Javier’s children, moved to live in a house in Neiva. Some years later, her daughter Ana Milena and her grandchildren took their own path. Ana Milena married and returned to live in San Vicente and was accompanied by her nephew Leonardo who stayed in the town for about a year till his godfather decided to take him to Medellín.

Leonardo’s brother, Javier Ricardo, stayed at Neiva to work. However, on several occasions he had difficulties with armed and violent outlawed groups. “Because of problems with the guerrillas I moved to Florencia, and then being here in Florencia there was a problem with the paramilitaries and I was threatened and they tried to displace us again” (Javier Ricardo).
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With this phrase, Ricardo reveals the magnitude of his isolation during his captivity in this jungle area where communication is not available.

After his release, Ricardo returned to his family to the house where Dioselina lived in Neiva, to live with his four children and with grandchildren who, over the years had been arriving at the Cabrera Sánchez home. Of course, if at any time a family member had been interested in visiting El Danubio, Ricardo’s experience was enough to dissuade them.

From Ricardo’s rugged and unexpectedly prolonged stay in El Danubio, the Cabrera family was sure about several things of which the following stand out: first, the guerrillas recognized the last name Cabrera as the owners of the land, second, the land had remained unexploited since the founder’s murder and so far the only use it had been put to was as grazing fields for cattle belonging to guerrilla commanders, and third, apart from the land there was absolutely nothing left of what was once the farming business, there were no houses in all the properties that made El Danubio. However, all this also means that in the region the guerrillas had a strong presence and influence, and in those terms the zone was not safe for the family.

Javier Ricardo could not study at the university either: “I completed primary education, high school, and technical education. I wanted to study law at Universidad Libre like my mother, but my brother also wanted to study at the university and the money was only enough for one of us” (Javier Ricardo). Currently, Javier Ricardo, along with his second wife and some of his children, lives in Caquetá, very close to the region where El Danubio is located. Leonardo Francisco lives in Neiva with his wife and children.

“My grandfather’s house was left abandoned” (Carolina), and the truth is that within two years after the founder’s murder, the whole family had left the region.

In 1985, three of the Cabrera brothers, Jaime, Hernando, and Rodrigo lived outside the region.

Elsa and Jaime established their home in the Colombian Caribbean region, and they have stayed there till now. In addition to Jaime Andrés, they have two other children, Martha Lucía and Juan David. Martha is a professional in physiotherapy and Juan is a math teacher. None of the children of the Cabrera Bautista household know the land of El Danubio.

María Gabriela married Rodrigo a year after the founder’s murder. “I did not go to the land to know (the farm), because it was no longer possible. Rodrigo told me that they could not go there; that it was forbidden” (Maria Gabriela, August 2017).
In any case, the region was an area of continuous fighting between the army and the guerrillas.

For the family, nothing changed when it came to the farm. For Ricardo, things were different. During his captivity, he had lived with the guerrilla group, and in this way, he had managed to establish a good relationship and even friendship with them. The guerrillas new him, so he decided to capitalize on this. After his release in 2008 Ricardo obtained the authorization of the guerrillas to be able to enter and leave the region without any problem, and from that moment he decided to visit El Danubio periodically.

“In my case, for instance, my family lives here (in Neiva), and I live there (on the farm). I come here (to Neiva) and stay for about eight days or a maximum of 15 days, and then I return to the farm. … Yes, I have lived like this almost always, all the time.” (Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera, December 2016).

With President Juan Manuel Santos’ government (2010-2018) and its peace process with FARC guerrillas, a new dynamic began for the Cabrera family. During the peace talks, first, cessation of the fighting in the region was achieved, and second, the guerrillas agreed to free the land that was under their control.

“About three years ago (the guerrillas told us) that they were going to give us the land back, also that there was no problem with us” (Hernando Cabrera, April 2017).

María Gabriela and Rodrigo have a son, Nicolás. “I am a civil engineer with a postgraduate degree in project management” (Nicolás Cabrera Correa, June 2017).

Rodrigo married for the second time and has two children from this marriage, Carlos Felipe, who is currently studying a master’s program in Italy and María Lucia, who recently finished her university studies in political science. None of Rodrigo’s children know El Danubio.

Angela started a relationship with Hernando shortly after the founder’s murder. Although Angela did not know El Danubio, a few years after she had married, living with Hernando and her two young children, she too had to experience the drama of the forced displacement.

“It is a very hard (experience). We were living in Copey-Cesar. After a certain day, the guerrillas began to prowl at night. From the plantation and through an alley they reached the house where we lived. I often saw my husband getting out of bed quietly to check the corridors. He didn’t want me to realize what was happening. I asked him and he told me, ‘Nothing happened, calm down.’

‘Later, the house guards told him, ‘Don Hernando, last night we saw a group on our premises. And they told him it was the guerrillas.’”
“Now, with the peace dialogues, they started giving back land not only to us, but to a large number of settlers, but the guerrillas still govern there” (Rodrigo Cabrera, December 2016).

To recover their land, the Cabrera family needed to comply with some formalities and, finally, with some legal issues.

In the first phase of the returning process, the family was asked to attend the meetings that the guerrillas and community action boards in the region organized to establish the identity of the landowners.

“These people (the guerrillas) held meetings, and I did not miss any opportunity to tell them that the land belonged to us, that Ricardo Cabrera (the founder) had left it to us” (Ana Milena, September 2017).

Ricardo and Ana Milena attended the meetings with the guerrillas, and at the end of 2016 FARC delivered the property at least physically to the Cabrera family.

“Till last year, when they (FARC) called us, I went with Ricardo. We went on three occasions, and on the last visit, they told us to take care of the farm” (Ana Milena, September 2017). In this way, FARC officially returned land to the owners which had ended up under their control intermittently for the last 30 years because of the violence.

“For several nights the group (guerrillas) passed frequently.” “It was end December and my husband told me, ‘Angela we are leaving, tomorrow we are leaving.’”

“So, are we leaving? and I was ... like ... (surprised). We went to Neiva, with the children, and a suitcase.”

“The next day we received a phone call; the guerrillas had invaded the farm (during the night), and burned the house, everything; with buckets, they watered fuel all over the house, the house was immense. They took out all the people and set it on fire, all because they (Hernando’s bosses) hadn’t wanted to give them (the guerrillas) money.”

“The guerrillas burned everything. We only had what we carried in the suitcase” (Angela, June 2017).

After being displaced from the coast, Hernando and Angela moved to the eastern plains of Colombia, where they live to this day.

Their sons Luis Felipe and Hernando Jr live in Bogotá and are a doctor specializing in general surgery and an officer of the Colombian army respectively. Neither Angela nor her children have been to either El Danubio or the region.
However, the legal part was still left. When the founder had acquired the land he had failed to get the business legalized and supported with documents, and this is how the seven siblings had to get involved in the process of legalizing their land.

“We always wanted to recover the land, but we never had a chance. And (now) the opportunity is being given, and we are trying to comply with all the paperwork and everything else” (Hernando Cabrera C, April 2017).

The legal process took some time and had hard moments for everybody as explained by Hernando during one of our interviews:

“We resumed the issue of the documents about the property. During the holy week, the process stopped because the notary did not want to sign the deeds. Now, what remained was filling the documents, and after that having those ready and submitting them to the Ministry of Agriculture” (Hernando Cabrera Cabrera, June 2017).

Less than a month after this meeting with Hernando, on July 11, 2017, the Cabrera family received the deeds for the land owned by their father from ‘La Republica de Colombia.’ Today, legally they are the owners of El Danubio. By recovering ownership of the land, the Cabrera family entered ‘Phase 4: re-entry’

“For a long time, my dad was unable to return to the farm. But one day, he came back. In other words, he was never disconnected from the land, because even when he could not be there, he was always looking for new possibilities to go there” (Lucy, 2017). In 1999, elder brother, Ricardo, decided to revisit the land. Ricardo was taking advantage of the fact that the land was included in the area known as the zone of distention, an area given by the government to FARC as a guarantee of its intentions of peace. However, that peace process failed. “My Dad decided to retake and recover everything” (Carolina, July 2017).

Unfortunately for Ricardo, his visit extended for approximately eight years because the guerrillas decided to keep him captive in the region. His absence brought loneliness and hard times for Dioselina and her children.

“It was hard, and we lived for a long time without knowing about him; there was no communication of any kind. Then we lost track of him. Some people said that he was fine and alive, but nothing more” (Carolina, July 2017).

‘Years passed and then I received a phone call from Milena. ‘Ricardo is sick, what a poor guy,’ she said. And she asked me if we could accept him again at home. And I replied that he left because he wanted to. Who forced him to go there? Nobody” (Dioselina, July 2017).
From the peace process onwards, the older brother visited El Danubio periodically, and two of his six siblings also decided to visit the land. “Ricardo returned to the land and is working there” … “Javier also went there and is working the land” (Hernando Cabrera, April 2017).

Rodrigo was the most outspoken. “Theoretically, we have officially returned because for about a year or two my brother Ricardo has already been going to El Danubio” (Rodrigo Cabrera, December 2016).

Over the years with the peace process progressing, other family members belonging to the 3rd generation and even the 4th generation also visited the land: Javier’s son, Ana Milena’s husband, Ricardo’s wife, three of Ricardo’s children, and Carolina’s daughter from the 4th generation.

“When I went, I had not visited the plains for several years, and what a beautiful thing! I told my husband if we were in another economic position, I would not sell, we could move here, and we could build a house, we would stay here. And my husband told me, ‘Yes, let’s sell the small farm and then we can move here’” (Ana Milena, September 2017).

Dioselina was furious with Ricardo because he had disappeared for eight years, and she had not received a call or even a letter from him. However, his children interceded on behalf of Ricardo to be forgiven by Dioselina. “Then, Jimmy (Jose Ricardo) told me ‘poor Dad’” (Dioselina, July 2017). And that is how Ricardo returned home again. “We started approaching my Dad again, to take him back, and to accept him here again in our house” (Carolina, July 2017).

After the guerrillas released him, Ricardo continued visiting the farm frequently. “He managed to return, and in that way, he managed to reactivate this whole topic about the land” (Lucy, July 2017).

Other members of the Cabrera Sánchez household were encouraged over the years to visit El Danubio with their father. The first to do so was Vanessa. “I was there 14 years ago” (Vanessa, April 2019), and in fact, it was her first visit to El Danubio.

The next member of the 3rd generation to get involved with the land was Jose Ricardo. However, he did not limit himself to a short visit, and instead devoted himself to El Danubio completely. “About five or six years ago I went there. Then I spent three years with my Dad on the farm,” “I have gone with my Dad several times and I have traveled the land in its entirety” (Jose Ricardo, April 2019).

According to Jose Ricardo, his activities on the farm started before the peace process when he accompanied his father to take pictures of El Danubio, a task motivated at that time, specifically for selling the land.
The dynamics of the relationships between the siblings had formed around the events that the family had experienced. To better understand the current relationships between the siblings, it is essential to quickly recollect these: During their childhood and youth, the Cabrera siblings lived together and participated collectively in working on the farm along with the founder.

Except for the two younger brothers from the founder’s first marriage and those who left for the city for their university education, the other five siblings stayed with the founder. Jaime, his wife, and son were living with the founder in his house till Hernando took him to live on the Caribbean coast. During the founder’s last years, living with his second wife Hermila, Orlando and Ana Milena remained under the same roof along with Javier’s children.

There was a good relationship between Ricardo and Ana Milena, who, for example, on the day of the murder were outside the founder’s house talking and also between Orlando and Javier’s children, who played cards with the founder.

However, over time his father, Ricardo, started working on the farm and Jose Ricardo became involved full time in the daily activities at El Danubio, and also had to perform some particular tasks. “In fact, I was measuring the farm recently” (Jose Ricardo, April 2019).

Jose Ricardo is well aware of the issues with the farm through his father. “Sometimes, when we are around, when we are alone, or when we go in the car, we talk. He speaks, I ask him, and he answers” (Jose Ricardo, April 2019). The relationship between father and son which revolves around the theme of the farm was described by his mother and sisters as:

“My brother is the one with my Dad right now. My brother left his job here to accompany my Dad” (Lucy Cabrera, July 2017).

“...my father has the experience and has transmitted everything to my brother, and my brother is absolutely in love with the land” (Carolina Cabrera, December 2016).

“Recently, Jose Ricardo didn’t want to go to the farm, so I told him, ‘Jimmy, if you don’t go then I will go with your Dad. I don’t know how to drive a car, but we’ll be together in that truck.’ I told him that but I wanted to go because I was terrified that Ricardo would be alone. I told him, ‘Jimmy, your dad without you, is nothing’” (Dioselina, July 2017).
During the first years of displacement, Ricardo lived in Hermila’s house with Ana Milena, Orlando, and two grandchildren. A few years later, Hernando took his two brothers, Ricardo and Javier, to the coast.

Rodrigo was upset with Ana Milena and Orlando because he considered them as being very selfish for having sold the properties that the founder had bought and registered in their names, and also because they did not share the money from the sale with the other brothers. With the restitution of the land to the family, it was necessary to solve this situation.

“What happened is that, with the issue of land on the plains, Rodrigo requested that the other two siblings should not be taken into account (i.e., that they were excluded), because that problem was an issue exclusively among the five first children from of the first marriage, and that is when the discord began. Later, we decided that everyone would participate, and Rodrigo accepted that decision” (Jaime Cabrera, July 2019).

According to Jaime, today, “relations are super good between all of us,” “I talk a lot with Ricardo, Milena, Orlando, and Rodrigo” (Jaime Cabrera, July 2019). Hernando in turn maintains that his best relations are with Ricardo, Rodrigo, Milena, and Orlando.


Jose Ricardo’s participation in the farm’s activities was not only commented on several times by members of the 2nd generation but even members of the 3rd generation also commented on it. As did his cousins, Leonardo, Hernando, and Luis Felipe, among others. “My cousin Jose Ricardo, the son of my uncle Ricardo, was there ... accompanying him to the savannah” (Javier Ricardo, September 2017).

In November 2016 Carolina decided to revisit the land and took her little daughter Victoria with her. Carolina’s daughter is the first member of the 4th generation to have visited the property.

“Due to the trauma of the conflict, violence, and my grandfather’s death, I was very apathetic to the idea of going there. Then, I decided to go, undertake the trip and visit the land. That was when the peace process started and the guerrillas started their withdrawal. That is to say that I returned to San Vicente and to the land after 31 years.”

“Victoria lived there with me for 10 days, and my daughter was the happiest girl, running through those fields, walking, seeing animals from that region.”

“I was delighted to see my daughter happy, riding a horse, waking up at 5 in the morning to feed the chickens, the pigs, the horses, going to see the cattle put together. It was an enjoyable experience for her, she really enjoyed the trip” (Carolina, July 2017).
Meanwhile, Milena says: “I regularly talk with my brothers, every eight days.”

“Javier lived with me on the farm for three years, so we have a good relationship.”

“With Ricardo, sometimes a long time passes without us speaking to each other, because he goes to the plains and stays there for weeks” (Ana Milena, September 2017).

Milena lives near Orlando, and she speaks frequently with Ricardo and Javier since her house is located in San Vicente del Caguán and has become a place of constant visits by the other two brothers on their way to El Danubio. However, Milena tells me that with Rodrigo she does not have any contact and that they have not spoken to each other since the problems because of the sale of La Quinta and Finlandia farms.

The last meeting that the Cabrera siblings had was around the issue of the land. “We had a problem, and we were stuck because of the problem of land price. But that issue has been sorted” (Jaime Cabrera, July 2019).

This meeting, apart from being the first meeting that the siblings had in a long time, also covered other matters.

When I had an opportunity to interview Rodrigo Cabrera for the first time in December 2016, he explained that he was the leader of the Cabrera brothers.

A few months later, Dioselina surrendered to the convincing power of her husband Ricardo and finally agreed to visit the land again. “I visited the farm in March 2017,” “When I went there, Enrique, I wanted to cry” (Dioselina, July 2017). The nostalgia for what was and is no longer there moved Dioselina.

The only member of the Cabrera Sánchez household who has flatly refused to visit the farm is the eldest daughter, Lucy. “Since my grandfather’s death I don’t want to know anything about that land. I don’t want to go back. It (the land) doesn’t have good memories” (Lucy, July 2017). However, due to her father’s constant trips to the farm, Lucy has been forced to be informed about what is happening in El Danubio. “I have a good relationship with my Dad. I worry every time he goes to the farm. And for that reason, we have to be updated” (Lucy, July 2017).

Javier Cabrera’s eldest son, Javier Ricardo, lives in Caquetá near Los llanos del Yarí, and is the 4th member of the 3rd generation who has visited El Danubio. “I haven’t been there for about eight years” (Javier Ricardo, September 2017). However, Jose Ricardo states that his cousin is attracted to the land. “He asked his Dad if he could give him a piece of land to put cattle, but I don’t know what my uncle Javier said” (Jose Ricardo, April 2019).

Ana Milena’s husband, Nalbiz Pastrana, visited the farm regularly, especially during the peace process.
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There were growing expectations at that time: “This year, God willing, we have a project that Rodrigo is leading. Let’s see what comes out of it. ... As a cooperative, let’s see what it will be. Surely to reseed, or to plant, perhaps to sow stevia, or palm, or maybe biodiesel” (Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera, December 2016).

However, Rodrigo did not have the approval of all the siblings so as a result, his proposals were not supported by the others. The siblings argued forcefully, and Rodrigo, disgusted, withdrew from the dialogue and that is how the discussions between the siblings about the land stopped.

At some point during the first half of 2017, a proposal to call a meeting came up. “It was Milena’s idea but practically I was the one who gathered them. I led them” (Hernando Cabrera, June 2017).

The Cabrera siblings’ meeting was held in April 2017 in Neiva, during which important decisions were taken. First, they had to solve the problems with Rodrigo. “It’s not that they distrust Rodrigo, what happens is that Rodrigo becomes rude, so they don’t like his way of being” (Hernando Cabrera, June 2017). “Rodrigo was doing well. However, they (the siblings) did not agree, and then they decided that they would do it alone, as if that was easy, and it turns out that in the end, they could not do anything” (Hernando Cabrera, June 2017).

This was the time when the Cabrera brothers commissioned him to periodically go to the farm and inform them what was happening there. “I visited the property frequently to know what was happening. Even last year the Cabreras sent me money to go and check” (Nalbiz, March 2019). No other member of the 3rd generation has returned or visited the Cabrera siblings’ property but this does not mean that they have no relationship with the matter of the farm.

The 3rd generation’s transition to ‘Phase 4: re-entry?’ happened subtly, compared to their uncles and aunt, since they had no prior relation with the land. Thus, it was necessary to follow them individually during their involvement with the issue of reactivating the farm.

