'Peace without women does not go!' Women's struggle for inclusion in Colombia's peace process with the FARC

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ABSTRACT: In this study, we analyze the tactics deployed by Colombian women's rights NGOs, movements, and advocacy groups to challenge masculinism in the peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the former Colombian guerrilla Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) held in Havana.[1] By drawing on the literature on women's participation in peace and transitional justice processes, the research assesses the presence of women in Colombia's peace talks, the way women's movements articulated their demands, the role of the sub-commission on gender, and the manner in which gender was introduced in the drafts of the peace agreement and in the document the parties to the negotiation signed in Cartagena in September 2016.

KEYWORDS: gender • armed conflict • peacebuilding • feminism • Colombia (*Thesaurus*)

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1 After the peace agreement, the abbreviation "FARC" stands for Common Alternative Revolutionary Force.

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"La paz sin mujeres ¡no va!" La lucha de las mujeres por su inclusión en el proceso de paz con las FARC en Colombia

RESUMEN: El estudio analiza la forma en que las ONG de mujeres colombianas, movimientos sociales y grupos defensores de derechos humanos han desafiado el sesgo masculino de las negociaciones de paz entre el Gobierno y las FARC. A partir de la literatura sobre la participación de las mujeres en los procesos de paz, la investigación evalúa la presencia de las mujeres en el proceso de paz con las FARC, la articulación de las demandas de las organizaciones feministas, el papel de la sub-comisión de género en las negociaciones y la manera en que se introdujo la perspectiva de género en los borradores de los acuerdos preliminares y en el documento que se firmó en Cartagena en septiembre de 2016.

PALABRAS CLAVE: género • conflicto armado • feminismo • Colombia (*Thesaurus*) • construcción de paz (*autores*)

"Não há paz sem mulheres!" A luta das mulheres por sua inclusão no processo de paz com as Farc na Colômbia

RESUMO: este estudo analisa a forma na qual organizações não governamentais de mulheres colombianas, movimentos sociais e grupos defensores de direitos humanos desafiam o viés masculino das negociações de paz entre o Governo e as Forças Armadas Revolucionárias da Colômbia (FARC). A partir da literatura sobre a participação das mulheres nos processos de paz, a pesquisa avalia a presença delas nos processos de paz com as Farc, a articulação das demandas das organizações feministas, o papel da subcomissão de gênero nas negociações e o modo em que a perspectiva de gênero foi introduzida nos rascunhos dos acordos preliminares e no documento assinado em Cartagena (Colômbia) em setembro de 2016.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Colômbia • conflito armado • construção da paz • feminismo • gênero (*Tesauro*)

Introduction: Bringing women into Colombia's peace talks

When the peace talks between the Colombian government and Colombian guerrilla Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) began in August 2012, women were not part of the negotiating team. This led various organizations to unite and demand women's inclusion in the peace process. The result was the establishment in October 2012 of Mujeres por la Paz (Women for Peace), a space through which more than forty non-governmental organizations (NGOs) voiced one slogan: "There cannot be peace while there is oppression and half of humanity is still excluded from full development – women" (Mujeres por la Paz 2012b).[2]

Despite national and international pressure, it was not until November 2013 that the government appointed two women plenipotentiary negotiators and June 2014 that the establishment of a permanent sub-commission on gender took place (Mesa de Conversaciones 2014c). When Nigeria Rentería and María Paulina Riveros were appointed as plenipotentiary negotiators, two of the six points of the peace negotiations had already been settled —rural reform and political participation. At the time the sub-commission on gender began its work, the parties had already reached an understanding on the third point—solution to illegal drugs. Notwithstanding the late incorporation of women plenipotentiary negotiators and the delayed creation of the sub-commission on gender, these were critical victories in the struggle to ensure the integration of a gender perspective in the negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC.

