



Negotiating from the Margins:

**Women's
Participation in
Colombian Peace
Processes (1982–2016)**

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WORKING PAPER 9

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IDEAS FOR PEACE MAKING

With the signing of the “Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace,” Colombia has entered a new era. Presuming that this accord between the government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) puts an end to the 52-year war and wraps up what the literature denotes the “peace making” phase, we are now facing the even more complex challenges of the peace building phase.

This latter phase concerns achievement of the accord’s ambitious and vital promises on issues such as equitable agrarian reform, the widening and deepening of democracy, the eradication of violence, strengthened environmental protections, a shift in drug policy toward a public health approach, and the implementation of a transitional justice mechanism that guarantees victims’ rights. It also requires carrying out long-overdue reforms and transformations that would have been necessary with or without a peace agreement.

Through this collection, which offers ideas for peace building, *De-justicia* seeks to do its part in helping Colombia achieve these formidable collective pursuits. Our series places special emphasis on diagnoses and proposals for the short and medium term, even though the deeper transformations will take several decades. Just as it took a quarter century for the peaceful aspirations of the 1991 Constitution to materialize, it will take just as long—if not longer—to lay the ground for a less unequal and unjust society where lasting peace can finally take root.

Should the armed conflict truly come to an end, the first few years will be crucial both for preventing a return to political violence in the short term and for leaving it behind once and for all. This requires efforts aimed not only at building but at rebuilding. To start, such efforts must

construct solid policies and institutions, which are essential for any state, regardless of the presence of armed conflict. Some key examples are a land registry and a modern property tax collection scheme; fair and expeditious measures to combat political corruption; decisive investments in an innovative and equitable educational system that promotes the country's transition from an extractive economy to a knowledge economy; rules and institutions that encourage fiscal redistribution and social welfare; and land-use planning that unleashes the potential of Colombia's countryside and promotes sustainable development. In addition, these efforts should include the rebuilding of existing institutions in need of profound strengthening. This means electoral institutions that are transparent and inclusive, a judicial system that is accessible and swift, and democratic mechanisms that are participatory and effective (for example, participatory budgeting and popular referendums on environmental issues).

By focusing on public institutions, this collection embraces a point of departure that has been widely documented in institutional sociology: the heterogeneity of the Colombian state. The "Colombian paradox"—whereby violence and democratic stability exist simultaneously, with war in some regions and relative institutional normalcy in others—can also be seen in the patchiness of public institutions. The same public institution might be robust and meritocratic in large cities while captive to corruption and lacking in basic infrastructure in peripheral regions. For that reason, and because these regions are the ones that hold the cards for Colombia's peace, the books in this collection aim to place as much, if not more, attention on the country's periphery—including the regions most affected by the armed conflict—as on the traditional centers of power.

In line with the mixture of research and action that defines Dejusticia's work, each book in this collection pursues three objectives. The first chapter of each book draws on primary and secondary sources to provide a diagnosis of relevant institutions and social problems. The second chapter explores the building- and rebuilding-related tasks required to solve these problems. The third and final chapter contains concrete proposals for reform aimed at the state and civil society actors involved in peace building.

With this focus and structure, the publications in this series explore a range of issues that fall within Dejusticia's main lines of work. These issues include transitional justice, land policy, environmental justice, access to

information, the rights of indigenous and Afro-descendant groups, gender equality, drug policy, and peace funding.

This series is a truly collective endeavor. As with all of Dejusticia's publications, the initial drafts of the books herein benefitted from discussion and debate during in-house workshops, as well as feedback from outside experts. And for this particular book, the collective dimension was particularly strong, for we spent nearly an entire year fine-tuning its rationale and giving it shape in accordance with the evolution of peace talks between the government and the FARC.

This series owes its existence not only to Dejusticia's research team but also to its dedicated administrative team, which also participated in our in-house workshops. In particular, Elvia Sáenz and Marta Rojas contributed their keen editorial sense and attention to detail to ensure that these publications ultimately saw the light of day. If this series is able to contribute in some way to lasting and sustainable peace in Colombia, the effort will have been worth it.

César Rodríguez-Garavito

INTRODUCTION

At both the international and national level, women's participation in peace processes has been strikingly absent. While this statement might seem dramatic, it is a reflection of the numbers: a UN Women report entitled *Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence* analyzed 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 and found that just 4% of signatories, 2.4% of chief mediators, 3.7% of witnesses, and 9% of negotiators at peace tables were women (UN Women 2010). This trend is almost a spitting image of the Colombian context. Of the 61 agreements signed between the Colombian government and armed groups—most of which took place within the framework of peace processes—between 1982, the year when President Belisario Betancur assumed office, and 2016, during the administration of President Juan Manuel Santos, an average of just 4.07% of signatories were women.¹

This low number exists alongside another problem: from the Betancur administration to the present, the state has tended to constrict dialogue with civil society groups representing women, which has meant that women's interests and perspectives have been underrepresented in

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1. This low percentage is part of a broader phenomenon. Although women were granted the right to vote in 1954, they continue to be almost entirely absent from positions of power. Colombia's Quota Law (Law 581 of 2000) requires that at least 30% of public posts be held by women. Law 1475 of 2011 reinforces this requirement by mandating that political parties' candidate lists also include at least 30% women. Nonetheless, between 2014 and 2018, just 22.54% of senators and 18.58% of representatives were women (Sisma Mujer 2014). These figures are an improvement compared to those from the preceding political period (Guzmán and Prieto 2011), but they still fail to meet the 30% minimum required by law. Thus, while this book focuses on women's political participation in Colombia's peace processes, these figures demonstrate that women's participation in general is very low.

decision-making spaces, particularly in negotiation processes with organized armed groups. Before Santos took office, women's and feminist organizations campaigned around the slogan "There is no peace without women," alluding to the fact that women's underrepresentation can no longer be the common currency in peace talks; women, with their multifaceted perspectives, opinions, and world visions, must be included in the signing of social and political pacts that affect them directly.

The peace talks currently underway between the government and the FARC mark a milestone in terms of women's participation in Colombian peace processes. Thanks to the unrelenting advocacy of feminists and women's rights advocates, for the first time in Colombian history, two of the ten members in the government's plenipotentiary negotiating team were women. In addition, a gender subcommission was formed to ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective and women's participation in the peace accord, the first-ever such commission to be created as part of a country's peace process. And on July 24, 2016, this subcommission announced negotiating parties' commitment to ensure the mainstreaming of a gender perspective throughout the peace accord, with the aim of incorporating a differentiated approach into the institutions and processes formed in the wake of the accord and of guaranteeing women's political participation. Nonetheless, despite this progress, women's participation continues to remain low, far from the fair minimum of parity and far from overcoming their underrepresentation in decision-making settings.

The results of the October 2 referendum unveiled an additional obstacle that directly affects women's participation and the inclusion of a gender-sensitive approach in the peace process and public discussions: some of the most vocal opponents of the peace accord derided the document's inclusion of a gender approach, arguing that it was actually an "ideology" threatening traditional family values and promoting homosexuality. The fact that this position was effective in convincing different sectors to cast "no" votes in the popular referendum reveals how a gender approach and positions perceived as transgressing traditional gender roles are viewed as destabilizing to the status quo.

Throughout its history, the Colombian feminist movement has had to embrace advocacy strategies that respond to these circumstances obstructing transformations of and challenges to traditional gender structures. Talk of "gender ideology" and attacks on the advances achieved by the women's and LGBTI movements seem to have come to stay, for even

though their most immediate impacts were in relation to the referendum, they also have a direct impact on issues beyond the peace process, such as sexual and reproductive rights, women’s participation in politics, and LGBTI rights (Vivero 2016). This climate requires the feminist movement to, once again, rethink its strategies and come up with new forms of advocacy to counteract such views, which hinder and threaten to roll back the advances of feminism.

Therefore, now more than ever, it seems that women must respond to such questioning and to justify their presence in the public sphere. Why must women participate? What is their “value added” in terms of the peace process? What are the benefits of women’s exercise of political power? On their face, these questions may seem logical, but they conceal prejudices and assumptions that deny what women’s political participation is really about: justice. Have men ever had to justify their presence in decision-making settings? Have they ever been asked to describe what their value added is in order to have a seat at the political table? “Women” are not a homogenous group of people with identical insights, meaning that when they assume positions of power, we cannot say that they share an agenda or “contribution.” That is why such questions are loaded ones: women’s political participation should not be conditioned on some kind of contribution that they may make; women’s participation is justified, more than anything, by our commitment to more inclusive peace processes that reflect the values of a pluralistic and democratic society in which women—who make up 51.2% of the population, as well as a significant share of victims of the armed conflict²—participate in the most

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2. According to the Victims’ Unit, women make up 51% (2,592,000) of the 5,087,902 persons who were registered as displaced in 2014. Along these same lines, 84% of women victims of the armed conflict are displaced. Forced displacement is the leading type of victimization of women in Colombia. With regard to crimes against life and physical integrity, Colombia has a total of 677,543 indirect and direct victims of homicide, of whom 47% are women. Women also account for 3,000 cases of forced disappearance; 47,849 cases of threats (out of a total of 87,336); and 4,199 cases of torture. Furthermore, according to the Registry of Victims, women represent the bulk of victims of sexual violence: of 3,301 cases of sexual violence, 82% are against women. This panorama becomes even more stark when additional factors beyond gender—such as race, ethnicity, and social class—come into play (Departamento Nacional de Planeación and Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas 2014). The *Basta Ya* report by the National Center for Historical Memory (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica 2013) also highlights the differentiated impacts of the conflict in terms of gender, and a document published by Ruta Pacífica (Sánchez 2008)

important processes, such as agreements aimed at transitioning from war to peace and, in the case of Colombia, transitioning from a conflict that lasted more than 60 years to a much-longed-for peace. That is why it is an issue of justice.

Furthermore, the fact that women have not historically played a role in negotiations with armed groups has meant a loss of richness for democracy, for the perspectives and aims of feminist and women's organizations pose important critiques and reflections for thinking about our political sphere, unjust social structures, and the creation of more lasting peace agreements. In the case of Colombia, the women's and feminist groups that have been on the sidelines of the peace processes, from the Betancur administration to the Santos one, have tried to raise awareness of issues absent from negotiators' radars. For example, the differentiated impacts of the war on women is one of the main issues that several organizations have been advocating around for years, yet it was not until this most recent peace process that the issue was taken up, by the gender subcommission.

It is in this context that we write this book: with the aim of bringing readers' attention to the iniquitous panorama of the low, sometimes almost nonexistent, levels of women's participation in Colombian peace processes, followed by recommendations that seek to make the current peace process more legitimate and effective. With that in mind, the first part of this book draws on numbers and testimonies to trace women's participation in peace processes, from Betancur's presidential term in 1982 to the current peace process under President Santos. Next, we explore the challenges faced by the Colombian state in ensuring women's

uses this lens as an analytical framework for understanding the armed conflict. Further, as shown in a different report by the National Center for Historical Memory, entitled *Mujeres y guerra: Víctimas y resistentes en el Caribe colombiano* (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica 2011), the conflict in Colombia's Caribbean region involved specific gender structures and practices that influenced the type of violence and control utilized by armed actors in their effort to secure the region. Specifically, the report shows how paramilitary groups used coercive tools to establish how men and women "should be," and how violations of these norms resulted in concrete forms of gender-based violence. This coercive context had a disproportionate impact on women and LGBTI persons.

For these reasons, it is essential to view Colombia's conflict in terms of gender in order to understand its dynamics and its impacts. As we will show in the following chapters of this book, one of the main claims of the Colombian feminist movement in the context of peace processes has been to call for recognition of the differentiated impacts of the armed conflict, including on women.

participation in the current peace process and in the phases following the signing of the accord. Lastly, in the third part, we propose a number of recommendations according to three time frames—short, medium, and long term—aimed at ensuring a basic minimum and a fair minimum in terms of women’s participation in this transitional justice process.

It is our hope that this book will form part of the collective memory on the history of women’s participation in Colombia’s peace processes, which has been sparse despite the strength of the feminist movement and its struggle to secure a place in society; and at the same time, we hope that it will contribute to the state’s current efforts to remedy this type of injustice and ensure, through concrete laws and policies, women’s participation in the different peace-related settings. This is the only way for Colombia to cast aside its historical approach to state building, which has been nourished by the voices of men alone, and to construct a more democratic and inclusive nation—one that is composed of men and women in equal parts.

Conceptual Framework and Methodology

This book is structured around the notion of political participation. María Emma Wills (2007), in her book *Inclusión sin representación: La irrupción política de las mujeres en Colombia, 1970–2000* (*Inclusion without Representation: The Political Emergence of Women in Colombia, 1970–2000*), defines political participation as part of her analysis of women’s emergence in Colombian politics and the obstacles they faced along the way. According to Wills, political participation contains two essential elements: *inclusion* and *representation*. With regard to the first of these:

The level of women’s inclusion in a given political system increases when they acquire the right to vote and to be elected, and [then] make use of this right, not only by electing but also by being elected. That is, when they vote and manage to enter the circle of the political elite, and when they hold both appointed and elected public positions. (Wills 2007, 45–46; authors’ translation)

Inclusion thus refers to women’s increased physical presence in the political decision-making sphere, a process whose most direct consequences are the transformation of the composition of the political elite and the gradual dismantling of the barriers that have historically impeded women’s access to positions of power.

Meanwhile, the second element of political participation is *representation*. According to Wills, “the degree of representation is measured in terms of the emergence of an institutional framework aimed specifically at achieving women’s full citizenship” (ibid., 152). In essence, *inclusion* should be accompanied by policies that seek to undo the historical exclusion of women from positions of power. For this reason, it is critical not only that women’s physical presence in such positions be guaranteed but also that there be an institutional willingness to generate the conditions needed to achieve this. This requires adopting concrete policies aimed at erasing gender gaps and protecting and broadening women’s rights.

But representation, Wills argues, requires more than this: not only does it call for the necessary conditions to facilitate women’s participation in politics and to ensure their full citizenship, but it also requires the state to commit to a set of institutions that mainstream a gender perspective into all of their processes and activities. Inclusion alone does not guarantee this:

More women can be named ministers, and a woman could even become president of Colombia, but these transgressions do not automatically convert them into dissident voices in terms of dominant conceptions of masculinity and femininity. (ibid., 22–23)

Just because a woman holds a position of power does not mean that there will be a gender perspective within institutions, for the mere fact of being a woman does not immediately anchor her to policy agendas or actions emanating from this perspective. Therefore, inclusion is a necessary but insufficient condition for women’s full participation. In addition to ensuring that women have a seat at the political table, the state must commit to embracing a gender perspective that seeks to dismantle the obstacles that have engendered inequality and impeded women’s access to positions of power.³

That said, representation entails complex struggles and processes that are neither unidirectional nor homogeneous. In her book *Inclusion*

3. According to a 2011 resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, “women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women” (United Nations 2012).

and Democracy, Iris Marion Young (2000) argues that one of the biggest challenges of representation is being able to maintain a connection between constituents and their representatives. In societies such as ours, it is impossible for an entire citizenry to participate at the highest levels of decision making, which is why we elect representatives to make our interests and perspectives heard in these settings. But it is a complicated process, for, as Young notes, “There is no single will of the people that can be represented” (ibid., 127); citizens’ vast range of opinions, interpretations, and ways of seeing the world means that there is no single set of interests in need of representation.

The same is true for women: although the historical oppression that is shared by women can give them a certain perspective of the world, not all oppressive relationships are the same, nor are women’s interpretations of and responses toward these situations. For this reason, here too, there is no clear “shared will” that can be represented. There is no established consensus on what it would mean to mainstream a gender perspective into a state or what women’s interests would be; the heterogeneity of women as a social group implies a variety of opinions and interpretations concerning these questions, and it is inevitable that many of them would fall outside the spectrum of representation. How can this gap between a constituency and its representatives be resolved? And more importantly when we talk about women’s representation, how can we ensure that representation overcomes—rather than reproduces—historical exclusion?

For Young, representation highlights a basic principle: public discussion. Without a deliberative process in which constituents and representatives can come together to discuss the issues that affect them, exclusion will persist, and constituents will feel that their representatives are failing to represent them. As she notes, it is a well-known fact that historically marginalized groups are underrepresented in political systems and public discussion. This leads to a problem of injustice, for the policies and programs that directly affect these groups are designed in settings far removed from their experiences, perspectives, and voices. Hence, it is critical to strengthen spaces for dialogue between constituents and representatives: this not only strengthens democracy by integrating new actors and world-views but also, and even more importantly, fosters actions aimed at remedying historical injustices and laying the groundwork to prevent them from occurring again.

But how can the interests and opinions of an entire constituency be brought together into a single platform for action? How can we avoid the dispersion of interests without falling into the trap of exclusion? Young argues that the key is to view representation as a process that is dispersed over time—as a socially and historically constructed process. This means that the decisions reached during public discussions are temporary and in response to specific circumstances and needs, and that they will change in the future and be replaced by others. In other words, decisions will always mean that the interests of some members of the constituency are excluded, but priorities change and public discussion should always be open, meaning that exclusion at one moment in time does not imply a lack of representation.

In this book, then, we understand political participation as consisting of inclusion and representation. With regard to inclusion, we analyze women's physical presence in government-provided settings for negotiations with organized armed groups. To track this presence, we reviewed 61 agreements signed between representatives of the government and armed groups and counted the number of signatories who were women. We also examined the gender composition of the peace commissions and other institutions created with the aim of coordinating the government's exchanges with armed groups. We are aware that our period of study contains a range of efforts to initiate negotiations with armed groups, some of which scholars consider to be peace processes and others not (since some focused on resolving very specific issues and not on proposing a systematic agenda for peace). More than the specific nature of these processes, our attention is focused on analyzing women's inclusion in these decision-making settings involving insurgent groups and the government. We use "agreement" to refer to the documents resulting from these negotiations and, in some cases, to the joint communiqués signed by armed groups and the government.

We tracked representation on the basis of two types of sources. First, we reviewed the content of the agreements to determine the extent to which they incorporate a gender perspective and seek to eliminate the historical injustices and gender gaps that have stood in the way of women's participation in policymaking settings. We define "gender perspective" broadly to include, first, any effort to expand, guarantee, or repair women's rights with an eye toward correcting the historical exclusion and

oppression of women and, second, policies that challenge traditional notions of femininity or masculinity and seek to advance gender equality.⁴

But such a vision of representation would fall short according to Young's terms, for it does not capture the struggles around who is doing the representing and who is being represented, around what platform or interests will be represented, and, in general, around the processes that ultimately determine the claims that will appear on the state's agenda and, in this case, in its negotiations with armed groups. To track this phenomenon, we conducted semi-structured interviews with six women who self-identify as feminists,⁵ who have been involved in the Colombian feminist movement⁶ (approximately from the mid-1980s to present), and who are currently serving in public positions or as leaders of some of the most important feminist organizations in Colombia⁷ (see annex 1 on interviewees'

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4. It is worth noting that our conception of “gender perspective” aligns with that put forward by our interviewees and their organizations. This does not mean that this way is the only way to define a gender approach; indeed, other communities—such as the LGBTI community, the Afro-Colombian women's community, and the indigenous women's community—have different concerns, claims, and visions in this regard. Nonetheless, in this book, we conform to the perspective of the women we interviewed, who self-define as feminists and who have experience in the feminist movement.
 5. For interviewees, being a feminist means having political and worldviews that endeavor to protect and expand women's rights, as well as to critique and challenge traditional notions of femininity and masculinity. It also means envisioning a world that features gender equity and fairer social relations between men and women. During their interviews with us, the feminists told us about their trajectories and the different conceptions and actions that they embraced during the period under study. Thus, for example, while their early demands centered on issues related to women's rights, their later discourse and practice drew more heavily on the notion of gender.
 6. Mauricio Archila defines social movements as “an organized expression of civil society” that forms the basis of “permanent, collective social actions that stand up against exclusion, inequality, and injustice, [and] which tend to be proactive and present in specific socio-spatial and temporal contexts” (2006, 12). As we will demonstrate, the actions of the feminist organizations with which our interviewees have been associated are organized expressions of civil society whose central aim is to eliminate the gender injustices experienced by women and to broaden women's rights and possibilities for participation. Throughout the book, we will thus speak of “the Colombian feminist movement,” for even though this movement includes a range of organizations that often embody different strategies, methodologies, and interpretations, there is a certain level of agreement regarding gender inequality as it affects women in Colombia and the need to address and eliminate it.
 7. Annex 2 provides an overview of the feminist organizations that our interview-

profiles).⁸ We selected this profile for our interviewees because their work in these entities and as activists has involved challenging traditional conceptions of gender and struggling for women's rights. We wish to unearth the circumstances and obstacles that this kind of agenda has encountered when it comes to being incorporated into agreements with armed groups.

The women we interviewed took part in the processes of representation that underpinned these struggles to introduce “women’s” interests into the peace processes. We place “women” in quotation marks because, as noted by Young, “women” are a social group with a wide range of interests, opinions, and worldviews that cannot be compacted into a single shared will. The voices and experiences of interviewees demonstrate the tensions, obstacles, and processes behind the construction of a platform seeking to represent women at specific moments in time and the strategies used to achieve women’s representation within the state.

We are aware that our interviews with and the life experiences of these six women cannot speak for all of the processes concerning women’s representation in negotiations with insurgent groups, but the picture they do paint—albeit an incomplete one—speaks to the complexity of representation and the tensions that continue to exist between the feminist movement and the state, among feminists themselves, and the inherent struggles in defining who represents women’s voice in Colombia.

Our analysis of women’s participation in peace processes, which is based on the testimonies and experiences of those interviewed, has an underlying regulatory aim: in terms of inclusion, we support the notion that Colombia’s political sphere should ensure parity—that is, decision-making spaces with 50% women.⁹ Further, with regard to representation,

ees have been affiliated with or which they mentioned as key actors within the Colombian feminist movement.

8. The women we interviewed are Beatriz Quintero, director of the Red Nacional de Mujeres; Olga Amparo Sánchez, staff member of Casa de la Mujer; Cecilia Barraza, former director of Corporación Sisma Mujer and Corporación Humanas Colombia; Gloria Tobón, member of the Coalition for Action on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325; Claudia Ramírez, former deputy director of Sisma Mujer; and María Emma Wills, academic expert on feminism and gender, and the only woman member of the Historical Commission on the Conflict and Its Victims in the peace talks between the Santos administration and the FARC.
9. The main aim of such a gender equity policy is to correct the historical exclusion faced by women in positions of power. As demonstrated by Iris Marion Young (2000), the fact that women are underrepresented in political decision-making

we argue that in order to guarantee the necessary conditions for the full enjoyment of women's rights—in addition to challenging traditional gender structures and opening up spaces for women's participation—all state institutions and processes must embrace a crosscutting gender perspective. In other words, with regard to representation, we envision a complete gender mainstreaming within the state. These two criteria form the basis on which we measure whether women's inclusion is high or low and whether there has been progress or regression in terms of representation.