Leonardo Francisco worked in the hato when he was a child. He is taking his last exams to be a lawyer, works in Neiva, and thanks to his work, news comes to him. Leonardo told me that his uncle Orlando and his aunt Milena, with whom he speaks regularly, keep him updated about the farm. On the other hand, on April 4, 2019 and while I was present at the business meeting held by the Cabreras with a possible investor, I could see how when some documents that Rodrigo and Hernando did not have in their possession were needed, Hernando immediately phoned Leonardo who arrived in just a few moments with the documents in his hand, and from that moment he attended the meeting.

As for Rodrigo’s children, Nicolás, the eldest, is very well aware of the land situation and his name is included in the deeds of ownership of the property, representing his father. “From a very young age those anecdotes which I told you were told to me about my grandfather as a farmer.”
Second, they decided who would lead the siblings’ decision process regarding any land-related business.

“Yes, we were confused, but they (the siblings) realized that it was not easy ... and we met during the holy week (April 2017), and then we reached an agreement that everyone would give me power so that, with Rodrigo’s help, I would lead the issue regarding a decision about any business although Rodrigo had previously said he would not get involved again in that” (Hernando Cabrera, June 2017).

“...everyone believes in me, and that’s why they decided that I would lead that issue. They know that I have led large companies all my life and that I work in the countryside. I have worked for 37 years in the oil palm sector, with large agricultural production companies. They know that I have knowledge about that and that gives them confidence. And I’ve been honest and responsible in life, in all the jobs I’ve had” (Hernando Cabrera, June 2017).

And third, the family understood that they had marked differences between themselves. “What happens is that when you have been able to study, you see things differently, and you have to learn how to handle a situation.”

“At that time, there was some knowledge about it, but it was never in detail,” “Anecdotes that my dad shared with me” (Nicolás, June 2017).

In July 2017, when I interviewed María Lucía, the youngest daughter from Rodrigo’s second marriage, she was not very informed about the El Danubio issue: “My Dad has told me that it is a matter of conflict, an inheritance left by my grandfather, I think, I’m not sure,” “But I don’t know the circumstances due to which that land was lost,” “My dad doesn’t tell me anything about it.” In fact, at the time of the interview, María Lucía explained to me that when it came to the subject of the farm, she felt ignored by her father: “My Dad was always reluctant to tell me things, like saying ‘this is not your problem.’” In response to that rejection, María became disinterested in the subject. However, on April 4, 2019, when I attended the Cabrera business meeting as an observer, at the beginning of the meeting, María Lucía was the only member of the 3rd generation present.

Ricardo and Dioselina’s youngest daughter, Vanessa, knows the history of the estate and her grandfather thanks to her parents. Vanessa does not ask much about what is currently happening with the land: “I think that is a subject for my Dad. It belongs to him.” However, she says she meets and talks with her cousins Leonardo and Javier Francisco, and with Miriam, her uncle Javier’s wife, about the land.

Hernando Cabrera’s wife, Angela, was also present during the business meeting in April 2019. She knows the issue of El Danubio and has discussed her plans about the estate with her husband. She was silent during the meeting, but very attentive to the conversation between Hernando, Rodrigo, and the investor’s representative.
“You should not confront your siblings just because you have the resources (i.e., money), and they don’t. You have to know how to handle the issue to avoid resentment, because if you make them feel bad, obviously you are not going to get absolutely anything from them, then, as is said colloquially, you have to play dumb” (Rodrigo Cabrera, December 2016).

Considering Rodrigo’s argument, it can be observed that there are differences in the family that, for him, are significant both in the level of education achieved and in their economic positions. The expectations among the siblings have been divided between selling the recovered land or doing something productive with it.

“Between all of us, we are going to unite to make a team.”
“We are going to form a cooperative, all the siblings. We are seven siblings; we will make a collective to see what can be done.”
“To exploit it, be it in livestock or in agriculture or it can be both, whatever we want because that decision is for the cooperative to take” (Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera, December 2016).
“It doesn’t mean that because I know about palm, it has to be palm. If a decision is taken to sow another crop, we can go with another crop.”
“We are willing to carry out any project – reforestation, plant trees for wood, cocoa, coffee, rice, whatever” (Hernando Cabrera Cabrera, April 2017).

Hernando Jr, an army officer and Hernando’s youngest son, says he has been hearing his father and uncles talk about El Danubio since he was about 6-years-old. He is well informed about what has happened to the land and has, in fact, said that talking about the farm is an exciting topic for him. However, he also states that the issue is not his business, even though he would like to be more involved.

Hernando’s eldest son, Luis Felipe, a doctor, says he is aware of the land through his father and uncle Rodrigo. However, he believes that his opinion “still doesn’t count” (Luis Felipe, October 2017).

Despite what Luis Felipe affirmed regarding his participation in the discussions about the farm, during the first quarter of 2017 he and his cousin Nicolás registered their participation that has been relevant to the current process of dialogue in the family about the reactivation of the farm. It all started in December 2016 when the Cabrera siblings, due to big differences among their positions, argued and Rodrigo, the leader till then, withdrew from the dialogue. The conversations between the brothers about the land and the farm were suspended. Nicolás and Luis Felipe described their intervention during an interview as:

“Now, that we are regaining possession of the property there is an anecdote that I believe happened at the end of last year. It was during this conflict of leadership; they (the 2nd generation) did not agree to pay for the deeds, obtain permits, and deal with bureaucratic problems.”
The idea was cultivating a crop like palm, for which 15 million per hectare is needed, or forests, for which 20 million pesos per hectare are also needed” (Hernando Cabrera Cabrera, June 2017).

“Yes, sell it, lease it, whatever comes out, the business that results.”

“They say there is a business that consists of leasing the land to plant sugarcane. Well, we can lease it to someone else. I don’t want to go over there because of my age, because of the illness that I have had (i.e., my heart surgery), one is no longer able to do that intense activity, that’s for a young person with plenty of energy” (Jaime Cabrera Cabrera, July 2019).

“’I’m more inclined to sow teca (sowing wood products).”

“The business that I have visualized is planting; a 30-year business, which begins to produce seven years later, by seasons” (Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera, December 2016).

On her part, Ana Milena finds herself in a contradictory situation: “Personally, I would like to sell it because I know what we are going to have to face. Ricardo and I have always been there. We have fought, we have struggled, FARC has said many things to us, and, in turn, we have had to tell them a few things. So why continue with those problems?”

“My father decided to step aside (and he said) we are going to leave things like that, you don’t agree on anything and then I can’t continue moving forward” (Nicolás, June 2017).

“With Nicolás, my cousin, my uncle Rodrigo’s son, we managed the matter because they (the 2nd generation) was fighting. (then we acted) so that the problems with the other siblings were sorted out and they could finish the paperwork” (Luis Felipe, October 2017).

“So, during period of time when conversations were suspended (among the 2nd generation) I was moving ahead by contacting friends and a business opportunity was created. With this possibility, I came to tell my dad firmly to resume the conversations” (Nicolás, June 2017).

“Dialogues were taken up again later, but to achieve that, I had to talk to Luis Felipe. I asked him to speak with my uncle Hernando, so that my uncle Hernando also pushed and reached this agreement that has been in force till today, June 23. My father Rodrigo said, ‘Let’s continue with the issue, let’s take it forward and take that decision of doing it, but on the condition that everyone signs a power of attorney so that it is a single person who takes the decisions’” (Nicolás, June 2017).

However, it seems that not only Nicolás and Luis Felipe exerted pressure over their parents to solve the confrontation between members of the 2nd generation, because Carolina during an interview mentioned how she and her siblings exerted influence on her father, her aunt Milena, and her uncle Jaime:
“To have a better quality of life for my husband who suffers from diabetes, it’s a possibility.”
“Well, Enrique, at times I want like to sell because of our economic situation, because of everything, that’s why. If we can have another financial situation, and if we can have a project, if one can implement it then it will be magnificent because we really like the countryside” (Ana Milena Cabrera, September 2017).
Hence, Ana Milena is torn between present economic needs and the possibility of a future reactivating the land she likes so much, but for which she will be asked for more patience, time, and effort.

Considering all this and after reaching an agreement, during June 2017 each landowner issued ample and sufficient power authorizing Hernando Cabrera to act on their behalf. On June 5, Jaime and Milena were the first to issue and sign the document; Javier, Ricardo, and Orlando did it on June 9; and Nicolás on behalf of Rodrigo on June 20.

“What first came before us was selling, leasing, or the possibility of going to work on the land, it would be perfect but it needs a significant economic injection.”
“We have made contacts, and some are offering us purchase and other leases, so we will see which is the best option” (Hernando Cabrera Cabrera, June 2017).

“Not now, we don’t have difficulties within the family. We have talked among siblings.”

“I said to my Dad, instead of fighting among yourselves, name only one person to represent you. Who is the most tolerant? Well, my uncle Hernando.”
“Then, we talked to my Dad’s sister, my aunt Milena. We have always been in touch with her and we told her to make my uncle Hernando in charge, it would be better.”
Later, I had an opportunity to talk to my uncle Jaime, who lives on the coast and he said, ‘Yes, let’s name one and only one.’”
“Then they took away the power that my uncle Rodrigo had and transmitted it to my uncle Hernando, and they all agreed.”
“And so far it is working” (Carolina, July 2017).

In April 2017, the Cabrera siblings met again. They took decisions regarding the leadership, as well as ideas and projects that involved the land. The paperwork related to the legalization of the land ownership was finalized in full on July 11, 2017, when the corresponding authorities issued the deeds of ownership of the property in favor of the Cabrera siblings.

Regarding the influence of the cousins, Luis Felipe, Nicolás, Carolina, and her brothers, there was no mention of them during the interviews with the members of the 2nd generation. Moreover, they affirm that the 3rd generation has not interfered in what has happened so far with the land.

Despite what was said by the members of the 2nd generation about the participation of the 3rd generation in the issue of El Danubio, the estate exists for the young Cabrera descendants.
“Right now, Hernando and Rodrigo have a power of attorney, and whatever they do is going to be the right decision” (Ana Milena Cabrera, September 2017).

“This was when we decided to leave Hernando and Rodrigo in charge. Whatever they wanted to do was the right decision. I agree with that. The business that Rodrigo and Hernando decide to do is the right thing” (Jaime Cabrera Cabrera, July 2019).

The 3rd generation also figured during this process. To remember, when the founder was still alive, El Danubio was at its maximum productivity, and Ricardo’s three eldest sons, Jaime’s eldest son, and Javier’s two eldest sons were already present; the latter two also worked on the farm. Also, some years before the peace process some of them visited the land -- Vanessa (Ricardo’s daughter) and Javier Francisco (Javier’s son). In addition, at the end of 2016, Dioselina (Ricardo’s wife), Carolina (Ricardo’s daughter), and little Vicky (Carolina’s daughter, 4th generation) visited the land.

During the interviews with the Cabrera siblings from the 2nd generation, the interventions of three other family members that belong to the 3rd generation stood out: Jose Ricardo Cabrera Sánchez, Nicolás Cabrera Correa, and Luis Felipe Cabrera Vargas. Luis Felipe and Nicolás have never been to El Danubio.

“Two years ago, we started talking about that also related to the theme of the peace process.” “Rumors spread that the guerrillas were possibly going to start allowing the owners to re-enter their land, and then we started thinking and considering that it could be possible.”

“Since I learned that they (the 2nd generation) were in the process of returning to take possession of the farm and of some other things, I started telling the people closest to me, ‘We have this land, we want to do something, but we have neither the capacity nor the money to do it’” (Nicolás, June 2017).

Ideas about what to do with the land are diverse, they come and go between the young generation and some of the 2nd generation members, and according to Nicolás this is explained by the marked differences between the cousins.

“I believe that the subject of academic preparation should be considered, without the intention of belittling someone, to project some entrepreneurship, to resume activities. But I would say, leave aside the option to sell because it will always be present. There are not more than two or three who are thinking of appropriating and making it productive again. I say two or three because it would be selfish to think that I am the only one who is thinking of developing something there” (Nicolás, June 2017).

Some like Javier Hernando Cabrera Fuertes want to work on the land even though he knows little about it. He says that if it was possible for him to play a part in decisions about the property, he would like to have an excellent business instead of selling.
“Nicolás is one of those who suggested that it would be a good idea, for example, to plant teca, and some other possibilities” (Rodrigo Cabrera, December 2016). In addition, what makes Nicolás notable is his inclusion in the land ownership documents as an owner on behalf of Rodrigo.

Nicolás and Luis Felipe Cabrera (Hernando’s oldest son) had a lot to do with the meeting that later meant that the family continued conversations about how to exploit the land. However, the participation of the two cousins, members of the 3rd generation, was not mentioned by the members of the 2nd generation. “They are interested (3rd generation), but it is better for them not to get involved because they are going to make things more complicated” (Hernando Cabrera Cabrera, June 2017).

Finally, Jose Ricardo Cabrera Sánchez, Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s only male child, stood out for always being next to his father. For the members of the 2nd generation, his participation is obvious.

“Jose Ricardo has been there, Carolina has also been there. The others, as they have their own jobs, have not been able to go there” (Hernando Cabrera Cabrera, June 2017).

“And Jimmy too, both of them (Jose Ricardo and Ricardo) live happily there” (Jaime Cabrera Cabrera, July 2019).

“As a business, I would like, and that is what I am aiming for, to sell a portion (of the farm) so that it becomes a resource, money so that my uncles have that money at this time because of their age and their needs. Also, for diversifying, for having other income. I see that land, leased, basically to generate oxygen bonds in the next 10 years. I would very much like that” (Nicolás, June 2017).

“Of course, I don’t say I won’t come back. When I came from there, I said I would never return, but look ... now he is already involved, he (Ricardo) wants to go back there, but it scares me,” “I am terrified, and now we are going there” (Dioselina, December 2016). When expressing her thoughts, Dioselina is torn between the fear of violence and the possibility of having her own business, dreaming of an elusive prosperity. For her, the decision to return has already been taken, “He is already involved, he wants to return,” she says, looking at her husband. She is going to return, but warns us that this time she will get out of there only when she dies. And despite everything she says that she would like to start a business there. “For example, to begin with, a dairy” (Dioselina, July 2017).

“I loved it. I am not a lover of farms or anything like that, but to go back there, to resume everything, to see what there is to do. There is a lot to work on. There are gorgeous landscapes, real land. I arrived delighted, not because it’s theirs (2nd generation) or it’s mine (3rd generation). My dream is, as I said before to my siblings, I asked them to make a partnership between us, all four, to set up a dairy and cattle” (Carolina, July 2017).
Today, three members of the family stay on El Danubio – Javier Cabrera Cabrera, whom I failed to interview, but with whom I frequently communicate via cell phone. Javier visits the farm regularly, sends me photos of the animals on the farm, and we also discuss the articles I write for a newspaper in Colombia. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera and his son José Ricardo also stay there. The farm is a full-time job for both of them. They remain on the farm for long periods, Ricardo has hired a family and a farm steward who help him with the cattle he has managed to accumulate, and with the daily production of milk and cheese. When I had the opportunity to visit the farm, Ricardo accompanied me, we toured the land on horseback, in a van, and an old tractor and he showed me his cattle and I also accompanied his workers during their daily activities. I could also see the construction of the new house on the farm, where Ricardo plans to live with Dioselina and his family. Ricardo has a lot of hope from the farm, and he even proposed that I invest some money and buy cattle to have on El Danubio.

Currently, Ricardo is working on the farm and with a reduced number of cattle produces milk and cheese in small quantities. However, his brothers, Hernando and Rodrigo, continue their efforts to do something big with El Danubio.

“If there were a project, or someone to invest, and one could be there, it would obviously be much better. We talked (with my Dad) and supposedly my uncle Hernando will have a project to plant teca, to sow something and get oil,” “Come on, include me as a partner in the project” (Jose Ricardo, April 2019).

“I would love to have a farm. I think it’s an excellent opportunity, maybe not having the whole farm in case it is enormous, because that can generate a lot of conflict of interest.”

“But I think it would be an excellent option to have a place that one says is mine, that is, I have somewhere to go, whether it is a house, an estate, whatever” (María Lucía, July 2017).

“One hopes that at some point something good will happen for one to return there. I would not sell that. If we had a chance, we would be there” (Javier Ricardo, September 2017).

There are those who like Leonardo Francisco think that they would not like to be considered a part of the farm, and others like Angela, who do not approve of the family getting involved in projects on that land.

“I would not like my husband to go back and face that over there, no. I have told him that it is best that they sell. I really do not want Hernando to take a risk over there, the area has a history that has not been easy. Violence, and everything else is hard” (Angela, July 2017).
Chapter 7

On April 4, 2019, and on the invitation of the Cabrera brothers Rodrigo and Hernando, I had an opportunity to be present during the meeting they held with the representative of a foundation that included foreign investors in search of 50,000 hectares of land. The meeting was a result of the efforts of both sides, the brothers and a representative of the investors.

The business meeting was held in Neiva, and was initially attended by the Cabrera brothers Rodrigo and Hernando, Rodrigo’s daughter María Lucía, Hernando’s wife Angela, the investors’ representative, and me as an observer.

During the meeting, Rodrigo made a presentation on the land, explained the property documents, and also made it clear that the decision of the seven current owners of the land lay with Hernando, who worked on behalf of all of them.

Some aspects of the proposed business were discussed, the possibility of a land concession contract for 20 or 30 years, and a price that ranged between COP 1,500,000 and COP 2,000,000 annually per hectare were also discussed.

Some documents were needed during the meeting, and Hernando contacted Javier’s son, Leonardo Francisco, and who is a lawyer by telephone and who arrived minutes later with the documents and then joined the meeting. The meeting lasted about an hour.

“At a particular moment, when they started with differences regarding the price (of that land), I told my husband, I am convinced that if they tell me tomorrow that they will give me 20 pesos for that land, I would sell it because it is more productive to have the money instead of a number of hectares of land that I cannot get to enjoy or cultivate, that I can’t visit because of the distance, health, or whatever. It is more productive to have 20 pesos or 30 pesos instead of something that has been abandoned” (Elsa Bautista, July 2019).

There are also those who have a more flexible opinion. Hernando’s youngest son, Hernando Jr, would like to have that property. However, he says that the decision to sell depends on the peace achieved in the region. If it is safe, he would like to stay, but if it means waiting another 20 years, it is better to sell. If the environment is safe enough to live there, then with his eyes closed he would advise his father to go there.

