Vierelina Fernández, Ph.D.

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Rutgers University – New Brunswick
Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS)

EDUCATION

PhD, International Relations, Florida International University (August 2024)

Dissertation: "Insurgent Feminism: A Comparative Empirical Analysis of the Colombian FARC and Kurdish PKK-YPG Guerrillas' Contributions to Gender Equality"

National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellow, 2018-2023
Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship Honorable Mention, 2022

MA, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Florida International University (2020)

Directed Research Thesis: "Revolutionary Religion: Rethinking the Impact of Religious Ideology on Women's Participation in Armed Insurrection"

Double BA, International Studies / Latin American & Latino Studies, DePaul University (2015)
Minors (2) in French and Economics

UNIVERSITY APPOINTMENTS

Postdoctoral Associate (2024-2026). **Rutgers University**. Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS).
Instructor (2021-2024). **Florida International University**. School of Politics & International Relations.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Feminist Security Studies; Insurgency; Rebel-to-Party transitions; Global South Security Studies; Women in Armed Conflict; Post-Conflict Democratization; Comparative Politics (Latin America-Middle East); Mixed Methods.

ORIGINAL DATASETS / DATA DASHBOARD

Two (2) original mixed-methods datasets *constructed from dissertation research (May 2020 - June 2022). The first is the product of survey and interview data collected with* ***153 former FARC combatants****.*
The second is the product of a ***content analysis of 193 official documents*** *of Turkish, Kurdish, and Colombian political party material.*

Fernandez, Vierelina. ***Gender Attitudes Among FARC Ex-Combatants***. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2025-09-27. https://doi.org/10.3886/E238425V1

Corresponding data dashboard available here: https://wvscivilianinsurgentdashboard-idkaogysk7npdhz9p7seq3.streamlit.app/

Fernandez, Vierelina. ***Gender Equality in Insurgent vs. Civilian Political Party Communications in Turkey and Colombia***. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2026-10-08. https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR317391.V1

SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS & MANUSCRIPTS

Book Manuscript: Insurgent Feminism in Global Revolution: Lessons from Colombian and Kurdish Guerrilla Fighters. Complete first draft; revisions underway.

- *Complete first manuscript draft workshopped by four senior faculty members at Rutgers University in October 2025; revisions underway.*

Fernández, V. (2013). Indigenous influences in Mexican children's literature. *Diálogo*, 16(2), 95-97.

Berardi, L., Balcázar, F., Lacolla, F., **Fernández, V.**, Gonzalez, D., Camacho, R., (2014). International community research project and action: Examining white privilege and discrimination in Argentina. *The Community Psychologist,* 47(1), 16-18.

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

Fernández, V. (2026). Beyond Destruction: War as Generative in Turkey and Colombia's Feminist Political Parties. *Small Wars and Insurgencies*. (Submitted October 2026.) https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.7572381

Fernández, V. (2026). Examining the Importance of Cultural Competence and Interdisciplinarity in Psychological Research: A Case Study of the Kurdish and Yazidi Genocides. *Journal of Feminist Scholarship.* (Submitted November 2026.) https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.7572938

WORKING PAPERS (AVAILABLE)

Both (2) papers below are publicly available for viewing and download at the Social Science Research Network (SSRN). Currently incorporating feedback from prior submissions to high-impact journals.

Insurgent Feminism: A Comparative Analysis of Colombian and Kurdish Women Guerrillas' Contributions to Democracy. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.7637219

Changing the Focus: Re-Imagining Human Trafficking as a Product of Gender Inequality https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.7591141

PUBLICATIONS (PUBLIC-FACING ESSAYS / OP-EDS)

Fernández, V. (2026, February). What country music can learn from the Bad Bunny effect. *The Tennessean.* (Syndicated by Yahoo News: Entertainment). https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/contributors/2026/02/15/bad-bunny-and-the-untapped-latino-market-for-country-music/88689381007/

*(Forthcoming) Fernández, V. (2026, November). Turkey's Peace Process with the PKK Must Learn from Colombia's Mistakes. *Diplomatic Courier.* https://www.diplomaticourier.com/

POLICY AND ADVISING EXPERIENCE

Strategic Advisor in Latin American Gender and Security. Pan-American Strategic Advisors (PASA). https://www.panamstrategicadvisors.com/vierelina-fernandez-bio. *(May 2025- Present).*

GRANTS & EXTERNAL FUNDING

Secured competitive external and institutional funding to support international research, fieldwork, and project completion, including:

- McKnight Foundation Dissertation Completion Grant **(2024)**
- Dissertation Year Fellowship at Florida International University **(2022)**
- Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship Honorable Mention **(2022)**
- McKnight Dissertation Fellowship - Florida Education Fund (FEF) **(2021)**
- Tinker Foundation Latin American Field Research Grant **(2019)**
- National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship **(2018)**
- McNair Scholars Doctoral Fellowship at Florida International University **(2016)**
- McNair Scholars Independent Research Abroad Grant (Colombia); DePaul University **(2015)**
- DePaul University College of LA&S: Summer Undergrad Research Grant (Mexico) **(2014)**

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Courses emphasize discussion-based learning, real-world case studies, and student engagement with primary data and field-based research. All courses designed and taught independently as the instructor of record.