With this in mind, the first chapter of the book examines the history of women's inclusion and representation in peace talks. We offer a historical overview of the various attempts at rapprochement between the national government and insurgent groups, beginning with the Betancur administration and ending with the Santos administration. To do this, we follow the voices of interviewees to construct a narrative that highlights their emphases and pauses. This journey will then allow us, in the second chapter, to take stock of the limits and potential of women's political participation during the period of study in order to then, in the last chapter, propose a basic minimum and a fair minimum for women's participation in the current peace process.

settings is unfair, for it means that they are systematically silenced in spaces involving decisions that directly affect them. Furthermore, such underrepresentation reveals the persistence of structural barriers that prevent women from participating under equal conditions in the political sphere. For these reasons, a fair minimum is 50% participation, as this percentage is symbolic in terms of the regulative ideal of gender equality.

WOMEN IN PEACE PROCESSES (1982–2016): INCLUSION, REPRESENTATION, AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF GENDER IN COLOMBIA

The Betancur Era (1982–1986): The First Milestone in Women’s Inclusion in Colombian Peace Processes

In the late 1970s, tensions emerged on Colombia’s political scene that would set the stage for the political participation and actions of our interviewees’ organizations. Conflicts between the country’s political elite and traditionally marginalized sectors came to a head during the National Civic Strike of September 14, 1977, when trade unions decried the traditional two-party system and the policies that the ruling Liberal Party had designed for the working class. The political elite’s response to this strike was exceptionally violent. In the words of Fernán González, the strike “marked a precedent of military interventionism in politics, motivating a group of high-ranking officers of the Armed Forces to present President [Alfonso] López with a set of requests for repressive measures” (2014, 371; authors’ translation). When Julio César Turbay assumed the presidency in 1978, these repressive measures were formalized through the introduction of a decree known as the Security Statute.

Under the statute, virtually all types of opposition and mobilization were classified as disturbances of the public order. The statute granted the military broad discretion to repress and punish conduct deemed subversive, insurgent, or critical of the state’s authority. The persecution, detention, interrogation, and torture of social leaders, in addition to the stigmatization of social protest, were some of the most direct consequences of this policy and of the power granted to the armed forces as arbiter of the social order (*ibid.*, 376).

As María Emma Wills explained to us in her interview, in the midst of this repressive environment, paradoxically, the 1970s in Colombia

like in many parts of Latin America and other countries, saw a fundamental shift in the way that political participation and advocacy were being conducted, because basically what was happening at that time was that the streets and town squares—even though they had always existed—became central spaces for agency and public claims like never before. (Wills 2016)

During this time, according to María Emma Wills, thanks in large part to pressure applied by the student movement, “there was a series of ruptures in terms of how politics is conceived and where it is conducted, and, if you will, politics was taken out of its traditional and official spaces like Congress, the family, political machinery, board rooms, and was tipped footloose into the public sphere” (ibid.). As a result, despite the context of restrictions, stigmatization, and criminalization stemming from the policies that were in force at the time, social actors strengthened spaces for opposition and took to the streets to voice their discontent.

Where were women in the midst of all of this? How did they participate? “In this context, women were—and are—key, not because they had a mammoth presence but because they had a true paradigm, an outlook on reality that was epistemologically and culturally at odds with what was happening in society” (ibid.). María Emma Wills explained that the feminists from the 1970s “were actually proposing another way of conceiving of good governance, good living, life within the community, life within society. I think that the most important thing about this generation of women is that capacity to envision a different world” (ibid.). Through a variety of strategies, women channeled this capacity toward, among other things, advocating before the peace talks that took place in the 1980s onward.

In telling their stories, the feminists we interviewed marked the cadence of events; they remembered, forgot, and pointed out milestones and fractures. In doing so, they created their own chronology and coincided in their identification of the first period of women’s participation in peace processes: the peace talks carried out during the Betancur administration. According to interviewees, Betancur’s time in office marked one of the greatest levels of women’s political participation. This was perhaps a response to the context in which he came to power and to the policies rolled out during his term.

Betancur assumed office in 1982, and from the moment of his inauguration speech, a key aspect of his presidential agenda included the

possibility of commencing peace talks with guerrilla groups (Villarraga 2015, 15). This marked a shift compared to Betancur's predecessor, Turbay, whose security policies focused on using military force to squash illegal armed groups (Velásquez 2009). Hence, Betancur's discourse of peace upon taking office was novel one. But what is most notable from this era is the shift that occurred in the way that the armed conflict and its actors were perceived: while the Turbay administration saw the conflict as a problem of insurgency and public order, President Betancur recognized that a set of objective and structural factors—such as poverty and exclusion—were fueling the violence and that the state had to address these issues if it wished to put an end to the conflict (González 2014, 381). This agenda of peace would be reflected in the various agreements and conversations between the government and armed groups during this period.

As noted by Magdala Velásquez (2009), in the midst of Betancur's agenda of peace, negotiations during the period set a precedent for Colombian peace processes, for they *included* women at the negotiating table for the first time. In 1984, the government signed agreements with four different guerrilla groups: the FARC, the Popular Liberation Army, the Communist Party of Colombia – Marxist-Leninist, and the Workers' Self-Defense Forces. These four agreements included 52 men and 4 women (26 men representing the guerrilla groups and 26 representing the government, and 1 woman representing the guerrilla groups and 3 representing the government). Similarly, the government-created commissions responsible for overseeing the various stages of the peace talks consisted of 158 men and 17 women (see table 1).

These figures reveal a panorama in which women represented 7.14% of all signatories of the peace agreements and 9.71% of peace commission members (see table 2). These percentages, though low, mark a milestone in terms of women's *inclusion* in Colombian peace processes, even compared to the agreements that would be signed in subsequent years.

With regard to representation, the women we interviewed recalled this period as a time of “vastly fluctuating participation,” for “there were many women who were there, but not actually in the agreement” (To-bón 2016). Feminists voiced their claims and began forming an agenda to influence the negotiations—and even though these efforts were not reflected in the agreements, this period was a time in which feminist organizations began to mobilize resources and strategies that they would draw on in the future.

TABLE 1
Gender composition of peace commissions during the
Betancur administration

Commission	Men	Women
National Peace Commission	33	7
High Commissioners for Peace	5	0
National Commission for Verification	49	4
National Commission for Dialogue and Negotiation	41	4
Peace, Dialogue and Verification Commission (1985)	30	2

SOURCES: Verdad Abierta (<http://www.verdadabierta.com/procesos-de-paz/farc/4292-acuerdos-del-cese-al-fuego-entre-1984-y-1986-con-las-farc-el-m-19-el-epl-y-la-ado>); Fundación Ideas para la Paz (2008)

Olga Amparo Sánchez, for example, noted that the recently created Casa de la Mujer established a women’s collective in Bogotá that spear-headed women’s committees aimed at influencing the peace talks. Participants in this initiative centered their claims largely on opposing Turbay’s Security Statute, highlighting the importance of peace in the Colombian context, and, after the M-19’s siege and the government’s retaking of the Palace of Justice, demanding a trial to hold those accountable from both sides (Sánchez 2016). These calls for peace were accompanied by demands to improve women’s quality of life, including with regard to their working conditions, access to health services, and economic status. As noted by Olga Amparo Sánchez, the demands of feminists from the women’s collective were conceived not from a gender perspective but from a women’s rights perspective. This would be the case until roughly the National Constituent Assembly of 1991, during the administration of President César Gaviria, when gender began to emerge as a key aspect of feminists’ discourse and practice.

The four agreements signed during the Betancur era centered on demanding a ceasefire by guerrilla groups and promoting the conditions necessary to ensure peace in the most conflict-affected regions of the country; these conditions included agrarian reform, the modernization and strengthening of institutions at the local level, and political participation by demobilized guerrillas. Demands for better living conditions among women were not explicitly included. Thus, we can consider the

TABLE 2
Gender composition of signatories to the peace agreements signed between the Betancur administration and armed groups

Agreement	Date	Men			Women		
		Guerrilla groups	Government	Political parties	Guerrilla groups	Government	Political parties
Uribe agreement, signed between National Peace Commission and FARC	March 28, 1984	5	5	-	0	1	-
Agreement between National Commission for Dialogue and Negotiation, Communist Party of Colombia – Marxist-Leninist, and Popular Liberation Army*	August 23, 1984	7	10	-	0	1	-
Agreement between National Commission for Dialogue and Negotiation and M-19	August 24, 1984	11	8	-	1	1	-
Agreement between Peace Commission and Workers' Self-Defense Forces	August 23, 1984	3	3	-	0	0	-

* It is worth noting that representatives of the Communist Party of Colombia – Marxist-Leninist signed an agreement together with the Popular Liberation Army. The table includes representatives from both groups in the column for “guerrilla groups,” since the agreement did not clearly distinguish signatories according to these two groups.

SOURCE: Villarraga (2015), vol. I

Betancur-led peace process as constituting a milestone in women's inclusion but not for their representation.

The 1991 National Constituent Assembly: Tensions, Possibilities, and Advocacy Strategies around a New Social Pact

The second moment identified by interviewees in their history as feminists is the National Constituent Assembly of 1991, which took place during the Gaviria administration. It is worth noting that interviewees placed very little emphasis on the presidential term of Gaviria's predecessor, Virgilio Barco (1986–1990)—and when they did mention the Barco administration, it was in connection with the constituent assembly and the phases leading up to it.

What was women's participation like in the moments leading up to the assembly? According to Olga Amparo Sánchez, the Office of the Presidency implemented a methodology inviting civil society to present proposals for reforming the 1886 Constitution; these proposals were then evaluated by a special committee of the House of Representatives. Various feminists from “the women's collective, which was initially created to lobby before Betancur's peace talks, presented a proposal to the House of Representatives. Seventeen women's groups contributed to the proposal, including trade unionists, women party members, and social leaders” (Sánchez 2016).

The stories related by Beatriz Quintero and Olga Amparo Sánchez do not refer to the interests of women trade unionists, leftists, or campesino organizations; rather, their accounts speak about women who self-identified as feminists and who drew on a variety of tools to influence the new Constitution with a concrete agenda linked to women's sexual and reproductive rights and their civil and political rights. Unlike during Betancur's peace negotiations, during the National Constituent Assembly feminists tried to coordinate a shared agenda based not only on a discourse of women's rights but also on gender claims that called attention to how femininity is constructed and to the oppressive dynamics lying behind it. Both Olga Amparo Sánchez and Beatriz Quintero described this history of tensions, agreements, and feminist strategies for ensuring that the new Constitution incorporated issues that, for them, represented and benefitted women. This history is located in an intricate setting marked by a number

of obstacles to inclusion and representation. The proposal to hold a constituent assembly emerged at a tense moment in Colombian history: President Betancur's attempts to negotiate with armed groups failed because while guerrilla groups such as the FARC and the M-19 voiced their commitment to negotiating with the government, they simultaneously carried out offensives against the state and declared their intention, during various guerrilla conferences, to expand and fortify their stronghold. The co-existence of these two strategies—one of peace and another of war—was an insurmountable contradiction that ultimately led to greater violence and polarization within Colombian society. In the words of González, “as a result of the disparities between failed peace agreements and rebel gains, it became clear to the majority of the public that Betancur's peace process had been skillfully exploited by guerrilla groups to expand their reach” (2014, 390). The M-19's siege of the Palace of Justice and guerrilla groups' increasing grip on the country raised serious doubts about the kind of commitment that these armed groups were willing to agree to as part of a peace negotiation. Against this backdrop, President Barco's administration did not depart radically from the existing political will for peace, but it also incorporated an agenda that aimed to strengthen the state's institutional and infrastructural capacity to address the problems underlying the conflict in rural areas. Through the National Rehabilitation Plan, Barco sought to fold Colombia's marginalized regions into the state's political and economic agenda and to provide local governments with the tools needed to improve the living conditions and economic well-being of their communities. Nevertheless, as González notes, this process took place alongside the aforementioned waves of violence, including the continuing political genocide of the leftist Patriotic Union party at the hands of paramilitary groups and the guerrilla expansion that had commenced during the previous administration.

Lastly, Barco established negotiations with the M-19 guerrilla group, which demobilized during this period. To oversee this peace effort, the government created two commissions, whose members included ten men and one woman, meaning that 9.09% of participants were women, a lower proportion than that of the Betancur administration. Similarly, the government held two meetings with the guerrillas (one in Panama and the other in Usaquén, Bogotá) and signed a peace agreement with the M-19. During these processes, 41 men and no women participated. The same was true for the joint declarations signed by government and M-19

negotiators establishing specific commitments for moving the peace talks forward: among the signatures were 29 men and no women. These figures reveal a major setback in terms of women’s inclusion and in comparison to the precedent set by President Betancur. Perhaps this is why the Barco administration passes by almost unnoticed in interviewees’ testimonies (see tables 3, 4, and 5).

The joint declarations and final agreements that were signed between the government and the M-19 during the Barcos administration addressed a range of issues, including guarantees for political participation, the strengthening of state institutions in the countryside, electoral reform, drug trafficking, political assassinations, and the conditions for demobilization. None of these issues raised any concerns related to gender or women’s rights.

For example, as part of the peace talks, the government agreed to create roundtables for analysis and dialogue and issued a call to various sectors of civil society to participate in these roundtables and to offer their perspectives on the agreements. The sectors it called on were academia, grassroots associations, retired military officials, trade unions, and the Catholic Church. It did not invite feminist organizations. The only issue that could be considered as potentially connected to a gender perspective is that of electoral reform. Regarding this issue, the M-19 called on the national government to provide guarantees for minority groups’ participation. Nonetheless, there were no explicit proposals embracing a gender perspective or seeking to ensure women’s participation. The peace talks during the Barco administration can thus be described as taking a step backward on the issue of women’s inclusion and as having a total lack of women’s representation.

TABLE 3
Gender composition of peace commissions
during the Barco administration

Commission	Men	Women
Advisory Council for Reconciliation, Normalization, and Rehabilitation	8	1
Presidential advisors for reconciliation, normalization, and rehabilitation	2	0

SOURCE: Fundación Ideas para la Paz (2008)

TABLE 4
Gender composition of signatories to the peace agreements signed between the Barco administration and armed groups

Agreement	Date	Men						Women					
		Guerrilla groups	Government	Political parties	Witnesses	Trade unions and others	Guerrilla groups	Government	Political parties	Witnesses	Trade unions and others		
Panama Summit	July 14, 1988	4	0	7	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Usaquén Summit*	July 29, 1988	10	1	-	-	-	0	0	-	-	-	-	-
Agreement between the government, political parties, and M-19	March 9, 1990	2	3	-	1	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	0

* Information on participation in the Usaquén Summit was measured on the basis of the signatories of three working documents prepared by the M-19, the Popular Liberation Army, and then government minister César Gaviria.

SOURCE: Villarraga (2015), vol. II

TABLE 5
Gender composition of joint declarations signed during peace talks
between the Barco administration, political parties, and the M-19

Declaration	Date	Men			Women		
		Guerrilla groups	Government	Other	Guerrilla groups	Government	Other
First joint declaration, national government and M-19	January 19, 1989	1	1	-	0	0	-
Second joint declaration, national government and M-19	February 4, 1989	1	1	-	0	0	-
Third joint declaration, national government and M-19	March 5, 1989	4	1	-	0	0	-
Fourth joint declaration, national government and M-19	March 17, 1989	1	2	1	0	0	0
Joint declaration, national government and the "Gloria Amanda Rincón" company of the M-19 in Huila	March 30, 1989	1	1	-	0	0	-
Fifth joint declaration, national government and M-19	July 17, 1989	1	1	-	0	0	-
Sixth joint declaration, national government and M-19	September 26, 1989	2	2	-	0	0	-
Seventh joint declaration, national government and M-19	December 14, 1989	2	2	-	0	0	-
Eighth joint declaration, national government and M-19	January 25, 1990	2	2	-	0	0	-

SOURCE: Villarraña (2015), vol. II

Following these negotiations were the ones led by President Gaviria, which our interviewees referred to only tangentially. As with the Barco administration, this omission in their narrative is perhaps due to women's scant participation in negotiating tables and decision-making spaces. Gaviria took office in 1990 and, from the outset, embraced a policy of building on the peace efforts carried out by his predecessor (Villarraga 2015). Perhaps the most fundamental feature of this period, in addition to the National Constituent Assembly, was the fact that it involved the largest number of peace agreements (18 in total, plus 2 communiqués) signed with armed groups; six of these agreements involved the demobilization of the Popular Liberation Army, the Workers' Revolutionary Party, the Quintín Lame Armed Movement, the Socialist Renovation Movement, the Popular Militias of Medellín, and the Francisco Garnica Front of the Simón Bolívar Guerilla Coordinating Board. This supported the idea that the constituent assembly was a peace pact aimed at ensuring the inclusion of a range of traditionally marginalized sectors in Colombian politics.

In relation to the FARC, the Gaviria administration pursued a number of peace talks—the so-called Tlaxcala talks—that ultimately failed due to a lack of political will among both parties. According to González, “both sides insisted on contemplating military action as a deterrence strategy and on pointing out their counterpart's lack of political will to negotiate” (2014, 416). As a result of these failed peace talks, the FARC began to lose its legitimacy before the public, which saw the guerrilla group as losing sight of its original vision. In the face of this setting, the government responded with a military attack.

With regard to women's inclusion, 205 men and 4 women are among the signatories of the 18 agreements signed during the Gaviria administration, meaning that 1.91% of all signatories were women.¹⁰ This too is a low figure that represents a step backward with regard to the precedent established by Betancur. The Gaviria administration also created two presidential councils to oversee peace talks, whose members consisted of 16 men and 1 woman, meaning that just 5.88% were women, another low number compared to those of both Betancur and Barco (tables 6 and 7).

The agreements signed with the Popular Liberation Army touched on several new issues compared to those addressed in prior rounds of

10. This figure does not include joint declarations signed by the negotiating parties.

peace talks. Parties agreed to create a commission tasked with identifying the underlying roots of violence that were fueling the conflict; proposed the development of socioeconomic plans for Colombia’s rural regions aimed at eliminating the inequality gap in areas historically occupied by the Popular Liberation Army; called for the creation of “democracy houses” to increase civil society participation in the country’s democracy; devised strategies to support victims of the armed conflict; and agreed on the need for mechanisms aimed to facilitate guerrillas’ reintegration into society. None of these efforts or documents referred to a gender perspective—and although one could conclude that some of these new mechanisms, such as the democracy houses and the Commission to Overcome Violence, would encourage dialogue with women’s organizations, the agreements and negotiations lack a specific commitment to doing so. Similarly, the government’s agreements with the Workers’ Revolutionary Party, the Quintín Lame Armed Movement, the Francisco Garnica Front of the Simón Bolívar Guerilla Coordinating Board, the Socialist Renovation Movement, and the Popular Militias of Medellín placed special emphasis on human rights, guarantees for guerrillas’ reintegration into society, and assistance for victims of the armed conflict. However, none of them raised issues related to gender. Thus, in terms of its peace agreements, the Gaviria administration has a profile similar to that of Barco: backward steps in inclusion and zero representation.

TABLE 6
Gender composition of peace commissions
during the Gaviria administration

Commission	Men	Women
Presidential advisors for reconciliation, normalization, and rehabilitation	1	0
Presidential advisors for peace	3	0
Presidential Council for Peace	12	1

SOURCE: Fundación Ideas para la Paz (2008)

Meanwhile, as mentioned by Wills in her book, during the Gaviria administration, “Ana Milena Muñoz, the country’s first lady, led the formation of the Presidential Council for Youth, Women and the Family” (2007, 225). As its name suggests, this council provided guidance for programs

TABLE 7

Gender composition of signatories to the peace agreements signed between the Gaviria administration and armed groups

Agreement	Date	Men			Women		
		Guerrilla groups	Government	Other	Guerrilla groups	Government	Other
Agreement between national government and Popular Liberation Army	August 26, 1990	3	4	-	0	0	-
Agreement between national government, Popular Liberation Army and Communist Party of Colombia – Marxist-Leninist	September 28, 1990	3	6	-	0	0	-
Agreement between national government and Popular Liberation Army	February 15, 1991	6	6	-	0	0	-
Final agreement between national government and Popular Liberation Army	February 26, 1991	6	7	2	0	0	0
Agreement between national government and Workers' Revolutionary Party	December 28, 1990	6	7	-	0	0	-
Final agreement between national government and Workers' Revolutionary Party	January 25, 1991	6	6	-	0	0	-
Agreement between national government and Quintín Lame Armed Movement	September 14, 1990	2	3	-	0	0	-
Agreement between Presidential Council for Peace and the Negotiating Commission of the Quintín Lame Armed Movement	March 2, 1991	4	5	-	0	0	-
Final agreement between national government and Quintín Lame Armed Movement	May 27, 1991	11	7	3	0	0	0

Cabo Norte agreement between national government and the Simón Bolívar Guerilla Coordinating Board (CGSM)	May 17, 1991	2	2	10	1	0	1
Declaration by government and CGSM concerning the first round of talks in Caracas	June 6, 1991	10	6	9	1	0	1
Agreement on oversight, second round of talks in Caracas between national government and CGSM	June 25, 1991	10	6	4	1	0	0
Joint declaration by Peace Commission and CGSM in Tlaxcala	March 18, 1992	10	5	-	0	1	-
Agreement between national government and Socialist Renovation Movement (CRS)	December 18, 1993	2	2	2	0	0	0
General agreement between national government and CRS	January 14, 1994	2	2	1	0	0	0
Final political agreement between national government and CRS	April 9, 1994	3	3	1	0	0	0
Initial agreement between national government, Pro-People Militias, and Popular Independent Militias of Valle Aburrá	February 15, 1994	6	7	3	0	0	0
Final agreement for peace and coexistence between national, departmental, and municipal governments and Popular Militias of Medellín	May 26, 1994	6	6	4	0	0	0
Agreement between Ernesto Rojas Commandos of the Popular Liberation Army and national government	March 29, 1992	4	4	3	0	0	0
Final political agreement between national government and Francisco Garnica Front of the CGSM	June 30, 1994	3	3	1	1	0	0

SOURCE: Villarraga (2015), vol. III

and policies related to women, youth, and the family. Wills writes that the council tried to coordinate the drafting of a policy document (known as a CONPES) that would outline a public policy on women, grounded in the idea that gender discrimination was the result of structural inequalities in society. However, this policy document failed to have a direct impact on the peace agreements of the period, and its drafting did not include input from feminist organizations. The presidential council and feminist groups had different agendas, and dialogue between the two was nonexistent: “to begin with, the agenda of the Red Nacional de Mujeres was based on the achievement of specific targets for the years ahead, and what the council was proposing was a series of intentions” (ibid., 226).