“Claiming this land is not part of my priorities, and neither is going there to work because it is not my profession, what I like is surgery.” “I would tell him (his father) to sell half of it and the other half to be shared between brothers and stepbrothers, and he could keep a piece of the land so that if he wants he can lease it to someone. (Only) if there is a business that is producing and being managed properly, would I be a partner. When my parents die I will be forced to be part of the business” (Luis Felipe, April 2017).
Currently, Ricardo CC, helped by Jose Ricardo and Javier CC, continues to work the land, and the land and the family continue waiting to see what will happen next.

Even though there are some members of the Cabrera family, such as Javier Hernando and Carlos Felipe, to whom the name El Danubio means nothing, little by little the theme of the farm and the land seems to be gaining adherent.
8 In the beginning there is family habitus

Every human being is essentially an individual, and as an individual (s)he perceives and interprets the world in a particular and unique way. There is no way that I, as an individual, will perceive the world as you do, even though we could both be sharing the same scenario. This uniqueness has its foundation in the history of each person, and that same singularity explains the heterogeneity present in a community. A hermit, isolated on a mountain, in solitude perceives his/her context and interprets it, and according to his/her perceptions, rationalizes and acts. Over time, in each performance, the hermit obtains and accumulates experiences, and from these, (s)he acts again.

When this hermit meets a second hermit living on the other side of the mountain (s)he discovers that (s)he is not alone. Initially there is socializing and sharing of perceptions of the context and exchanging interpretations with his/her fellow person. These two human beings say goodbye, and return to their respective faces of the mountain; they continue to be present in the same context, but stop interacting and socializing. If, on the contrary, the two individuals form a group of two to share the context, then there will be the appearance of a social group in the mountains. Even when they belong to the same social group, they will continue to perceive and interpret their individual experiences, which are unique to each of them. Hence, they will need to interact and socialize enough so that they can collectively take the next decision. In this way, the group begins the development of its history.

However, this does not mean that individuality is lost. Each of the hermits, as an individual being, will assimilate the experiences of collective action and store them for him/herself as part of his/her own experience.

So far, we have socialization and a social group.

Now imagine that the two hermits discover that in the neighboring mountain, there are fruits that they have never seen and that two other hermits also inhabit it. Our first two hermits propose a fruit exchange to their counterparts. The hermits interact, socialize again, and according to their individual experiences in getting the fruits, they propose getting something for the exchange. Now an economic reason is added to socialization and the social group that motivates action.

After the first successful exchange, they continue to do so repetitively till for some reason in the context, perhaps out of necessity, or by their own decision, the action is modified or stopped. We call this process of the social group acting because it is motivated by an economic reason,
‘habitualization’ when it is seen as a process, and ‘habitus,’ when it is seen as the final product of the process. Once ‘habitus’ originates, it becomes a part of the group’s memory staying in the memory of all the hermits. With the arrival of winter, the exchange activity is suspended. Hermits dissolve the group heading to their mountains till the next spring. The habitus generated by working together and the experience gained during the fruit exchange, is imprinted in history, in memories, and in each hermit’s memory. The habitus, like the hermits, enters a period of inactivity.

With the arrival of spring, the fruits arrive, and the conditions are again favorable for the exchange. Although months have passed, knowing that there are other varieties of fruits and that there is a way to obtain them, the hermits meet again, and habitus around their small business is reactivated.

My case study deals with the entrepreneurial journey of a family in business. I have recognized that the family’s history and its land played an important role in this journey. Thus, inspired by Bourdieu (1989), I can say that the conduct of those who are either in the family or in the family business is not fortuitous. It involves practices consistent with the situations in their respective social scenarios (Bourdieu, 1989) which are identified by Bourdieu as a “permanent way of being” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 39), or what he calls “habitus.”

Existing studies have built alternatives to habitus. For example, Tagiuri and Davis (1996, p. 203) suggest that the family involved in a family business proceeds to regulate its members to act considering a “family mold.” The authors’ observation is significant since it informs us of the existence of a mold based on the collective condition of the family organization. However, Tagiuri and Davis (1996) observation is formulated in a scenario in which the family business exists, which leads me to consider that the existence of the family business essentially establishes two crucial and different moments in the family which are differentiated from each other by the organization that is adopted. The family’s molding capacity is mentioned in literature on human relations affirming that “though people shape their environments, they are in turn, shaped by them” (Clark, 2016, p. 748). In the Cabrera’s family case, the family members were active “co-constructors” of their context (Johannisson, 2011, p. 145).

Another notion is the “organizing context” by Johannisson (2011). This concept is similar to Bourdieu’s habitus. In the organizing context, Johannisson (2011) shows that individuals unfold their interactions in their daily environment. This allows me to see from this social space that the community is an environment conducive for getting involved in entrepreneurial activities. Yet, the organizing context and habitus are not identical, they highlight a different perspective in the use of time and with it, the origins of an individual’s involvement in

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145 A discussion based on the difference between the *chronos*, which is adopted by Pierre Bourdieu, and *kairos*, taken by Bengt Johannisson. Explained by Johannisson (2010, p. 203), *chronos* is defined as “the basic temporal order then has to be
entrepreneurship. But the organizing context is also a social space (Johannisson, 2011). In essence, it is a social space that influences the community that occupies it.

With Taguiri and Davis (1996) so-called mold, I observe how alternative concepts of habitus converge. On the one hand, we have Pierre Bourdieu for whom “family is a social space” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 88), a description that inspires me to visualize a family business in the same way. In other words, family and family business are two spaces or different social settings. Bourdieu also observed that social spaces exerted an influence on those who occupied them and that this influence had its origins in the motivations that shaped these settings (Bourdieu, 1989). Thus, while developing the case study of the Cabrera family, I identified the space in which the family was not involved in the business as the “family habitus,” I identified a scenario that records the involvement of the family in a family business as “family business habitus.” Conveniently for me, Bourdieu (2005, p. 212) argues that when there is habitus, a “time screen” opens going from “stimulus” to “reaction,” and within it can be seen the individuals and the community. So, a family or a family business has not always been there. A family habitus and a family business habitus are required to be molded by the family’s history. Thus, I affirm that in the history of the Cabrera family, which became involved in a family business, there are two spaces: The first is that offered by the family in its organization as such – the family habitus. The second is provided by the family involved in the family business – the family business habitus.

Differentiating between the two habitus is important since each habitus refers to different domains. This was evidenced by the absence, or on the contrary, the presence of the family business in the Cabrera’s family case. Even when these two habitus exist for the same family, they will differ because they are molded as per different needs and meanings, a tendency very typical of individuals (Clark, 2016, p. 750). This is how I observed the family molding itself considering its family organization in the family habitus. I see it molding in the family business habitus considering that in its family organization there is a family and a business involved. The existence of the Cabrera family and its actions in both habitus can be visualized through the development of their history.

Based on the case of the Cabrera family and its land, I define family habitus as “a result of the family’s collective actions when, even without the presence of a business, it interacts motivated strictly by economic purposes.” For Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo and his family, the family habitus emerged with the existence of the family, the land, and the possibility of working on the land. With the appearance of his family nucleus, he socialized his experiences and history with his wife, and children. He found his family to be a group, a community or a network with which he moved in search of maturing the business idea that

replaced,” and kairos “is timing or catching the right moment.” In the interpretation of my case the chronological order of events and the influence of ‘a before and after period’ on the outcome of my research is essential. I also adopted the concept of habitus but I must add that I followed the idea of the chronos.

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provided them with the economic reasons to act. It is how the founder prepared his sons with the future business in mind. As Ana Milena said, “Dad taught us that life in the country is better than in the city because there is no hunger. He took us to the farm, taught us about the land, cattle, horses, races, and taught us about everything.” And by Ricardo and Jaime: “I arrived at Yari in January 1963, I was approximately 13 years old with my father and Don Oliverio Lara, and from that moment we stayed. Oliverio came to buy land, and my father worked for him as a manager,” Ricardo Jr recalls. Ricardo’s words were confirmed by Dioselina when, during her interview, she recounted how Ricardo Jr unconditionally supported and accompanied the founder in his work. Jaime remembered, “My dad and I were very close. He listened to me a lot and I listened to him. It was then that he asked me to manage Satia farm, while he managed the land of the Llano.” It was ultimately a collective task, since whoever was the business founder would take his eldest son with him to prepare the work on the land and at the same time he also prepared Jaime to be in charge of one of his farms in Algeciras. In time, both sons ended up working on El Danubio.

The family business habitus, in contrast, refers to the collective actions of the Cabrera family and its interactions motivated by economic purposes, which are now conditioned by the existence of the family business. Once Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo acquired the land of El Danubio he and his family developed a great business and they built history by being both individually and collectively engaged in the business. Individually each family member developed his/her own story, which they assimilated by nesting it in their experiences: “It is my habitat, where I grew up, where I learned, where I felt protected, the place that makes my heart beat,” said Javier Ricardo. Collectively, by interacting and socializing, the group forged its own experiences, which were lodged in each family member’s knowledge and individual memory. Ricardo told me as we toured the land, “Jaime, Javier, Rodrigo, Hernando, and Milena came to this land; we all came here to contribute.” Thus, through the stories of the family members, the family can be seen moving to live together close to both the farm and the founder. Life and the hato are closely intertwined making it impossible to see one without the other.

However, the family habitus also reveals its permanence in memory, which was evident when listening to Ricardo speak during his interview in December 2016 when, even before recovering the land, he said: “We all know rurality because we were raised in the countryside. In the cattle business, I’m the one with more experience. Hernando is an agronomist, he knows a lot about crops. Javier knows about machinery. Jaime as well. Rodrigo is an engineer like Orlando. We have spoken, and banks have answered positively. We are seven of us and banks have offered some money per person to invest in building a house, corrals, improvements, and the rest in cattle.” Rodrigo insisted at that time, “Our whole family is a peasant family.” This last statement by Rodrigo has a lot of meaning, considering that at the time he said it, in December 2016, the family did not even have the land, and yet he considered themselves farmers. The family business
offered the family a scenario with an economic reason in which the habitus concerning the family business flourished.

The family’s stories were lived collectively but assimilated individually. Once the family lost the land and the family business was dissolved, everything changed for the founder and the habitus lost its framework. With the dissolution of the collectivity, the family members continued with their lives; they brought their memories and experiences anchored in a dormant family business habitus developed during the family’s involvement in the family business. Habitus was thus “linked to individual history” of the Cabrera family (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 86) and it was housed and remained in each of the family members who interacted and socialized during the existence of El Danubio, those who acted together as they were motivated by the same economic reasons. Over the years, the peace process provided the Cabrera family some aspects that they had lost with the family business, “The habitus continuously thwarted by the situation may be the site of explosive forces which may await the opportunity to break out” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 87). After more than 30 years, the family recovered its land and it collectively reacted. Individual members reacted as they were influenced by the habitus stored in their memories and in their history. However, not all the conditions were the same as they were during the business, and that explains the difficulty that habitus may have faced in its resurfacing.

As illustrated in Figure 15 (see p. 72), the family’s development, demarcated by events, allows us to appreciate two large areas differentiated by a horizontal long dash dot line: the family habitus in the lower part and the family habitus in the upper part. The events show the family moving through both the habitus, that is, through the period when the family business did not exist, and during its existence. The absence and existence of the business allows us to consider and see a before and after period. I explain this inspired by Aldrich and Yang (2012). For these authors, entrepreneurs count on, among others, all the “knowledge and experience accumulated” through “the life course” (Aldrich & Yang, 2012, p. 13). They state this specifically about new ventures. Extending the application of this statement to the Cabrera family, that is, considering the reactivation of the family business, it was necessary to include the accumulated knowledge and experience of the Cabrera family members that they acquired during their time in the family business. Although the family is the same, during the absence of the business I identify the Cabreras as ‘the family,’ and during their family business as ‘the familyFB.’ To form with what is required by the family habitus, it was important to consider how “the family molds the behavior of its members” (Tagiuri & Davis, 1996, p. 203), the specific family-life context of violence and displacement for which it regulated the habitus.

Experience and knowledge about the events that happened in each habitus and their collective meanings, were printed in the respective habitus. Also, all the information about its family networks and “patterned relationships” were also imprinted in the respective habitus (Dubini & Aldrich, 1991, p. 305). Now, remembering my story of the hermits, through the habitualization process, we observe family Cabrera molding its family habitus, and the familyFB molding its
family business habitus. Next, I explain in detail the Cabrera family’s habitualization process in the family business.

8.1 Habitualization of the Cabreras to the family and to the family business

Operationally, a family business researcher regards the existence of the business by studying the period that includes the family's involvement in the business. By doing this the researcher allows the business to impose a restriction of time conditioned by the existence of the family business. Thus, for the researcher, the presence of the business becomes essential. Such a period covers the start of the family business until its dissolution. However, the Cabrera family business period showed that business life was not a window of time wide enough to include the Cabrera’s family-life context. This meant that before and after the business, there were still two additional crucial periods that needed to be examined. The business did not condition the existence of the family; the formation of the family preceded El Danubio, thereby leading to the possibility of reactivating the business.

In the presence of the family business, a major construction called familiness happened. This included the family’s involvement with the business, the ‘zero’ moment and the very final moment in which the family left the business.

Thus, beyond the family business El Danubio, for the family and its history, the existence of the business marked one of the periods of its existence, which is far from its whole history. Affirming that during a family’s development, there is a history beyond the family business means that it can be found looking back in time, or conversely, in the period following the closure of the business.

Using the family development theory, identifying the most relevant events in the family-life context, I developed Figure 15 ‘Habitualization of the family in the business’ (presented in Chapter 3, p. 72). In this figure, I drew a line in time that went through the development of the family’s life. This timeline provided a window of time spanning family development. Therefore, considering that familiness went from the beginning to the end of the family’s involvement in/with El Danubio, there is a period ‘before familiness’ and one ‘after familiness.’ I organized these periods as ‘Phase 1: Before familiness,’ ‘Phase 2: Through familiness – The family business,’ and ‘Phase 3: Post-familiness.’ The possibility that the reactivation of the family business may occur during the Cabrera family’s existence marks its entry into the fourth phase of the family history, which I call ‘Phase 4: Re-entry?’ This section discusses the events featuring each phase in detail based on Figure 15. Habitualization is an ongoing process that occurred throughout all the four phases and it was also enriched by different organizations and the economic reasons adopted by the family. Organizations like the family and family business and their economic reasons, shape the habitus and then all experiences and knowledge from them are linked to the family’s human capital.
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With the presence of the family business, I adopted the entrepreneurial process as a perspective through which I focused exclusively on events related to the family’s involvement in the business, and the business’ involvement with the family. Each event was capitalized on collectively and individually as an experience. I recognized the capacity of the events as facilitators in the creation of both family human capital and social capital. Considered contextually, each event in the family’s life offers a perspective of the development of the family concerning the land and its contextual circumstances. The dynamic relationship between the family and the land allowed me to observe what the projection of the habitus would be like.

Through the case of the Cabrera family and its land I identified four gives only three different events (i.e., property events, facilitator of human capital, and facilitator of family social capital, contextual circumstances) whose interpretation is essential. For instance, the presence of land is essential in the farming business is important. The land is present from the very beginning of the family’s history, which dates back to 1595, suggestively indicating the influence of the land on the family. I mark 1958, when the ownership of the land came to Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo by way of inheritance, as a ‘property event,’ considering his relationship with the land. As a ‘property event’ it directly affected the production of ‘family human capital-generic’ at the individual level. It represented the culmination of the family’s influence on the individual. However, for an individual it also depicted the historical point at which the influence of the entered the habitus’ dynamics in the family nucleus.

In 1963, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo was employed by a renowned landowner and he arrived on the land of Los llanos del Yari for the first time, accompanied by his eldest son. The father and son generated and shared experiences while managing Los Llanos del Yari. Their experiences were representative of the family’s experiences and were thus assimilated based on the family habitus. I call these events involving the context that offered the family an opportunity to accumulate experiences and knowledge related to work on the land ‘facilitators of human capital,’ which directly affected the production of family human capital, which in this case is ‘generic.’

In 1964, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo was commissioned to work the land that years later made up El Danubio. Even though this event can also be seen as a generator of experiences, it allowed me to highlight the social effect it had on the family. These types of events had a direct effect on the Cabrera family and its production of social capital, putting its internal map of interactions to the test. I identify these as ‘event facilitators of family social capital,’ generating a need for a contextual rearrangement in the family, which was consistent with the requirements of its habitus. The need for experience and the influence of the land demanded the production of family social capital through the family’s collective actions.

Finally, there were events that had a direct effect on the production of capital, but which originated outside the family. Although they also had a significant impact on the community requiring its reaction, it is important to highlight their
peculiar origins. I call these events ‘contextual circumstances.’ During the habitualization process, the family and its members’ reactions to these events were expected to follow both their habitus and economic reasons. The first such event in the Cabrera family and its land occurred in 1965, when Oliverio Lara was murdered by his workers. This event had a direct effect on the Cabrera family and its production of social capital. I present more details of each event by discussing each phase of the habitualization.

**Phase 1: Before familiness / pre-familiness**

In a study of the Cabrera’s family-life context, the phase ‘pre-familiness’ is the period that preceded the involvement of the family in the family business and it preceded the existence of the business itself. This phase establishes a distinction of an entirely different period in the history of the family when the family business did not exist. In the Cabrera family, the phase pre-familiness focuses on the background of the family business, El Danubio, for understanding the family’s past (1958-1970). The living history of the Cabrera family during the pre-familiness phase formed an antecedent of the family business. It implied the formation of ‘human capital-generic’, family social capital, and access to the land, which took place because of the family’s origins in interactions with the legacy of its ancestors. In Cabrera family’s past, there were multiple family interactions that eventually led to the family habitus. However, projecting backward in time the Cabrera family occupied a space representing family development. At this point far from the family business, I visualized those family aspects that contributed to family development and that eventually led to the establishment of the family business.

The case of the Cabrera family and its land is illustrated in Figure 24 (see p. 200). I started from a ‘property event’ which is the first feature considered in the ‘family habitus.’ The beginning of Phase 1, or pre-familiness, is marked by the influence of a ‘property event’ which directly influenced the production of ‘human capital-generic’. This property event, ‘before familiness,’ is constituted as history’s contribution to the construction of a family habitus influenced by the family’s history. Once this influential family trait was accepted it was integrated into the family habitus and the production of family social capital and human capital began at the individual level, as expressed by Jaime Cabrera Cabrera, “I got to know Satia farm when I was very young, and I remember it very well, since it was in my charge for five years.” All experiences played a part in the form that the family habitus took. With ownership of the land, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo, initially and individually accepted its influence, revalidating his habituated closeness to it. His relationship with the land at that moment was nothing more than a family habit generated by his ancestors. However, this property event, through interactions and experiences was shared collectively with his family nucleus of five children and his wife. In this way, the land’s influence permeated the group. With interactions, the effect of the property event was transmitted from the individual level to the collective level. It was now present in the experiences
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not only of individuals but of the family. By accepting the influence of the land through the property event, the family also found and shared an economic reason for their actions. With the family and its interactions generating and assimilating experiences around the land this gave the family the economic reason to act and so the family generated a habitus of its habitualization to the family.

Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo and his 12-year-old son’s arrival in Los Llanos del Yari marked the beginning of the production of experience in working the land for the family. Although knowledge production had started some time earlier for 46-year-old Ricardo, now he shared the stored experiences with his son. New experiences were acquired by the two as a family, a direct effect on the production of ‘human capital-generic’. Experiences and knowledge about working the land corresponded to ‘human capital-generic’. Collectively, through the ‘facilitators of human capital,’ the family habitus was nourished and strengthened. The motivating economic reason was part of the habitus and required knowledge and experiences of the family. Though the habitus was generated collectively, it was also stored individually in the two Cabreras and shared with the whole family. Once the habitus was exposed to family socialization, the habitualization process imprinted it on the family habitus.

The map of family interactions, and with it their collective actions, were put to test through the events that directly affected the production of family social capital, and which I identify as ‘event facilitators of family social capital.’ During the pre-familiness phase, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo’s appointment as administrator required the family to demonstrate the strength of their family relationships and their commitment to complying with that economic reason that in their habitualization process was integrated with the family habitus. During this event, not only did Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo move contextually but the event also required other movements, such as Ricardo Jr moving with him to the distant land of the Yari to work shoulder to shoulder with him. As Dioselina Sánchez said, ‘When they went to take over the business of the land that years later became El Danubio, Don Ricardo said to his son, ‘If you follow me, Ricardo, I will take over the business,’ and his son answered, ‘Yes Daddy! and we are going to live in San Vicente.’’’ In the same way, the farms owned by the family required that another of the older brothers, Jaime, take them under his responsibility and the other children entered into activities on the land. With the new roles in the family, the interactions necessarily changed, evidencing at all times the family rally around the economic reason printed in the family habitus with a direct effect on the production of family social capital. In the case of the Cabrera family, family social capital was produced from the interactions of family members – so far in the absence of the business.
Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo’s boss Oliverio Lara’s murder in 1965 constituted a collective test for the family. Contextually, what happened to the family was that the death of the owner of the land on which Ricardo and Ricardo Jr had worked in recent years offered the family a unique opportunity of getting the ownership of the land. The event could well have meant a family debacle, considering that the Cabrera family was organized around the work and management that their father and older brother carried out on the property. However, the family habitus was exposed and so the family’s interactions socialized the event in direct correspondence with the economic reasons that governed the family’s actions. During the event, the family interacted to assimilate the impact produced by the unexpected incident. In Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo and his family, there was a group of “motivated entrepreneurs” taking an opportunity to access “resources” (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986, p. 3). It was possible to visualize how close the family business was. Such a reaction can only show strength in the family social capital produced in the family. However, the event was not provided by the family. Instead, it was a result of its immediate
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context, making me consider it as an ‘event of contextual circumstances.’ This event is located in the area of family social capital according to its direct effect on the production of family social capital, and highlighted its origin is external to the family. With family support, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo decided to buy the land of El Danubio from the Lara family. In this way, he started heading towards the formation of a new social organization.

The phase pre-familiness allowed me to follow the development of the family from individual stories, recreating the interactions between family members and each member’s particular relationships with the group and of the group with each member. During the pre-familiness phase, the family organization prevailed in adopting a future shape from a dynamic interaction and socialization of this group that was influenced both historically and contextually, thus forging the family habitus. In this way, history and context acted in the Cabreras’ habitus in which the family was gathered, and in which all members who subsequently came to the family were also included and influenced. In my case, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo, had a past before becoming an entrepreneur. He was born in rurality and grew up surrounded by land and the agricultural business. As a family member, he was exposed to the influences of his family and work activities, that is, he was influenced by the family capital of the Cabrera Perdomo family. The family forged its family capital and clung to the land and the farm considering these as a family matter, which explains the actions that led him to establish a similar relationship with his family and land. This experience culminated in his participation in the succession through which he became a landowner. With support from his family, he initiated a transition to becoming an entrepreneur with the family capital exerting an influence through his shared day-to-day experiences. Ricardo’s experiences as an employee were relevant for this since he had worked for a well-known landowner and rancher in the region.

Thanks to the Cabrera family’s entrepreneurial process during the development of the family, I observed the reactions of the family members and their effect on the dynamics of interaction and socialization of the group. Advancing through the first phase, built on the influences to which he had been exposed, Ricardo started sharing his ‘human capital-generic’, or his experiences, with his family nucleus – his wife and children – who, in turn, were influenced by the context. Observing the formation of the family social capital, I estimated the beginning of the construction of the Cabrera family network a little before the birth of the founder’s eldest son in 1951. Pre-familiness thus showed that the family was influenced by the family habitus and it reacted according to the experiences which were present in ‘human capital-generic’ and family social capital. As Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo’s children confirmed, he shared his experiences with his nuclear family, as the children were being prepared for getting involved in the farm business. Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo was not only considering who could be involved, but was also preparing his whole nuclear family through the formation of ‘human capital-generic’, shared through their interactions. For Ricardo and his successors, trust was important in a context characterized by instability and violence. Now Ricardo had his own family

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nucleus and he relied strongly on it. Thus, the presence of the land was accompanied by a new experience that the family stored in the family capital. Once integrated into the family context, the land required care and was used in the best way which constituted an economic reason for the family to act in a manner that was reflected in its interactions and socialization.

This constant and permanent action by the family motivated by a search for reliance on the family and the conservation and optimal use of its land was identified as Phase 1 of the process of habitualization, which was expressed through the production and development of the family habitus both at the individual level and as a group. This foundation helped the family pursue its economic intentions in the next phase.

**Phase 2: Through familiness – The family business**

A distinctive feature of Phase 1: Pre-familiness was that the family organization stood out as the structure adopted by the family. During Phase 1, the family’s history and development gave an account of the evolution of the family and its habitus that, in turn, established the Cabrera family during its consolidation into a specific family structure. However, with the encouragement provided by the land and the possibility of an attractive business the family prepared to make a change in the family structure.

The presence of the new family business established a different period, Phase 2: Through familiness – The family business, providing this phase with a beginning and an end when the family withdrew from the business. This phase covers the period 1970-1985, as illustrated in Figure 25 (see p. 204). El Danubio, as the new family business from the contextual perspective, required that the family adopt a new habitus that allowed it to develop the new organization. With the family’s decision to initiate a family business, the family left the ‘family habitus.’ We now focus on the family as a unit of analysis. The family took a more complex structure compared to the previous one that did not have the presence of the business. The new structure in El Danubio involved a new habitus that I call ‘the family business habitus.’ Once El Danubio received the agricultural family, it offered them security and comfort so that the family members could continue developing themselves as business farmers. The Cabreras had to do complex adaptations, and produce social capital for developing a business in the countryside. After that moment, I no longer saw the group in the same way, that is, as a ‘family,’ because now there was El Danubio, which established a significant difference with its past. Now the family can be seen as a ‘familyFB’, denoting the presence of the family business in the family’s history. Thus, the interactions and socialization were modified, reaching a different dynamic through different events in its history. This new dynamic denoted the beginning of familiness as an exclusive construction of the new family business.

Referring to this phase as the second phase means that I accepted those processes that took effect during the previous phase as immediate antecedents of what happened in the second phase. In other words, when it comes to the process
of habitualization, the family habitus was the primary antecedent of the process of familiness. At the end of Phase 1 the family filled each space of the family habitus that established itself as a social group. It pursued a common economic reason, which in itself was a culminating moment that led to visualizing the family on a new level as a different organization. Thus, considering that there was familiness from the very beginning of the family’s involvement in the business, means that involvement was a fundamental requirement. In the same way habitualization was an essential requirement for the existence of the business and, therefore, for the production of familiness.

Familiness was not the only process that took place during Phase 2. When the family entered Phase 2, habitualization assumed the family business as its economic reason for acting, which facilitated the formation of family\textsuperscript{FB} organizational social capital and human capital (Figure 25, see p. 204). In other words, habitualization participated in the formation of the new family business habitus. Considering processes as habitualization and familiness in the family during its passage through Phase 2, a broader understanding of both the family and the business and their mutual influence was achieved. With the involvement of the family in the family business, the family changed from the family habitus to the family business habitus. The start of Phase 2 was marked by a ‘property event,’ ‘Land acquisition El Danubio’ see figure below.

During this property event, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo, with explicit support of his eldest son and his entire family, acquired the land now owned by the heirs of the late Oliverio Lara. Ricardo asked his son Ricardo CC for advice when deciding whether to buy the El Danubio land or continuing working as a farm employee. His son gave him his immediate support. In doing so, the two of them showed that they fully shared the actions to which they had become habitualized. Supported by his children and his wife, or his family nucleus, Ricardo acquired the land and with his family he started the family business, the farm. The acquisition of the property was the culmination of a historical process of consolidation around the land. During this process, according to what was established in the family habitus the family accumulated experiences by working on the land and forged interactions around these activities. Hence, the events were facilitators of both human capital-specific and family\textsuperscript{FB} social capital. Organizational social capital was produced from the interactions between the family members involved in El Danubio. Through these interactions it was possible to understand the influence exerted by the social capital produced in the ‘family habitus’ that moved to the ‘family business habitus,’ and from the ‘family business habitus’ to the ‘family habitus’ in the later phases of the habitualization process.
Regarding human capital, during the adaptation of the ‘family habitus,’ the experiences were ‘generic,’ however, now in the presence of the family business, I distinguished this as family human capital-specific. The acquisition of land had an effect on the family directly in the production of the family human capital-specific and indirectly in the production of the organizational social capital of the family. Acquiring the land also meant a high level of interaction between the family members who expressed their support for the idea of working the land through their roles.

The motivating economic reason for family action and the family’s experience prevailed; this can be seen in the family moving to live in the vicinity of the land, an event that took place in 1970 when the family lived close to the farm. During this movement, the family took two decisions. First, the family moved to Los Llanos del Yari to accompany the founder and his eldest son to farm life and work, as indicated by Carolina Cabrera, “We lived near my grandpa, and we were neighbors.” Second, in a role division exercise, Ricardo’s third eldest son, Jaime,
stayed in the family and inherited land to administer and connect it with the family business El Danubio as explained by Jaime Cabrera Cabrera, "When I was 20-years-old I was already in charge of Satia." This event that originated in the family, had a direct effect on the production of family human capital-specific, and I identify it as an event ‘facilitator of human capital.’ This event demonstrated the unity of the family FB around the motivating economic reason for action. It stands as the beginning of the transformation of a habitus that led the family towards the family business – a perfect representation of the ‘habitualization of the family to the business’ process. The ‘family business habitus’ exercised its influence by demanding compliance.

The family’s relocation to El Danubio was completed in 1982 when the family decided to sell the inherited properties and Jaime, his wife, and their son set out on their journey to Los Llanos del Yarí. Since the acquisition of El Danubio, 12 years had passed for the family. With Jaime and his family moving and the sale of Satia and El Casil, the consolidation of a family network that gathered all the family members on the same land became clear. Jaime, with his experience in land management, was needed for working on the vast tracts of land and numerous livestock that El Danubio had. With the entire family on the land, the socialization of the business was at its maximum having a direct effect on the production of the family FB organizational social capital. Considering the sale of the two Cabrera family farms, I identify this event as a ‘property event.’ The development of the family network, communication, the roles played by its members, and the degree of socialization achieved for the economic reason, allowed me to understand that the process of family construction progressed with the development of the family FB.

In 1983, an ‘event of contextual circumstances’ occurred – the kidnapping of Ricardo Jr’s wife and his eldest daughter Lucy by the guerrillas. These kinds of events were not planned by the family and were a consequence of the context in which the case unfolded. This event represented a second manifestation after Oliverio’s death of the violence that affected the context in which the family moved – the context of Colombia’s violence. The event had consequences for the family and a direct effect on the production of the family FB organizational social capital since as a result Dioselina stopped her visits and those of her daughters to El Danubio. A year later, Jaime Cabrera Cabrera also moved with his wife and son to another Colombian region.

During this phase, there was a third ‘property event:’ ‘Land acquisition of two farms.’ In 1984, the Cabrera family acquired two other farms near El Danubio. This event had a direct effect on the production of family FB organizational social capital as it represented the entry of the founder’s new wife and her two children, Ana Milena and Orlando, into the family. The family network grew, and now the second generation had seven members.

In 1985, there was a dramatic event: the ‘founder’s murder.’ I consider this an ‘event of contextual circumstances’ with a direct effect on the production of the family’s social capital organizational structure which dramatically impacted the family at a collective level. The founder was the center of the family and of the
business. Just as the business was affected, the family\(^{FB}\) organizational social capital and the production process of familiness were also affected by his death. The founder’s murder meant a threat to the rest of the family members. The economic reason that had motivated the family suffered a sharp blow since that motivation was neutralized with fear expressed through the impossibility of returning to the land. Based on the interviews, I perceived a reduction in the motivation required to meet the requirements of the family business habitus. As a result of the fateful event, a threat loomed over the family preventing it from continuing with the business. The production of familiness stopped. The founder’s children refused to return to the region of the Yari plains, and the land was lost. The guerrillas took over El Danubio. The ‘event in the contextual circumstances’ in 1985, the ‘founder’s murder,’ marked the end of Phase 2, as the family lost control over its land, and with that also went the \textit{hato}, the family business. With the disappearance of the contextual conditions of the family business and the farm, which had been the economic reason that had motivated the family’s activities in the business, the reason for the existence of the family was lost and the process of habitualization of the family to the business was suspended. The habitus that had been generated and stored in the family human capital-specific during the family’s passage through the ‘family business habitus’ took refuge individually in the experiences of each of the family members. The habitus of the family to the business did not disappear. It remained stored in each individual in the family’s ‘human capital-generic’. This marked the beginning of Phase 3.

\textit{Phase 3: Post-familiness}

Phase 3: Post-familiness refers to the period in which the family business no longer existed because the Cabrera family was afraid to go back to the region. This phase lasted from 1985 to 2017, as illustrated in Figure 26 (see p. 207). Phase 3 accepts the previous phases as its antecedents. This phase occurred when the Cabrera family which had been involved in a business, decided to withdraw from the business and land due to external and uncontrollable circumstances. This also included dramatic circumstances which led to the Cabrera family’s involvement in the business coming to an end. This experience was unique and exclusive to the Cabrera family which was involved in the family business. Therefore, the knowledge obtained from this experience provided an excellent background for future business involvement. The Cabrera family lost its family business habitus, which was given by the family business and to which it had clung. The family business habitus that El Danubio favored was broad and sufficient enough to bring together the different family nuclei that made up the family and provided the family\(^{FB}\) with an ideal setting to house and allow their interactions.

Thereby, Phase 3 meant the family changing and moving from the recently adopted ‘family business habitus’ to the ‘family habitus’ as it became an agricultural displaced family. But this was not a simple change. The ‘family business habitus’ expanded itself to the family and through the consolidation of
the family to the business. The family, motivated by an economic reason given by the business, took hold of this required expanded habitus by becoming a family\textsuperscript{FB}. Although the family\textsuperscript{FB} returned to a family habitus, I kept in mind that this new family habitus was not the same as the one actualized during pre-familiness, since now the family had abundant experience thanks to its involvement in a family business. In other words, I could no longer describe family habitus in the same terms as I did in Phase 1.

As portrayed in Figure 26, in Phase 3 there was no family business and the Cabrera family returned to the adoption of the ‘family habitus’ and to its ‘human capital-generic’ and family social capital. The big difference was that now the family capital had been enriched by its antecedents, as it was involved in the production of family ‘human capital-specific’ and ‘family\textsuperscript{FB} organizational social capital’ which included a large part of the family’s history and with it the execution of processes such as familiness and its habitualization to the business. Forgetting the habitus generated by the Cabrera family would be like denying value to its past involvement in the family business. Also with the disappearance of the business, the map of interactions that carried it and the production of familiness were inoperative, even though their existence during the family’s development was undeniable. In Phase 3, the Cabrera family necessarily began a period of readjustment.

![Figure 26 Phase 3: Post-familiness](image-url)
For the Cabreras, the land had always been present in their past. After dramatic events, the family went back to a pure state of reconfiguration. As for the familiness generated by the family FB in the previous phase, when the land was lost and the business and farm disappeared, the production of familiness stopped. This situation was very complicated for the Cabrera family. Without its business, familiness did not apply, and as if this was not enough, the habitus that the family generated during its experiences around the business at El Danubio became suspended. Therefore, in the absence of the land and the business, they re-accommodated themselves to an unprecedented situation which meant enormous challenges. Its process of habitualization to the family began anew from individuality to collectivity. Now, producing a family habitus was only on focus.

Fortunately for the Cabrera family, in the family that existed after the business had undergone a transformation and was no longer the same, individual memory was in charge of storing the results of the processes in each of its members and these memories were deeply connected to the land. With the absence of the family business, there was no longer the production of familiness, and it went along with all the experiences of the family to individual memories. The presence of habitus, which included the familiness produced during the family’s habitualization to the business, was perceived by the family. It was present during the leadership that the Cabrera family assumed before recovering the land and the expectations generated while considering the reactivation of the family business.

The dramatic event of the founder’s death went beyond sadness and the horror caused by his murder. The void resulting from the death of their natural leader was amplified by the cessation of the farm’s activities. The family abruptly left the ‘family business habitus’ to go back to the ‘family habitus.’ It was the return of the ‘family,’ after its experience as ‘family FB.’ Now without a business and a leader, the dramatic effect of poverty inevitably reached the Cabrera family. Because of the absence of the business and its land, in 1986 the family was forced to sell the last two farms that the founder had acquired just two years earlier, which did not fall under the guerrillas’ control. As Ana Milena Cabrera explained, “We sold those farms and the cattle we had there to survive. We no longer had the hato, we lost everything.”

The first event during Phase 3 was again a ‘property event:’ ‘Sale of two farms’ in 1986. This event did not take place in the ‘family business habitus’ but instead took place in the ‘family habitus.’ This means, first, that with the non-existence of the family business, the effects were directly on ‘family social capital’ and ‘human capital-generic’. Second, it meant that the family without the family business and access to the land, modified the economic reasons that had motivated its actions. However, the abrupt change also affected their community. Third, with the change in the economic reason that motivated the family’s actions, it needed a new reason that allowed it to consolidate a new family habitus. This was the beginning of a new process of habitualization for the family without the business.