Rutgers University:
- Introduction to Latin America (LAS 101). Fall 2024 - present. Multiple sections.
- Advanced Topics: Political Violence and Conflict in Latin America. Spring 2026.

Florida International University:
- Comparative Politics: Theory and Practice (CPO 3010). Spring 2024.
- Contemporary International Problems (INR 3081). Summer 2021.

PROGRAMMING AND SERVICE (SELECT)

*(Forthcoming) **Rutgers Center for Latin American Studies Event.** "The Colombian Peace Deal: 10 Years of Post-conflict Lessons." Panel. *November 2026.*

Lead for Colombia Working Group at the Rutgers University Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS). Organizing and hosting events. *Sept. 2025 – Present.*

Rutgers Center for Latin American Studies Event. Panel moderator/discussant: "International Law and (In)Justice: Venezuela, Extrajudicial Force, and Caribbean Impacts." *April 2026.*

Co-Lead for the Mexico-Central America Working Group at the Rutgers University Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS). Organizing and hosting events. *Sept. 2025 - Present.*

Kurdish Studies Association at Rutgers University. Moderator for the panel "Decolonizing the Middle East: Kurdish Experiences." *December 2025.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYZP4_87Wzk

International Studies Association-Northeast (ISA-NE). Discussant and Chair for the panel "Narratives of Vulnerability." *November 2025.*

***Politics and Gender* Conference.** Discussant for the panel "Sexual Violence and Conflict." Conference held at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. *May 2025.*

***Politics and Gender* Journal Reviewer.** Served as an expert reviewer for a submission on the 2016 Colombian Peace Deal and its gendered dimensions. *July 2025.*

Rutgers Center for Latin American Studies Event. Spearheaded the creation, organization, and carrying out of a Fall 2024 in-person event with Colombian guest speaker and social activist, Dr. Karol Solís Menco. *October 2024.*

FIU in D.C. Fly-In Series. One of ten individuals selected and funded to travel to Washington D.C. for 3 days for the first inaugural fly-in on Latin America and the Caribbean. *February 2023.*

RESEARCH SUPERVISION & MENTORSHIP

Rising H.S. Senior in STEM. Was contacted by a highly motivated H.S. student in STEM looking to serve as a research assistant for my dataset project on the Colombian FARC. We meet weekly, where I supervise his work and provide academic guidance. *December 2025 – Present.*

McNair Scholars Program Summer Research Mentor: McNair is a competitive program that prepares exceptional young scholars from low-income, first-generation, minority backgrounds for a doctoral program in an effort to diversify those producing knowledge. *May 2025.*

Usküdar University (Turkey). Mentor to a first-generation, minority (Kurdish) woman from a conservative household denied a university education by her family for 12 years. She sought out my mentorship for her college and grad school applications. *January 2022 – May 2024.*

SMART Lab Mentor. The SMART Lab at the University of South Florida (USF) helps prepare undergraduate students from underrepresented minority groups for a doctoral program. I served as a mentor from: *August 2022 – July 2023.*

INTERNATIONAL FIELDWORK & EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Graduate

(January-June 2022) Dissertation fieldwork. Six months in **Turkey**, **France,** and **Germany**.

(May-October 2021) Dissertation fieldwork. Six months in **Colombia**.

(February 2020) Exploratory pre-dissertation field research. Three weeks in Diyarbakir, Batman, and Mardin, **Turkey**.

(November 2019) Tinker Grant pre-dissertation field research. Three weeks in Barranquilla, Valledupar, and Manaure, **Colombia**.

(May-November 2018) Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center at Florida International University. Research assistant (RA) for **Department of Homeland Security (DHS) study** on human trafficking in South Florida. Six months. Under José Miguel Cruz, Ph.D.

(July 2016) Universidad Piloto de Colombia - intensive summer course: "Construcción de Cultura de Paz" (Constructing a Culture of Peace). Two weeks in Bogotá, **Colombia**. Under Carolina Urbina, Ph.D.

Undergraduate

(July 2015) DePaul University McNair Scholars Program Summer Research Experience (SRSE). Two weeks in Bogotá, **Colombia**. Under Fabricio Balcázar, Ph.D.

(September-December 2014) Independent research abroad project. Four months in Guadalajara, **Mexico**. Under Carolina Sternberg, Ph.D.

(May-July 2014) **Tufts University: The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy**. Leadership Alliance Summer Research Early Identification Program (SR-EIP). Nine weeks. Under Professor Kim Wilson.

(June 2013) DePaul University McNair Scholars Program Summer Research Experience (SRSE). Two weeks in Buenos Aires and Patagonia, **Argentina**. Under Luciano Berardi, Ph.D. and Fabricio Balcázar, Ph.D.

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS (SELECT)

(2026, April). Beyond Destruction: War as Generative in Turkey and Colombia's Feminist Political Parties. Postdoc Research Talk. Rutgers University.

(2025, November). Denied Motherhood? A Militarized Feminist Approach to the Realities of Armed Insurgency. (Paper). International Studies Association-Northeast. (ISA-NE).