In this paper, we research how women's rights NGOs, movements, and advocacy groups articulated their demands to participate and influence the peace process between the Colombian government and the FARC in Havana. This means that our time frame extends from August 2012, when the peace negotiations began, until September 2016, when the final agreement was signed in Cartagena (Cartagena Agreement). Hence, the changes made after the plebiscite was voted in October 3, 2016 are not discussed. Despite the setbacks brought by the negative vote, in which the gender element of the agreement became a point of controversy, women's efforts to find spaces of participation and influence the peace agreement provide valuable lessons for understanding the gendered dynamics of peace processes (Céspedes-Báez 2016; Bouvier 2016). They expose the difficulties faced by the Colombian women that embarked in the task of being present, challenging and transforming the male dominated field of peacebuilding.

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2 "No puede haber paz mientras se oprima y se impida el desarrollo pleno de la mitad de la humanidad, las mujeres."

The examination of the demands voiced by Colombian women's rights NGOs, movements, and advocacy groups serves a twofold purpose. First, it reveals the discursive tactics deployed by women's organizations to demand their inclusion in the peace talks. Second, by contrasting the texts produced by women's organizations during the negotiating process with the preliminary drafts and final peace agreement, the study provides key insights into how Colombia's peace process in Havana was gendered. This comparative exercise allows us to examine if women's efforts managed to rebuff male privilege, power, and narratives in the peace process. By analyzing the inclusion of women and gender in the peace negotiation, we problematize the way the negotiators translated/co-opted women's demands and limited the possibilities of discussing in-depth issues such as gender equality in the economic and social arenas.

The article is structured into four main sections. First, we provide a short overview of Colombia's armed conflict. Second, we research feminism's passageway from being marginal to the discussions on warfare, peacebuilding, and transitional justice to making key contributions to these fields. This theoretical framework provides a starting ground for examining women's role in negotiating peace. Here, we also underscore some of the main historical advances to make women's experiences of the armed conflict visible in Colombia. Third, we explain the methodology that guides our study. Last, we analyze how Colombian women's rights NGOs, movements, and advocacy groups challenged the masculine biases of the peace negotiations between the government and the FARC in Havana, gradually bringing their understanding of gender and women's issues to the negotiating table. In the conclusions, we extract the main lessons that this case study provides to women organizations working on transitional justice and peacebuilding processes.

1. Overview of the Colombian Conflict

Colombia has suffered the longest lasting conflict in the Western Hemisphere. In 1958, after years of political violence, the Liberal and Conservative Parties agreed upon a power-sharing government strategy. Within the framework, they closed the doors to all those that did not identify with the two traditional parties (Arias Trujillo 2006). This triggered the formation of multiple guerilla factions, including the most predominant, the FARC and the National Liberation Army (ELN).

Colombia's armed conflict has displaced more than six million people (Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas 2015). As of August 2017, a total of 8.186.896 armed conflict-related victims have been registered by the government (Registro Único de Víctimas 2017). More than one hundred thousand

individuals have reported the loss of property; almost one million homicides have been listed; and 22,493 crimes against sexual liberty and integrity have been recorded, among other illegal conducts. Before the peace agreement of September 2016, several Colombian administrations had endeavored in the task of negotiating a peace deal with the FARC. In 1998, President Andres Pastrana (1998-2002) failed to negotiate a settlement with the armed group. His presidency was followed by the government of President Alvaro Uribe (2002-2006; 2006-2010), who adopted a military approach to defeat the FARC.

Since the early 2000s, women's rights activists and non-governmental organizations have been very vocal about the particular and disproportional impact armed conflict has had on women's lives (Céspedes-Báez 2014; Céspedes-Báez 2017). Also, they have promoted a negotiated end of the conflict in which gender-based violence is acknowledged and redressed. Over these years, their advocacy has focused on identifying particular cases and instances of such violence to hold accountable the government and all the illegal armed actors participating in the conflict. To do so, they have emphasized on the incidence of sexual violence against women producing reports, campaigns, and specific legal knowledge to advance their claims. Their work on this issue has gradually strengthen their movement and coalitions, giving them a prominent place in the Colombian and international public spheres.