In 1987, because of a terrifying and unsustainable situation, the family resigned itself to definitely losing the family business in which it had drawn its
map of interactions as a family and with the land. El Danubio had represented the ideal setting in which the family socialized and allowed a permanent overlap between family life and work. With its loss, such an ideal scenario as a source of experience and knowledge disappeared. This was the only setting that the family knew. However, with the loss of the land, a new drama started and that was how the family members became a group of displaced agricultural farmers, as indicated by Angela Vargas, “They had to flee, abandon everything.” The Cabrera’s family’s internal map of interactions was altered. The family business had enabled the maximum learning and experience in which the whole family fit. This setting was reduced in such a way that the family disintegrated into various family nuclei in search of survival. The drama of displacement and its effects continue to this day with a scope that can only be perceived through the narratives portrayed in this study. Each member’s present and future taken from their natural setting of experience, was influenced by this event. From this moment on, each family member moved using the experience acquired to carve out a future for herself/himself. For the second-generation members, acquired jobs mainly related to agricultural work – Milena is working on a farm in her husband’s company; Jaime and Javier are working on farms; and Hernando has had a long career in palm plantations. In contrast, in the third generation, among the interviewed family members, only one of Milena’s daughters and one of Ricardo’s children are working in the countryside.

I identify the above event as ‘displacement,’ and an ‘event of contextual circumstances’ that had a direct effect on the production of the family’s ‘human capital-generic’.

Over the years, in its process of habitualization the family continued to forge its family habitus. Trying to validate its previous economic reasons, the members had to live new experiences that inevitably influenced their actions. For example, Hernando Cabrera Cabrera and his family, wife and a son, continued working other lands as employees. However, the Colombian context which was already invaded by violence pushed him to displacement again in 1991. The event was seen within the family as a repetition of the drama of violence to which they were exposed during their work on the land. This event made the family members revalidate their interactions, demonstrating that socialization within the family was still in force. This is shown in the narrative as the family is united by the decision to be away from the farm. It may sound ironic, but at first the family maintained unity around the decision to stay away from El Danubio which was vindicated in their internal map of interactions. This event had a lot of resemblance to the 1999 kidnapping of Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera and his subsequent release in 2008. In 1999, the region was under the control of the guerrillas, and it was a scene of violent confrontations between the groups who were a part of the armed conflict. Ricardo Jr decided to visit the land, even when it was extremely risky. His visit to the land lasted around eight years (until 2008), during which time the rest of the family did not know his fate. However, as a result of this stay, Ricardo Jr was recognized as the owner of the land by the guerrillas and he got their authorization to work there.
The difference between this event and that of his brother, Hernando, was that Ricardo returned to the land despite fear and because he was motivated by the peace process. Ricardo’s kidnapping showed the influence and importance of the land on someone who was the founder’s right-hand man and his eldest son. The narrative also showed the drama that the event caused for the family which also led to the revalidation of the family network. These two events were external to the family. They influenced family interactions, that is, they had a direct effect on the production of social capital. For this reason, I identify them as ‘events of contextual circumstances’ as observed in Figure 26 (see p. 207).

Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s release was related to two events in 2012 and 2016, which were connected to the peace process in Colombia. When he regained his freedom, he had already established contact with the guerrillas and was encouraged by the expectations of a peace process, so he decided to return to El Danubio to work there again. Of course, the event allowed Ricardo to revalidate his experience of working on the land and gave him back at least informally the work scenario in which individually he started a new production of experiences. However, the event had a strong effect on the family social capital. Interactions between the members about what had happened between Ricardo and the land were immediate. In Figure 26, it can be seen how the family members showed that they were influenced by the possibility of recovering the land, as expressed by Hernando Cabrera Cabrera, “We always wanted to recover the land, but we never had a chance. And (now) the opportunity is being given, and we are trying to comply with all paperwork and everything else.” The event, related to the peace process, had a direct effect on the production of family social capital, and is identified as an ‘event of contextual circumstances.’

The expectation of peace with the signing of the agreement between the government and the guerrillas along with Ricardo working on the land led to a return or at least a visit by some of the family members to the land. The narratives suggest that the family business conditions were being created again and that the family habitus to the farm started showing signs of being permanent in the family. For the family, the recovery of the land that Ricardo had informally achieved in some way gave them back the natural and favorite setting for the production of experiences. This scenario was immediately exploited by Ricardo, and shortly after by his eldest son, José Ricardo and by his brother Javier. José Ricardo was recruited by Ricardo Jr to become his father’s right hand thus establishing a perfect similarity to what his father, founder Ricardo, had done with him some decades earlier. The entrepreneur of the nascent family business, Ricardo Jr, confirmed that he did not want to be alone; father and son united for the same purpose. With this Ricardo Jr brought other members of his family across generations who knew and worked on the farm in the founder’s time. Even though the peace process seemed to give them back the source of their experience, I believe that it had a more critical effect as it offered the possibility of reconstructing the internal map of family interactions. In other words, the event was generated outside the family, but it had a direct effect on the production of family social capital. Hence, I see it as an ‘event of contextual circumstances.’
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The last event during Phase 3 was the meeting held by the seven siblings to formalize a process of defining the leadership in the event of an eventual land restitution process. This event allowed them to visualize the economic reason that had motivated their actions when they were habitualized to the family business. In the Cabrera case, through this leadership process faced by the second generation, the intention of reactivating the business materialized, for example, through the discussion itself as reflected by different potential businesses discussed among family members and holding meetings with potential investors. This process is very telling considering there was still no business or land, at least formally. One explanation for reaching this process is that, in the absence of the business, previous family business experience served as a motivation. Thus, this event is called a ‘leadership process’ and a ‘facilitator of human capital.’ It is a continuation of the previous experience that the family had and therefore has a direct effect on the production of ‘human capital-generic’ as observed in Figure 26.

Phase 4: Re-entry?

From the perspective of the entrepreneurial process, I observed the origins of the family (Phase 1), its involvement in a family business (Phase 2), and its subsequent exit from the business (Phase 3). However, with Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s return to the land because of the Colombian peace process, and an expectation of the restitution of land, the idea of reactivating the old family business – the farm – became an important possibility. Faced with this possibility, and with the event called ‘land restitution,’ a new phase in the development of the Cabrera family opened up, Phase 4: Re-entry. Phase 4 offered the Cabrera family conditions that were similar to what they had experienced when the business existed. Here, I suggest that the previously developed family habitus tried to re-emerge after being motivated by economic reasons that the habitus carried with it imprinted on its members. This time the family habitus was greatly influenced by a habitus that the family members had stored in their memories. The family habitus registered the regrouping of the family rapidly adhering to the land as an economic reason, transmitting this reason quickly to the next generation (Figure 27). Thus, the presence of the land and a potential farming business led the Cabreras to reactivate their memories which were previously shared by the members of the second generation. This situation also explains why the new third-generation family members – except for those who worked and lived on the farm – stayed largely away from a potential farming business because they never shared that reality. The second generation was empowered through ownership of the land and a process of grouping the family developed, motivated by the possibility of reactivating a potential farming business.

Unlike Phase 1, Phase 4 showed the influence of the family business habitus on the family and the family habitus (see Figure 27, p.212). During Phase 3, the family had been motivated by the expectation of recovering the land, and during Phase 4, by the hope of restarting the business. The production of human capital-
generic was influenced by family ‘human capital-specific’ generated during the ‘family business habitus.’ Likewise, family social capital was quickly developed through interactions which had originated when the family business existed.

The Cabrera family developed a family habitus in which the family carefully forged family social capital from its interactions and ‘human capital-generic’ from its experiences. Once the family’s involvement in the business ended and the business disappeared, the family business delivered to the family its ‘family\textsuperscript{FB} organizational social capital’ and ‘family human capital-specific’. Considering that the family had to re-adopt the family habitus and it did not have the business, the habitus stored this information from the family business system in its members’ experiences and memories collectively and individually.

The absence of the land had been critical. With the possibility of reactivating a farming business, the Cabrera family’s condition was very similar to what it was about 40 years ago when the founder had started the family business. With the possibility of the Cabrera family’s re-involvement in the business, the family habitus allowed the family to be motivated enough so that it could potentially lead to a new family business.

In Figure 27, the first event of Phase 4 marked the culmination of the immediately preceding phase and started a period that is still not over. The event called ‘land restitution’ denoted the moment when the Colombian government legally handed over the land to the Cabrera family and its current seven owners.
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After this event, the family showed essential family dynamics. The presence of the land had a huge influence on the family members. With the restitution of the land and with the leadership of the family being defined, the seven siblings started debating between the reactivation of the business or selling the land. However, the group’s experience came to light in each of the siblings, and the family network was reactivated, transcending the various family nuclei and projecting itself as a great family, as indicated by Hernando Cabrera Cabrera, “We are willing to carry out any project: reforestation, planting trees for wood, cocoa, coffee, rice, whatever.” To say that all these dynamics accelerated and were spontaneous based on simple wishes would mean ignoring the presence of the family business, familiness, and the family’s habitus to the business during the previous existence of the business, thus denying the family history. I see the first event of Phase 4 as a ‘property event,’ which returned the family to its ideal scenario that generated experience and which also managed to reactivate the entire family network which now involved a new generation.

Between 2017 and 2019, multiple projects were proposed by the Cabrera siblings, including selling the land. With the proposed projects, it was possible to appreciate the efforts of the second and third generations’ attempts to influence the final decision. The third generation also gradually joined the discussions, as shared by Nicolás Cabrera, “I see that land in the next 10 years, leased basically to generate oxygen bonds. I would very much like that.” In Figure 27 one can see how the family members slowly got involved in the business reactivation issue (see p. 212).

In April 2019, the last event captured by this longitudinal study took place, a ‘business meeting’ held by the leaders of the seven siblings – Rodrigo and Hernando – with potential investors. This meeting was significant as it showed the farm as an economic reason that motivated the family as other members accompanied the two family leaders for the meeting. For example, Rodrigo was accompanied by his daughter, María Lucia. I had interviewed María Lucia in July 2017, and during the interview she had said that she felt excluded by her father from conversations about the land. In fact, due to her father’s attitude at that time, she had declared herself disinterested in the farm. Hernando was accompanied by his wife, Angela. I had interviewed Angela in June and September 2017, and during the interviews, she had said that she did not support Hernando in his idea of reactivating the land. However, during the business meeting, she was very attentive and participatory. Finally, the meeting was also attended by Javier’s son, Leonardo Francisco, who worked in El Danubio during his childhood. I had interviewed Leonardo in July 2017, and during the interview he had said that he was not interested in the land, and hence, he wanted to be away from a discussion about it. However, he was present in the business meeting and used his knowledge about the law to collaborate with Rodrigo and Hernando in everything related to the land.

Collectively this ‘business meeting’ was an expression of community, considering that Rodrigo and Hernando acted on behalf of their other siblings. Also, the presence of other family members showed that the topic had already been shared
and accepted even by the next generation. This ‘business meeting’ had a direct
effect on the production of family social capital and on an expression of the
experience of the second generation which is now the owner, thus having an
indirect effect on the production of human capital-generic. I identify this event as
a ‘facilitator of family social capital.’

8.2 Discussion: The entrepreneurial journey of
displaced agricultural families – Building a
habitualization perspective

In this section, I build a habitualization perspective to better understand the
entrepreneurial process of displaced agricultural families during their life
contexts. I draw on the interpretations of my case presented in the previous section
and bridge habitualization with relevant concepts from entrepreneurship,
sociology, and family business research. Considering that a perspective of
habitualization in a family business is useful for contextualizing research, I use
familiness and family capital to build this perspective. In the habitualization
perspective, the formation of a family habitus and a family business habitus allow
one to examine the effects of the family-life context through time (Reay, 2004).
Thus, I discuss the emerging habitualization perspective in more detail.
The habitualization to the family and business is an ongoing process that occurs
throughout the entrepreneurial journey of displaced agricultural families during
their life contexts. Hence, I propose that the entrepreneurial journey of displaced
agricultural families takes place through a habitualization process to the family
and business. Extracting the key elements of the interpretations of my case, Figure
28 introduces the key concepts at play during the habitualization process over time
(see p. 215). Deriving from my case, four different and consequent periods or
phases are marked in the entrepreneurial journey of displaced agricultural families
in their life contexts: ‘Phase 1: Before familiness / pre-familiness;’ ‘Phase 2:
Through familiness – The family business;’ ‘Phase 3: Post-familiness;’ and
‘Phase 4: Re-entry?’ The family-life context is divided into these four phases,
where the latter two phases comprise the period of displacement and possible
reactivation of the business. Every phase has its developments, and once a phase
ends, it is added to the story as antecedents for the next phase. In Figure 28, the
resulting antecedents (i.e., family habitus and/or family business habitus) feed
each new phase. The antecedents constitute feedback loops and are represented
with black arrows. Further, in this process, there are conceptual components of
this bundle in an unbundling process, i.e., different family capitals and familiness,
which help us distinguish between family with land and business – and then re-
bundling these considering the family without land and business. The
habitualization process allows us to observe how during the entrepreneurial
journey of the displaced agricultural families, the family, the family business, the
land and its contextual circumstances are interconnected and influence each other.
Figure 28 Visualizing the entrepreneurial journey of displaced agricultural families with habitualization
A habitualization perspective is proposed as a process inherently human (Berger & Luckmann, 1991) and expressed through the community. Acknowledging this, and after studying a family business, leads me to position the family as a priority. The family precedes the business, but during the family business a link is established between the family system and the business system, which is a precondition for developing advantages in the family business (Habbershon & Williams, 1999). Understanding how this link is formed and how it evolves is important. Habitualization necessarily gives rise to essential processes such as familiness. A process such as familiness assumes that a family business is a precondition as talking about familiness without a business involved would almost be like committing heresy. Untangling habitualization enhances the family’s role in the family business, and can therefore help advance our understanding of the entrepreneurial journey of displaced agricultural families. From the family business perspective, Habbershon and Williams (1999, p. 12) examined the background of familiness to get explanations for “future change processes.” Pearson, Carr, and Shaw (2008, p. 955) considered antecedents as being significant in understanding family businesses hence making it possible to locate “unique historical conditions” that influence processes such as familiness in the family-life context and events that happened over time. However, they do not consider antecedents beyond the business. Aldrich and Cliff (2003) highlight the importance of family antecedents in a business. Thus, a broader scope is needed since the family precedes the business and is made up of individuals who have both family and business origins. Specifically, in the habitualization process, the formation of familiness and family capital (e.g., Ramirez-Solis, Baños-Monroy, & Rodríguez-Aceves, 2019), crossing the limits imposed by family businesses emerged as a relevant component. This means that the family business represents only one period in the life context of agricultural families. Adopting a linear historical perspective in time and marking the family business as a point of reference, two additional periods emerged – a ‘before period’ and an ‘after the business period’ during the entrepreneurial journey in the life contexts of agricultural families. Once I considered the family before the business, its experience as a family in the business, and the family after leaving the business I saw the presence of conditions that suggest the potential reactivation of businesses. As follows, I discuss each phase conceptually in detail.

Phase 1: Before familiness / pre-familiness

Phase 1: Pre-familiness refers to the influences in the family before the family business. Removing the family business from the scene, I concentrate solely on “family factors” (Habbershon, Williams, & Macmillan, 2003, p. 452), which over time contribute to the family’s determination of getting involved in a business, and significantly influence the family business, the family, and its performance. Little has been said about the antecedents of the ‘bundle’ of family and business resources proceeding familiness. Hence, I use an ‘unbundling’ process, exploring the family background, that is, crossing the boundaries imposed by the business
and going back long before its establishment to the origins of the family to determine how that platform was formed to endure the familiness of the family business. In Phase 1, families are on their way to consolidating their existence as a group by forming family social capital and ‘human capital-generic’, integrating their members and individual habits, pointing to where the habitualization of individuals to the family develops or the family habitus is shaped (i.e., see Phase 1 in Figure 28, p. 215).

Further, individual performances allowed me to appreciate habits, which are different from habitus. Habits are routinized behaviors developed by individuals and anchored in natural human actions. For instance, members of a family develop habits without their being collectively developed as a purpose. Yet, when habits exist in a family, members become habituated to their execution and they are collectively habituated to the family. The situation evolves if the members, once habituated to the family, recognize that through their habits, they can act collectively and seek the same purpose. From Berger and Luckmann (1991) perspective, individuals use habitualized\textsuperscript{146} actions for themselves, get used to them and reduce them to routines; in contrast, the formation of a family habitus has an economic motive in relation to both the family and the land. The actions generated for an economic motive are socialized and become habitualized. The beauty of ‘habitualized actions’ is that they are imprinted on an individual’s behavior and always “at hand for his projects into the future” (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p. 71). From Bourdieu’s perspective, an entrepreneur’s way of proceeding is triggered by the family habitus, which in turn can be seen in his or her practices (Nash, 1999). In other words, the family habitus and its influence lead individuals to flourish as potential entrepreneurs. For family business founders and entrepreneurs, having a family that interprets their vision is vital (Danco, 1982, p. 8). According to Dyer (1986), it is not surprising that entrepreneurs look to their families while searching for qualified personnel.

In Phase 1: Before familiness / pre-familiness, a family habitus is being formed and a dynamic process of interactions between its members and the family takes place. This construction of family social capital or the family network will influence future decisions for which the farming families require time, so this takes place slowly (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986) and continues depending on the motivation that inspired its construction. It constitutes the beginning of the entrepreneurial journey and the presence of a family nucleus exemplifies the transition from “individualism to the collectivism” (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 211). In this way, interactions of the family members also access human capital-generic or the entrepreneur’s experiences and knowledge. Capitalizing on the possibility offered by the family for using its knowledge for “an economy of effort,” entrepreneurs can exploit the land in the future (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Thus,

\textsuperscript{146} Habitualized is not a word that can be found in a dictionary. It is an adjective that Berger and Luckmann (1991) used to refer to those actions that the individual appropriated for him/herself, for instance, habitualized actions or habitualized activity. In my research ‘habitualized’ is an adjective that strictly refers to the noun ‘habitus.’
towards the end of Phase 1, there is a collective economic reason closely connected to the land. The habits and habitus that the individuals carry out are motivated by a collective purpose and they serve as a foundation for the habitualization of family members to the family (habitus).

The family habitus goes hand in hand with the development of the family in relation to the land, if a family exists. The family and its habitus are formed in response to the land’s influence, and then the family grows after being influenced by individuals and their relation to the land. The possibilities of amassing experience as an act of efficiency through the capitalization of experience (Frank et al., 2017) from the collective work of family members have been widely exposed by family business literature (e.g., Brumana et al., 2015). In addition, the family habitus is consistent with the features of the family involved, that is, just as it may comprise a family of two, it can also have several family nuclei which share the same last name. Thus, interactions are a crucial factor for a family in its production of family capital (Sharma, 2008; Zellweger, Eddleston, & Kellermanns, 2010). They have a key place through family-life context, influencing the possibilities of generating and socializing experiences and knowledge suitable for the family and the land.