One aspect worth noting is that the Gaviria administration was one of the most active presidential administrations in terms of signing peace agreements with armed actors, and despite having an institution whose very aim was to address historic discrimination against women in Colombia, this did not translate into the incorporation of a gender perspective into these agreements. One of the reasons for this is the council’s institutional weakness and the little importance placed on gender issues within government agendas (ibid.). Perhaps this is why the Presidential Council for Youth, Women and the Family during the Gaviria era was almost entirely absent from feminists’ testimonies; the council’s impact was extremely limited, and it did not create the tools needed to ensure women’s representation in peace talks with guerrilla groups.

What did not pass unnoticed concerning this era was the feminist movement’s efforts to shape the “peace pact” proposed by the National Constituent Assembly. Interviewees described the national assembly as a breakthrough because it was a key moment in which women organized with the aim of constructing a shared agenda and adopting concrete strategies to ensure the agenda’s incorporation into the new Constitution. Was there feminist organizing around the 1991 Constitution? Gloria Tobón explained:

[It was] very important. It was after the collectives organized around the inclusion of women’s rights in the Constitution that the Red Nacional de Mujeres was born, which for me is the mother of all networks, since it was the first movement to bring together organizations that weren’t big feminist groups around a political approach of women’s citizenship. And in ef-

fect, it achieved things that were included in the new Constitution. (Tobón 2016)

According to Wills's book, in the lead-up to the constituent assembly, various feminist organizations drafted documents proposing actions on certain issues, and the idea was to use these documents as the basis for presenting an agenda to the government so that their claims would be included in the new Constitution. For example:

The document prepared by the Red de Mujeres y Constituyente called for the implementation of inclusive language mentioning *ciudadanos y ciudadanas* [the masculine and feminine forms of "citizens"] and sought to prohibit discrimination based on ... economic, social, or cultural grounds; ethnicity or gender; religious or political affiliation; or sexual orientation. It also defined human reproduction as a right and a responsibility, and not as a biological act governed by religious dogma. (Wills 2007, 219)

In addition, at the "Encuentro nacional de mujeres: Un abrazo amoroso por la vida" ("National Women's Encounter: A Loving Embrace of Life"), held in Bogotá in 1990, presentations addressed issues ranging from the economy and its relationship with women, democracy building from a feminist lens, the ethics of love, and the changes needed in current political and patriarchal relationships (ibid., 220). All of these concerns brought together an agenda aimed at securing structural change in society that would promote gender equality. The problem, in this case, was the discussion regarding which advocacy strategies would be most effective for positioning these issues in the Constitution.

To our question "Were women present in the National Constituent Assembly?" María Emma Wills (2016) responded, "Yes, of course. The problem is that they were not feminists, so we had to convince them just as much as the others." What happened, then, with the proposals and ideas that feminist organizations had developed? Why didn't they appear in the Constitution? Why weren't they represented? Olga Amparo Sánchez provided an explanation. The 1990 conference in Bogotá

was a national meeting of feminists where participants debated the women's agenda as it concerned the constituent assembly, the constitutional reform proposal presented by the 17 organizations to the House of Representatives, and the strategy for bringing women to the assembly. In this context, one of the key

points of the conference was whether we would each go [to the assembly] with our own [candidate] lists or with one joint list together with [political] parties or leftist organizations. (Sánchez 2016)

For Olga Amparo Sánchez, as well as the other feminists we interviewed, the internal fissures stemming from disagreements over whether to participate alongside political parties created tensions—sometimes insurmountable ones—within the movement. The issue here was that “while some feminists argued for using our own lists to participate in elections for the constituent assembly, others defended the strategy of uniting with the parties” (Wills 2007, 221).

This tension would become a routine one among feminist organizations during this era and would manifest itself not only in the National Constituent Assembly but in other settings in which feminists had to decide whether to engage with the state machinery in order to promote their agendas or, instead, to maintain their independence and advocate via other means. Many of feminists’ demands during the 1980s onward centered on promoting structural change in society, and, for some, this meant defying and coming up against settings—such as academia and the state—that tended to reproduce oppression and discrimination against women (Luna and Villarreal 1994, 174). Thus, some feminists decided to declare themselves independent, meaning that they would neither engage nor participate with political parties. Their strategy was a different one: they took to the streets, participated in organizational roundtables, and traveled to the country’s different regions. Others, meanwhile, believed that it was necessary to engage with the state and to establish strategic alliances with members of political parties who were open to promoting feminist claims in the constituent assembly. This question—whether or not to pursue “double militancy”—was the great feminist dilemma toward the end of the twentieth century.

Olga Amparo Sánchez, however, pointed out nuances in this dilemma: she noted that not all feminists were entirely independent or completely convinced of the need to build alliances with political parties and the state machinery. For example, Casa de la Mujer tried to influence the constituent assembly by adopting its own candidate list; thus, despite not allying with political parties, these women did decide to become involved in the process. Similarly, once the assembly was elected, the organization

created alliances with Red de Mujeres y Constituyente to promote the initiatives that had been discussed. This is why, for Olga Amparo Sánchez (2016), “none of the groups that promoted our own candidate lists distanced ourselves from advocacy in the National Constituent Assembly.”

Despite this caveat, for Beatriz Quintero, the dilemma of double militancy did have an impact on feminists’ inclusion in the assembly. In a stocktaking paper on feminist participation in the constituent process, she explains that

although no consensus was reached for the women’s movement to participate with a shared candidate—since the discussion on double militancy arose, and many women from the movement decided to support candidates from their parties or movements—Rosa María Turizo and Norma Villareal presented themselves as candidates for the women’s movement. (Quintero 2005, 6)

Advocacy efforts also focused on building strategic alliances with members of political parties that participated in the assembly; according to Quintero, “among the constituents who were most receptive to our invitations were María Teresa Garcés, Iván Marulanda, Eduardo Verano, Otty Patiño, Marcos Chalita, Germán Rojas, and Angelino Garzón” (*ibid.*, 7). As a result of these strategic alliances, some of the issues that were on the feminist agenda at that time were ultimately included in the 1991 Constitution.

In the National Constituent Assembly, feminists were unable to achieve two points in their proposal: the point concerning sexual and reproductive rights and that concerning free and voluntary motherhood and nontraditional notions of family. But “they achieved a resounding success in terms of political rights, by guaranteeing women’s adequate and effective participation at the decision-making levels of public administration. In addition, other articles included the majority of the proposals presented by the Red Nacional de Mujeres y Constituyente” (Wills 2007, 222–3). On the whole, the feminists we interviewed had a positive recollection of these advocacy efforts before the constituent assembly given that, despite the tensions surrounding the formation of their agendas, feminists were able to ensure that some of their interests were represented in the Constitution. Nonetheless, the fact that structural issues such as those concerning the family, motherhood, and sexual and reproductive rights were

not covered in the assembly is suggestive of the difficulties that agendas seeking to break with the status quo face vis-à-vis state institutions. This difficulty would become more pronounced in subsequent years.

Taking stock of this period, we can observe a fundamental paradox: the era of Colombia's constituent assembly—a groundbreaking moment in terms of the political inclusion of traditionally marginalized sectors of society—was marked by extremely low levels of women's participation in peace negotiations, and the institution created with the aim of attacking historical discrimination against women was virtually absent from the policymaking and decision-making spheres.

This period also shows how, for the first time since the Betancur administration, feminists came together with the goal of forming a shared political agenda. Feminists' lack of representation in the peace talks can be explained in part by the fact that they were arguably more interested in having an impact on the National Constituent Assembly, which is where they focused most of their efforts. Thus, even though feminists were not present in the government's negotiations with guerrilla groups, this period was characterized by a mobilization pattern that would acquire greater force in subsequent processes and which, in the words of Mauricio Archila (2006), was a form of mobilization "from below," whereby social movements and civil society organizations use a variety of mechanisms and strategies to try to ensure that their voices and demands are heard by governmental decision-making bodies, even when they are not *included* in the state's spheres of power.

The National Constituent Assembly speaks to the fact that representation is neither a uniform nor a linear process, for governments are not always the ones that open the way for the inclusion of social actors' agendas; rather, sometimes these actors themselves are the ones who appropriate tools for placing pressure on political elites to transform their institutional arrangements. The creation of the Red Nacional de Mujeres is a groundbreaking moment for our interviewees because it is the moment when feminist organizations united forces to create a shared agenda and to search for strategies for securing representation in the new Constitution. Lobbying before and creating strategic alliances with political parties were the mechanisms most used—and most questioned—by some feminists.

We can therefore conclude that the assembly unveils an internal tension within the feminist movement that would be maintained in subsequent years, as well as important tensions and conflicts between state

institutions and civil society. On the one hand, the feminist dilemma of “double militancy” would be a tendency that would characterize feminists’ future interventions in state-led processes, particularly peace negotiations. On the other, this is perhaps due to institutions’ lack of receptivity toward agendas perceived as subversive or destabilizing. For this reason, feminists place great value on their independence from the state, for it is from “the margins” that they can promote their agendas, conduct advocacy in historically neglected regions of the country, and position their issues and interests without being obligated to negotiate according to the time frames, parameters, and criteria established by state institutions.

Indeed, the next milestone identified by the feminists we interviewed shows that this tension between state institutions and social movements is not an easy one to resolve. As noted by Archila, “relationships between social movements and the state in Latin America have oscillated between ones of antagonism and ones of subordination” (2006, 12). Colombian feminism is no exception. But more than subordination, the feminist movement has found important spaces for negotiation in Colombian institutions, all the while being able to preserve its deeply critical perspective concerning the status quo and the unequal social arrangements that are constructed from within the state. The Samper era is an example of the government’s intermittent opening and closing of dialogue with the feminist movement and how the movement did not allow its agenda to be subordinated.

The Samper Era (1994–1998) and Institutional Frameworks for Gender Equality: Tensions, Progress, and Dialogue with the Feminist Movement

Beatriz Quintero (2016) told us that the National Constituent Assembly marked a fundamental shift in feminists’ understanding of the social order and of their relationship with the state: “Before the assembly, we didn’t concern ourselves with the state. Then after the state with all of its courts—we began looking at it. We began to see an actor that we had to start dialoguing with.” In this same vein, she noted:

I think that Colombia changed even its language after 1991. The word “rights” appeared. It didn’t used to exist. I mean, people were citizens, but the discourse wasn’t alive within them, and it appeared. That is very beautiful. The discourse became a part

of people, and we owe that to the constituent assembly. In that sense, I do believe that there was peace building, since it was built with rights. (ibid.)

It was as a result of this fundamental shift in language that interviewees remembered the administration of President Ernesto Samper as a time when feminists' claims and demands began to resonate within Colombian institutions and when channels of communication appeared between the movement and the state, which, despite being loaded with tension, were a precedent for the advocacy strategies that the movement would adopt and for the pathways that the state would pave.

Interviewees remembered the Samper administration for its creation of the National Directorate for Women's Equity (DINEM by its Spanish initials), which replaced the Presidential Council for Youth, Women and the Family. DINEM was created in 1995 as a result of a strategic alliance between then senator Piedad Córdoba and feminist organizations. Olga Amparo Sánchez explained that during this era, the National Planning Council had two representatives from the women's movement who were there with the aim of ensuring that the National Development Plan included provisions to create a ministry-level institution that would promote women-relevant public policies. This proposal was handed over to Córdoba—a senator and rapporteur for the National Development Plan—who, as Wills writes, “was able, thanks to her ability to handle Congress and to support from a group of women parliamentarians, to ensure the inclusion of an entity tasked with coordinating gender policies: DINEM” (2007, 232). The decree founding the directorate presented it as an autonomous institution with stable financial resources (ibid.), which, in principle, meant that it would be able to develop long-term projects that would not risk being terminated on account of changing political winds.

One of DIMEN's most significant features—which prompted great expectations as well as tensions at the time of the entity's creation—was the appointment of Olga Amparo Sánchez as its director; Sánchez was a woman with a history of lobbying on behalf of women's and feminist organizations, and she was also a founding member of Casa de la Mujer, a feminist organization whose political work centers on exposing and dismantling situations of oppression, subordination, and injustice as experienced by women and advocating for their human rights. During our interview, she related the following story from 1994, the year when feminists

began discussing the importance of a strong institutional framework for women's rights:

In 1994, the Samper administration created the National Planning Council. And I ended up at the council on behalf of women's organizations, and during that first National [Development] Plan there was an issue, which was [the state's] debt to women. In the National Development Plan, we raised the need for an institutional framework because the only thing there was [at the time] was a Council for Youth, Women and the Family. We argued that a strong institution was needed. (Sánchez 2016)

This proposal was embraced by Senator Córdoba, and thanks to this strategic alliance between feminists and the senator, DINEM was finally created. How did a feminist end up as DINEM's director?

I was picked because Samper asked the Liberal Party to nominate someone qualified for the role, and Piedad said to the party, "Instead of choosing someone from the party, I think we should pick a woman who knows about women's issues, who has legitimacy," and she proposed that it be me. I was there for three years. (ibid.)

DINEM's public policy proposal for women was presented to the Policy Advisory Committee, consisting of the minister responsible for the policy, the director of DINEM, a representative from the Presidential Council for Social Policy, and representatives of feminist and women's organizations. The policy proposal was based on four main pillars: (i) political rights; (ii) economic, social, and cultural rights; (iii) sexual and reproductive rights; and (iv) a national plan for the elimination of violence against women (ibid.). DINEM carried out three strategies to strengthen these themes: (i) the organization of "training courses for public officials and congressional advisors aimed at promoting bills benefitting women"; (ii) the incorporation of "a gender perspective that could be applied to development plans"; and (iii) the development of an action line focused on "supporting and empowering social organizations in the conducting of events, publications, and trainings" (Wills 2007, 232–3). This last area had a particularly strong impact with regard to peace processes and the armed conflict, for DINEM supported the creation of the Ruta Pacífica, a feminist organization that, for María Emma Wills (2016), "is the first

movement to call attention to sexual violence as a weapon of war,” and which supports women in rural areas of the country by positioning agendas focused on eliminating violence and empowering women.

Moreover, DINEM publicized and provided financial support for subnational-level events conducted by the Ruta Pacifica and other feminist and women’s organizations. DINEM was committed to establishing communication channels and joint activities with these organizations, which would be able to benefit from DINEM’s institutional support to promote the initiatives that feminists were developing “from below.” Olga Amparo Sánchez (2016) concluded by noting that DINEM “was an autonomous entity, so we had a budget and administrative autonomy. It was a very important experience because what you can do from within the state and with a budget is more than what you can do from within the organizations.”

This receptivity of the Samper administration toward agendas focused on ending the conflict and supporting women in different regions of the country was perhaps a response to the concrete circumstances in which he assumed office. President Samper’s peace policy was based on four lines of action: “the ‘social leap,’ a ‘commitment to human rights,’ the ‘improvement of the administration of justice,’ and ‘constructive dialogue with guerrillas’” (Villarraga 2015, 102). Of these four areas, the state’s commitment to human rights would be an issue that would acquire increasing relevance in state policies during that era, in light of the international commitments that the state had been adopting on women’s rights since the end of the 1970s.¹¹ This would grow even stronger during the Caguán

11. The United Nations declared 1975–1985 the “United Nations Decade for Women,” thereby ensuring that the issue of gender equity occupied a central position in public policy and development efforts. Against this backdrop, in 1979 the United Nations General Assembly approved the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), an international treaty committing member states to rolling out programs, policies, and laws aimed at decreasing gender inequality and gender-based discrimination. Colombia domesticated CEDAW through Law 051 of 1981. In addition, it ratified the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women through Law 248 of 1995. Throughout the decade for women, the global community held four international conferences aimed at assessing countries’ state of gender equity and determining the best mechanisms for resolving problems in this area. The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in 1995, synthesized these concerns in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted by 189 countries, including Colombia.

process, but in the Samper administration, especially with the support of DINEM, putting an end to the war and to the gender-related impacts of the armed conflict became key elements of a peace agenda. Despite this priority not receiving concrete representation in the peace agreements signed by Samper, the fact that the Ruta Pacifica and other feminist organizations that were analyzing the armed conflict from a women's rights perspective were receiving institutional support and resources is in and of itself an advance in terms of representation.

In the agreements negotiated during this period, the government placed significant emphasis on human rights and on ensuring civil society participation in the negotiations. Although these two priorities could be considered useful from the perspective of the feminist movement, the government did not express any explicit commitments to them. Indeed, in the actual signed peace agreements, it is difficult to identify concrete positions of the government, for some of the agreements—such as that of the Remolinos del Caguán—were aimed at resolving very specific situations that did not represent broader institutional commitments toward a peace process. As González notes, the Samper administration lacked political legitimacy in light of the proven links between Samper's presidential campaign and funding from drug traffickers—an event in Colombian history usually referred to as “Proceso 8.000” (the “8,000 Process”). Within this context, “during the Samper administration, there were virtually no actions related to peace due to the government's little room for maneuver, as it was severely affected by the crisis of governance unleashed by the so-called 8,000 Process” (González 2014, 421). Thus, even though we can say that the agreements signed by the Samper administration lacked women's representation, we must also acknowledge that the Samper era did not have any clear peace negotiations carried out with continuity and commitment.

In this period, then, there were two scenarios related to representation: first, DINEM's rollout marked a shift toward an institutional commitment to addressing gender-based problems and to engaging in dialogue with feminist organizations. But, second, women were not really represented in the government's negotiations with armed actors. An institutional framework for gender and negotiations with guerrilla groups were two processes that, for the time being, traveled down separate paths.

With regard to inclusion, we can conclude that there was an effort to increase women's representation in negotiating teams compared to previous

administrations. Samper issued a decree creating a high commissioner for peace, and the entity charged with overseeing the development of peace talks and agreements was the Presidential Council for Peace; this institution included 13 men and 2 women, meaning that 13.33% of its members were women, an increase compared to the negotiations during the Betancur administration. At the same time, in the four agreements and two pre-agreements that were signed during this period with the National Liberation Army, the Jaime Bateman Cayón Movement, and the Independent Revolutionary Movement – Armed Commandos, signatories included 75 men and 7 women—in other words, 8.54% women, which, once again, represents a step forward compared to previous processes (tables 8 and 9).

TABLE 8
Gender compositions of peace commissions during the Samper administration

Commission	Men	Women
High commissioner at the Presidential Council for Peace	1	0
Presidential Council for Peace	13	2

SOURCE: Fundación Ideas para la Paz (2008)

What is paradoxical about these numbers is the fact that an administration such as that of Samper, which was noted for its weak peace efforts, had higher levels of women’s inclusion and representation—if we take DINEM’s creation into account—than the Gaviria administration, for example, which was noted for its commitment to achieving peace and correcting historical discrimination by means of a new Constitution. In this sense, the Samper administration was more promising in terms of women’s inclusion and representation.

Nonetheless, the tensions were still there. The first one described by interviewees has to do with the fact that even though DINEM’s creation was a step in the right direction, the government’s lack of political legitimacy at the time was a hampering force. In this regard, Cecilia Barraza noted that DINEM had great potential—not only because it was an autonomous entity with stable financial resources but also, and especially, because there were women working in the government for whom this issue was actually important. You had Cecilia López as minister of agriculture, you had Piedad Córdoba as senator

TABLE 9
Gender composition of signatories to the peace agreements
signed between the Samper administration and armed groups

Agreement	Date	Men			Women		
		Guerrilla groups	Government	Other	Guerrilla groups	Government	Other
First agreement between national government and Jaime Bateman Cayón Movement	February 8, 1996	2	3	2	0	0	1
Remolinos del Caguán agreement (for the release of 60 soldiers and 10 marines)	June 3, 1997	2	2	1	0	0	0
Pre-agreement: Viana declaration between national government and National Liberation Army	February 9, 1998	2	2	3	0	0	1
Puerta del Cielo agreement between National Liberation Army, National Committee for Peace, and civil society*	July 15, 1998	-	-	35	-	-	4
Pre-agreement between national government and Independent Revolutionary Movement – Armed Commandos in Medellín	January 21, 1997	4	3	-	0	0	-
Final agreement between national government, government of Antioquia, mayor of Medellín, and Independent Revolutionary Movement – Armed Commandos	July 29, 1998	4	8	2	0	1	0

* The signatories to this agreement are not distinguished according to government, guerrilla, international witness, or political party member, which is why we have placed everyone in the “other” column.

SOURCE: Villarraga (2015), vol. IV

pushing for these issues and who helped ensure the directorate's creation, but you had an administration with zero credibility, which is why it wasn't possible to achieve an impact. (Barraza 2016)

As Olga Amparo Sánchez explained, "For some feminists, I was selling out to a corrupt and drug-trafficking government" (Sánchez 2016).

This problem of legitimacy would be exacerbated by the second tension. Olga Amparo Sánchez told us a story revealing the state's tendency to reject feminist ideas seen as "subversive" or threatening to the status quo:

There was a fractious debate in Congress on abortion. The House of Representatives was full of people from Opus Dei and the organization called Por el Derecho a Nacer. So when I entered the room, the women yelled, "Assassin!" The minister of health was there, and so was the counselor for social policy and members of the House. When I started to [give a report on what DINEM had accomplished in terms of sexual and reproductive rights], a man from Por el Derecho a Nacer stood up and said, "We've researched your views and you're a disgraceful feminist" ... So then a woman gets up and says to me, "Doctora, you and I are going to cross paths in this life because you're fighting for women's rights and I'm fighting for the rights of the unborn" ... They were handing out buttons with fetuses on them ... So I got up from my seat—and everything was being broadcast live—and she was going to put the button on me, and I accepted it in my hand. I sat back down, and the button remained there in my hands. And of course, all that was really heavy. The government thought it was awful, so did the feminists because, according to them, I should have gotten up and said, "Yes to abortion." After that, I was asked to resign, since I supposedly hadn't been representing the government. (ibid.)