In August 2012, President Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2014; 2014-2018) announced the beginning of the negotiations with the FARC. After four years of negotiations, the final agreement was signed in Cartagena in September 2016. With the hope of ratifying the agreement, the government decided to carry out a plebiscite to let the Colombian people express whether they supported what was decided in Havana. In 2 October 2016, the citizens of Colombia went to the polls. The vote against the agreement won by a narrow margin. 49.78% voted "Yes" and 50.21% voted "No" ("Con el 'No' en el plebiscito" 2016). When this article was written, the consequences of this unexpected outcome for the government were still unknown. The parties that opposed the peace agreement were demanding the modification of the text.[3]

3 After the unexpected outcome of the plebiscite, the government and FARC adjusted the peace agreement to address some of the concerns of the opposition. In November 2016, the Colombian Congress approved the peace agreement and started the process of its implementation ("El Congreso de Colombia aprueba nuevo acuerdo de paz con las Farc" 2016).

2. Feminism's stand on warfare, peacebuilding and transitional justice processes

a. Feminist efforts to contest the masculine subjectivity of warfare

For decades, feminist scholars have criticized the neglect given to women in warfare. They have revealed how women's issues have been peripheral to the literature and policies on warfare and how their rights come to abeyance when armed violence originates (Gardam and Charlesworth 2000; Bennoune 2003). A masculine gendered hierarchy has impeded a serious examination and understanding of women's role in armed conflict, peacebuilding and transitional justice (Gardam 1997).

Feminist scholars have argued that the approaches that treat women and men in the same manner serve to mask women's standpoints. The conception of war as an act of men reinforces the marginalization of women (Gardam 1993; Otto 2010). It incorporates a masculine subjectivity that disdains women's capabilities, vulnerabilities, distresses, and understandings of armed violence (Gardam 1997). Accordingly, visions based solely on the perspectives of men overlook the experiences of women.

Feminist scholars have focused on revealing the differential impact of warfare on women. To do so, they have frequently called the attention on sexual violence, whose victims are predominantly female. Numerous feminist works have proved the endemic nature of sexual violence in the context of armed conflict and showed the permissive character of state policies and institutions towards this crime (Kamau 2011; Russell-Brown 2004). By drawing attention to acts of sexual violence, feminists have succeeded in making women's suffering in warfare more visible (Manjoo and McRaith 2011; Askin 2003; Halley 2008).

Feminists have also documented the masculine partiality of transitional justice processes. They have exposed the gender hierarchy that privileges certain type of victims and truths. In the words of Fionnuala Ni Aoláin and Catherine Turner: "the conduct of violence and war is predominantly male, leading to a male bias in negotiations, and mediators are usually men" (2007, 240). This masculine preference has swayed transitional justice away from women's societal narratives. For this group of feminists, concrete mechanisms of inclusion in peace negotiations are required to remedy the marginalization of women from transitional justice and peacebuilding processes (Gardam and Charlesworth 2000; Gallagher 1997; McGuinness 2007).

From a critical perspective, feminist scholars have also exposed the dangers of reducing the role of women in warfare to certain crimes and experiences.

They have insisted that sexual violence is only one of the features of armed conflict that affects women, exploring the negative consequences of this "hyper-attention to sexual violence" (Engle 2014). For them, the primary focus on women as victims of sexual violence obscures other possible forms of victimhood and ways of involvement in armed confrontations. This group of scholars has explicated the negative consequences of warfare on women beyond common conceptions of victimhood (Prescott 2013). Not only do they pay attention to the fact that women make up the majority of internally displaced persons and refugees, they also explore how armed violence sharpens structures of male domination that subjugate the role that women play in society (Bennoune 2003).

Brooke Ackerly, Maria Stern, and Jacqui True state "feminism is not about studying women and gender exclusively. Just as states, conflict, institutions, security, and globalization cannot be studied without analyzing gender, gender cannot be studied without analyzing these subjects and concepts" (2006, 4). Consequently, the study of gender and armed conflict is not reduced to the study of women as victims. It is all encompassing, in the sense that it conceives gender orders as a relevant characteristic of warfare. For this group of scholars, the tendencies to hem in women's experiences within the label of victims of sexual violence are one of the consequences of the stratification of gender roles. This contributes to the mummification of gendered orders, nullifying "any attempts to advance gender equality and the loosening of gender expectations around caring and parenting for women" (Haynes, Ni Aolain and Cahn 2011, 18).