(2025, November). Authoritarian Feminism? Examining Command Structure and Hierarchy in the Gender-Progressive FARC and PKK. (Paper). International Studies Association-Northeast. (ISA-NE).

(2025, April). From Soldiers to Feminists: Examining the Wartime Variables Transforming the Colombian Guerrillas. (Book chapter). Center for Iberoamerican Studies (CEIUPRA), University of Puerto Rico. *Virtual presentation.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zq8TbDrbcyg

(2025, March). From Soldiers to Feminists: Examining the Wartime Variables Transforming the Colombian and Kurdish Guerrillas. (Book chapter). Mid-Atlantic Council of Latin American Studies (MACLAS). University of Delaware. Newark, United States.

(2024, November). Insurgent Feminism: A Comparative-Empirical Analysis of the Colombian FARC and Kurdish PKK-YPG Guerrillas (Book Project). McKnight Fellows Annual Conference. Tampa, United States.

(2024, April). War Creates States, but Does It Also Breed Feminism? A Transregional Empirical Comparison of the Colombian FARC and Kurdish PKK/YPG (Paper). Cornell University Reppy Peace and Justice Fellows Annual Conference, Ithaca, United States.

(2023, September). War Creates States, but Does It Also Breed Feminism? A Transregional Empirical Comparison of the Colombian FARC and Kurdish PKK/YPG (Paper). International Studies Association-Latin America and the Caribbean (ISA-LAC), Bogotá, Colombia.

(2021, April). War Creates States, but Does It Also Breed Gender Equality? Examining the Feminist Commitment of Latin America's Post-Conflict Political Parties. (Paper). International Studies Association (ISA), *Virtual Conference*, United States.

(2019, March). Insurgent Feminism: A Comparative Analysis of Colombian and Kurdish Female Guerrillas' Contributions to Democracy. (Paper). International Studies Association (ISA), Toronto, Canada.

(2018, November). Insurgent Feminism: A Comparative Analysis of Colombian and Kurdish Female Guerrillas' Contributions to Democracy. (Paper). International Studies Association – Northeast (ISA-NE), Baltimore, United States.

(2018, July). Insurgent Feminism in the 2016 Colombian Peace Deal. (Paper). FLACSO-International Studies Association (FLACSO-ISA), Quito, Ecuador.

(2017, April). Gender Representation in Political Leadership: Analyzing Bourdieu's "Double-Bind" Under the Presidencies of Cristina Fernández and Dilma Rousseff. (Poster). Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA), Chicago, United States.

INVITED SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

News feature. *Kobanê's Role in Global Feminist Movements (World Kobanê Day)*. Interview for Mezopotamya Agency. (Forthcoming.) *November 1, 2026*. https://mezopotamyaajansi45.com/en

Panelist. *Mexico-US Security Relations*. Expert Interview with Pan-American Strategic Advisors. *May 2026.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9z-y77p5m8&t=1118s

Panelist. *Latin America's Right-Wing Turn.* Expert Interview with Pan-American Strategic Advisors. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umnSsdjg4GI

Panelist. Women, Life, Freedom: Kurdish Women in the Middle East. Event organized in collaboration with the Kurdish Student Organization at Rutgers University. *April 2025.*

Teach-In. Tierra Grata Territorial Space for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR). *Feminismos Internacionales y La Lucha Guerrillera en Kurdistan*. (International Feminisms and the Guerrilla Struggle in Kurdistan.) La Paz, Colombia. *October 2021.*

Invited speaker. Encuentro con la Migración Podcast. *Las Mujeres Migrantes (Parte 2).* Bogotá, Colombia. *September 2021.* https://open.spotify.com/episode/6DNnRbC4zIyXvqb9U1NuCH

Guest lecturer. Rutgers University, Master's level class. *War, States, and Gender Equality.* Newark, New Jersey. *April 2021.*

Guest speaker. Stories from the Field: The Podcast. *Learning Field Research*. Boston, Massachusetts. *March 2021.* https://storiesfromthefield.buzzsprout.com/1617775/episodes/8225705-learning-field-research-with-vierelina-fernandez-leah-hickert-ayse-lokmanoglu-jack-macdonald-and-renata-martinez

Guest speaker. Florida International University, Office of Training and Fellowships. *Preparing a Competitive NSF GRFP Application*. Miami, Florida. *August 2020.*

Guest lecturer. Universidad Pontifica Bolivariana, Master's level class. *Feminist International Relations*. Medellín, Colombia. *September 2019.*

Invited speaker. The Tinker-Andes Series at Florida International University. *Conducting Fieldwork with Former FARC Rebels in Colombia.* Miami, Florida. *September 2019.*

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- American Political Science Association (APSA)
  - Women and Politics Section | Conflict Processes Section
- International Studies Association (ISA)
  - Feminist Theory and Gender Studies Section (FTGS) | International Security Studies Section (ISSS) | Global South Caucus (GSCIS)
- Middle Atlantic Council of Latin American Studies (MACLAS)
- Southeastern Council of Latin American Studies (SECOLAS)

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Spanish (Native); English (Native); French (Conversational); Portuguese (Read-only); Kurdish (Beginner)