Beatriz Quintero recounted:

The issue of abortion is very hard, and it's a marginal issue within the feminist movement due to the fact that their priority has been the armed conflict and the struggle for peace. Also, it is an issue that means engaging with more people working in human rights or who are from the women's social movement. When you say, "I believe that women should be able to have an abor-

tion,” they give you a dirty look. But if you say “Women have equal rights,” now isn’t that nice. The other [position] is seen as monstrous. (Quintero 2016)

This “monstrousness” of abortion is one issue on the feminist agenda that butted heads with state institutions, and the position of Olga Amparo Sánchez at DINEM revealed precisely what the limits were with regard to dialogue between the state and social movements. Her experience at DINEM led her to conclude that the feminist movement should be independent from state institutions because “there is an institutional and legal order that prevents you from changing the world. It’s not an issue of willingness” (Sánchez 2016).

Despite the great expectations surrounding DINEM’s creation—given that it was an autonomous institution with its own budget and a proclivity toward feminist claims—this experience showed, for interviewees, that institutions have very clear limits about which kinds of agendas they promote and which they censure. Once again, feminists’ fundamental debate over “double militancy” emerged: autonomy or engagement with the state? This conflict would appear once more within the framework of the Caguán peace talks—a period that, for the women we interviewed, was one of the most important milestones in women’s participation in Colombian peace processes.

Caguán: The Great Milestone in Women’s Participation

According to interviewees, in terms of women’s participation, the presidential term of Andrés Pastrana (1998–2002) involved two somewhat paradoxical moments: on the one hand, his term was notable for the massive mobilization of women and feminists seeking to influence the peace talks underway, but, on the other, it was also the moment when DINEM shut its doors and made way for the Presidential Council for Women’s Equity, a less autonomous entity with a much smaller budget. It would seem, then, that state institutions were headed in one direction, while women and feminists—through their organizations and their political participation “from below”—were going in another.

Upon assuming office, President Pastrana’s priority was to “search for peace in the public agenda, but in a way that would be immediately visible through decisive action” (Villarraga 2015, 139). Thus, the

administration's negotiation process with the FARC involved a series of improvisations and ambiguities (*ibid.*), for the government, in an effort to showcase immediate results, implemented decisions and actions that were not part of a careful planning process. As part of its peace proposal, the administration issued a decree creating a demilitarized zone located between the departments of Meta and Caquetá. Known as Caguán (on account of its location in the municipality of San Vicente del Caguán), this demilitarized zone served as the site for peace negotiations between the government and the FARC.

However, Caguán was but one more example of the simultaneous presence of a policy of peace and one of war. As González writes, "the fundamental problem of the negotiations was a deeper one: once again, both actors simultaneously deployed a political approach and a military one as a method of waging war in the midst of peace" (2014, 431). For the FARC, this period involved an expansion of its troops and its strategic corridors for harvesting and transporting coca. Meanwhile, right-wing paramilitary groups fortified their stronghold in different regions of the country and took increasingly violent actions as a form of opposition to the government's peace talks with the guerrillas. For its part, the government—despite Pastrana's arrival in office with a policy of peace—began strengthening its military forces with assistance from the United States; this effort was known as Plan Colombia (*ibid.*, 430). Thus, both parties, at the same time they voiced their commitment to peace, took offensive action.

Despite these paradoxes, Gloria Tobón (2016) told us emphatically that Pastrana's peace process was "an exercise in participation. It was a big example of how women could be more than just an ad hoc group, we could think and contribute, we could draft documents, and we could say important things." For her, this period marked a turning point in women's participation because, for the first time, gender issues were placed on the negotiating table as a key part of the agenda, and it would be impossible to talk about peace without also talking about these issues. This positioning was due to the mobilization efforts of various feminist and women's organizations. There was a specific lead-up to this panorama: Gloria Tobón recalled that the Red Nacional de Mujeres began to promote participatory settings known as "women's consultations," which were "regional movements that we organized to consult with women about their ideas for the peace process." With these consultations,

a kind of alliance of organizations was formed. There were indigenous women, trade unionists, campesina women, women from NGOs. This mobilized a ton of people, and we would organize meetings every week or every other week, and tons of women would go to these meetings to talk about the peace process. (Tobón 2016)

In Caguán, the tensions persisted between independent feminists and those who believed in engaging with the state: “at that moment, the fissure was very deep, mostly because going to Caguán meant sitting down with armed men, and the big question was kind of whether a feminist should go and sit down next to an armed actor” (ibid.). Lastly, several organizations agreed on the need to mobilize around a shared agenda for influencing the peace process. Here, feminists’ experience from prior advocacy attempts related to peace talks, as well as the feedback gathered from the women’s consultations, was critical in allowing feminists to arrive to the negotiating table with specific demands. This entire trajectory was crystallized in one specific setting: the public hearings organized by the government and the FARC to determine the various points of the peace agenda.

The agreements from this period involved a wide range of negotiating issues linked to achieving structural change in Colombian society. They referred not only to human rights, guerrillas’ reintegration into society, and ceasefires but also to issues such as drug trafficking; the protection of victims’ economic, social, and cultural rights; agrarian reform; the exploitation and conservation of natural resources; justice reform; and reform of the country’s economic model as a way to achieve social justice. The public hearings were a mechanism whereby civil society could act as judge and jury concerning the issues that were selected. At the hearings were representatives from the government, the FARC, and civil society organizations, who placed priority on the proposals and voices of society’s most marginalized.

As Gloria Tobón told us, feminist organizations participated in these hearings, and they had concrete gender-based proposals for each of the issues. For example, “for the first economic issue, we were able to influence the process in such an intense way at that roundtable with the government that they agreed to open a women’s roundtable, a hearing. So for that economic issue, a really great process was initiated, a wonderful one, with

the entire women's movement there participating, which was very broad." How many women took part? What was their participation like?

There were more than 80 women's organizations there, the entire country was moving around it. We were doing our women's consultations, we were gathering input, but at the same time, we were doing the biweekly meetings to discuss the documents. [We had] a discussion about a document outlining a presentation on women and the economy that we would give at Caguán. We worked very diligently, it was very interesting work. (Tobón 2016)

Did the government take these presentations into consideration? "Yes, in all the [negotiation] documents, [the government] began to incorporate [a gender approach]. It didn't end up disappearing from the agenda. Nothing was done without the women, and we were there on top of things" (ibid.).

The other advocacy strategy utilized by women's and feminist organizations was the sending of representatives to Caguán. As Gloria Tobón recalled, "We had to ask everyone for money so we could take the women to Caguán—so it wouldn't be this thing where just three women went. In the end, some 700 women made it to Caguán, and it was quite an event" (ibid.). The government appointed a delegate to act as an intermediary between civil society and the negotiating teams:

Ana Teresa was the force behind promoting the citizen agenda, she was one of the most visible agents at that time. And on the side of the FARC, in Caguán they nominated Mariana Páez. Within the guerrilla movement, the issue of gender was completely alien—there was no awareness—so doing that work was really tough. But well, having Ana Teresa was incredibly important in that commission. (ibid.)

And did Ana Teresa represent feminists' demands?

It's really hard to talk about representation because she was nominated by the government. What Ana Teresa did was participate in the roundtables; she was able to take what had been discussed in the thematic sessions—I mean, the thematic committee is important, but not being at the roundtable where the big issues, the key ones, are discussed means you're left out. Or rather, all of that is very important, but not as important as mak-

ing decisions, and civil society wasn't present [in those decision-making settings]. (ibid.)

Thus, feminists from the organizations did not feel directly represented in the negotiating teams or decision-making spaces during the peace process. In fact, none of their proposals to incorporate a gender approach was ultimately included in official documents. These documents call attention to the need to enhance the voice and participation of historically marginalized populations, but they make no explicit mention of gender or the claims of feminists. Gloria Tobón noted, for example, that one of feminists' strongest proposals concerned the economic development model and the disproportionate burden it was placing on women, but the peace accord on this point made no reference to this issue. Despite this lack of representation in the agreements, the pressure applied from below—through the movement's organization, creation of networks, and production of knowledge on the conflict's impact on women—in itself marks an important turning point in women's participation, for the peace processes from this point forward would be forced to address a gender perspective in their negotiations and agreements.

During the Samper administration, the FARC and the government signed 18 agreements and 1 joint declaration officially creating the negotiating teams. These agreements were signed by 149 men and 3 women, meaning that 1.97% of signatories were women. This figure confirms what Gloria Tobón told us: women were not included in decision-making settings. Nonetheless, data on the peace commissions overseen by the Presidential Council for Peace do show important progress in inclusion: for the first time ever, women constituted more than half of members. Of the 27 members of this entity, 17, or 62.92%, were women (tables 10 and 11).

This progress in representation and inclusion stands in contrast to the scarce attention paid by the Pastrana administration to the institutionalization of gender or to mainstreaming feminist perspectives into state processes. As recounted by Cecilia Barraza, President Pastrana's decision to shut down DINEM and replace it with the Presidential Council for Women's Equity hindered the impact—slow though it may have been—that was being achieved by DINEM in various regions of the country: “During the Pastrana era, this was terrible because it put an end to what we thought had been there, and we blamed the government for closing down DINEM and creating this strange entity known as a Presidential

Council” (Barraza 2016). Wills writes that “a year after being elected, Andrés Pastrana, in June 1999, transformed DINEM into the Presidential Council for Women’s Equity via Decree 1182. This change meant a loss of institutional status and led to a reduction in administrative and financial autonomy” (2007, 242–3).

TABLE 10
Gender composition of peace commissions
during the Pastrana administration

Commission	Men	Women
High commissioner in the Presidential Council for Peace	4	0
Presidential Council for Peace	10	17

SOURCE: Fundación Ideas para la Paz (2008)

Claudia Ramírez described her experience working as a representative of the feminist movement at the Presidential Council for Women’s Equity:

I think that the period was a step backward because they brought [DINEM’s] status down a notch, so it was an adverse environment. Also, from a resources perspective, [the new council] had very few resources, and anyway it was a very nascent initiative and it was a period when people didn’t pay much attention to women’s issues, they would say “Why? Everything is equal for everyone.” And there was this deep-rooted idea that when we asked for things for women or spoke about women’s claims, we were infringing on the right to equality. (Ramírez 2016)

And what role did the feminist movement play in this presidential council?

At that moment, the women’s movement sought to have an impact on Pastrana’s cabinet, it was very close to the council. In fact, all of us who were there were part of the movement, and there were good information channels and the possibility of positioning women’s claims, opinions, perspectives in the council. So yes, there was that positioning and sense of closeness, which completely changed after the new director took charge. She didn’t want anything to do with the women’s movement. (ibid.)

TABLE 11
Gender composition of signatories to the peace agreements
signed between the Pastrana administration and armed groups

Agreement	Date	Men			Women		
		Guerrilla groups	Government	Other	Guerrilla groups	Government	Other
Agreement to establish the Common Front for Peace and Non-Violence*	November 22, 2000	-	2	6	-	0	0
Agreement between national government and FARC for initiation of dialogue	January 7, 1999	3	1	-	0	0	-
Agreement between political parties, Congress, national government, and FARC	April 28, 1999	4	2	4	0	0	1
Caquetania agreement between Colombia's president and FARC commander Manuel Marulanda Vélez	May 2, 1999	1	1	-	-	-	-
Agreement concerning "a shared agenda for change toward a new Colombia" between the national government and FARC	May 6, 1999	3	4	-	0	1	-
Agreement on National Negotiating Table and National Thematic Committee	May 6, 1999	3	4	-	0	1	-
Agreement on joint communiqués, negotiating table, and thematic committee between the national government and FARC	October 25, 1999	3	4	-	0	0	-
Agreement on methodology between national government's negotiating table and FARC	November 2, 1999	4	7	-	0	0	-
Agreement on public hearings	November 5, 1999	10	13	-	0	0	-

Agreement	Date	Men			Women		
		Guerrilla groups	Government	Other	Guerrilla groups	Government	Other
Los Pozos agreement between national government and FARC (president of Colombia and Manuel Marulanda Vélez)	February 9, 2001	1	1	-	-	-	-
Humanitarian agreement between national government and FARC	June 2, 2001	2	1	-	0	0	-
Agreement on rules for the international facilitating commission	April 5, 2001	4	6	-	0	0	-
San Francisco de la Sombra agreement between national government and FARC	October 5, 2001	8	2	-	0	0	-
Agreement on work methodology between national government and FARC	January 23, 2002	4	5	-	0	0	-
Agreement on national and international accompaniment for negotiating table	February 7, 2002	5	5	-	0	0	-
Agreement between national government and National Liberation Army on preparatory meeting for national convention	October 8, 1998	2	1	7	0	0	0
Agreement between national government and National Liberation Army	October 30, 2000	1	1	-	0	0	-
Agreement for Colombia between national government and National Liberation Army	November 24, 2001	3	2	-	0	0	-

* This was an agreement between the national government and political parties.

SOURCE: Villarraga (2015), vol. V

The first director on women's equity during the Pastrana administration was Elsa Gladys Cifuentes, who, as Claudia Ramírez (2016) noted, "wanted nothing to do with the movement but was very receptive to the fact that she had a team who came from women's organizations." During Claudia Ramírez's time at the council, the office's work centered on the drafting of an equal opportunity plan for women, which was envisioned as a long-term national policy to foster gender equality. Claudia told us that this effort was completely disconnected from the peace negotiations at Caguán; they were two different agendas. Cecilia Barraza attributed this separation of agendas to the movement's frustration on account of DINEM's closure:

The council's creation and DINEM's disappearance led to a kind of rupture, if you will, between the council and social movements because it was a big let-down—we had been putting all our efforts into [DINEM] and then they shut it down. So then civil society began focusing its work on the Caguán talks. (Barraza 2016)

On the whole, two sides to women's political participation emerged during the Pastrana era. On the one hand, as noted by interviewees, this period marked a milestone in participation because the Caguán talks involved feminist mobilization aimed at influencing the key themes for the peace agenda; once again, feminists mobilized their forces "from below." As interviewees pointed out, the gender focus had made it onto the radar. Gloria Tobón recalled, for example, how Mariana Páez, a FARC guerrilla who was appointed to participate in the peace commissions, "changed a lot on account of her conversations with us—she became sensitized. That kind of contact is very important, it was key for a lot of people there. Joaquín, for example, also led himself be persuaded" (Tobón 2016). In terms of inclusion, the fact that the peace commissions included more women than men marked an important precedent. Nonetheless, in the decision-making spheres concerning the peace accords, women were practically absent, demonstrating the persistent barriers to women's participation in conditions of equality.

On the other hand, DINEM's closure prompted feminist organizations to continue strengthening their various channels for advocating before the state and its peace process; but at the same time, it was a disappointment, as the new council's significantly smaller budget and loss

of administrative autonomy underscored the state's weak commitment to gender issues. The council's creation also spoke to a persistent trend in Colombia's institutional framework for gender issues, which is problematic in terms of representation: the state's institutionalization of gender has depended on specific instances of political will instead of a systematic institutional commitment to adopting a gender perspective.

These specific instances of political will can sometimes provide the impetus for positioning gender-focused agendas and achieving important progress in women's representation in the state; this was the case, for example, when Senator Córdoba exercised political pressure to create DINEM. However, supporting women's representation during these specific moments is problematic because just as they can be catalyzing, so too can they be constraining. This happened with the director on women's equity who was appointed by President Álvaro Uribe. Claudia Ramírez recalled sadly how the Equal Opportunity Plan, which feminists had hoped would become the national policy for women's equity, "was drafted and then stashed away in a desk drawer" (Ramírez 2016) because the new director was not interested in having a relationship with the feminist movement and quashed any hopes for communication and joint action. This thus reveals the problems of maintaining a gender focus within the state when doing so depends on political will. Uribe's presidency highlights the precariousness of gender institutionalization in Colombia: the administration closed all dialogue with the feminist movement, and state institutions remained silent on gender issues. But feminists did not stay quiet: they took to the streets, lobbied before international forums, strengthened their networks, and conducted subnational-level work to push their agendas and have an impact on the conversations underway with right-wing paramilitary groups.

The Uribe Administration (2002–2010): An End to Dialogue with Civil Society and the Struggle for Women's Representation

Cecilia Barraza (2016) explained that "the arrival of the Uribe administration abolished that tiny hope that perhaps peace could be built." Álvaro Uribe assumed office after the failed peace talks of Caguán with a warmongering discourse that "closed the door to establishing a policy of negotiations between insurgents and the government" (Villarraga 2015,

185). Although the peace talks under the Pastrana administration promised an agenda built on social justice, the fact that both the state and the FARC carried out simultaneous policies of peace and war led to the collapse of negotiations, for parties' continued military offensives, kidnappings, and other war tactics depleted the legitimacy of the peace process, which ended definitively when the FARC kidnapped Congressman Jorge Eduardo Gechen.

Against this backdrop, Uribe's two terms as president promoted a policy of "democratic security," whose aim was to defeat armed groups by military means. His administration thus marked a rupture from past administrations, which had committed themselves, through a variety of strategies and discourses, to negotiating a solution to the armed conflict. Uribe's government did not pursue this line of action for two main reasons: first, Uribe discredited previous administrations' peace efforts on the basis that sitting down to negotiate with armed guerrilla groups was inefficient; his approach was therefore entirely an offensive military one. Second, his administration endorsed the notion that Colombia did not actually have an armed conflict (Villarraga 2015), a position that hindered the recognition of human rights violations stemming from a context of violence.

At the same time that official policies failed to recognize the existence of an armed conflict or its victims and erased any hopes of pursuing peace talks with armed actors, civil society rolled out various mobilization strategies aimed at counterbalancing Uribe's discourse and calling for urgent peace. As noted by Mauricio Romero, the period around the turn of the twenty-first century was marked by "an increase in collective action in support of peace" (2001, 407). The feminist movement was no stranger to this effort. Cecilia Barraza explained that for her and other women in the movement, this period marked an important moment in terms of the feminist movement's adoption of the discourse of peace: "in 2002, the year when Pastrana left and Uribe took office, the first women's march for peace was held." Some say that 80,000 women marched on this day, others say it was 50,000 and yet others say 10,000. Regardless of the exact number, for Cecilia Barraza, the march was "the first time that [Iniciativa de Mujeres Colombianas por la Paz] Ruta Pacífica, Red Nacional de Mujeres, the Organización Femenina Popular all came together as one group." For these organizations, the march "was a kind of response: Caguán failed, and we aren't buying the story of going to war" (Barraza 2016).

During this period, the feminist movement worked independently of the state to create its own agenda for peace. The director for women's equity who was appointed by the Uribe administration closed all communication channels with feminist organizations, forcing the organizations to seek other means of participation. Cecilia Barraza explained that "what Marta Lucía Vásquez [the new director] did when she came to the presidential council was to practically close the door to women's organizations and create two women's advisory boards that were a meeting-type initiative promoted by the first ladies of the departments and municipalities" (ibid.). Faced with this exclusion, feminists adopted a strategy of participating in international hearings, events, and other forums.

This strategy was part of a broader advocacy agenda by civil society organizations that were demanding the protection of human rights in Colombia. Romero writes that one of the key features of the mobilization for peace during this time was "the increased 'visibility' of Colombia's armed conflict within United Nations entities, international human rights organizations ... and governments in the region, in Europe, and around the globe" (2001, 407).

What were the main issues on feminists' agenda for peace? Cecilia Barraza explained that "many organizations were working on the issue of displacement, and they began to produce the first reports on the disproportionate effects of the armed conflict and to develop increasing ideas about what displacement meant for women" (Barraza 2016). This agenda stood in direct opposition to the policies of the Uribe administration, for if the government's official discourse denied the very existence of an armed conflict, then feminists' calls for recognition of the disproportionate effects of the war on women were null and void. The panorama was dire indeed:

The situation for talking about and raising the issue of conflict was so difficult that for human rights organizations, the fact that we women's organizations could show, for example, the issue of sexual violence and present it before international settings, was a form of advocacy and of proving the existence of an armed conflict in the country, because the human rights organizations were completely stigmatized by the Uribe administration. (Ramírez 2016)

One feature of this tense moment, which would later become an important tool for feminists' empowerment, was the way in which feminist organizations began to appropriate international instruments to position their agenda and pressure the state to comply with its gender-related commitments. One such example concerns the issuing of Resolution 1325 in 2000 by the United Nations Security Council. This resolution is especially important because part of its general aims include women's equal participation and full involvement in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as in the maintenance and promotion of peace. Feminist organizations built networks and led working sessions to monitor the government's compliance with Resolution 1325 in its peace processes.

Gloria Tobón highlighted the importance of these international tools for the movement's advocacy efforts. For her,

[these] international instruments allow you to monitor issues that the Colombian state isn't thinking about, and we can say to the whole world, "It's not complying." They are tools that foster women's [participation] in the peace process; we have to appropriate these tools in order to conduct advocacy, there's no other way. (Tobón 2016)

By participating in international settings and drawing on resolutions and commitments adopted by the Colombian state with regard to gender equality and the eradication of violence against women, the feminist movement conducted important advocacy and increased its strength. This type of lobbying would become central in Colombia's current peace process and was an important mechanism for strengthening social movements, especially during a period in which the state was not receptive to the claims of feminist organizations.

In terms of inclusion, the Uribe administration held talks with paramilitary groups and the National Liberation Army guerrilla group. Its main strategy here was "a military resolution to the armed conflict, with the aim of defeating of the insurgency and, on that basis, considering the possibility of negotiations whereby rebels would already be subjugated by the national government" (Villarraga 2015, 185). The large number of women in the Presidential Council for Peace is worth noting. Of the council's 26 members, 10, or 38.46%, were women (table 12). Nevertheless, with regard to concrete agreements, there were no women among

the signatories (table 13). This reveals a clear step backward compared to previous administrations and agreements.

The agreements signed between the Uribe administration and the right-wing United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia centered on reestablishing the state’s legitimacy in areas occupied by this armed group, as well as ensuring the necessary conditions for a ceasefire and the elimination of drug trafficking. The negotiation process did not address the issue of gender. Meanwhile, the government’s talks with the National Liberation Army guerrilla group can be traced only through joint communiqués, for the parties did not go any further than this; these communiqués focus on establishing the necessary logistical and political conditions for commencing formal negotiations, which makes it difficult to analyze women’s representation.