By approaching gender realities as "a complex system that cuts across class, ethnic, rural/urban, and other divides, rather than look simply at 'women' as victims of 'men'", this group of feminist scholars dismantles "conventional assumptions about who are the actors —the fighters and legitimate targets— and who are the acted upon —civilians and 'innocent victims'" (Helms 2015, 464-465). This conceptual shift breaks away from generalizations that make women's agency incompatible with their status as victims. It reframes feminist research by demonstrating how these oversimplified identifications are the result of gender discourses that reinforce dichotomous logics (Helms 2008). These approximations emphasize on the plurality of women's subjectivities and experiences (Tabak 2012). They argue that the conception of women simply as victims "not only fails to accurately portray them, but also fails to fully respect, embolden, and empower the women as survivor and enablers" (Askin 2003, 515).

The consolidation of this feminist knowledge has been successful in turning gender-related issues into important matters of analysis when discussing armed conflicts, transitional justice, and peacebuilding. International regulations have adopted a gender perspective to tackle the problems underscored by

feminist and women's movements (Otto 2010; Engle 2014; Halley 2008). These international advances have "inspir[ed] many local and global women's movements for change, which runs counter to the charge of understanding power as 'top-down', releases the grip of sexual subordination feminism, and actively seeks to assert power as a positive goal of feminist endeavor" (Otto 2010, 99). Overall, these feminist achievements have brought gender into the peacebuilding and transitional justice agenda.

The Colombian government's negotiations with the FARC in Havana took place in a time when women were no longer invisible and marginal from deliberations on peacebuilding and transitional justice processes (Céspedes-Báez 2016; Céspedes-Báez 2017). Basic feminist premises regarding equal protection and representation in deliberative bodies and pertaining prosecution of gender-based violence had been incorporated into international governance systems, making gender a part of the security, peacebuilding and transitional justice designs (Otto 2010; Halley 2008). Furthermore, when the negotiations began, Colombian women NGOs and activists had built a solid trajectory and knowledge around women and conflict (Céspedes-Báez 2017; Jaramillo and Erazo 2016). Through constitutional and legal victories, they had made sexual violence one of the most conspicuous features of women's advocacy in the country in the last decade. Triggered in 2005, after Law 975 of 2005 was passed to facilitate the demobilization and prosecution of high and middle rank paramilitaries, sexual violence became the epitome of gender-based violence in the Colombian conflict, the argument to ask for differential measures, and the evidence to demonstrate the disproportionate impact of war in women's lives. Overall, the national and international legal setting provided a foreground for advancing women's involvement in the peace negotiations with the FARC.

The question that remains is how the demands and legal accomplishments of these Colombian feminist activists translated into the peace process between the Colombian government and FARC. This study provides a unique opportunity for assessing women's role in the peace process, contrasting feminist demands to feminist practice. The study serves to evaluate the extent to which national and international mechanisms enabled women's participation and inclusion. By delving into the Colombian case, the research complements the studies aimed at comprehending the challenges faced by women in participating and influencing peacebuilding processes and transitional justice schemes. It extracts some valuable lessons of the paths and tactics through which Colombian women's rights NGOs, movements, and activists advocated for women's inclusion and participation in negotiating peace.

3. Methodology

The study applied an interpretative method which required a close reading of the texts produced by Colombian women's rights NGOs, movements, and advocacy groups, contrasting their demands with the gender approach adopted in the peace agreement signed in Cartagena in September 2016; that is, before the plebiscite was voted. As we read through the publications, we tried to organize the demands following the points in the agenda set by the parties in Havana, but sometimes the issues raised were transversal to the negotiating process. This decision reflects the dynamics of the peace process. Since at the beginning of the negotiations women's rights NGOs, movements, and advocacy groups did not find participation spaces and channels, they began organizing parallel meetings and events to discuss the points in the agenda being debated by the parties in Havana. This was a way of raising women's demands and making their exclusion visible.