To sum up, at the end of Phase 1: Before familiness / pre-familiness, individual entrepreneurs are no longer walking alone; the family jointly defines a collective purpose (Donnelley, 1964), and thus develops its family habitus. Therefore, its members are habitualized to the family and the land. Because of Phase 1 of the habitualization process, the entrepreneurial journey of families starts which then consists of having a family as an organization in connection to the land. Nevertheless, as habitualization is an ongoing process, it is enriched through the different organizations and economic reasons that the family decides to adopt, which are explained in the next phase.

**Phase 2: Through familiness – The family business**

‘Phase 2: Through familiness – The family business’ indicates that families are stimulated to achieve a goal by purchasing land and initiating a new farm business. The families also carry out diverse activities by supporting the founder’s initiatives in the new business. The ongoing process of habitualization, now to a new family business, provides a sense of direction and specialization of activities for the families (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). This also means that due to the process of habitualization the farm becomes the best economic possibility, based on a collective decision when family members engage in the business. In this phase, family members participate in the family business united by a purpose, validating both systems, the family and the family business. Family members as a “collective of individuals” and the family as “a collective individuated” (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 211) contribute to the process of habitualization to the family business (habitus). The decisions taken during this phase are a consequence of past actions that are replicated accordingly in the following phases capitalizing on the experiences (Frank et al., 2017). In Figure 28, such an influence is observed
as an arrow or feedback loop that links the family habitus with the family business habitus (see p. 215). In my case, the founder, Ricardo, asked his son, Ricardo CC for advice when deciding whether to buy the El Dambio land or continuing working as a farm employee. His son gave him his immediate support. In doing so, the two of them showed that they fully shared the actions to which they had become habitualized. Supported by his children and his wife, or his family nucleus, Ricardo acquired the land and with his family he started the family business, the farm.

The new family business exists because it is preceded by the family (habitus), and its actions in business are motivated by human activity and the existence of the family habitus. Business founders have families which played a “dominant role” (Dyer, 1986, p. 60), and which grew generating interdependence with the land and supporting priorities which they share widely with their families. The new farm business materializes according to what the family visualizes for the land. Thus, the family gets used to working together in the family business. Through a family business habitus, the family assimilates its new social structure (Nash, 1999) and the business, as argued by Haag (2012, p. 174), becomes “a natural part of everyday life,” and of its “life course.”

This also corresponds with the materialization of “collectivism” (Bourdieu, 2005) through a “collective vision” (Dyer, 1986).

The business welcomes the family, thus forming the family business system with the involvement of the founder and related family members. Thus, the creation of familiness (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005) starts and continues through the dynamics of interactions. With the initiation of the business, the family cannot be considered as being the same since its entry into a business has had an impact at the level of “behaviors and outcomes” (Chrisman et al., 2005, p. 556); the family is exposed to different experiences and contextual circumstances present in the region (i.e., Ramirez-Pasillas, Brundin, & Markowska, 2017). At this moment the family business emerges as a new system, which also means that the family reaches another level – the family becomes an agricultural family. At the new level, the family is what it is and is received by this other system, the business, which from now on shapes its new family business habitus, and once the family adopts this habitus, I recognize it as a familyFB.

Family social capital and human capital of the former family conform to the existence of the business, and this is how familyFB and the business develop simultaneously. The agricultural family, thus enters its business with a particular internal map of connections between its members and connections to the land set earlier in the context of the family system, which are vital for the family business (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 957). The family business habitus is given a new shape

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147 The elements of the sub-systems formulated by Habbershon et al. (2003, p. 454) are always present: for the family, its “history,” and “lifecycle;” and for the individual family members, in their “interests.”
to which the family adapts. The family business system develops the habitualization of the family\textsuperscript{FB} to the business.

Thus, the family business that emerges from the convergence of the two sub-systems is a new organization (Habbershon et al., 2003), a social system that if divided will allow us to appreciate particular dynamics of permanent interactions between the sub-systems. I relate to my metaphor about the plant in the old boot (i.e., introduced in Chapter 3): As time passed the plant in the boot grew and its roots/family members merged with the land, the plant/family over the years spread over the entire boot and the family was born, grew, and lived on that land where it had its business; therefore, their relationships were based on the farm. In the same vein, family members of businesses intertwine with their work on the land in their daily lives, an unbeatable expression of the difficulty in establishing “boundaries between work and family social relationships and events” (Arregle et al., 2007, p. 83). These dynamics achieved by the family’s interactions with the family business are decisive in the production of habitus and familiness.

When proceeding with the convergence of the two systems, the agricultural family and business, the former is highly involved with the latter. However, the family always has the dominant role (Arregle et al., 2007). Thus, the involvement of the family in the business is a necessary step if we consider the influence that the family business can exert over the family (e.g., Discua Cruz, Howorth, & Hamilton, 2013). When family members get involved in the business, they strengthen their commitment to the business, which is one of the strengths of family businesses (Brumana et al., 2015). The family’s involvement in the business is so broad in situations that its study is only possible through the family involvement and essence approaches (Chrisman et al., 2005). The involvement of the family in the business is only the beginning, till the family is unified around a common intention, vision, family, and/or behavior around the business. On the one hand, it becomes observable as a zero point of the family business. On the other hand, the development of the family\textsuperscript{FB} organizational social capital and family human capital-specific happen with the involvement of the family in the family business. This also means that without family involvement in the business, there will be no creation of familiness. Recognizing the family is the “who” of familiness (Zellweger et al., 2010, p. 61) which allows us to give prominence to research about the family so that it is possible to interpret it. When a family defines itself as a family business, we have the culminating moment of the family’s involvement in the construction of familiness (Zellweger et al., 2010). Then, it is possible to visualize the formation of familiness in a family business by focusing on the development of the family\textsuperscript{FB} organizational social capital and family human capital-specific (see Phase 2 in Figure 28, see p. 215). Familiness does not originate spontaneously. It is a result of a construction process that develops with the family’s involvement in the business. It continues through the essence level with dynamic interactions of the family members with their land; it projects itself over time and culminates when organizational identity is achieved (Zellweger et al., 2010). Considering both dimensions and also the evolution of the construction
of familiness and the family-life context allows me to capture a broader picture than only a sole focus on the business would have.

With familiness the attention focuses on the ‘family FB organizational social capital’. The resulting interactions and relationships affect and are affected by the family business (Chrisman et al., 2005) and offer an excellent opportunity to capitalize on its behalf (Donnelley, 1964, p. 433). It is through these interactions and relationships that the business receives and assimilates information and knowledge regarding the family. As family members merge with the business, they bring those who were considered part of the family to the business. In this way, the business adjusts its habitus to house the new family FB. Even though the family occupies a decisive position during the interactions between the two systems, at times we have to count on the fact that one organization dominates over the other, whether it is the family over the business (Donnelley, 1964), or the business over the family. Thus, the business receives a family habitus and proceeds to reshape it, this time as a family business habitus which houses the new family FB. Then, the family business offers to the family FB a family business habitus.

Regarding habitualization, the family in its “everyday routines” hosts essential actions that originate in the business (Haag, 2012). 148 Berger and Luckmann (1991, p. 71) argue that habitualization is a source of a “stable background” that benefits individuals and allows them to act efficiently in a way that maximizes the use of their relationships, experiences, and knowledge. From the moment the family farming business emerges, habitualized actions have a meaning at the individual level (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p. 71), and the decisions give meaning to the organization (Frank et al., 2017, p. 712). Berger and Luckmann (1991) explain how habitualization works in favor of decision-making, allowing it to generate spaces “for deliberation.” Haag (2012, p. 184) shows how by working jointly, the business family greatly appreciates the continued potential to improve what has been done so far, and that is when the family sees in its collective and family work “a driving force in itself.” Hence, the family business habitus rests on the socialization of the family to the business (Nash, 1999, p. 177).

In Phase 2, the family FB establishes the setting required for working and encouraging the creation of its uniqueness, its family business habitus through habitualization. Thus, the processes of habitualization and also of familiness mutually reinforce each other, as the habitualization process enables the emergence of familiness allowing it to enrich the scope of the entrepreneurial journey of the agricultural family. Familiness develops during the construction of the family business and shows us that the process of habitualization transcends the limits of the business.

The appearance of familiness on the family horizon as a consequence of a family business is important for generating explanations regarding the role of the

148 In her dissertation, Kajsa Haag was strictly referring to family business succession.
family business and its influence on the family in potential future attempts at reactivating a business in another phase (i.e., Phase 4). On the one hand, familiness is a result of a construction process over time that shows variations. On the other hand, habitus is not static either. It is susceptible to change along with routines (Haag, 2012, p. 178), and depends on the experiences generated by each situation to which the family has to adapt (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 214). If we consider an “experience curve” (MacMillan, 1986, p. 242), from familiness we get individuals’ exposure to entrepreneurial activities because the process is conditioned by the family business.

Even though habitualization by its very nature precedes familiness, there comes a time during the family business, when the familyFB enacts both processes simultaneously. Firstly, the familyFB gets habitualized to the family business, assimilating and adapting habitus through the practice of business and around the family business, and secondly, it builds its familiness. Its familiness evolves. At the same time, through its habitualization to the family business, family members adapt to it permanently, depending on the conditions imposed and the experiences gained during the business. Thus, the familyFB gets habitualized to the business, integrates the built-up familiness, and consolidates the family business habitus.

As observed in Phase 2 in Figure 28, when I speak of familiness, I am referring to the process of constructing the ‘familyFB organizational social capital’ and ‘family human capital-specific’ that exclusively happens in a family business. When I speak of habitualization, I am referring to the entrepreneurial journey of the displaced agricultural family throughout their history. When I speak of habitualization in the entrepreneurial context and more specifically in the context of a family business situation, I refer to the conditions by which individuals become habitualized to a business controlled by a familyFB.

When that accumulated knowledge and experience has come from an indistinct variety of contexts, it takes the form of “general human capital,” and if it originates in specific settings, it takes the form of “specific human capital” (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2008, p. 704). The family business habitus is based on experience and knowledge obtained from the presence of the family business. In the presence of the business and consequently influenced by the social interactions of family members (Arregle et al., 2007), the ‘familyFB organizational social capital’ appears. With the presence of the family business, the requirements of the new organization placed certain demands on the agricultural family. For Pearson et al. (2008, p. 957), with the emergence of the family business, the family and the organizational social capital are infused. On entering the business, the dynamics of the interactions give rise to new and valuable processes like familiness during which members learn as a family. However, I would say that it gives rise to a transition149 in which the family social capital takes the form of ‘familyFB organizational social capital’, nesting the resulting familiness there. Then the familiness production process can be understood as being contingent on the existence of the family business in the family linked to its organizational social

149 Transition: a change from one state or condition to another (MWD, 2020).
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capital. However, the family\textsuperscript{FB} organizational social capital requires particular dynamics in the interactions that allow the production of this familiness, which at the end are experiences that will be printed on the family business habitus.

This allows me to include the interactions, experiences, and knowledge of family members in the two systems, the family and the family business, being shaped by their interactions with the land and contextual circumstances as part of a dynamic feedback loop. Tagiuri and Davis (1996) explain through their overlapping relationships model that during interactions between both the systems, a mutual reshaping originates that results in particular attributes. For Zellweger et al. (2010, p. 57), the members of an organization share and express the values and beliefs of the organization through interactions. I propose that even more than that, the interactions between the family and family business members can be visualized as a means of transportation through which the systems individually transfer their attributes to each other. In this way, the beginning of a family business gets the attributes of the family by recognizing the effects of its interactions with the land and the contextual circumstances as presented in Figure 29. In my case, crime and violence shaped the reality of the Cabrera agricultural family. But in other agricultural families, different family configurations and contextual circumstances can affect the influence that the family exercises on the family business.

![Figure 29 Step 1 Attributes from the family to the family business according to context](image)

Once the new family business receives the attributes delivered by the agricultural family, it appropriates them, and familiness is developed considering the land again and the contextual circumstances. As portrayed in Figure 30, the family business, in turn, influences and transfers its attributes and familiness to the now agricultural family\textsuperscript{FB} (see p. 224).
Figure 30 Step 2 Attributes from the family business to the family\textsuperscript{FB} according to context

Figure 31 shows how the agricultural family\textsuperscript{FB} proceeds to enhance its attributes from the attributes and familiness generated in the family business, and then moves to influence the family business again\textsuperscript{150} after having been shaped by the interactions with the land and contextual circumstances.

Figure 31 Step 3 Attributes from the family\textsuperscript{FB} to the family business

To sum up, during Phase 2, a new agricultural family\textsuperscript{FB} appears when the family business is created. The business is influenced by the family\textsuperscript{FB} and continues to update its familiness based on the development of the family capital. Once the family business shapes and assimilates the familiness produced by the family\textsuperscript{FB}, the family business habitus is formed. The family business habitus works on further developing the business. However, the family is now different from what it used to be before the appearance of the family business, since it now has a business. The family has become an agricultural family. Also, the agricultural family grows and changes. In agricultural families, new entries and exits occur over time. From this moment, the recently added members of the family, partners and descendants, can join those who formed the agricultural family in its initial phase. The new members can integrate with the family nuclei, taking the form of a large agricultural family in which, everyone collectively relates and works on the farm. As the feedback process continues, everything is stored in the family\textsuperscript{FB} memory – its family experience and knowledge. From the moment the family

\textsuperscript{150} The next move is uncertain, as we don’t know if the family business is going to influence a family\textsuperscript{FB} – if the business is active or the family – if the family has left the business.
merges with the business it confirms itself as a collective and the evolutionary construction goes on.

**Phase 3: Post-familiness**

The family exits the business in Phase 3: Post-familiness. Through my research, I have found it problematic that familiness is typically viewed as exclusive to the family business, emerging with the constitution of the family business and restricted to an active business. For example, Ramírez-Solís et al. (2019, p. 934) argue that without the involvement of the family in the business, there is the total absence of familiness. But viewing entrepreneurship as a journey, it is clear that ventures have a beginning and, consequently, an end. The entrepreneurial journey continues even after a venture reaches the end because a business can be reactivated. A similar idea has been brought forward in a technology-based context by MacMillan (1986, p. 243),[151] who labels it “sleeper-status,” which fits well with the displaced agricultural families. In this sleeper-status, businesses have the possibility of re-entry. Re-entry implies a possibility of continuing on the entrepreneurial journey. Family businesses, like any other business, might at some point disappear because of different reasons including those found in my case study, like the death of the paternalistic leader of the family business and the loss of the land. Without a family business, the family involvement disappears, and there is no production of familiness. However, the built-in familiness is immersed in the family business habitus. With that, we reach the third phase, which I call Phase 3: Post-familiness. Post-familiness corresponds to the process by which an agricultural family is forced to exit the business and it concentrates on only being a family. Consequently, the family business habitus becomes dormant, including the ‘family\textsuperscript{FB} organizational social capital’ and the family ‘human capital-specific’. The family develops its family social capital and ‘human capital-generic’ as illustrated in Figure 28 (see p. 215). Without a family habitus and with increasing fear for their lives, the family\textsuperscript{FB} can disintegrate into smaller units, which are demarcated by the various family nuclei. With the loss of the land, the disappearance of the business and the farm, and the abrupt displacement of the families from their land, the families enter a dark side of their entrepreneurial journey. When the business is active, the family\textsuperscript{FB} retains its essence as a social system by letting its parts interact. But when the family business disappears due to contextual circumstances, like a murder or a kidnapping, the family\textsuperscript{FB} loses the structure that allowed it to maintain that communication at an organizational level. By losing the land and the farm, the agricultural families miss the scenario provided by the family business to house their communication which is a vital loss for the families (Discua Cruz, Hamilton, & Jack, 2020, p. 3). With this, the collective motives that fostered their interactions and the organizational communication between its parts disappears in

[151] When technology is an issue “the business is put on ‘sleeper status’ until technology catches up.”

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both intra- and inter-organizational relationships (Arregle et al., 2007). The former family, at least momentarily, returns to its initial state as a social group or as a family. The family as a social group registers activities with or without business. The map of the internal connections established between the members in the context of the business is limited to their respective family nuclei, that is, they move from a ‘family’ to a ‘family’ again. A family without its farm business is in a situation in which it has never been before. The family no longer has the business nor the land, and for an agricultural family, the latter has a meaning that goes beyond the family firm. It is a reality provided by conditions unknown to its members who, in the preceding phases, had undergone a process of habitualization explained by their family life and family business contexts (Bourdieu, 2005) and facilitated by the existence of the farm. The family, now seen as a former family has become accustomed to reasoning and behaving according to what their family business habitus required. Without the land and the business, the family is disoriented and does not know what to do. Its members somehow continue with their lives. However, the family splits into smaller social units, that is, atomizing and distributing family members in their different family nuclei in the same or different locations.

Thus, habitualization of individuals to the family is affected due to contextual circumstances. When the family is affected by dramatic events, like guerrillas and civil conflicts triggering its displacement, it leads to trauma; it can also lead to families’ dissolution.

If a family harmoniously withdraws from the business, the habitualization of the individuals to the family is not affected and so the family habitus continues to exist. The process of habitualization to the family, therefore, depends on how a family reacts after it does not have a business. If the family’s integrity has been affected, the process of habitualization to the family adapts according to the new form of the family. With the disappearance of the business, the habitualization of the family to the business and the corresponding family business habitus become dormant and are ‘housed’ in the experience of the family, in its family ‘human capital-specific’. In practice, this becomes even more complicated if we consider that the experience gained from the family business habitus can become almost imperceptible in the new and unfamiliar situation (Bourdieu, 2005). Then, because of displacement and the related loss of the family business, a wide variety of jobs can be taken up by family members. This illustrates that the family members pursue professional or entrepreneurial careers influenced by their knowledge acquired before the displacement, which can be seen in their human capital (Discua Cruz & Fromm, 2019, p. 82).

Further, during Phase 3, the habitualization process involves individual efforts to bring the family together to the land. Individuals do not want to be alone or accompanied by just anyone, they want to be with their families, and thus look at their families for bringing in potential successors (Danco, 1982, p. 10). The current family, which is the former family is familiar with certain situations thanks to its previous experiences. The creation of the previous family business, the familiness developed through it, and the drama of violent displacement and

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all that it implied, are significant experiences – among which the family business experience inspired resilience, and the violent displacement triggered fear, prevention, and caution. Such an experience leaves behind a powerful link between the family and the land. Such an experience resembles the “strong psychological tie” explained by Nielsen and Riddle (2009, p. 439) between migrants and their country of origin.