TABLE 12
Gender composition of peace commissions
during the Uribe administration

Commission	Men	Women
High commissioner in the Presidential Council for Peace	1	0
Presidential Council for Peace	16	10

SOURCE: Fundación Ideas para la Paz (2008)

The government’s negotiations with the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia were controversial, particularly in terms of justice, for they were widely criticized by civil society organizations and international entities as failing to adequately hold paramilitaries to account for their crimes and for failing to respect victims’ rights to truth, justice, and reparations. Colombia’s Constitutional Court issued a ruling ordering the government to strengthen justice mechanisms to ensure the protection of victims’ rights.¹² Standing in the shadows of this ruling were civil society organizations—including feminist organizations—that conducted activism “from below,” for the government had blocked all possibility of dialogue with social movements. For this reason, this era can be noted for women’s struggles for representation from the ground up. This helped

12. Sentence C-370 of 2006 is the main Constitutional Court ruling regarding the Justice and Peace Law.

TABLE 13
Gender composition of signatories to the peace agreements
signed between the Uribe administration and armed groups

Agreement	Date	Men			Women		
		Armed groups	Government	Other	Armed groups	Government	Other
Santa Fe de Ralito agreement between national government and United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC)	July 15, 2003	9	1	9	0	0	0
Peace agreement between national government and reintegrated members of the Cacique Nutibara Bloc of the AUC	December 10, 2003	2	1	3	0	0	0
Sur del Casanare agreement for Colombian peace between national government and Campesino Self-Defense Forces of Casanare	January 29, 2004	2	1	2	0	0	0
Agreement between national government and AUC	May 13, 2004	10	1	2	0	0	0
Joint communiqué between national government and National Liberation Army (ELN)	December 5, 2005	1	1	-	0	0	-
Joint communiqué between national government and ELN	December 21, 2005	1	1	-	0	0	-
Joint communiqué between national government and ELN	January 11, 2006	1	1	-	0	0	-
Joint communiqué between national government and ELN	February 24, 2006	1	1	4	0	0	0
Joint communiqué between national government and ELN	February 27, 2006	1	1	-	0	0	-
Joint communiqué between national government and ELN	October 26, 2006	1	1	-	0	0	-
Agreement on fund to finance dialogue between national government and ELN	November 24, 2006	1	1	3	0	0	0

SOURCE: Villarraga (2015), vol. VII

create the conditions to ensure that when Juan Manuel Santos took office, feminists' claims would not fall from the radar and that feminists would have the tools necessary to demand guarantees from the state and to pressure it to comply with its international commitments on gender equality.

The Peace Process during the Santos Administration (2010–2016): Expectations, Concerns, and Challenges

The peace process being led by the Santos administration has sparked expectations and anxiety. Are feminists optimistic about the future? Claudia Ramírez (2016) told us, “In terms of the conflict, I think that a lot of progress has been made, and what seems promising to me is the way we’ve been able to follow in the footsteps of others—that is, in the pathways that others have been paving.” All of the participatory mechanisms that feminists have constructed and strengthened “from below” in order to influence the country’s peace processes have had concrete impacts on the movement’s way of thinking today and on their minimum—and even maximum—expectations in terms of institutionalizing a gender approach. Today, women activists such as Francia Márquez, an Afro-Colombian from Cauca, tell the president directly when he is not meeting his promises and challenge him to see the armed conflict as a product of the racism and structural inequalities that have shaped Colombian society (Ortiz 2016).

Based on this and other examples, Claudia Ramírez told us:

I’m optimistic in the sense that before, nobody would listen to a victim of sexual violence—she would be forced to be alone in her pain and stigmatization. I think that right now, progress has been made in giving dignity to those victims of sexual violence, and that those who have brought their stories public are an inspiration for other women who have had the same experience. Now they say, “Look, this happened to us, and it’s not our fault, and there needs to be a reparation” ... I also think that women have a lot of responsibility in this process of placing victims at the center, and I think that it was well recognized. This was very real when victims’ point of view began to be discussed and there were many women victims present, as well as specific settings to talk about women. So to me, these things make me very optimistic. (Ramírez 2016)

María Emma Wills shared a similar opinion. For her, the contact that negotiating teams have established with women victims and women's organizations that have been present in Havana has been fundamental for integrating a gender perspective into the peace process. She noted, for example, how women from the FARC met with a former woman guerrilla who "told them about how she and her women comrades had been having a hard time in the transition to politics—or rather, get ready because you women who are militants, commanders, you have no idea what awaits you." The negotiating teams also talked about victims of sexual violence from various regions of the country; in this regard, Wills (2016) noted that "hearing from these victims, women who had been raped by all sides, was a transformative experience."

However, feminists still maintain a sense of fear and caution. Cecilia Barraza explained that, indeed, "there have been substantial changes, if you look at how the glass was during the 1990s, now it is super full," but that there continues to be a fundamental problem:

Despite everything, there is still a reality that has not changed in civil society, or in the government, or in the FARC, and that has to do with the unequal power relationship that exists between the organizations fighting for women's rights and the rest of society. [Women's] issues continue to be missing or of secondary importance for the rest of society—as long as the public agenda doesn't make these issues its own, it's going to be impossible. (Barraza 2016)

María Emma Wills expressed her concern about women's limited participation in the negotiating teams. Claudia Ramírez described her fear that when it comes time to implement the agreements, the gender perspective might be neglected, and Gloria Tobón spoke of a patriarchal mentality that remains deeply rooted in Colombian society and poses the greatest challenge for the feminist movement and the post-conflict era. What overall assessment, then, can we make of the current peace process? What are its possibilities and its limitations?

Upon taking office, Juan Manuel Santos embraced a discourse of opposition to the policies of the previous administration. The Santos administration, "though maintaining an offensive military strategy, opted to try again to negotiate a political solution with the guerrillas" (Villarraga 2015, 211). During his first term, Santos acknowledged the existence of

the armed conflict and began to engage with the FARC to explore the option of holding peace talks. Indeed, his reelection campaign was based on the idea of peace: after Santos revealed to the country, in August 2012, that his administration had begun secret conversations with the FARC six months earlier in an effort to draft an agreement that would put an end to the armed conflict, formal peace negotiations commenced, and Santos's reelection was presented as an opportunity to provide continuity to the process that had already begun and was generating great expectations. This process has involved international observers, government representatives, FARC representatives, victims of the conflict, and experts who have been closely following the negotiations.

With regard to women's participation, the website *Verdad Abierta* has described the initiation of peace talks thus: "the conversations in Havana began without women. Both sides of the table consisted of men talking about ending the war; and behind them, a few women provided technical support, such as Elena Ambrosi on the government's side of the table" (*Verdad Abierta* 2015). But the picture did not remain this way: pressure from feminist organizations, together with the Colombian state's international commitments on gender equality and violence against women, led to the appointment, in 2013, of two women plenipotentiaries for the government's team: Nigeria Rentería, who was the director for women's equity at the time, and María Paulina Riveros, director of human rights at the Ministry of the Interior (Ramírez 2015). Nigeria Rentería later resigned from her spot in order to run for governor of Chocó and was replaced by the minister of foreign affairs (also a woman). For the FARC, it is difficult to count the exact number of women negotiators on its team, since the armed group did not differentiate between negotiators and advisors. What we do know is that ten people (and not always the same ones) sat at the table and that only one of them was a woman appointed as negotiator: Tanja Nijmeijer. With these appointments by both sides, the negotiating table ultimately consisted of 3 women and 17 men, meaning that 15% of the negotiators were women.

In addition to the negotiating table, the two parties created the Historical Commission on the Conflict and Its Victims, which had 12 members, including 1 woman: María Emma Wills. With regard to the commission and its work,

23 feminist and women's organizations published a communiqué noting that while some of the [commission's] documents

mention the situation of women and identify some of the crimes of which they were victim, none of them addressed the complexity of women's experiences. (Ramírez 2015)

Thus—and also as a result of pressure from feminist and women's organizations—the negotiating parties decided to create a gender sub-commission that would be responsible for ensuring that the peace process incorporated a gender perspective into all its stages and in all of its agreements.

To this end, the participation of women victims has been key, for their perspective underscores the importance of recognizing the conflict's differentiated impacts on men and women and, in particular, of constructing peace agreements that take these differences into account. The discussion of point five of the peace accord—concerning victims of the conflict—involved the participation of 60 victims, including 36 women (Ramírez 2015). This is an important figure, for 60% of the voices that helped shape the agreement were the voices of women.

In this regard, a monitoring report issued by the Coalition for Action on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 notes:

It is important to highlight the large presence of women in the government's thematic groups, whose membership and technical support is represented by women. In four of the five Support Groups (participation, legal, communications, strategy, and transitional justice), the leaders are women, [and] there are a total of 25 women and 13 men in all of the groups. (Coalición 1325 2014, 22)

Under the Santos administration, the government has signed seven agreements with the FARC, whose signatories include 43 men and 8 women, meaning that women account for 15.69% of all signatories. Thus, our overall assessment of the peace process in terms of women's inclusion is, on the one hand, positive, for some of the commissions supporting the process—particularly the commission on victims—are made up of more than 50% women. But on the other hand, the decision-making settings are still composed of mostly men (tables 14 and 15)

Meanwhile, more than 18 women's and feminist organizations have been supporting and attending the peace process, demanding minimum and maximum levels of justice; they are calling for parties to incorporate

a gender perspective into all aspects of the peace talks and agreements, as well as a differentiated approach that ensures justice for historically marginalized and conflict-affected populations. As part of this effort, they have drafted a variety of recommendations that they have sent to Havana via organizational representatives, which identify the basic points that the negotiating table should consider when drafting the agreements and parties’ concrete commitments. The issues raised by women’s and feminist organizations through the gender subcommission place pressure on negotiating parties to ensure that the peace process represents their interests—and the fact that such a gender subcommission exists in the first place and that dialogue with the feminist movement has allowed for the creation of spaces to incorporate a gender approach represents a positive step forward in terms of women’s representation.

TABLE 14
Gender composition of negotiation settings
involving the FARC and the Santos administration

Negotiating table	Men	Women
Plenipotentiaries	17	3
Substitutes	8	2
Support tables for the negotiating table	13	25

SOURCE: Coalición 1325 (2014)

In this process, the National Summit of Women and Peace, for example, brought together several groups—Casa de la Mujer; Ruta Pacífica; Red Nacional de Mujeres; Mujeres por la Paz; Colectivo de Pensamiento y Acción Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad; the Coalition for Action on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325; Conferencia Nacional de Organizaciones Afrocolombianas; Iniciativa de Mujeres por la Paz; and Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas, Negras e Indígenas de Colombia—to join efforts and develop their own agenda to monitor the inclusion of a gender approach in the implementation, monitoring, and public endorsement of the peace agreements.

The fruit of these efforts can be seen in the official peace agreements. First, the agreement on comprehensive rural reform promotes access to land and secure land tenure through the principles of equality, land restitution, and the provision of goods and services necessary for a dignified

TABLE 15

Gender composition of signatories to the peace agreements signed between the Santos administration and the FARC

Agreement	Date	Men			Women		
		Guerrilla groups	Government	Other	Guerrilla groups	Government	Other
General agreement to end the armed conflict and build a stable and lasting peace	August 26, 2012	5	5	4	1	2	0
Agreement on the filing of Legislative Act No. 04 of 2015 in the Senate and 150 of 2015 in the House	May 11, 2016	1	1	1	0	0	1
Special agreement on the Law on Amnesty, Pardon, and Special Criminal Treatment	August 19, 2016	1	1	1	0	0	1
Special implementation agreement to select the executive secretary of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace	August 19, 2016	1	1	1	0	0	1
Agreement to facilitate the fulfillment of the timetable for the process of laying down arms	August 20, 2016	1	1	-	0	0	-
Final agreement to end the armed conflict and build a stable and lasting peace	August 28, 2016	7	7	2	1	1	0
	November 24, 2016	1	1	-	0	0	-

*The agreements listed in this table are those officially listed in the "Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace."

life. Here, the focus is on vulnerable populations, with a particular emphasis on women heads of household and on the creation of training opportunities in areas that are typically uncommon for women. It also orders the creation of 11 national plans that embrace principles aimed at guaranteeing equality between men and women during the implementation phase, understanding that comprehensive rural reform cannot be reduced to mere access to land and instead includes the promotion of equality and specific transformations geared toward women. Second, one of the key pillars of the agreement on political participation is the strengthening of civil society organizations and movements by creating spaces for participation and dialogue. The agreement highlights the importance of empowering women to participate in politics and of integrating traditionally marginalized populations into decision-making settings, which translates into an explicit commitment to strengthening and supporting feminist and women's organizations, as well as a recognition of the importance of women's voices in shaping the public sphere. Third, the agreement on illicit drugs seeks to promote a drug policy that is based on human rights and public health. To this end, it notes the need for special treatment for the weakest members of the drug trade and the application of a differentiated approach when designing new drug policies. The agreement on victims of the conflict recognizes the state's duty to protect, respect, and fulfill human rights using an equity- and gender-based approach. Within this framework, it outlines the importance of recognizing the differentiated impacts of the conflict on men and women, as well as the need to provide reparations to women victims.

Lastly, the agreement on implementation and verification mechanisms commits to incorporating a gender perspective, mainly through the active participation of women's organizations that oversee the implementation process; to this end, it provides for the creation of a special forum consisting of six women's organizations in Colombia that will be tasked with monitoring the work of the Commission for Monitoring, Promoting, and Verifying the Implementation of the Final Agreement. Cutting across all of these agreements is the principle of community and civil society participation in all of the points to be discussed.

For the first time, a gender approach has been an explicit commitment in a Colombian peace process.

What, then, is left? What challenges lie ahead? How do feminists view the peace process's future? María Emma Wills told us that there are

two “pillars of silence concerning what is happening to women in this country” that impede the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into Colombian institutions and peace processes. The first is academia:

I think that all of these delegations that stem from an academic world that completely has its back to the feminist and gender discourse—since they are the product of that scholarship and of those perspectives of the world—I think that the negotiators have learned about women and sexual violence only during the actual negotiations when the negotiating agenda is created. Because that [issue] is not on the radar, not for either of the two delegations. (Wills 2016)

Academia is a creator of concepts and of new world visions, which is why, as María Emma Wills explained, it is extremely concerning that gender has not been used as an analytical lens for understanding the world. If academia continues to “turn its back” to gender, it will be difficult to secure long-term social change. This is the first challenge that the feminist movement has identified for the future.

The second “pillar of silence” was described by Gloria Tobón; for her, the incorporation of a gender perspective into the peace processes and into institutions in general

is an issue of cultural construction that you can't change overnight. I think that there is still a long way to go in terms of gender awareness. It's an issue of mentality; deconstructing the patriarchal imaginary is a serious task. It's hard work, transforming a culture is slow. That's why the few achievements we've gained have cost us a lot, but it's the silent revolution that we women are waging. (Tobón 2016)

For her, if this “patriarchal imaginary” persists, there is little room for progress in ensuring that a gender perspective becomes a true commitment within Colombia's institutions—that is, a commitment made with the conviction that such a perspective is essential if we wish to talk about peace. More than simply fulfilling a gender quota or complying with an international treaty, a gender perspective requires internalization by institutions—it requires becoming a basic assumption that underlies all institutional processes. This is the second challenge for the future of the feminist movement that was identified by interviewees and which is currently

being compounded by the attacks lodged by critics who accuse the gender perspective of being an “ideology” that distorts traditional values.

Shirin M. Rai, in a theoretical study on mainstreaming gender in state institutions, writes that “times of transition can also be moments of opportunity for the national machineries to strengthen their position” (2003b, 28) toward the incorporation of a gender perspective into institutional frameworks. She argues that during periods of transition and conflict resolution, governments are more likely and more willing to make commitments to eliminate gender-based inequality and violence in all its forms. For this reason, and as demonstrated in a report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Guzmán and Montaña 2001, 20), times of transition can serve as “political windows”—that is, ripe moments for a gender perspective to be embraced by and implemented in all state institutions. The feminists we interviewed all agreed that the current peace process is a political window that should be capitalized on to ensure that a gender perspective is finally heard and valued in public debate and that the state mainstreams gender as an underlying principle in all of its processes. However, the challenge posed by the “gender ideology” critics requires devising new awareness-raising and advocacy strategies so that there are no setbacks in the progress achieved thus far and so that feminism is not discredited as a useful perspective for understanding inequality and its linkage to war and transitional justice processes. The women we interviewed, drawing on their personal chronologies and memories, thus view the Santos administration’s peace process as a milestone—a milestone marked by expectations, fears, and, above all, reflection and uncertainty regarding the future and the strategies that the movement will adopt to confront it.

THE CHALLENGES: HOW CAN WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION BE ENSURED IN THE CURRENT PEACE PROCESS?

The historical picture painted in the previous chapter demonstrates that women's participation in government negotiations with armed actors has been patchy and inconsistent. On the one hand, in terms of inclusion, the Betancur administration set a precedent for women because, for the first time, women had an important presence during negotiations; however, just as expectations were set that the situation would improve from there, women were dropped from the negotiating scene in the subsequent administration. The past 34 years of negotiations with armed actors have been a stop-and-go process.

In general, we can conclude that women remain virtually absent from the decision-making sphere, for they have never represented more than 15% of signatories to peace agreements, as was the case during the Santos administration; the next highest proportion was during the Samper administration, when women made up 8.54% of signatories. When all of the peace agreements are taken together, women have made up an average of 4.07% of signatories (table 16 and graph 1). Meanwhile, with regard to peace commissions and other entities charged with overseeing the negotiation process, women have had a greater level of participation: in the Pastrana administration, women made up 62.92% of peace commission members, and during the Santos peace process, they made up 65.78% of the auxiliary negotiating tables. This shows that women's presence has increased substantially in the working sessions in support of peace processes, but not in the actual decision-making spheres (table 17 and figure 2).

With regard to women's representation, the experiences of our interviewees illustrate how the agendas representing "women's" interests have changed over time and in different circumstances: while feminist organizations focused their efforts on denouncing the war and advocating for peace during the Betancur process, they shifted their gaze toward issues

such as the gender-based impacts of the armed conflict, sexual violence, structural inequalities, and unjust economic models during subsequent administrations. Feminists have adopted a range of strategies to ensure that these agendas have an impact on the state and are reflected in its agreements with armed actors. Nonetheless, this effort is anchored within a broader context of relations and tensions between the feminist movement and the state. The Colombian government has opened and closed participatory settings at various points in time, and its commitment to women's participation has been erratic.

TABLE 16
Percentage of men and women signatories in peace agreements signed between the Colombian government and armed actors (1982–2016)

Presidential administration	Men (%)	No.	Women (%)	No.
Belisario Betancur	92.86	52	7.14	4
Virgilio Barco	100.00	41	0	0
César Gaviria	98.09	205	1.91	4
Ernesto Samper	91.46	75	8.54	7
Andrés Pastrana	98.03	149	1.97	3
Álvaro Uribe	100	48	0	0
Juan Manuel Santos	84.31	43	15.69	8

TABLE 17
Percentage of men and women in peace commissions (1982–2016)

Presidential administration	Men (%)	Women (%)
Belisario Betancur	90.29	9.71
Virgilio Barco	90.91	9.09
César Gaviria	94.12	5.88
Ernesto Samper	86.67	13.33
Andrés Pastrana	37.08	62.92
Álvaro Uribe	61.54	38.46
Juan Manuel Santos	34.22	65.78

FIGURE 1

Bar graph representation of men and women signatories in peace agreements signed between the Colombian government and armed actors (1982–2016)

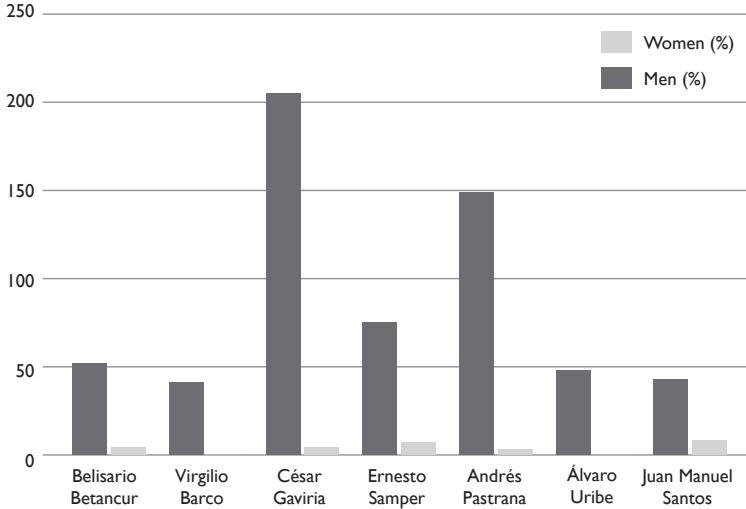
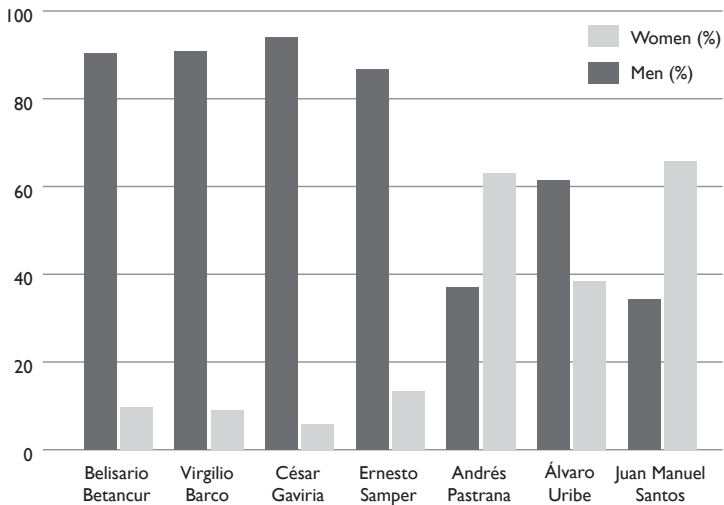


FIGURE 2

Bar graph representation of men and women in peace commissions (1982–2016)



In his study on social movements in Colombia, Archila notes that the relationship between the state and social movements has tended to be a tense one, for the state often seeks the subordination of these movements, which in turn leads the movements to assume an antagonistic stance toward the state. He concludes that “between these extremes arises the need for social actors to have a certain level of autonomy that implies neither capitulating to the state nor withdrawing from the sphere of social engagement due to an uncompromising antagonism” (2006, 12). Indeed, the intermittent relationship between the state and the feminist movement is what has led to the strengthening of participatory mechanisms “from below” when it comes time to seek an impact on the government’s negotiations with armed actors.