Most of the information analyzed was derived from Corporación Humanas Colombia. As a member of Mujeres por la Paz, this organization has kept a detailed record of the activities carried out by women's movements since the peace process began. The majority of the documents relating to the women's movement's advocacy pertaining the peace process that we analyzed in this research were hosted in their webpage. These included minutes, pronouncements, and event transcripts, among others.[4] Additionally, the preliminary agreements divulged by the government and the FARC were also analyzed, evidencing the changes made after the sub-commission on gender reviewed these. These documents can be found in the official website of the peace talks.[5] Furthermore, we submitted two official writs for information to the High Commissioner for Peace. These served to clarify the gendered composition of the negotiating parties and the mechanisms created by the government to enable women's participation in the negotiations. Secondary sources were incorporated to support the data found in the primary sources.

Three steps were taken to examine how the peace process with the FARC was gendered. First, we appraised the way women were included in the peace negotiations. Applying a numerical approach, we observed the ratio of men to women negotiators, revealing the prevalence of men in the negotiating table. Second, we read the texts produced by Colombian women's rights NGOs, movements, and advocacy groups, and contrasted their demands with the gender approach adopted in the peace agreement signed in Cartagena in September 2016. The purpose was to comprehend how these organizations assumed their role in

4 See: http://www.humanas.org.co/
5 See: https://www.mesadeconversaciones.com.co

the contestation of the predominant gender order, the demands raised during the negotiating process, and the translation of these by the negotiating parties. Additionally, by reviewing the preliminary drafts and the Cartagena agreement, we examined how women's demands and the sub-commission on gender influenced in the formulation of the gender perspective of the agreement. This comparative exercise provided key insight to the differences between the issues raised by women's rights NGOs concerning the incorporation of gender into the framework of the peace process and the gender perspective that was adopted in the final peace agreement, allowing us to enquire how the negotiators and the subcommission on gender co-opted/translated women's demands. Last, some of our main ideas and arguments emerged when the findings were juxtaposed with the feminist literature discussed in the first section. In doing so, the case study allowed a more profound evaluation of women's movements' achievements and challenges.

It is important to clarify that issues not directly raised by women's movements or not acknowledged by the negotiating parties were also considered. This is because silence serves as an indicator of existing gender biases. In the words of Annica Kronsell, "silence on gender is a determining characteristic of institutions of hegemonic masculinity […]. Masculine norms, when hegemonic, are never really a topic of discussion" (2006, 110). Consequently, the suppression of certain demands helped to grasp the existing gender orders that surround the peace negotiations.

Before initiating the study, it is also important to clarify the treatment given to the terms "masculine", "masculinist" and "masculinism". These signifiers are used to describe a gender order that privileges certain men and marginalizes women from decision-making positions, overlooking their role in warfare.

4. Colombia's peace negotiations and their gender perspective

In this section, we adopt a gender approach to analyze Colombia's peace process with the FARC in Havana. We assess the presence of women in the peace talks, the way that women's movements articulated their demands, the role of the sub-commission on gender in the peace negotiations, and the way gender was introduced in the preliminary drafts of the accords and in the Cartagena agreement.

a. Women's path to Havana

In September 19 of 2012, Resolution 339 designated the main delegates that would represent the Colombian government in the peace talks with the FARC. As it is shown in table 1, initially only men were part of the government's negotiating team. Only two women were designated as alternate negotiators: Lucía Jaramillo

Ayerbe and Elena Ambrosi Turbay.[6] As for the FARC, five of its main negotiators were men. Only two women, the Dutch national, Tanja Nijmeijer, and Shirley Méndez[7], were presented as collaborators.

Table 1. Government's negotiating original team members in 2012

Name	Position
Humberto de la Calle Lombana	Chief Delegate - plenipotentiary
Sergio Jaramillo Caro	High Commissioner for Peace - plenipotentiary
Frank Joseph Pearl	Plenipotentiary
Retired General Jorge Enrique Moral Rangel	Plenipotentiary
Retired General Oscar Adolfo Naranjo Trujillo	Plenipotentiary

Source: Authors, response to official writ for information submitted to the High Commissioner for Peace presented by the authors, Bogota, October 9, 2015.

When reading through the profile of the original negotiating team members, we find out that almost all of them have had some kind of relation with Colombia's armed forces or defense sector. Not only there are two retired generals, Jorge Enrique Moral Rangel and Oscar Adolfo Naranjo Trujillo, but also the High Commissioner for Peace had formerly been an advisor for Colombia's Ministry of Defense from 2006 to 2009. This seems to replicate the message sent by the FARC's main leader, Rodrigo Londoño Echeverri, also known as "Timochenko": "The debate between men who know war makes things easier" ("Preferimos un buen acuerdo" 2016). Thus, the absence of women at the beginning of the peace conversations just mirrored the ingrained belief that war was a men's affair, and that the negotiations to pave the way to its end only pertained to them.