The economic behavior of the family is stimulated by the repossessing of the land. The encouragement given by the land recovery is effective in bringing the family closer even across generations. The approximation between family members can be explained using Nielsen and Riddle (2009) study. They argue that migrants tend to give high value to social networks and the knowledge that they had before their migration, which also motivates them both in expectations and in intentions to invest. In other words, family members capitalize on previously shared experiences with the land and when the former business exerts its influence on the land, this is accentuated by the presence and joint work carried out by family members on the land.

The recovery of the land, bringing about the potential reactivation of the family business habitus, is explained through inertia (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 212). Bourdieu (2005) states that habitus is not mechanically prompted, nor does it depend on history. However, history can account for its existence. The family habitus can, thus, be seen as an indelible mark imprinted on the family which is as deep as time and nested in each individual member (Nash, 1999) who is a part of the family and family business. In Figure 28, such an influence is observed as a feedback loop or arrows that link the family habitus and the family business habitus with the family habitus in Phase 3 (see p. 215). The family habitus only emerges when conditions around it recreate previous situations, motivating individuals’ actions consequently establishing the family habitus from past practices. In my understanding, the family habitus is a “practical sense” (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 213). Therefore, the family habitus emerges as a response to the presence of the land and the possibility of doing joint business, validating the family’s economic ideals (Nash, 1999) of what was once the family business, the farm. As a result of the habitualization process, families can explore the possibility of joining forces, and thus the observable habitus is a product of practice (Bourdieu, 2005).

Summing up, in the absence of the business, although the formation of familiness stops, habitualization continues adapting to the new family organization, and familiness housed in the experiences. Thus, the focus is on shaping the family habitus considering the family structure, the reappearance of the land, and the specific contextual circumstances. Human capital in the form of stored experiences and knowledge facilitates the process of habitualization of the family.
Phase 4: Re-entry?

This phase only applies if a family decides to re-engage in a family business. To reach this phase, there has to be a level of habitualization to the family. The difference is that since the family habitus is stored in the family’s memory-experience, the family is motivated by the existence of a dormant family business habitus that the family developed during its previous experience in the family business. The family business habitus also stores memories of familiness, which have memories of the capital. In Figure 28, such an influence is denoted as a feedback loop or arrow that links the family habitus with the habitus in Phase 4 (see p. 215). However, in this phase the family uses its family social capital and ‘human capital-generic’ for rebuilding the interest of the family around the potential reactivation of a farming business. Thus, after their displacement, the family members finally get the land by restitution achieving a similar purpose of inheritance (Donnelley, 1964). However, unplanned successions often come with expected and reasonable disagreements (Dyer, 1986). Williams and Krasniqi (2018) maintain that the means acquired by displaced people during their displacement are motivated towards entrepreneurship. This is similar to the role that the recovered land plays for agricultural families: re-entry or reactivation of the family business will happen to the extent that the conditions and motivations found by the family are similar to those that existed when it entered the business in Phase 2. With similar conditions and motivations, the family business habitus can potentially emerge again.

The legal restitution of the land and a potential farming business implies that the family needs to define a leadership, headed by the next generation. The motivation that leads the family to define leadership is found historically by its previous experience as a family, and its exposure to the family business, which also indicates that the family habitus is structured for-and-from the farm and land. To understand the present rationality of collective economic behavior, it is essential to take into account the economic and social conditions that preceded it (Bourdieu, 2005). The previous experience of the family business involved emotions resulting from family relationships. It magnified them to an “exceptional high degree” (Donnelley, 1964, p. 432), managing to catapult the need for a definition of leadership even when the business is absent. The knowledge gained also suggests that the next generation has already managed to overcome the resulting ambivalence between the search for individuality that stands out inspired by the firm and the spirit of union encouraged by the family (Tagiuri & Davis, 1996, p. 202). During this process of defining the family leadership, the former family demonstrates that it has the ability to cope with a new situation that a family might not have been able to cope without its business experience. A family team in a family business, avoids proceeding with impositions as Haag (2012, p. 173) argues. Then, the next generation defines how group decisions will be made, establishing leadership under one person, which curiously resembles how in the founder’s time decisions were made by a single person. Even in the absence of the business, the family organization makes it
possible to observe that in its nature of a social system there is a tendency to take decisions seeking efficiency (Discua Cruz et al., 2020). The family shows the commitment and ability gained during its previous experience in the family business, and as a family\textsuperscript{FB}, a period during which they advanced efforts in the construction of familiness (Habbershon et al., 2003). Accepting that this is a response to the influence that the former family\textsuperscript{FB} habitus has on the family, the presence of unique attributes in the family are acknowledged as explained by Tagiuri and Davis (1996, p. 201) as a consequence of activity in a family business – even when right now, the family is not in business. Discua Cruz et al. (2020) point out the social construction of an entrepreneurial opportunity through language. Individual opinions emerge, and with them also possible obstacles. Nielsen and Riddle (2009, p. 438) argue that despite the existence of adverse factors inherent in post-conflict contexts, displaced people retain a particular optimism. That sense of hopefulness strengthens their intentions, and this explains why family members tend to continue and discuss and in the end favor the business’ reactivation. With these actions, the displaced family operationalizes its intention to re-enact its agricultural context, a purpose previously suggested by Johannisson (2011, p. 136). Lastly, the progressive participation of members of the next generation in the possibility of reactivating the business is seen when they intercede in favor and give impetus to the leadership process carried out by members of the older generation. With their involvement in the discussions, the newer generation’s members are intervening in the process of reactivating the business farm. The newer generation members enter the debate about the reactivation of the business, and little by little the family integrates them.

To sum up, Phase 4 corresponds with the habitualization process which is enriched by the addition of family members from across generations in the potential reactivation of the farming business. This process is anchored in the use of the family social capital and ‘human capital-generic’. The process is influenced by the dormant family business habitus and related capitals. It is a process where the family progressively discusses the reactivation of the business with optimism and hope.
9 Capturing the antecedents and aftermath of a displaced agricultural family business process

This dissertation examined a displaced agricultural family during its entrepreneurial journey for gaining a better understanding of the processes and effects of its development in relation to its history. Specifically, the dissertation answered the following research question: ‘How do family interactions, historical events, and context influence the decision to start and re activates an agricultural family business?’ To answer this question, I conducted an inductive and interpretative single case study of the Cabrera family in Colombia relying on an umbrella of methods. The Cabrera family was displaced from its home and farming business ‘El Danubio’ in Los Llanos del Yari. The Cabreras experienced the murder of a family member and a kidnapping by the guerillas. Following the history of the family through its life context by investigating three generations of the family in Colombia, my research externalized the antecedents and the aftermath of a displaced agricultural family business process in relation to the dramatic contextual circumstances. The interpretation of the case led to a habitualization perspective featured by underlying processes that influenced the entrepreneurial journey before the creation of the family business and after the business stopped existing. Such processes corresponded with the formation of a family habitus and a family business habitus.

The Cabrera’s case offered me the possibility of understanding a broader process of habitualization with a more nuanced understanding of the influence of family, business, land, and contextual circumstances. For Bourdieu, a structured response is possible when it comes from a social group that has been engaged in a specific practice historically (Nash, 1999). When studying the family-life context, the formation of a family habitus and a family business habitus offers the same possibility. A family is a social group (Arregle et al., 2007; White, Klein, & Martin, 2015), and the family and business constitute two different systems (Tagiuri & Davis, 1996), where each system is made up of diverse people and their experiences, knowledge, and interactions. Because of this, focusing on the interactions and involvement of agricultural families during their life contexts is central for advancing our understanding of their entrepreneurial journeys (e.g., Aldrich & Kim, 2007).

Inspired by Bourdieu (1989); Jaskiewicz and Dyer (2017); Johannisson (2011), I observed that the family interacted in a rich context where it constituted a social space receiving and providing continuous feedback to family members, the business, and its land. The family enriched its social space and consequently, influenced the family and its business (or potential business). Historically, the
family interacted in this social space adopting a different organization, whether family, family\textsuperscript{FB} or family business. Through the family-life context, agricultural families may adopt different organizations during their entrepreneurial journeys. Therefore, once agricultural families are involved in a farming business, they need to make a distinction based on the family before the business and the family after the business. Such a distinction results from the fact that agricultural families’ experiences, knowledge, and connections are different; the families, thus, assume a new organization even though they still have the same last name. When getting involved in the family business, it is necessary to appreciate the new features of the family recognizing the new attributes gained from the transition (i.e., after the business). This is why in my research I differentiate the family when it is not involved in the family business by calling it a ‘family’, and ‘family\textsuperscript{FB}’ indicating that the family is exposed to the experiences, knowledge, and connections that can only be obtained from a family business. These experiences, knowledge, and connections are essential for the formation of family capital and familiness.

Further, the family and the family\textsuperscript{FB} are exposed to a constant process of habituation from which the family and family business habitus are defined. While its organization is that of a family as a social group, it defines its family habitus and when its organization is that of the family business, the agricultural family\textsuperscript{FB} defines its habitus as a family business habitus. Thereby, habituation is a broader process carried out by family members who are born and die during the family’s entrepreneurial journey. Its product, the habitus, is housed in the family’s experiences and knowledge. The habitus is shaped by the changing conditions to which the family is exposed like violence, crime, and displacement. Thanks to memory, the habitus can be dormant and then reactivated with a new involvement in business, or land restitution, or a possible reactivation of an old business in the countryside.

During the involvement of the family in the family business, all the events that are part of the family-life context directly and indirectly affect the production of the family and the family\textsuperscript{FB} capital. These processes and their constant influence in turn happen during the habituation that occurs throughout the entrepreneurial journeys of displaced agricultural families.

My dissertation contributes to theories of entrepreneurship and family business (Nordqvist & Melin, 2010) by studying the entrepreneurial journey of a displaced agricultural family during its life context in Colombia. My contribution relates to the problem of investigating a family and family business using concepts and theories developed in the developed Western countries in developing countries like Colombia, thus advancing the rapidly emerging research on entrepreneurial families in developing countries (cf., Discua Cruz, Hamilton, & Jack, 2020; Discua Cruz, Howarth, & Hamilton, 2013; Hashim, Naldi, & Markowska, 2020; Nordqvist et al., 2011; Ramirez-Pasillas, Brundin, & Markowska, 2017). Scholars studying entrepreneurial families in developing countries often apply theories developed in Western countries without adapting them to different contexts, leading to a lack of accuracy in their findings and interpretations. Thus, my study complements recent literature on entrepreneurial
families in developing countries by acknowledging displacement and peace as a context rich in under-explored phenomena and problems of agricultural families thus contributing to our understanding of families and entrepreneurship from the perspective of habitualization (e.g., Discúa Cruz et al., 2020; Hashim et al., 2020; Ramirez-Pasillas, Lundberg, & Nordqvist, 2020). As suggested by Ramirez-Pasillas et al. (2017), the habitualization perspective of an entrepreneurial journey connects and repositions concepts of the entrepreneurial process, familiness, and family capital, theorizing about the involvement of an agricultural family in business via the family and family business habitus. My study adopted the agricultural family as a unit of analysis within the context of the land problem and the underlying violence in Colombia. Specifically, there are implications regarding entrepreneurship in an agricultural family violently dispossessed of its land and being forced to lose its business. Seeing the family-life context historically, it was possible to delve into the background of the first generation of the founder or founders, depending on the case, understanding how profound the influence of the family was and its consequent relationship with entrepreneurship. During my historical reconstruction, valuable insights explained the strong relationship that existed between agricultural families, their land, and their businesses. Through my empirical interpretation of the events, it was possible to visualize the family influence passing through generations. The family-life context provided valuable historical, social, and economic contextual details that affected the family and its interactions, from which an understanding regarding the formation of family capital in the different organizations that involved the family could be reached, that is, as a family and as a family involved in the business. Based on the presence of several generations, it is possible to observe the evolution of the family from a process of habitualization during which it acquired a family habitus and a family business habitus. A study of the second generation made it possible to show the existence of habitus before, during, and after the involvement of the family in a farming business in the countryside. From the point of view of the third generation, it was possible to understand that the habitus has memory and that family business habitus manages to remain in the family even in the absence of the farming business. Habitualization and habitus allow us to communicate the family’s past, the former family business, its land, and its familiness with the possibility of a future reactivation or a new involvement of the family in (other) businesses. In this way, the experience of the family involved in the family business works for the benefit of the entrepreneurial activity and gives the former family business a role as a part of the family’s development in a new and broader dimension.

This study also draws attention to the importance of an agricultural family as a business family which is relevant for studies on family businesses (i.e., Fitz-Koch et al., 2018). Agricultural families are involved in the farming business, and this business is traditionally recognized as a family activity closely linked to land (e.g., Garner & de la O, 2014). Considering the farming business as a representative activity of an agricultural family’s involvement in the business, it is challenging to find a family business activity without a family history before
the business activity. Agricultural families are present worldwide, and even though their activities have reduced in number, they still recognize these activities as socially and economically essential for their countries. Agricultural families’ involvement in the farming business finds an explanation in their specific family-life contexts during which the family, the business, and the land interact and merge so that they can hardly be seen separately. When a family gets involved in a business, it gives rise to a family business in which family and business develop in the countryside, establishing a continuous relationship of mutual feedback during which the business takes shape (e.g., Aldrich & Lippmann, 2013; Bourdieu, 1989; Johannisson, 2011). This special involvement of agricultural families with business in the countryside, their interactions and development are based on their family-life contexts. Thus, the family-life context deserves special consideration by a research when aiming to obtain a greater understanding of both the family and the family business in connection with land.

My study also sheds light on the entrepreneurial journey by creating and recreating family dynamics around the possibility of starting and reactivating a family business. A study of a displaced agricultural family in Colombia made it possible to observe the relationship of domination described in literature that was exercised by the family over the business (e.g., Arregle et al., 2007; Donnelley, 1964). It was also possible to observe the influence that the family business exerted on the family. Taking into account that the family clung to the family business for developing the family business habitus, I argue that the influence of the family business on the family acquired a greater scope. The recreation of the relationship between the family business and the family was done through a reconstruction of the family’s interactions between its members involving all generations during the presence and absence of the business, with and without access to the land. To these interactions and influences must be added the period corresponding to the potential business’ reactivation. In the case of the displaced agricultural family, it was valuable to examine the family’s reactions and interactions in connection with the business during its absence and around its potential reactivation. The contextual circumstances that influenced the family-life context were essential for a broader understanding of the entrepreneurial journey of the agricultural family in Colombia.

Once families lose the land and the business, they are forced to reconfigure themselves since they have lost their common purpose. However, by following its development through the different events in its life context, it is possible to observe that the Cabreras’ potential business reactivation affected its family members involving them little by little including members of the third generation. Then, the family business exerted a positive influence on the family and its interactions.
9.1 Research implications

My study shows that when aiming to gain a better understanding of a family business, research on agricultural families should consider the family’s oldest antecedents because it is only when we consider the families’ historical antecedents that we will be able to make sense of what a family’s involvement in business entails (cf., Jaskiewicz et al., 2016; Jaskiewicz & Dyer, 2017). My study, thus, demonstrates that the theory of family development is a useful approach for studying a family’s antecedents by interpreting key events in the family’s history. This theory provides the researcher with a conceptual spectrum for considering the family’s development and social and historical changes which allow the researcher to theorize from the family-life context (cf., Aldrich & Kim, 2007). This research develops the family-life context as an analytical tool that helped me to expand the window of time, encompassing not only the family business period but also including the period in which the family existed before its involvement in the business, and the period after the involvement and the family business not existing. The family-life context is a broad spectrum and is an addition to contextual studies (cf., Ramirez-Pasillas et al., 2017; Welter, 2011). This analytical tool requires the researcher to identify significant events for a family in each period from which (s)he will be able to interpret historically and socially significant events as well as their influence on the context and the family. As an analytical tool, it gives the researcher the freedom to move backward and forward in time as necessary, thus reaching the present time. In this way, the researcher empowers himself/herself to throw light on periods obscured by different causes or approaches during the development of the family.

Following a sociological approach (cf., Bourdieu, 1989), it is possible to advance research on entrepreneurial families (cf., Nordqvist & Melin, 2010). In literature, a restricted understanding of the family business is common that tends to ignore essential contextual aspects (e.g., Danes et al., 2008). Also, family business research tends to demand family businesses as an imperious requirement. By proceeding in this way, the researcher excludes from his/her area of interest two large groups of families – those that have not yet been involved in a business, and those that after being involved, are no longer involved. Also, considering those families who have been involved in a business in the past, it is recognized that not everything is about new ventures, suggesting instead that researchers should also increase their interest in re-entry into businesses (Baü et al., 2017), and the potential reactivation of businesses.

A research focus on the habitualization perspective offers ample possibilities of advancing our understanding of the involvement of agricultural families in business throughout their life contexts. Once researchers extend the window of time for their studies they can better appreciate the background of the business and the family as well as its connections and interactions with its land. Such aspects are essential and can help obtain more clarity in an understanding of the entrepreneurial journeys in other countries.
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The habitualization perspective of displaced agricultural families throughout their entrepreneurial journeys enriches research in entrepreneurship and family business inasmuch as it allows positioning the displaced family as a unit of analysis without ignoring the presence of the family business and the land. By considering the existence of the habitus to the family and to the family business, family business research has an opportunity of studying and better understanding the dynamics between both systems – the family and family business – and their influential mutual feedback (cf., Habbershon & Williams, 1999; Pearson, Carr, & Shaw, 2008). My study also provides empirical evidence on familiness as suggested by Habbershon and Williams (1999). However, instead of focusing on understanding the differences between family and non-family businesses, my study addresses the formation of familiness and family capital. By doing so, it further develops the habitualization perspective and elaborates on the emergence of family and family business habitus.

My study also develops a method contribution with a snapshot visit. A snapshot visit is inspired by ethnography (cf., Knoblauch, 2005) and an enactive approach (Johannisson, 2018), and is characterized by a short duration research visit. It is a valuable tool for researchers trying to gain sensitivity and an understanding of their case. The investigation can be carried out without a snapshot visit as well. However, the findings of such an approach might lack sensitivity. In a snapshot visit, many aspects of the case and the uniqueness of context become visible. A snapshot visit emerges as an in-depth observation exercise of exposure to the context, and only through the visit will the researcher be able to get closer to the context.

9.2 Limitations

Based on my study on a displaced agricultural family in Colombia, I contribute to entrepreneurship and family businesses research. However, my study has some limitations which could be overcome in future studies.