Two main tensions have hindered dialogue between the feminist movement and the state: first, on many occasions, public institutions’ incorporation of feminist claims has stemmed from the political will of individual actors as opposed to a structural commitment by the Colombian state to supporting women’s representation. The times when institutions have mainstreamed a gender perspective into their work have been the result of the movement’s strategic alliances with people in positions of power who are receptive to feminists’ claims. Such was the case when Senator Córdoba lobbied for the creation of DINEM, as well as when the director for women’s equity under the Pastrana administration worked with feminists to develop an equal opportunity plan.

Nonetheless, just as these stand-alone cases of political will have propelled the feminist agenda in the state’s decision-making settings, they have also impeded it, as was the case during the Uribe administration. It is thus problematic to rely on individual persons to promote women’s representation, for just as these people can be positive forces, they can also be restrictive ones, and such instability impedes the implementation of a long-term vision. This panorama has had direct impacts on the state’s negotiations with armed actors, for if there is no structural commitment by the state to ensuring women’s representation, then these issues and perspectives are not incorporated into the negotiating agenda. That is why the feminist movement’s efforts to influence peace processes “from below” have been so important: as our interviewees explained, with the current peace process, the issue of gender has finally made it onto negotiators’ radar. Thanks to the movement’s unrelenting pressure, a gender

perspective has been incorporated into the peace talks and agreements. The challenge now is to ensure continuity in the long term.

The second tension that has characterized the state's relationship with the feminist movement is the fact that the state tends to sever this relationship whenever feminists' claims are perceived as "subversive" or destabilizing to the status quo. Such was the case during the National Constituent Assembly and during Olga Amparo Sánchez's experience at DINEM. This has prompted the feminist movement to search for other, more autonomous ways of participating and to look beyond the state when it comes to "changing the world."

But despite all this, feminists have not completely distanced themselves from the state; although there is still disagreement between feminists who seek to work independently of state institutions and those who consider the state to be a key actor with which to engage, the feminist movement has pursued a range of strategies to influence institutions and peace processes, and the state has shown varying degrees of receptivity along the way. These "struggles for representation" carried out "from below" to pressure the state and demand its compliance in terms of participation have also revealed the movement's ability to adapt to the circumstances posed by state institutions and to seek and construct spaces for participation even—and especially—in moments where such spaces are not officially open. The government's negotiations with armed actors have been an important setting for the movement's advocacy efforts because, as noted by interviewees, they are spaces for exploring long-term social pacts that seek not only to put an end to the conflict but also to transform certain aspects of Colombia's current state of affairs. For interviewees, it is important to position feminists' claims in this setting because the peace agreements relating to social change and transformations to the status quo should pass through the sieve of gender; for them, it is impossible to talk about peace without hearing the voices of women.

Against this backdrop, the main challenge that lies ahead in terms of women's political participation is to ensure that women are consistently included and represented in the processes that will follow the state's current negotiations with the FARC. To achieve this, the state should consider a basic minimum and a fair minimum for women's political participation in the post-conflict era. One aspect of the basic minimum we propose is that there should be no more steps backward in terms of the levels of women's participation that have already been achieved. The fair minimum in this

regard is parity. The agreements signed between the government and the FARC in the various thematic areas call for the creation of institutions aimed at monitoring the processes that will be carried out.¹³ Women's equal participation should be guaranteed in these entities, and the state should endeavor for women to hold positions of power and leadership.

In terms of representation, we believe that the basic minimum requires maintaining the participatory spaces that already exist; the communication channels that have been gained between the government and the feminist movement should not be lost. In this regard, recent developments in the wake of Colombia's popular referendum—in which various sectors have decried the inclusion of a gender perspective in the peace process as an attack on traditional values—should be a warning call for the feminist movement to develop strategies to prevent setbacks in the basic minimum concerning women's participation.

According to Young, civil society and the state are two different spheres by virtue of the practices that each embraces. Philosophers generally see civil society as a promoter of democracy, for one of its main roles is to question the state and to demand its compliance with guarantees of social equity, human rights, and liberties. This is why

some theorists and political commentators even suggest that civil society is better equipped than the state to meet needs, deliver services, and further social solidarity. On this view, state institutions should be restricted in order to allow the flourishing of associational life to effect all these goods. (Young 2000, 155)

Thus, in principle, one might think that the feminist movement would be wise to maintain its autonomy from the state. One of the penchants of the movement in Colombia's history of peace negotiations has been its constant critique of the status quo; feminists have insisted on the importance of their claims, even when state institutions have closed the

13. The agreement on comprehensive rural reform calls for the creation of a land fund and the promotion of regionally focused development programs; the agreement on political participation provides for the creation of the National Council for Reconciliation and Coexistence, a dialogue commission, and special transitory peace electoral districts, as well as the strengthening of territorial planning councils; the agreement on illicit drugs calls for the creation of a national crop substitution program; and the agreement on victims provides for the Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Recurrence Commission, the Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing in the Context of and Due to the Armed Conflict, and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

doors in their faces. The movement should retain this autonomy and critical stance toward the status quo and the state; if these elements are lost, civil society's ability to promote democracy will be weakened.

But Young also writes that “despite the vital role of civil society in promoting the inclusion, expression, and critique for deep democracy, I argue against those who suggest that civil society serves as a preferred alternative to the state today for promoting democracy and social justice” (ibid., 156). This is because “state institutions have unique capacities for co-ordination, regulation, and administration on a large scale that well-functioning democracy cannot do without” (ibid.). In this regard, civil society should not see itself as autonomous and independent from the state, for the state's institutional apparatus offers essential conditions and tools for shaping long-term and wide-reaching agendas. The feminists we interviewed recognized this, noting that the state is indeed an actor with which the movement should engage. According to this perspective, the tensions between the movement and the state are not necessarily destructive; they can also be useful. The feminist movement's critical capacity and its ability to exert pressure on the state can be capitalized on by institutions seeking to promote social change, particularly during opportune moments such as peace processes.

The main challenge is to ensure that the state and the feminist movement are able to establish communication channels that continue to safeguard feminists' autonomy and that open up spaces for women's political participation. Colombia's current peace process involves a number of settings to this end: the implementation of comprehensive rural reform is based on the active participation of communities in the processes that stand to affect them; the same is true for the agreement on illicit drugs, which is based on participation in comprehensive rural reform and on mechanisms such as community assemblies to define regionally focused development plans. In these two agreements, parties make an express commitment to ensuring the participation of women's organizations. Similarly, the agreement on victims highlights the importance of involving civil society—especially victims—in the design and implementation of truth and reparations policies.

The agreement on political participation is the one that establishes the greatest commitments to strengthening participatory spaces for civil society and social movements and for ensuring the inclusion of traditionally marginalized populations. This agreement explicitly acknowledges that

women's participation is essential for regional councils and the shaping of working agendas within the country's different regions. It also highlights the importance of empowering women in the exercise of political power. Compliance with these commitments is the basic minimum for ensuring women's representation in post-conflict Colombia. As noted by Young, representation is a process that involves constant dialogue in spaces where constituents and their representatives reach agreement on the platform for action at a given moment. The peace agreements promote this type of policy, and their effective fulfillment will ensure that the spaces won by the feminist movement to date are not lost and instead grow stronger.

Meanwhile, a fair minimum with regard to representation is the mainstreaming of gender within the state. If the hope is that the state's peace-related commitments are maintained over time, are transformative, and lead to more equitable and fair social structures, then it is critical to build a strong institutional framework that integrates a gender perspective into all state processes.

Gender mainstreaming departs from the following premise: public policies affect men and women differently, regardless of whether lawmakers take a gender perspective into account (Staudt 2003, 51).¹⁴ Its guiding principle is the recognition that gender is a fundamental part of how our social world is shaped, and, as a result, public policies are not neutral in their impact on men and women; to the contrary, policies often tend to generate or reproduce gender inequalities that, in turn, perpetuate or increase the vulnerability of certain social actors. In this context, the gender mainstreaming framework, in addition to recognizing that public policies are not gender neutral, is based on a commitment to a better society: it endeavors to eradicate gender inequalities that are forged and reproduced in the design and implementation of public policies and, in doing so, positions the state as the key actor in achieving this objective.

According to a report by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on public policies and gender mainstreaming

14. At the outset, the mainstreaming perspective was intended to focus solely on issues of women's inequity. However, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, shifted this focus to include the notion of gender equality (Rai 2003a, 2). Even so, the women's equity perspective continues to operate within the language of gender mainstreaming, and sometimes "gender inequity" and "women's inequity" are used interchangeably. This issue requires further discussion, for it could affect the way that mainstreaming agendas are defined.

in Latin America, processes aimed at embracing a gender lens in the design and implementation of public policies “include the incorporation of new gender concepts into the day-to-day dealings of the state and the establishment of gender quality as a public policy aim” (Guzmán and Montaña 2001, 5). The main purpose of this relationship between the state and gender is to question “the state’s role in reproducing [the prevailing] gender order” (ibid.) and to ensure that public institutions mainstream a gender focus so that public policy design and implementation eliminates—as opposed to reproduces—gender inequalities. Ultimately, the underlying requirement of gender mainstreaming is the recognition that gender inequality is a public concern “that can be addressed by institutions and brought into line with constitutional frameworks” (ibid., 19).

Mainstreaming gender in the state means, as some authors have argued, incorporating gender into national machineries. According to Rai, these machineries are “institutional mechanisms for ensuring that gender mainstreaming agendas are implemented and issues of gender equality remain in focus in public policy” (2003b, 15). Gender mainstreaming requires that the national machinery be put into motion—through laws, policies, and programs—in order to make the state gender sensitive. In this regard, we recommend that gender mainstreaming be regarded as a fair minimum for women’s representation, for, if achieved, it would mean that a gender perspective is incorporated into the state’s structures and that the groundwork is laid for dismantling traditional gender structures and promoting fairer and more equitable social pacts over time.

How can we ensure that the state complies with this basic minimum and fair minimum during Colombia’s post-conflict era? What strategies should be adopted? The next chapter offers a set of recommendations that respond to these questions. Our proposals are grouped into three categories: short term, medium term, and long term. They recommend lines of action and good practices that the state should adopt in order to achieve the basic minimum and fair minimum for women’s political participation. All of the ideas outlined below are geared, in Young’s (2000) terms, toward making participation an inclusive practice that strengthens democracy and corrects historical oppression and exclusion.

RECOMMENDATIONS: HOW CAN WE GUARANTEE A BASIC MINIMUM AND A FAIR MINIMUM FOR WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION?

Recommendations for the Short Term: Gender-Focused Education

The feminists we interviewed pointed to two main obstacles standing in the way of women's representation and the mainstreaming of gender and women's rights into Colombian institutions. For them, academia and culture are the two "pillars of silence" that continue to reproduce oppressive social relationships that prevent women's voices from being adequately heard in the public sphere and that prevent feminists' claims from resonating with the state. It is not surprising that state institutions are tainted by these two obstacles, for neither the state nor its officials are immune from society—and while institutions may voice their commitment to a gender perspective and to women's rights, the daily actions of public servants often revictimize women or reproduce violence and oppression.¹⁵

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15. One example of this can be seen in the way that Bogotá's government secretary responded to the 2016 lawsuit filed against the state by the family of Rosa Elvira Cely, a victim of sexual violence. On May 24, 2012, Rosa Elvira, a mother and head of household, was raped by one of her classmates from the institute where she was completing her high school degree. In 2014, Rosa Elvira's family filed a lawsuit against the police, the District Attorney's Office, and Bogotá's secretaries of government and health for their negligent handling of the case. Their lawsuit argued that, first, despite having an arrest warrant, the aggressor was not captured and that other criminal complaints against him were not processed in a timely manner, and, second, Rosa Elvira failed to receive timely medical care following her attack. According to the claimants, these events created the conditions that led to her attack and eventual death. All of the defendants rejected these claims, but the statement made by Bogotá's government secretary is telling of how the two pillars of silence identified by interviewees are present in the daily actions of state officials. The government secretary blamed Rosa Elvira for her rape, arguing that "everyone at the school knew what kind of people Javier Velasco [the aggressor] and his classmate were, with whom Rosa Elvira Cely went out [that night]; everyone knew that they [had a reputation for] acting weird and for

This gap between rhetoric and reality underscores the lack of public servants' training and education in the area of gender; the issue is not a key component of their professional training or daily work. If this hole is not patched, guarantees for women's participation will continue to be fragile, for the state's commitment will not be a long-term one, and just as some officials might apply a gender focus in their work, others might not, thus revictimizing, silencing, and continuing to oppress women.

Colombia's current peace process marks a milestone in women's participation not only because it involves a greater rate of inclusion but also because the agreements signed to date outline explicit commitments to feminist and women's organizations, as well as to the application of a gender approach. Nonetheless, without a systematic effort to train and sensitize the public officials and institutions involved in implementing the agreements, these commitments risk being hollow words. The fact that a gender focus is mentioned in the agreements does not mean that the policies adopted will effectively incorporate such a perspective. Without trained officials, the pillars of silence will remain intact and the gender-based aspects of the agreements will be difficult to execute. Therefore, our recommendation for the short term is to conduct gender-focused education whose basic aim is to incorporate a gender perspective into institutional practices.

At a minimum, this effort should fulfill three conditions. First, it should be directed at dismantling myths and stereotypes about gender and women's rights. In doing so, one of the assumptions it should question is that which defines a gender perspective as "a women's issue." As noted by Joan Scott, beginning in the 1980s, one of feminism's central claims was to highlight the importance of women's empowerment by reclaiming and revaluing their experiences in settings where women have historically been absent (such as politics). But this exclusive focus on women's experiences began to change, particularly when the category of gender started gaining momentum in feminist discussions: according to Scott, "Those who worried that women's studies scholarship focused too narrowly and separately

being bad." Moreover, the secretary's press release noted that the neighborhood visited by Rosa Elvira and her aggressor was unsafe, which, for the government, was evidence that Rosa Elvira had placed herself in a risky situation that ended with her rape (Durán 2016). The ludicrousness of this idea is symptomatic of how the state and its representatives reproduce gender oppression that revictimizes women and legitimizes violence against them.

on women used the term ‘gender’ to introduce a relational notion into our analytic vocabulary” (1986, 1054). A gender perspective approaches femininity and masculinity as two experiences that are shaped together in the midst of specific social relationships. The focus here is thus not only on understanding, questioning, and reframing femininity but also on doing the same for masculinity, with the aim of understanding and critiquing current gender structures while simultaneously envisioning new femininities and masculinities that can contribute to more equitable and fair gender experiences.

On this basis, gender-focused education should address both facets: by dissolving stereotypes and myths about what women can or cannot do, or what they should or should not do, such education should provide women with tools for empowerment in settings that have traditionally neglected their perspectives and experiences. Further, it should seek to appropriate a gender perspective, teaching men and women about how their gender-based experiences operate, encouraging them to challenge and critique this panorama, and fostering new ways of thinking about femininity and masculinity. It is therefore important to dismantle the myth that gender is merely a “women’s issue”: gender-focused education encompasses a commitment by men and women alike to analyze, challenge, and critique their gender-based experiences.

In the same vein, the second condition that should be fulfilled by gender-focused education in Colombia’s post-conflict context is a recognition that war and peace are processes rooted in and permeated by gender meanings and that such recognition is key to building fairer social pacts in the long term. One of the Colombian feminist movement’s most notable struggles has been its effort to highlight the differentiated impacts of the armed conflict on men and women.¹⁶ Moreover, as dem-

16. In this regard, the issue of sexual violence against women during Colombia’s armed conflict has been a key item on the agenda of feminist and women’s rights organizations. One example of how they have raised this issue vis-à-vis ongoing peace talks is the document entitled “Five Key Points for a Differentiated Approach concerning Sexual Violence in the Agreements on Victims’ Rights in the Peace Process,” published by a joint alliance among the Red Nacional de Mujeres, Sisma Mujer, Corporación Humanas, and the campaign entitled “No es hora de callar” (“Now is not a time for silence”) led by Jineth Bedoya. This alliance, and the document it has produced, seeks to establish minimum requirements for the transitional justice agreements reached with the FARC concerning the treatment and trial of sexual violence cases from the armed conflict.

onstrated by Kimberly Theidon (2009), war—especially the Colombian armed conflict—is structured around gender-related meanings and practices that create rules and standards about how men and women should behave during war.¹⁷ For this reason, transitions to peace should recognize and analyze these practices and help shape new masculinities and femininities that are based on peace. These two elements should be captured by gender-focused education in an effort to ensure that the state and its officials are equipped to address the challenges and complexities posed by gender during times of transition.

Finally, the fulfillment of these two conditions requires a third fundamental component: the participation of women’s and feminist organizations in the design and implementation of such an educational effort. As demonstrated in the first chapter of this book, feminist organizations’ experiences in terms of advocacy, lobbying, and regional-level work have provided them with a vast knowledge of the armed conflict and its gender-related meanings and impacts, making these organizations a critical resource for the design and rollout of gender-focused education. Without their participation, not only will the state be silencing their experiences, but it will also be reproducing the exclusion of women that has persisted in various peace building settings in Colombia, which would be a step backward in terms of the commitments outlined in the current peace process.

Academia has a critical role to play in the fulfillment of these three minimum requirements: Colombian schools and universities should systematically embrace gender-focused education so that this perspective becomes a familiar one to all citizens and an essential facet of their education. Academia—as a space for building new world visions, challenging the status quo, and generating continuous debate—is a key space for dismantling gender stereotypes and the gender gaps that prevent women from fully realizing their potential, participating in the public sphere on an equal basis with men, and having their voice heard in the political sphere. This need is even more urgent in light of the recent attacks by critics who

17. In her article “Reconstructing Masculinities: The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Colombia” (2009), Theidon demonstrates the close connection between weapons, violence, and warrior masculinity in Colombia’s armed conflict. For her, one of the most complex challenges facing ex-combatants’ reintegration into society is to ensure their disarming of militarized masculinity, which, ultimately, is a key element of how war is deployed and reproduced.

decry a gender perspective as an “ideology.” An educational initiative such as the one proposed here should also include the critical aim of exposing false notions about gender and demonstrating the importance, in terms of justice and equality, of challenging existing gender structures.

Recommendations for the Medium Term: Putting Transitional Justice “from Below” into Practice

As we mentioned in the first chapter of this book, two tensions have hindered dialogue between the feminist movement and the state. First, the incorporation of feminist claims into state programs has depended on specific moments of political will and not on a systematic state commitment to overcoming injustice stemming from traditional gender roles. Second, the state has tended to sever its relationship with the feminist movement whenever it perceives the movement’s claims as being subversive or destructive to the status quo.

These tensions can be reproduced during transitional justice processes when states—despite generally abiding by international standards concerning truth, justice, and reparations for victims—organize their processes in a way that disregards the experiences of those who directly affected by the conflict in question. As long as transitional justice processes embody the same exclusionary patterns, communication between the state and social movements will continue to be inconsequential. As suggested by Rodrigo Uprimny and Diana Guzmán, even when transitional justice processes include normative commitments to victims’ rights, in practice they often involve vertical decision-making mechanisms that end up excluding victims from the effort to build a new state (n.d., 14).

This can be even more problematic for victims in situations of social vulnerability, such as women. If transitional justice processes fail to take women’s concrete experiences into account, they ultimately revictimize women as opposed to fulfilling their rights. In this regard, it is essential that policies embrace approaches, such as a gender perspective, that challenge “neutral” and gender-blind policies that tend to reproduce and mask discriminatory practices—such as the differentiated and disproportionate impacts on women during armed conflict—instead of overcoming them.

By opening this door to dialogue, we can embark on a strategy that aims to implement a transitional justice process in a way that endows it with legitimacy and effectiveness. In this book, we believe that

“transitional justice from below,” which seeks to increase women’s inclusion and representation in peace-related settings, offers the right formula for overcoming the aforementioned challenges. On the one hand, experience shows that when women are included and represented during transitional justice processes, political agendas become more diverse and there tends to be a more consistent incorporation of a gender perspective (UN Women 2010). On the other, by strengthening spaces for discussion in which women and men participate equally, the state will be able to better value feminist claims; rather than seeing such claims as subverting the constitutional order, this change in thinking about transitional justice would allow for the possibility of perceiving them as legitimate claims worthy of being heard and discussed in the public sphere.

Transitional justice from below thus means looking at “transitional processes from the perspective of those who are involved in the conflict or dictatorship, and not solely—as is often the case—from the perspective of those who control political and legal debates, or those who hold power” (Uprimny and Guzmán n.d., 20). Simply put, it is about seeking ways to achieve democratic transition and transformation through the voices of victims and locally led initiatives for peace and reconciliation. Such an approach has several advantages: (i) it considers the voices of those who are directly affected, as well as those who are working on the ground; (ii) it offers the possibility of building a more inclusive peace; (iii) it takes into account the contributions of those who are not in the decision-making sphere; (iv) it provides for flexible frameworks to incorporate the experiences of local communities; and (v) it uses more democratic means to further the peace process (*ibid.*, 21).

Point five of Colombia’s current peace process calls for the creation of a Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence. This system provides for a series of judicial and extrajudicial mechanisms for fulfilling victims’ rights to the greatest extent possible. It is composed of five institutions that will be tasked with implementing the peace agreements: the Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Recurrence Commission; the Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing in the Context of and Due to the Armed Conflict; the Special Jurisdiction for Peace; Comprehensive Reparation Measures for Peacebuilding Purposes; and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence.

How can we ensure that these new institutions function from the perspective of transitional justice from below? Put another way, is it

possible for their implementation to include reflective dialogue with the feminist movement through inclusionary and representative policies in various settings for dialogue? These practical questions have practical answers. The implementation of the peace agreements should be conducted on the basis of international standards regarding victims, Colombia's national legal framework, and, above all, the peace agreements themselves, which in general terms promote transitional justice from below and based on a gender perspective.

At the international level, Colombia has acquired various commitments aimed at fighting impunity and ensuring the fulfillment of the right to justice, with special attention to victims' right to participation in processes that affect them. The scope of these commitments has been elaborated on by mechanisms in the international and inter-American human rights systems, such as the United Nations' report on the *Question of the Impunity of Perpetrators of Human Rights Violations (Civil and Political)* and its *Updated Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity*. Both of these standards underscore the need for states to guarantee the broad participation of any wronged party and any person or nongovernmental organization with a legitimate interest in the process. Additionally, within the inter-American system, the American Convention on Human Rights outlines the judicial guarantees of victims and the accused, highlighting these individuals' right to participation in its articles 8 and 25. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights followed these same parameters in its judgments in the *Velásquez Rodríguez* and *Godínez Cruz* cases, where it noted that article 25 of the American Convention on Human Rights requires not only that states make resources formally available to victims but also that these resources be effective and adequate for remedying the injustice committed.

Meanwhile, at the national level, article 229 of Colombia's Constitution notes that everyone has the right to access the administration of justice. This constitutional guarantee, together with the aforementioned international standards, has affected the regulation of victims' participation in criminal proceedings, both in ordinary times and during transitions. Thus, for example, articles 11 and 137 of the Criminal Procedure Code include provisions to ensure victims' access to justice and their effective involvement in criminal proceedings.

Similarly, victims' participation in transitional processes has been addressed through specific court rulings, including sentences T-1267

of 2001, C-228 of 2002, C-004 of 2003, T-249 of 2003, C-370 of 2006, C-209 of 2007, and C-579 of 2013 of the Constitutional Court, which outline the basic standards that the state must comply with when it comes to participation. In Sentence C-209 of 2007, for example, the court notes that victims' participation in ordinary criminal proceedings requires participating in specific stages of the process, including investigation, the filing of charges, the adoption of protection and security measures, the application of the opportunity principle, preclusion, and prosecution.

In addition, point five of the peace accord—which concerns victims—considers two of its guiding principles to be victims' participation and gender mainstreaming throughout all phases of the process. It notes that the right of participation of victims of serious human rights violations and serious infringements of international humanitarian law should be a crosscutting principle throughout the entire process (see annex 3 for more information). Here, it is worth remembering that the peace talks involved an analysis of the recommendations of more than 3,000 victims who participated in various forums, 60 testimonies provided directly in Havana, and more than 17,000 proposals presented to the Conversation Table by victims' organizations. In this context, some of these agreements were discussed in the gender subcommission, whose creation in 2014 marked an important milestone in peace processes worldwide, for it was the first time that a gender perspective was incorporated into the framework for peace talks and that the need to hear the voices of women victims was formally acknowledged.

The Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence also generally acknowledges the incorporation of an equity- and gender-based approach that responds to the specific needs of different regions and populations, particularly women and children. In doing so, the agreement makes clear that the creation of each one of the five aforementioned institutions should be guided by principles such as victims' participation and should embrace differentiated approaches, including a gender approach (Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz 2016).

The agreement thus recognizes that one of the key criteria for the Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Recurrence Commission is the participation of victims through broad, pluralistic, and well-rounded mechanisms that make room for different voices and visions and that guarantee an equity- and gender-based approach. Similarly, it notes that this commission will be tasked with, among other things, (i) helping uncover the truth

about what happened during the armed conflict, particularly with regard to the lesser-known aspects, such as the impact on women; (ii) ensuring that research methods and information-gathering efforts incorporate a gender approach; (iii) creating a gender-based task force to ensure a true mainstreaming of gender throughout the commission's work, including by reviewing methodologies and liaising with women's organizations; and (iv) fostering settings that serve to strengthen, among other things, gender equity and a culture of democracy and tolerance (*ibid.*).

In the same regard, the agreement states that the commission will have 11 commissioners and that the nomination process will be wide reaching and pluralistic. All sectors of society, including victims' organizations, may nominate candidates, who will be elected on the basis of collective criteria such as gender equity, pluralism, interdisciplinarity, and regional representation (*ibid.*).

Meanwhile, although the agreement does not make specific reference to a gender approach as it concerns the Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing in the Context of and Due to the Armed Conflict, it does note that this unit's rollout will involve the participation of victims' organizations and human rights organizations (*ibid.*).

With regard to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the agreement firmly recognizes the need for a gender perspective and to ensure that reparation measures take particular note of women's unique suffering and of the importance of their active and equitable participation in the justice-related component of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence. It also explicitly notes that the judicial panels and chambers of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace—such as the Tribunal for Peace, the Judicial Panel for Amnesty and Pardon, the Judicial Panel for Determination of Legal Situations for cases other than those above or in other unforeseen situations, and the Investigation and Prosecution Unit—must be constituted according to the criteria of gender equity and respect for ethnic and cultural diversity. In addition, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace will have a special investigation unit to address cases of sexual violence (*ibid.*).

In terms of comprehensive reparation measures for peace building, the agreement notes that collective reparation plans will incorporate a gender focus and that their creation should ensure women's participation. Moreover, the government commits to increasing the coverage and quality of community rehabilitation strategies to rebuild the social fabric, and

to developing return and relocation plans on the basis of an equity- and gender-focused approach. Lastly, it states that the government will roll out an effective process with the broadest possible participation of victims and their organizations that promotes spaces for the discussion of their proposals with relevant authorities. This process will be carried out within the framework of existing forums for victims' participation, which will be broadened and strengthened to ensure that victims and organizations not involved in these forums can also participate (*ibid.*).

On this basis, we can conclude that national and international standards on victims, like the agreement signed between the FARC and the Colombian government,¹⁸ contain an adequate legal framework to ensure that the peace agreements draw on transitional justice from below, to ensure that the currently low number of 4.07% of women signatories is increased, and to ensure that women's representation is a reality. As explained above, this formula not only provides legitimacy and efficacy to the peace process but also helps relieve existing tensions between the government and social movements such as the feminist movement.

This being the case, it would seem that any difficulties that emerge from here forward would be due not to the legal realm but rather to the way things are carried out in practice. Therefore, we believe that in the medium term, the government should focus on complying with current standards as opposed to developing additional regulatory and procedural frameworks and rules. In this regard, the government should place its attention on at least two points: first, if it truly wishes to achieve a fair minimum for women's participation, it should ensure parity in each institution of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence. That is, the technical and decision-making areas of each of these bodies should consist of 50% women and 50% men who are democratically elected. As we highlighted in our introduction, gender parity—more so than gender mainstreaming—is an essential step for erasing the historical and systematic exclusion of women in decision-making settings. Second, the government should establish participatory spaces that abide by the procedural principles of swiftness and efficacy while also guaranteeing that social organizations such as feminist ones have the ability to contribute to each stage of the peace process.

18. Annex 3 provides an overview of the gender-focused commitments established in the transitional justice agreements.

For example, the experiences of various truth commissions around the globe demonstrate the problems that can stem from failing to promote women's participation. As noted by Cristine Bell and Catherine O'Rourke in their article "Does Feminism Need a Theory of Transitional Justice?," truth commissions are seen as ideal settings for giving voice to women's experiences in countries seeking to face a past of war and violence, as well as all of the complexities that such a history implies (2007, 33). Nonetheless, when a gender focus is inadequately applied, these commissions can have the effect of revictimizing and silencing women instead. Bell and O'Rourke explain that in some cases, women's conflict-related experiences are reduced to the issue of sexual violence, with all women-focused settings structured around navigating this sole experience. This is problematic for two reasons: first, women's experiences during conflict are not limited to sexual violence, and so neglecting their other perspectives and ways of experiencing and thinking about conflict inhibits an understanding of the nuances and different layers of experiences present in an armed conflict (*ibid.*, 34). Second, reducing women's experiences to sexual violence means simplifying the vast realm of gender-based experiences during conflict, including the experiences of men.¹⁹

For this reason, ensuring the participation of women's, feminist, and victims' organizations in all stages of a transitional justice process—as well as all of its institutions—is critical for preventing stereotypes, platitudes, and violence from being perpetuated. Transitional justice processes' design and implementation should pass through the lens of feminist and women's organizations, who have extensive experience working with women victims of the conflict.²⁰ Finally, guaranteeing such participation

19. In this regard, Kimberly Theidon's article "Gender in Transition: Common Sense, Women, and War" (2007) explores women's experiences during the Peruvian truth commission process. As she notes, during proceedings that collected individual testimonies from men and women victims at the same time, the women tended to remain silent. For the commissioners, this silence was a sign that the women had nothing to say. But Theidon maintains that their silence can actually be seen as a form of resistance and as a way of expressing their frustrations, suffering, and experiences during the war. This case highlights the importance of having institutions that are able to capture the particularities of gender-based experiences in armed conflicts, which are not always the same in all contexts.

20. The feminist organization Ruta Pacífica, for example, has drafted a document proposing a truth commission for women victims of the Colombian armed conflict. See [https://www.rutapacifico.org.co/images/libros/Memory%20for%20Life%20\(web\).pdf](https://www.rutapacifico.org.co/images/libros/Memory%20for%20Life%20(web).pdf)

is a way of committing to non-revictimization and to processes that are more attuned to the variety of experiences and the complexities of armed conflicts and the gender structures inherent therein.

Recommendations for the Long

Term: Gender Mainstreaming

One of the most acute tensions identified in our historical overview from the first chapter of this book is the spasmodic communication between the feminist movement and the state. To begin with, the state has alternated between opening and closing its doors to the movement, sometimes randomly and other times because it disagrees with feminists' claims. In turn, the feminist movement has embraced a strategy of participation "from below" in order to ensure that its claims are heard, even when the state's doors are closed. This state of affairs neither strengthens democracy nor helps build a society that mends historical exclusion and oppression, for women remain outside the decision-making sphere and there is no clear commitment by the state to fulfilling women's rights or to reflecting on, critiquing, or challenging existing gender structures.

Ensuring a fair minimum that resolves this tension does not mean that the state and the feminist movement must be completely in sync with each other in their work or perspectives. To the contrary, and as noted by Young, democracy is built on dissent, and political participation is expected to be neither harmonious nor uniform. But the existence of participatory settings is not negotiable; they must be nurtured, and they should strengthen the state and democracy by stimulating critique and reflection and—most importantly—by giving voice and choice to historically excluded groups. Institutional policies cannot continue to be designed on the basis of excluding the social sectors they stand to affect; this contributes only to greater oppression and subjugation.

The government's commitments to feminist and women's organizations and to a gender perspective, as enshrined in the current peace process, mark the first step in a long journey to achieve women's political participation in a manner that is equitable and that ensures enduring and sustainable peace. Our proposal for a fair minimum in this regard is to mainstream gender within the state. Such a strategy will convert current tensions between the state and the feminist movement into a healthy space for participation, with the aim of correcting historical injustice and

oppression and fostering the conditions necessary for the peace agreements to be fulfilled not only during this time of transition but also in times of normalcy. However, for this to occur, gender mainstreaming efforts must meet certain minimum requirements as identified by different experts in the field.

First, one of the most fundamental conditions is that gender equality must not remain an afterthought: “Gender equality must be addressed in the budget and institutional core of mainstream policies and agencies” (Staudt 2003, 41). Regardless of whether women’s or gender-equity offices are established within existing ministries or a new ministry is rolled out, the state must ensure that a gender perspective becomes an integral and permanent part of the national machinery. This means permanent resource allocations that allow for the uninterrupted implementation of public policies, the development of new programs and projects, and the hiring and training of staff to perform this work (Kardam and Acuner 2003, 97).

One of the most widespread criticisms of countries’ attempts to mainstream gender in state institutions is that institutional support for mainstreaming is often dependent on the support of those in office at a given moment. This is problematic because it means that policy implementation is neither stable nor continuous; for this reason, mechanisms must be rolled out at an institutional level to provide a permanent budget that permits stable mainstreaming efforts.

Second, gender mainstreaming requires that gender issues not be treated as isolated problems. According to Kathleen Staudt, it means placing “relations between men and women in the context of other inequalities such as class and race” (2003, 52). Introducing a gender perspective into public institutions and policies thus requires establishing a connection between gender-equity agendas and other agendas that seek to combat inequality, promote development, mitigate violence, reduce poverty, improve education, and approach the state from a human rights perspective, among other things. National machinery must be coordinated in such a way that allows for constant interaction between a variety of agendas and that grants gender a fundamental role in this effort.

Third, mainstreaming requires tools that facilitate linkages, interaction, and the exchange of national experiences at the regional and international level (Rai 2003a, 3). Without such interaction, it is difficult for agendas to maintain the necessary continuity and stability. Furthermore,

attention to these three levels of experiences (national, regional, and international) allows for a thorough understanding of the problems stemming from gender inequity, as well as its various manifestations, and on this basis allows us to formulate policies that are cognizant of its complex phenomena. Similarly, the linkage between national, regional, and international experiences facilitates connections between gender-focused agendas and agendas addressing other types of inequalities, for it places gender issues within a broader panorama in which all forms of inequality are interrelated.

Fourth, building gender-sensitive institutions means establishing communication channels between women's rights organizations and the state. According to Nuket Karam and Selma Acuner, the relationship between civil society and the state tends to be marked by tension and an inability to reach agreement (2003, 103). Nevertheless, the work of civil society organizations is essential in at least two respects: for one, their direct work with communities gives them critical knowledge for addressing gender-related problems in all their complexity. In this regard, such direct work also opens the door for communication between the state and communities, which in turn makes it easier for public policies to draw on this information when attempting to respond to the concrete needs of different social groups. Additionally, the historical role played by these organizations is a vital one for the application of gender mainstreaming efforts, for these organizations can help propel the implementation of policies and serve as outside observers of state institutions and their work (*ibid.*).

Lastly, and drawing on the previous condition, gender mainstreaming requires the presence of an oversight entity that monitors institutional policies on gender and conducts periodic investigations on the progress of efforts in different regions of the country and at the national level (Rai 2003a, 2). This entity should provide continual scrutiny and auditing of institutions' behavior and should recommend actions for improvement. Relevant monitoring criteria should be designed in collaboration with the feminist movement.

The fulfillment of these five conditions will guarantee women's fair participation while also ensuring the state's structural commitment to women's rights and gender equity. Gender perspectives and world visions based on feminist claims will no longer be isolated or random issues within state institutions, instead becoming crosscutting facets of the state's

institutions, public policies, and regulatory criteria. Given that one of the aims of the current peace process is to generate far-reaching social pacts and the conditions needed to dismantle the structural inequalities perpetuated by the armed conflict, a gender mainstreaming strategy would help ensure that the resources and institutional framework are in place to facilitate long-term commitments to overcoming the problems of inequality and violence that affect Colombian women. Today, we are therefore at a critical juncture in which feminists' claims have the chance to be heard in state institutions and to become key components of the state's identity and institutions.

The institution currently tasked with mainstreaming a gender approach in the state is the Presidential Council for Women's Equity. In theory, and according to the council's list of responsibilities, it would appear that the five aforementioned conditions are being met. The council is charged with the "design of governmental policies aimed at promoting equity between women and men," with "promoting the incorporation of a gender perspective into the design, administration, and monitoring of national and subnational policies, plans, and programs," with establishing communication channels between Colombia's legislature and international bodies in order to coordinate gender-equity policies, and with promoting alliances with nongovernmental organizations and civil society sectors working on women's rights and gender issues (Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer n.d.). In addition, the council oversees the Observatory for Gender Issues, whose role is to "identify and select a set of gender-based indicators, analytical categories, and monitoring mechanisms to provide critical reflection on the policies, plans, programs, standards, [and] jurisprudence to improve the situation of women and gender equity in Colombia" (Law 1009 of 2006). The council's objectives appear to be far-reaching, structurally committed to gender equity, and focused on creating alliances with women's rights and gender-focused organizations.

Despite this, recommendations issued in 2007 to the Colombian state by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) noted that

the Committee is concerned that the [Presidential Council for Women's Equity] may have insufficient capacity and resources for effectively coordinating the use of the gender mainstreaming strategy across all sectors of Government, in particular for ef-

fective coordination of the implementation of national policies and programmes at the departmental and municipal levels from a gender perspective. (CEDAW Committee 2007, para. 14)

The CEDAW Committee also encouraged Colombia “to strengthen the role of the Office in coordinating the use of the gender mainstreaming strategy across all sectors and levels of Government” (ibid.). The same committee’s recommendations issued in 2013 did not change very much: [The committee] is concerned that the capacity and resources of the Office have not been adequately strengthened to ensure effective coordination among different institutions at various levels and efficiently promote, monitor and evaluate the implementation of national gender equity legislation and policies, in particular the Public Policy on Gender Equity. (CEDAW Committee 2013, para. 11)

Indeed, since its creation in 1999, the presidential council seems not to have fulfilled the conditions for gender mainstreaming. First of all, the council’s serious shortage of funding limits its impact and fails to provide the setting needed in order for a gender perspective to become central within state processes, instead treating it as a peripheral issue. The council’s highest annual budget was in 2000, when it was allocated COP3.5 billion by the Office of the Presidency. In 2006 and 2007, its budget was significantly lower, with COP450 million and COP470 million, respectively. In 2015, it had a budget of COP742 million, and in 2016 COP800 million (Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer 2016).

If we compare these numbers with the budget assigned to certain ministries during the same period, we can see a vast difference in allocations. This comparison is telling to the extent that the council is intended as the country’s lead entity in terms of gender-equity policies and is responsible for mainstreaming a gender focus in the state. The ministries we evaluated share similar functions in their issue areas. This being the case, the Ministry of Health was assigned an annual budget of COP426,072,457,546 in 2014 and COP483,518,704,833 in 2015 (Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social 2016). Meanwhile, the Ministry of Information Technologies and Communication was assigned COP56,775,580,000 in 2015 and COP49,600,333,000 in 2016 (Ministerio de Tecnologías de la Información y las Comunicaciones 2016). These data reveal that the Ministry

of Health's 2015 budget, for example, was approximately 138 times higher than the highest annual budget of the Presidential Council for Women's Equity.

These figures unveil two elements that work to the detriment of gender mainstreaming: to begin, such a wide gap between the resources allocated to the council and those allocated to certain ministries speaks to the marginal status conferred to gender issues in the state. Additionally, the council's budget has been extremely unstable throughout its existence: in 2006, it had a mere COP450 million, which rose to COP1,212 million in 2008 and then decreased to COP745 million in 2011 (Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer 2016). These two factors do not enable the development of long-term, far-reaching projects related to gender in Colombia. From the outset, the council's resource problems have made it incapable of effectively taking on the task of gender mainstreaming.²¹ As Patricia Londoño rightly notes in an analysis of the council, despite the laws, decrees, and development plans supporting the design and

21. Numerous women's organizations (Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad, Corporación Humanas, Corporación Sisma Mujer, Red de Educación Popular Entre Mujeres, Red Nacional de Mujeres, CLADEM-Colombia, Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir-Colombia, Colombia Diversa, and Profamilia) prepared a document commenting on the CEDAW committee's concerns with regard to the Presidential Council for Women's Equity. Their document notes that the council's lack of resources has at least two detrimental consequences for gender mainstreaming efforts: first, it means that the council becomes yet one more entity tasked with coordination, as opposed to exercising decision-making authority in the implementation of public policies (Confluencia Nacional de Redes de Mujeres 2007, 6). Second, it means that there is a "low impact with regard both to investment and to the number of beneficiaries" of equity- and gender-focused policies at the national level but especially the regional level (ibid., 7). This perception is not unique to women's organizations. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, in a 2006 report containing recommendations for the Colombian state, notes that "the institutional mechanisms that presently execute programs destined to protect the rights of women lack sufficient influence, competency to coordinate, and the resources to effectively implement State policies destined to mitigate the impact of the armed conflict on women" (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2006). According to the commission, a lack of both political will and resources has prevented the effective execution of programs aimed at addressing women's rights; furthermore, "the [commission's] Rapporteur learned during the visit of the perception of the international community and of non-governmental organizations of the weak capacity of the Presidential Office on Gender Equality to act as coordinating entity of the inter-institutional efforts to address the specific needs of victims of discrimination and violence and of resources to sustain and create programs" (ibid.).

implementation of programs aimed at making the state gender sensitive, the lived reality of this institution shows that such a process depends more on “the ‘good will’ of whoever is in office” (2006, 87) than on a stable commitment within the state.

Second, in addition to its financial resources problem, the Presidential Council for Women’s Equity appears to fall short in the way it applies a gender approach. As we highlighted in the section on short-term recommendations, a gender perspective should not be perceived as a mere “women’s issue” but rather as an issue that involves challenging the ways in which femininities and masculinities are shaped and how this leads to inequity, injustice, and violence. However, the projects led by the council to date have placed a sole emphasis on women. Overall, the council has carried out four projects since 1999: one concerning technical assistance and follow-up for the design and implementation of women’s policies and an equal opportunity plan; a second one concerning a development program for women heads of household; a third one concerning technical assistance and follow-up for a policy on women’s equity and participation; and a last one concerning technical assistance aimed at strengthening a gender perspective within state institutions throughout the country.²²

All of these projects are incredibly important for mainstreaming gender to the extent that they promote women’s empowerment and the protection of women’s rights. But the commitment of an institution such as the council must go beyond these types of policies and actually challenge the way in which the country’s gender structures operate and how men and women are affected by these dynamics.

Finally, one of the most serious shortcomings of the Presidential Council for Women’s Equity for the time being is the fact that it has zero proposals to address the challenges that lie ahead with regard to Colombia’s post-conflict phase. According to the council, “at this time, by means of a consultancy being carried out with funding from UN Women, we are determining what the council’s role will be during a post-conflict scenario and the linkages and actions that it should develop at the national and subnational level” (Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer

22. Although the council seems to define a gender approach more broadly than a “women’s issue,” it is not clear whether this is indeed the intention—and moreover, the council confirms that this fourth project seeks to strengthen institutional capacities to address issues *affecting women* (Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer 2016).

2016). The fact that the institution charged with mainstreaming gender in Colombia must request external funding to determine what its gender-related policies will be in the post-conflict phase is indicative of its limited institutional capacity to meet the demands on the horizon, for the council should have the information and funding necessary to conduct such a diagnosis and to design proposals related to the peace process. Similarly, dialogue with feminist organizations should constitute a basic strategy for determining the council's role in the post-conflict era. If the idea is for the country to establish far-reaching peace pacts and for the council to fulfill its duty to mainstream gender in the state, this entity should have strong mechanisms in place for designing and implementing its policies, and it should not need to rely on consultancies or external funding.²³

For these reasons, we believe that the Presidential Council for Women's Equity, as it currently stands, is not fit for the task of mainstreaming gender. In order to fulfill the five conditions outlined above, the government must consider either strengthening the council's institutional capacity or establishing another institution that is equipped to carry out these tasks.²⁴ This would be an undertaking not only for the post-conflict era but also for ensuring that institutions integrate a gender perspective over the long term. What is needed is an institution whose purpose transcends the immediacy of transitional justice and seeks to build an enduring and deep-rooted pact for gender equity in Colombia.