Regarding the choice of a single case study, my research focused exclusively on a displaced family involved in an agricultural business in Colombia. The selection of the case was based on its relevance and uniqueness and also considering the possibilities of accessing the case. However, even though I argue that the agricultural family represents the origins of family involvement in the business, this is only a representation of the great diversity of displaced families engaged in businesses in the countryside. The relationship that an agricultural family establishes with the land and its farming business is also due to its distinct and differentiating character which makes it different from other types of businesses. Hence, it is advisable to extend the study to different types of family businesses and families’ connections to the land.

My case is based on an empirical investigation of a displaced agricultural Colombian family and it considers special contextual conditions such as the Colombian armed conflict, the violence caused by displacement, the loss of land
and the business of the farming family, the agreement for peace between the government and FARC guerrillas, and the process of restitution of land to displaced Colombians. When it comes to violence in Colombia, it is essential to consider that this is a complex and historical phenomenon. Colombian violence has several origins, including in what has been called the land problem which involves conflict dating back to the time of the conquest. Violence in Colombian history has been orchestrated by different armed actors such as drug traffickers and paramilitaries, which increases its complexity. For understanding the Colombian conflict and its violence, it is important to understand what farming families living in the Colombian countryside face. To achieve this understanding, it is not enough to be a Colombian or have access to secondary sources of information, it also requires approaching the victims and protagonists of the conflict, getting to know the drama of violence closely and what it means and its effect on the families. This dissertation thus calls for further research on displaced agricultural families to shed more light on the influence of contextual circumstances on family businesses.

Researching family businesses in settings marked by violence leads to an interaction in an environment that has multiple interests interested in the war. This represents multiple risks for a researcher. A discussion on peace and conflict in Colombia is an extremely sensitive issue which affects the researcher’s considerations of the research process and the risks for him/her. Due to one of my articles in a local newspaper, someone reminded me that telling the truth in my country can put lives at risk. Visiting the post-conflict zone Los Llanos del Yarí during the peace process was an important experience during my research for gaining sensitivity to the case. However, it also meant risks in accessing an area where the army and armed groups are still present. Additionally, the area has explosive mines so one has to be extra cautious. Finally, due to the conflict, as an unknown person in the region, I had to take care when trying to talk about violence with the locals. The shadow of the paramilitaries and their massacre have led to great mistrust of outsiders, which is why obtaining interviews required a considerable investment of time. Thus, future research needs to carefully consider all these aspects and make use of tools such as a snapshot visit to Colombia for investigating relevant settings and the protagonists of displaced agricultural families during their entrepreneurial journeys.

Forced displacement is a global phenomenon. This dissertation was based on the violent displacement of agricultural families from their land during the armed conflict in Colombia. However, war is not the only reason for displacement which can also be caused by environmental factors like climate change, natural disasters, infectious diseases, famines, lack of economic opportunities, and project development, among others. Each of these represent different situations and dramas for exploring families’ entrepreneurial journeys. Therefore, their processes and effects cannot be interpreted using the same lens.

During the development of my case, I managed to interview approximately half of the Cabrera family. While the research design and number of interviews allowed me to achieve data saturation, I did not consider a number of places that
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would have allowed me to interview the entire family and explore the variety of experiences after their forced displacement. The complexity provided by the size of the family and the presence of three generations added more complexity to the research design. My case study is still unfinished and continues in its family-life context. We don’t know what will happen to the Cabreras. In the absence of a more extensive longitudinal study, it is not possible to determine whether the habitus and familiness obtained by the family from its time in the business will be sufficient to influence the reactivation of the family business.

9.3 Further research

Considering that this dissertation has developed a habitualization perspective, it is necessary to examine further habitualization and the consequent production of habitus. Family businesses as family business habitualization and family business habitus can be explored not only in starting, re-entry, and reactivation situations, but also transversely across other areas of family business research. Habitualization offers the possibility of advancing our understanding of families in business.

My study of the Cabrera family and its land could continue considering that the family has not yet firm ed up its decision about the reactivation of the family business and neither has it sold the land. The development of the family capital continues. If reactivation of the business does not happen, the displaced family may decide to sell the land and this could mean that the family will be seriously affected by the events and will not be able to get involved with its land again. Thus, future research can focus on potential reactivation of family businesses as a longitudinal study. As indicated by Nordqvist and Melin (2010), the movement and influence of the various generations in Latin American countries is important. For example, a few months ago, some Cabrera family members of the third generation asked me for advice about their intention of making a joint request to the members of the second generation, their parents, to allow them to work an area of the land. They also said that it would be good to involve fourth generation members.

Future research can study displaced families and family businesses in spheres other than agriculture. This can help advance our understanding of displacement of businesses as a field of study. Further, considering that my case developed in a setting marred by the violence generated by an armed conflict, future research can also examine exiting from businesses due to other types of violence. This can also be extended to considering reactivation of a business after a family ends its involvement in the business for whatever reasons. Each case of cessation of the family's involvement in the family business must have unique characteristics, and in the same way the probabilities of the family becoming involved in the family business again must also be considered.

Through the development of the case study and during the narratives family members’ emotions emerged and were expressed throughout the entrepreneurial
journey. Emotions of the second and the third-generation members about their experiences of the events influenced their position regarding the land, the start, and the reactivation of the business in the countryside. However, emotions were an aspect that I did not take explicitly into account during my study. Future research can explore the role of emotions in the entrepreneurial journeys of displaced agricultural families.

During my study, the interviewees continually alluded to their close relationship with the land, which influenced their positions about its potential reactivation. In the case of diasporas and migrants, literature mentions a psychological tie with the country of origin (Nielsen & Riddle, 2009, p. 439) which leads me to think about the same relationship between agricultural families and their dispossessed land. Considering the reactivation of the displaced agricultural family, it is convenient to more deeply explore the existence of such a relationship and to establish its influence in favor of entrepreneurship and family businesses.
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Appendices
Appendix 1: The events

In what follows, I detail the main events that I used for interpreting the Cabrera’s family entrepreneurial journey through its history. I used these events to reconstruct the entrepreneurial journey over time in Figures 14 and 15 in Chapter 3.

Phase 1: Before familiness / pre-familiness (1958-1970)
- 1958. Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo inherited his first land: Satia and El Casil when he was approximately 41 years old. At that time, Ricardo’s family had his wife, Lucy Cabrera Puentes, and his sons Ricardo (7), Javier (5), Jaime (4), Hernando (2), and Rodrigo (1). Lucy passed away in 1961.
- Ricardo CP was the sole owner of the land. There was no family business as the second generation was very young; they were children. Children Cabrera Cabrera have known the land since their birth.
- 1963. Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo carried out his work as an administrator and arrived at the Los Llanos del Yari. He was 46-years-old. He was accompanied by his older son, 12-year-old Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera.
- 1964. As an administrator, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo received the El Arenoso land. This land was later known as ‘El Danubio.’ He was accompanied by his older son, 13-year-old Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera.
- 1965. Oliverio Lara Borrero was assassinated. Oliverio was Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo’s boss.

- 1970. Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo bought the land that led to El Danubio. From now on, he is called the ‘founder.’
- Jaime Cabrera Cabrera (16-years-old) stayed in Algeciras, managing El casil and Satia farms.
- Older brothers, Ricardo (19) and Javier (17), worked on El Danubio. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera was the founder’s right hand man.
- Dioselina Sánchez came to live in Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo’s house as Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s wife, bringing her two children with her.
- 1972. Javier Cabrera Cabrera’s son, Javier Ricardo, was born; he is from the third generation. He lived with the founder and over the years joined those who worked on the farm.
- 1974. Javier Cabrera Cabrera’s son, Leonardo Francisco, was born; he is from the third generation. He lived with the founder and over the years joined those who worked on the farm.
- 1975. Hernando (19) and Rodrigo (18) went to live and study in Bogotá. However, in every school break and vacation, they returned to El Danubio.
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- Hernandez did not finish his university degree and moved to live and work on the Colombian Caribbean coast.
- Rodrigo stayed in Bogotá and worked there.
- 1976. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s daughter, Lucy, was born; she is from the third generation. In her early years, she lived in San Vicente del Caguán and on the farm.
- 1978. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s son, Jose Ricardo, was born; he is from the third generation. He lived in San Vicente del Caguán.
- 1979. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s daughter, Carolina, was born; she is from the third generation. She lived in San Vicente del Caguán.
- 1979. Jaime Cabrera Cabrera (25-years-old) married Elsa Bautista. Jaime was the administrator of Satia farm and lived in the Algeciras-Huila region.
- 1982. The founder sold the properties El Casil and Satia.
- Jaime Cabrera Cabrera, his wife Elsa, and their son moved to San Vicente del Caguán. Soon they visited El Danubio. When Jaime was on El Danubio, he worked in the family business since he managed one of the farms that made up the business.
- 1983. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s wife and daughter, Dioselina, and Lucy, respectively were kidnapped by guerrillas. Once they were released, Dioselina decided that neither she nor her children (Lucy, Jose Ricardo, and Carolina) will return to El Danubio.
- 1984. Due to the insecurity in the area, Jaime Cabrera Cabrera, Elsa, and their son decided to move to the Caribbean coast.
- 1984. Hermila Cruz Peña, the founder’s sentimental partner, and their children Ana Milena (18), and Orlando came to live with the founder in San Vicente and El Danubio. They became a part of the family.
- 1984. The founder acquired two farms near San Vicente del Caguán and registered them in Ana Milena and Orlando’s names.
- 1985. The founder, Ricardo Cabrera Perdomo is assassinated.
- Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera decided not to return to the region. El Danubio was abandoned. This was the end of the business, the farm.
- Some members continued living in the region:
- Ricardo’s family: Dioselina and her children Lucy, Jose Ricardo, and Carolina; Hermila and her children Ana Milena and Orlando, and Javier’s children, Javier Ricardo and Leonardo Francisco.


- 1986. Ricardo Jr’s family, Dioselina and her children Lucy, Jose Ricardo, and Carolina, decided to move to the city of Neiva.
Hermila (the widow) sold the two properties that were in her children’s names, and they decided to move to Neiva. Milena and Orlando went with her and Javier’s children, Javier Ricardo and Leonardo Francisco too accompanied them. In Neiva, they were also accompanied by Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera.

Shortly after, Ana Milena married Nalbix.

1986. Jaime and Elsa’s daughter, Martha Lucía, was born; she is from the third generation.

1987. Milena decided to return to San Vicente del Caguán and live there with her husband.


1987. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera and Javier Cabrera Cabrera decided to move from Neiva to the Colombian Caribbean coast.

Ricardo Jr’s family, Dioselina and her children Lucy, Jose Ricardo, and Carolina, decided to move from Neiva to the Caribbean coast.

1988. Leonardo’s godfather, Jaime Cabrera Cabrera, visited San Vicente del Caguán and took him to live in Medellín.

1988. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s daughter, Vanessa, was born; she is from the third generation.

1988. Hernando Cabrera Cabrera’s eldest son, Luis Felipe, was born; he is from the third generation.

1989. Hernando Cabrera Cabrera’s younger son, Hernando Jr, was born; he is from the third generation.

1989. Ana Milena’s eldest daughter, Lina Milena, was born; she is from the third generation.

1989. Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera’s eldest son, Nicolás, was born; he is from the third generation.

1990. Jaime Cabrera Cabrera and Elsa’s son, Juan David, was born; he is from the third generation.

1990. Milena’s second daughter, Edna Victoria, was born; she is from the third generation.

1991. Hernando Cabrera Cabrera, his wife, and two children were violently forced by the guerrillas to abandon the farm where he worked and lived in the Copey-Cesar region. They moved to Neiva and then to Acacias-Meta.

1994. Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera’s son, Carlos Felipe, was born; he is from the third generation.

1996. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s family, Dioselina and her children Lucy, Jose Ricardo, Carolina, and Vanessa, decided to move to Neiva.

1996. Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera’s daughter, María Lucía, was born; she is from the third generation.
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- 1999. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera decided to go to El Danubio where he was kidnapped. He remained on the land and in the distention zone till 2008.
- 2002. Ana Milena’s third daughter, Maria de Los Ángeles, was born; she is from the third generation.
- 2008. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera released and he returned to live with his family in Neiva. After his liberation, Ricardo decided to continue frequenting El Danubio and started working on the land not as a business, but instead as a source of income. Shortly after his release, he returned to El Danubio accompanied by his daughter Vanessa (20-years-old).
- 2009. Javier Cabrera Cabrera’s son, Javier Ricardo, visited the land. He wanted them to preserve the land.
- 2013. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s son, Jose Ricardo, returned to El Danubio, this time to work and help his father.
- 2016. Ana Milena’s husband, Nalbiz attended the summons that guerrillas made to his wife Milena to talk about the lands.
- 2016. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera and Milena Cabrera Cruz agreed to comply with the guerrillas’ summons and appeared on behalf of their other five siblings at various meetings to recover their land.
- Ana Milena visited El Danubio.
- 2016. November. The Colombian government and the guerrillas signed the peace agreement.
- 2016. December. Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera became the leader and spokesperson in the search for a productive project.
- Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera wanted to work in El Danubio.
- 2017. First-quarter. The Cabrera brothers argued, fought, and some refused to accept Rodrigo’s leadership. Everyone took part in the discussions. There was division among the members. They stopped discussing the land issue because there was no dialogue among the brothers.
- The members of the third generation, Hernando Cabrera Cabrera’s son Luis Felipe and Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera’s son Nicolás mediated on their own initiative and talked to their parents and uncles so that they could resume the dialogue.
- On her initiative and unaware of what Luis Felipe and Nicolás were doing, Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s daughter, Carolina, talked to her father so that he could resume a dialogue. She also spoke with her aunt Ana Milena so that she proposed to continue the discussions with Uncle Hernando Cabrera Cabrera as the new leader. Carolina also talked to her Uncle Jaime Cabrera Cabrera, and shared the same proposal with him. Jaime Cabrera Cabrera approved of the initiative.
2017. March. Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s wife, Dioselina, visited the land again.

2017. April. Meeting of the Cabrera brothers during which they defined a new shared leadership between Hernando and Rodrigo, who were authorized to start a business that they considered viable.

Hernando Cabrera Cabrera wanted to work on the El Danubio land.

Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera wanted to work on the El Danubio land.

Hernando Cabrera Cabrera’s son, Luis Felipe, confirmed that El Danubio was not among his plans. He was not interested.

2017. June. Beginning of my interviews: brothers Ricardo, Hernando, and Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera told me that they were taking steps to legalize the land.

Each of the Cabrera Cabrera brothers issued a power of attorney making Hernando the leader in any negotiations or projects involving the land.

Hernando Cabrera Cabrera confirmed his intention of reactivating El Danubio.

Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera’s son, Nicolás, said that in the last two years, he had become even more interested in the land since the peace talks began, and was part of a ‘voice to voice’ among the members of the third generation. He too wanted to reactivate El Danubio.

Hernando Cabrera Cabrera’s son, Hernando Jr, said that was excited to know that he had this land. He wanted to work on it.

Phase 4: Re-entry? (2017-19)


Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera’s son, Nicolás, was included in the deed as one of the owners of the land.

Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera’s daughter, María Lucía, interested in El Danubio but feels that her father is ignoring her.

Ricardo Cabrera Cabrera’s wife, Dioselina, wants to start a dairy on El Danubio.

Carolina said that the land belonged to her too. She wanted to go there and start a business, a dairy, with her brothers.

Hernando Cabrera Cabrera’s wife, Angela, did not approve of any project that had to do with El Danubio and she did not want to see any member of her family involved.

2017. September. Ana Milena became active in the dialogue but was confused because she liked the land, but she also had financial difficulties.

2017. October. Hernando Cabrera Cabrera’s son, Luis Felipe Cabrera, was not interested. However, he participated in the dialogues and was aware of the land issue.
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- 2018. Milena’s husband, Nalbiz, visited the land with the Cabrera brothers. Nalbiz visited El Danubio in the same year.
- 2019. April. Meeting of the Cabrera brothers with a representative of some investors. There was the possibility of a project.
- Javier Cabrera Cabrera’s son, Leonardo Francisco, used knowledge of the law to help with the management of documents related El Danubio. He was present at the meeting.
- Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera also present at the meeting.
- Rodrigo Cabrera Cabrera’s daughter, María Lucía, is present at the meeting.
- Hernando Cabrera Cabrera present at the meeting.
- Hernando Cabrera Cabrera’s wife, Angela, is present at the meeting.
- 2019. July. Jaime Cabrera Cabrera said he will accept the decisions taken by the leaders, Hernando and Rodrigo.
- Jaime Cabrera Cabrera’s wife, Elsa, is not interested in the reactivation of the farm or a project and wanted the land to be sold.
Appendix 2: Impressions from the snapshot visit

The FARC’s cemetery ‘Los Andes’

The FARC’s cemetery ‘Los Andes’
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‘Casa Roja’, the ‘red house’ – a notorious meeting place of the FARC

At ‘Casa Roja’ – bullet holes marking the wall
At Casa Roja – The former swimming pool

At Casa Roja – The aftermath of searching for ‘guacas’
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Dinner at a farm

The kitchen of a farm
At Los Llanos del Yarí – the satellite TV antenna, the only means of staying informed about the world

Getting timber for building Ricardo’s house
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Heavy rain in Los Llanos del Yarí

Getting Yucca for dinner
Daily activities on the farm – milking the cows

Daily activities on the farm – making cheese
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Dinner is ready – the local specialty ‘arepas’

At Milena’s place: The dinner table also serves for cutting the meat to be sold
Visit to the local forest

Crossing the creek – or better not?
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The lands

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At La Macarena

At the central park in La Macarena – finally, able to call home
With Carolina at La Macarena

120 hectares for sale
Building the Manila’s house farm

Guayabero River
Towards El Recreo in Los Llanos del Yari – concluding the snapshot visit
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Capturing the antecedents and aftermath of a family business process

The entrepreneurial journey of a displaced agricultural family in Colombia

This study examines a displaced agricultural family’s entrepreneurial journey in Colombia relying on a single case study and following an inductive and interpretivist approach. The main objective of the dissertation is explaining how family interactions, historical events, and context influence the family’s decision to start and potentially reactivate the agricultural family business. Following the displaced agricultural family through its life context, this study interprets the family members’ accounts of the formation of the family and its business, land displacement and restitution, and the potential reactivation of the business in the backdrop of violence, crime, and land evictions in Colombia. The agricultural family’s entrepreneurial journey is interpreted along four phases to make sense of the family's interactions and the critical events as per family accounts. The study extends habitualization as a perspective for addressing the underlying processes that influenced the family’s entrepreneurial journey before creating its family business and after the business exit. It proposes that the habitualization perspective can help us better understand the entrepreneurial journeys of displaced agricultural families. Habitualization provides a bridge connecting a family’s past with its present and future. This dissertation also sheds light on the entrepreneurial journey of creating and recreating family dynamics around the possibility of starting and potentially reactivating a family business considering the family’s land and observing the effects of its contextual circumstances.

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