23. Our critique here of the council is based largely on information received in response to a *derecho de petición* (a petition sent within the framework of Colombia's right to access public information) concerning the council's activities, budget, accountability mechanisms, and involvement in the current peace process. We are aware that a more detailed analysis—one that draws on other methodologies and sources (such as institutional ethnography, interviews, a review of official documents, and so forth)—is needed to fully understand the council's functioning; nonetheless, we believe that this preliminary perspective reveals some of the main problems faced by the council when it comes to mainstreaming gender in state institutions.

24. Interviewees proposed replacing the council with a ministry responsible for mainstreaming gender in the state, which would also help the state repay its historical debt regarding women's participation.

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Annex 1

Interviewee Profiles

Olga Amparo Sánchez Gómez

Feminist activist and researcher. Postgraduate degree in demography and population from Javeriana University. Former director of the National Directorate for Women's Equity. Columnist for *La Silla Llena / Red de Mujeres*. Currently a staff member of Casa de la Mujer.

Beatriz Helena Quintero García

Engineer, feminist activist, and founder and current director of the Red Nacional de Mujeres. Experience working and conducting research in the areas of political participation, violence against women, and sexual and reproductive rights. Has presented at a range of national and international conferences. Currently conducts advocacy to ensure that the peace accords being negotiated in Havana integrate a differentiated approach to sexual violence against women.

Cecilia Barraza Morelle

Chilean born and a naturalized citizen of Colombia. Historian with a master's degree in political science. Twenty years of experience working on issues related to women's rights, access to justice, and public policy. Author of various research projects on women's rights in Colombia and Latin America, as well as of public policies at the subnational level and the current gender equity policy being promoted by the national government. Former director of Corporación Sisma Mujer and of Corporación Humanas Colombia, as well as advisor and acting director of the Presidential Council for Women's Equity. Currently an advisor to the Colombian Family Welfare Institute.

Gloria Tobón Olarte

Feminist and activist. Conducted important work on behalf of civil society and the women's movement within the framework of the peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC in 1999 and 2001, which sought to promote women's participation in decision-making settings of the peace process. Has consulted on women's rights for UN Women, the United Nations Development Programme, various nongovernmental organizations, and regional governments, among others. Currently a member of the Coalition for Action on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. Has helped coordinate four reports on the application of Resolution 1325 in Colombia.

Claudia Cecilia Ramírez Cardona

Lawyer specializing in public law and human rights. Human rights researcher and professor with a special interest in women's rights, public policies for women, gender justice, violence against women, women and armed conflict, international humanitarian law, and training for political and social participation. Member of the women's movement. Previously held posts at the Ministry of Labor, the Office of the Inspector General, the Ombudsperson's Office, and the Presidential Council for Women's Equity, among others. Also served as deputy director of Corporación Sisma Mujer, a nongovernmental organization dedicated to defending women's rights. Currently a consultant on gender issues.

María Emma Wills Obregón

Holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Los Andes, a master's degree in political science from the University of Montreal, Quebec, and a PhD from the Institute of Latin American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Spent several years as a researcher at the Center for Research and Popular Education; the Political Science Department at the University of Los Andes; and the Institute of Political Studies and International Relations at the National University of Colombia. The only woman member of Colombia's Historical Commission on the Conflict and Its Victims. Currently an advisor to the National Center for Historical Memory.

Annex 2

Feminist Organizations Mentioned by Interviewees

<p>Ruta Pacífica de Mujeres (Women's Pacific Route)</p>	<p>Created in 1996, Ruta Pacífica de Mujeres is a feminist organization that seeks to raise awareness of the disproportionate effects of Colombia's armed conflict on women, advocate for peaceful resolutions to conflict, and demand truth, justice, and reparations for victims of the conflict, particularly women. The organization is made up of approximately 300 women's groups with different focal points (e.g., rural women, women trade unionists, women students, Afro-descendant women, and women academics) from nine departments of Colombia: Antioquia, Bogotá, Bolívar, Cauca, Chocó, Putumayo, Risaralda, Santander, and Valle del Cauca. Website: http://www.rutapacifica.org.co/</p>
<p>Casa de la Mujer (Women's House)</p>	<p>Created in 1982, Casa de la Mujer is a feminist organization aimed at protecting and defending women's rights in Colombia and, in doing so, fostering the conditions for women's full citizenship. By establishing strategic alliances with women's and feminist organizations from different regions of the country, as well as at the international level, Casa de la Mujer has developed a strong advocacy and lobbying capacity around gender oppression, armed conflict, and violence against women. Website: http://www.casmujer.com/</p>
<p>Red Nacional de Mujeres (National Women's Network)</p>	<p>Created in 1991, Red Nacional de Mujeres is a feminist organization that promotes women's political participation within the framework of the 1991 Constitution. It has focused on this issue since its founding, concentrating its efforts on supporting peace initiatives and protecting and broadening women's sexual and reproductive rights. Red Nacional de Mujeres currently consists of 62 women's and mixed organizations from 14 regions of the country. Website: http://rednacionaldemujeres.org/</p>

<p>Iniciativa de Mujeres Colombianas por la Paz (Colombian Women’s Initiative for Peace)</p>	<p>Iniciativa de Mujeres Colombianas por la Paz emerged within the framework of the application in Colombia of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, a resolution that promotes women’s participation at all levels and stages of peace processes and addresses the gender-based impacts of armed conflict. Currently, the organization consists of 22 groups representing women, feminists, women trade unionists, women academics, rural women, Afro-descendant women, and women students, among others. Website: http://www.mujieresporlapaz.org/</p>
<p>Cumbre Nacional de Mujeres y Paz (National Summit of Women and Peace)</p>	<p>Cumbre Nacional de Mujeres y Paz is an alliance of several organizations—Red Nacional de Mujeres; Casa de la Mujer; Ruta Pacífica; Iniciativa de Mujeres Colombianas por la Paz; Colectivo de Pensamiento y Acción Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad; the Coalition for Action on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325; Conferencia Nacional de Organizaciones Afrocolombianas; and Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas, Negras e Indígenas de Colombia—with the aim of monitoring the processes of public endorsement, implementation, and verification of the current peace process underway in Havana from a women’s and feminist perspective.</p>

Annex 3

Transitional Justice Agreements Reached in Havana That Establish Explicit Gender-Based Commitments

Agreement regarding the Victims of the Conflict	
Underlying Concepts	<p>■ The Colombian state has the duty to promote, protect, respect, and guarantee human rights, including economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights, with an equity-based and gender-based approach, following the principles of equality and progressivity, and to guarantee the right to peace, especially in the regions most affected by the conflict. (Chapter: “Guarantees of Non-Recurrence,” p. 188 [Spanish version], p. 200 [English version])</p>
	<p>■ The end of the conflict constitutes the best opportunity to realize victims’ rights to truth, justice, reparations, and non-recurrence, and in general to ensure the full realization of the human rights of all, including those of women, children, adolescents, youth, and the elderly; persons with disabilities; indigenous peoples; rural communities; members of churches, religious faiths, and religious organizations; the Afro-Colombian, black, palenquero, and raizal communities; the LGBTI community, human rights advocates; trade unionists; journalists; farmers; ranchers; and businesspeople. (Chapter: “Garantías de no repetición,” pp. 131-132)</p>
	<p>■ The agreement on victims is rooted in and permeated by a series of principles. Among these is the recognition of victims—both as victims and as citizens with rights—and the participation of victims of human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law during the conflict in discussions on the realization of their rights. (Chapter: “Agreement regarding the Victims of the Conflict”)</p>

Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence

Underlying Concepts	<p>■ The comprehensive system has an equity-based and gender-based approach that adapts and responds to the particular characteristics of the victimization in each territory and each population, and in particular to the needs of women and children. (Chapter: “Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence,” p. 128 [Spanish], p. 136 [English])</p>
	<p>■ The comprehensive system recognizes what has occurred in the context of the conflict and of the clarification and rejection of the serious violations of human rights and serious breaches of international humanitarian law, including those that have been historically less visible, such as those committed against women, children, and adolescents. (Chapter: “Guarantees of Non-Recurrence,” p. 187 [Spanish], p. 198 [English])</p>
	<p>■ One of the goals of the comprehensive system is the achievement of a territorial-based, equity-based, and gender-based approach. In this regard, the system will embrace a differentiated treatment of territories and populations, particularly women and children victims and the most deprived and most vulnerable populations and communities, and therefore those most affected by the conflict. (Chapter: “Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence,” p. 128 [Spanish], p. 137 [English])</p>

Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Recurrence Commission	<p>■ One of the commission’s goals is to help uncover the truth about what has happened and offer an extensive explanation of the complexity of the conflict, particularly regarding the lesser-known aspects of the conflict, such as the impact of the conflict on children and adolescents and gender-based violence. (Chapter: “Truth: Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence Commission and Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing in the Context of and Due to the Conflict,” p. 131 [Spanish], p. 140 [English])</p>
	<p>■ Throughout the country’s regions, the commission will promote coexistence, understood as the creation of an opportunity for change to facilitate the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the establishment of the deepest possible culture of respect and tolerance in democracy. To this end, it will establish forums for the strengthening of people’s respect for and trust in each other, cooperation and solidarity, social justice, equality of opportunity between men and women, and a culture of democracy that fosters tolerance. (Chapter: “Truth: Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence Commission and Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing in the Context of and Due to the Conflict,” p. 131 [Spanish], p. 140 [English])</p>

Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence (cont.)

<p>Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Recurrence Commission (cont.)</p>	<p>■ Throughout its work, the commission will take an appropriate approach to learn about the different ways in which the conflict has affected women, children, adolescents, youth, and the elderly; persons with disabilities; indigenous peoples; rural communities; persons on the basis of their religion, opinions, or beliefs; the Afro-Colombian, black, palenquero, and raizal communities; the Roma community; the LGBTI community; displaced and exiled persons; human rights advocates; trade unionists; journalists; farmers; ranchers; traders; and businesspeople. This will also help raise awareness in Colombian society of the specific ways in which the conflict has reproduced historical mechanisms of discrimination, as a fundamental first step toward a more just and inclusive society. (Chapter: “Truth: Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence Commission and Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing in the Context of and Due to the Conflict,” p. 131 [Spanish], p. 140 [English])</p>
	<p>■ Among the commission’s guiding criteria is the guarantee of victims’ participation, the restoration of their dignity, and the realization of their rights to truth, justice, reparations, and guarantees of non-recurrence. In addition, the commission will adhere to a criterion of victims’ participation through a broad, pluralist, and balanced participatory process where different voices and views will be heard. Further, it will guarantee an equity-based and gender-based approach that takes into account the different experiences, different impacts, and individual conditions of people. (Chapter: “Truth: Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence Commission and Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing in the Context of and Due to the Conflict,” pp. 132–3 [Spanish], pp. 141–2 [English])</p>
	<p>■ The commission’s mandate will be to elucidate and promote the recognition of the human and social impact of the armed conflict on society, including its impact on economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights, and the different ways in which the conflict has affected women, children, adolescents, youth, and the elderly; persons on the basis of their religion, opinions, or beliefs; persons with disabilities; indigenous peoples; rural communities; the Afro-Colombian, black, palenquero, and raizal communities; the Roma community; the LGBTI community; displaced and exiled persons; human rights advocates; trade unionists; journalists; farmers; ranchers; traders; and businesspeople; among others. (Chapter: “Truth: Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence Commission and Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing in the Context of and Due to the Conflict,” p. 134 [Spanish], pp. 143–4 [English])</p>

Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence (cont.)

<p>Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Recurrence Commission (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Among the commission’s duties is to ensure that a gender-based approach runs through each and every aspect of its work by creating a gender-based task force in charge of specific technical tasks, investigation, and the holding of hearings, among other things. This task force will not be the only one addressing this topic, but it will bear the responsibility for reviewing methodologies in order to ensure that all the commission’s instruments include this approach, and for liaising with women’s and LGBTI organizations. (Chapter: “Truth: Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence Commission and Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing in the Context of and Due to the Conflict,” p. 137 [Spanish], p. 146 [English]) ■ The commission will have 11 commissioners. The candidate nomination process will be wide ranging and pluralistic, ensuring that all sectors of society, including victims’ organizations, among others, may nominate candidates. The selection of commissioners will also consider collective criteria, such as equal participation between men and women, pluralism, interdisciplinarity, and regional representation. (Chapter: “Truth: Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence Commission and Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing in the Context of and Due to the Conflict,” p. 137 [Spanish], pp. 146–7 [English]) ■ With the aim of monitoring and following up on the implementation of the commission’s recommendations, a committee will be created following the publication of the final report. This committee will engage in dialogue with different victims’ and human rights bodies and organizations and will produce regular monitoring reports that will incorporate a regional-, equity-, and gender-based approach. (Chapter: “Truth: Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence Commission and Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing in the Context of and Due to the Conflict,” p. 139 [Spanish], p. 148 [English])
<p>Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing in the Context of and Due to the Armed Conflict</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The design and implementation of the unit’s functions will involve the participation of victims’ and human rights organizations. (Chapter: “Truth: Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence Commission and Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing in the Context of and Due to the Conflict,” p. 139 [Spanish], p. 149 [English])

Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence (cont.)

<p>Special Jurisdiction for Peace</p>	<p>■ Among the basic principles of the judicial component of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence is recognition of the fact that breaches of international humanitarian law and violations of human rights during the armed conflict are most serious when they are committed against women or when the victims belong to the most vulnerable groups, subjects of special protection, who deserve reparations and special protection, including indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombian communities and other ethnically distinct groups, religious communities, rural communities, the poorest, persons with disabilities, the displaced and refugees, children and adolescents, the LGBTI population, and the elderly. (Chapter: “Special Jurisdiction for Peace,” p. 144 [Spanish], p. 154 [English])</p>
	<p>■ In light of the aforementioned understanding, the judicial component will emphasize the needs of women and child victims, who suffer the disproportionate and differentiated effects of serious breaches and violations committed because of and during the conflict. Additionally, it recognizes that all peace agreements must adopt a gender focus and recognize in their reparative and restorative measures the special suffering of women and the importance of their active and fair participation in the judicial component of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence. (Chapter: “Special Jurisdiction for Peace,” p. 144 [Spanish], p. 154 [English])</p>
	<p>■ Among the limitations to the granting of amnesties and pardons by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace are crimes against humanity, genocide, serious war crimes, hostage taking or other serious deprivations of freedom, torture, extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, rape and other forms of sexual violence, child abduction, forced displacement, and the recruitment of minors, as established in the Rome Statute. (Chapter: “Special Jurisdiction for Peace,” p. 151 [Spanish], p. 161 [English])</p>
	<p>■ The Special Jurisdiction for Peace will comprise the following bodies: (a) Judicial Panel for Acknowledgement of Truth, Responsibility, and Determination of Facts and Conduct; (b) Tribunal for Peace; (c) Judicial Panel for Amnesty or Pardon; (d) Judicial Panel for Determination of Legal Situations, for cases other than those above or in other unforeseen situations; and (e) Investigation and Prosecution Unit. (Chapter: “Special Jurisdiction for Peace”)</p>

Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence (cont.)

Special Jurisdiction for Peace (cont.)

■ The Judicial Panel for Acknowledgment of Truth, Responsibility, and Determination of Facts and Conduct will receive reports from Colombian victims' and human rights organizations with regard to acts committed during the armed conflict. (Chapter: "Special Jurisdiction for Peace," p. 154 [Spanish], p. 165 [English])

■ The Tribunal for Peace will be made up of highly qualified Colombian justices and will include experts in different areas of law, with a focus on international humanitarian law, human rights, or conflict resolution. The tribunal will be formed according to criteria of equal participation by men and women and respect for ethnic and cultural diversity, and members will be elected through a selection process that reassures Colombian society and its different sectors. (Chapter: "Special Jurisdiction for Peace," p. 167 [Spanish], p. 177–8 [English])

■ With regard to the Judicial Panel for Amnesty or Pardon and the Judicial Panel for Determination of Legal Situations, each panel will consist of at least six highly qualified justices and will include experts in different areas of law, with a focus on international humanitarian law, human rights, or conflict resolution. They will be formed according to criteria of equal participation by men and women and respect for ethnic and cultural diversity, and members will be elected through a selection process that reassures Colombian society and its different sectors. (Chapter: "Special Jurisdiction for Peace," p. 168 [Spanish], p. 178 [English])

■ The Investigation and Prosecution Unit will consist of a sufficient number of legal professionals who are highly qualified in investigation and prosecution, and will include experts from different areas of law, with a focus on knowledge of international humanitarian law or human rights. It will be formed according to criteria of equal participation by men and women and respect for ethnic and cultural diversity, and members will be elected through a selection process that reassures Colombian society and its different sectors. (Chapter: "Special Jurisdiction for Peace," p. 169 [Spanish], p. 179 [English])

■ In addition, this unit will have a special investigation team for cases of sexual violence. Special provisions on handling evidence will be established for acts of sexual violence, as outlined in the Rome Statute. (Chapter: "Special Jurisdiction for Peace," p. 169 [Spanish], p. 179 [English])

Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence (cont.)

<p>Comprehensive Reparation Measures for Peacebuilding</p>	<p>■ The national government will strengthen collective reparation processes and will ensure a reparations-based approach for regionally focused development plans, collective reparation plans, and national collective reparation plans. (Summary of the structure of the subchapter “Collective Reparations at the End of the Conflict,” pp. 179–80 [Spanish], pp. 190–1 [English])</p>
	<p>■ The national government will strengthen collective reparation processes and will ensure a reparations-based approach for regionally focused development plans, collective reparation plans, and national collective reparation plans. (Chapter: “Reparations: Comprehensive Reparation Measures for Peacebuilding,” p. 180 [Spanish], p. 190 [English])</p>
	<p>■ The active participation of victims and their organizations will form the basis for the collective reparation plans with a regionally based focus. To this end, forums for participation will be created to define priorities in implementing the collective reparation measures, ensuring community participation in their implementation, and establishing project follow-up and oversight mechanisms. The participation of women in this approach will be ensured. (Chapter “Reparations: Comprehensive Reparation Measures for Peacebuilding,” p. 180 [Spanish], p. 191 [English])</p>
	<p>■ National collective reparation plans will be gender based and will be aimed at communities consisting, among others, of groups and organizations such as women’s and trade organizations, unions, human rights organizations, political and social parties and movements (particularly those of the opposition), and organizations of the religious sector, with a view to acknowledging the special nature of their victimization, recovering their identity and their organizational potential, and rebuilding their ability to have an impact on the development of local and national policies within a legal framework. (Chapter “Reparations: Comprehensive Reparation Measures for Peacebuilding,” p. 181 [Spanish], p. 191 [English])</p>
	<p>■ With regard to psychosocial rehabilitation, the national government has agreed to broaden the public coverage and regional scope and improve the quality of psychosocial care to ensure the emotional recovery of victims in accordance with the specific harm or injury they have suffered, including the particular impact of sexual violence. (Chapter: “Reparations: Comprehensive Reparation Measures for Peacebuilding,” p. 181 [Spanish], p. 192 [English])</p>

Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and Non-Recurrence (cont.)

Comprehensive Reparation Measures for Peacebuilding (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In addition, the national government has committed to increase the coverage and raise the quality of community rehabilitation strategies to rebuild the social fabric. These strategies will be equity and gender based. (Chapter: “Reparations: Comprehensive Reparation Measures for Peacebuilding,” p. 182 [Spanish], p. 192 [English])
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Furthermore, the national government has committed to introduce regional- and gender-based collective return and relocation programs for displaced persons. (Chapter: “Reparations: Comprehensive Reparation Measures for Peacebuilding,” p. 182 [Spanish], p. 193 [English])
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lastly, as part of its commitment to strengthen the policy of caring for and comprehensive reparation of victims in the context of the end of the conflict and contribution to material reparation for the victims, the government will set in motion an effective process with the broadest possible participation of victims and their organizations, promoting spaces for the discussion of their proposals with relevant authorities. This process will be carried out in the framework of the existing forums for victim participation, which will be expanded on and strengthened for this purpose, so that victims’ organizations and victims not involved in these forums can participate in this process. (Chapter: “Reparations: Comprehensive Reparation Measures for Peacebuilding,” pp. 184–5 [Spanish], p. 195 [English])

Guarantees of Non-Recurrence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recognizing the work of human rights advocates, the national government will contribute to the strengthening of human rights defense organizations, particularly those working in rural contexts, in relation to their guarantees of security, recognition, and non-stigmatization. To this end, a protocol for comprehensive protection will be drawn up. (Chapter: “Guarantees of Non-Recurrence,” p. 190 [Spanish], p. 202 [English])
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Moreover, the national government will strengthen coordination with the Office of the Attorney General aimed at driving forward and following up on, on a case-by-case basis, accusations and investigations of violations of the rights of human rights advocates. (Chapter: “Guarantees of Non-Recurrence,” p. 191 [Spanish], p. 202 [English])

SOURCES: Spanish edition: *Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera*, <http://www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co/procesos-y-conversaciones/Documentos%20compartidos/24-11-2016NuevoAcuerdoFinal.pdf>; English edition: *Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace*, <http://especiales.presidencia.gov.co/Documents/20170620-dejacion-armas/acuerdos/acuerdo-final-ingles.pdf>

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With the signing of the “Final Agreement to End

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Dejusticia’s Ideas for Peace Building collection seeks to contribute to this effort by presenting thematically focused documents containing analyses of and proposals to overcome some of the main institutional challenges of this new phase. In this book, we offer an examination of and recommendations for women’s participation in Colombia’s peace processes, with an eye toward strengthening spaces for participation and, in doing so, ensuring that the peace accord is ultimately translated into long-term social pacts that are inclusive and committed to justice and equity.

Women’s participation in Colombian peace processes has been remarkably low. Between the commencement of the Betancur administration in 1982 and today’s Santos administration, women have accounted for a mere 3.6% of negotiators and signatories of agreements between the Colombian government and armed groups. In addition, women have encountered multiple obstacles when it comes to advocating before the state and positioning a gender perspective in public institutions. Why do these obstacles persist? How can they be overcome? *Negotiating from the Margins* draws on the personal accounts of several women who used a range of strategies to advocate before Colombian peace processes. Thanks to the pressure applied by these women and their networks, today’s peace process includes, for the first time ever, a gender subcommission, as well as a crosscutting gender perspective throughout the accord. How can we ensure that this progress is not forgotten? What would be a basic minimum for guaranteeing that a perspective based on gender and women’s rights remains central during the peace accord’s implementation?

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