6 Both of these women had previously worked with President Juan Manuel Santos. Jaramillo had worked with him in the Good Government Foundation, which he established in the 1990s. Also, she participated in his presidential campaign. Ambrosi had worked in the Ministry of Defense during President Santos's government.

7 Tanja Nijmeijer is one of the most visible FARC women combatants, because of her foreign origin and the publication of her diary found in 2007 after the bombardment of one of FARC's encampments. Shirley Méndez has been depicted in the media as the sentimental partner of the deceased Víctor Julio Suárez, who was also known as "Mono Jojoy". He was one of the most visible members of FARC's secretariat. He died in 2010 after a military airstrike. It is interesting to note that these two women have stood out in the public narrative of the Colombian conflict due to their association to circumstances that do not necessarily relate to their contribution to FARC's cause or individual prowess ("Colombia: Dos mujeres serán negociadoras en proceso de paz" 2013; "Paz sin nosotras no es paz" 2013; "La historia de Tanja Nijmeijer" 2012).

This initial male dominated composition of the delegations corroborates one of the main feminist's critiques to transitional justice and peace processes; that is, the concern about the masculine bias of peace negotiations. It exposes the gender hierarchy that privileges men's experiences and voices; and, as a materialization of the worries posited by Fionnuala Ní Aoláin and Catherine Turner (2007), it shows that masculinism not only manages to prevail in the conduct of violence and war but also in the orchestration and mediation of peace.

Women's organizations' protests did not wait. To articulate their disapproval with the Colombian government's course of action in this matter, they created Mujeres por la Paz, a coalition through which more than forty organizations voiced women's demands. Its founding document, dated on October 2012, established as its main objectives:

> 1. To continue generating actions to contribute to peace's achievement with social justice. 2. To generate a legitimate voice as interlocutors and political actors in the process to end the armed conflict. 3. To contribute to hone women's arguments in issues concerning the legal framework for peace and transitional justice. 4. To follow-up and control the peace process agenda to ensure it includes women's needs and necessities. 5. To elaborate and strengthen women's organizations' synergies to influence the peace process agenda. 6. To amplify and strengthen Mujeres por la Paz at the national and regional levels. (Mujeres por la Paz 2012a; translation by authors)

In December 2012, Mujeres por la Paz organized the "National Meeting of Women for Peace". The conference was held in Bogotá on the 3rd and 4th of December. Woman's rights NGOs, such as Casa de la Mujer, Red Nacional de Mujeres Excombatientes, Corporación Humanas, and Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres, among others, expressed their support for a negotiated solution to the armed conflict.[8] However, they demanded women's participation in the peace talks. They asserted their right to take part on the social contract being negotiated in Havana, criticizing the patriarchal structures that marginalized them and acted upon them with violence. They insisted on the importance of women's participation in peacebuilding throughout Colombia's history and sent one united

8 Mujeres por la Paz assembled women activists and organizations coming from different sectors of the Colombian society. Casa de la Mujer and Corporación Humanas are two of the most well-known Colombian women's rights NGOs. Ruta Pacífica is the strongest Colombian women's movement with a wide-ranging presence in different regions of the country. The Red Nacional de Mujeres Excombatientes is a network of former women combatants coming from different Colombian insurgent groups that demobilized between 1990 and 1994.

message to the government and the FARC: "peace without women does not go!" (Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres por la Paz 2012).[9]

In December 2012, the government delegation and FARC held an event called "Comprehensive agricultural development with a territorial approach" to discuss the first point of their agenda: rural reform. In that opportunity, the women's movement once again rejected their exclusion from the peace process and demanded the transformation of social, cultural and economic structures that contribute to their oppression. Rather than women being another topic to be discussed between the government and the FARC, they insisted on being active participants in the negotiations. They claimed for their recognition as agents with their own voice and authority. Regarding agricultural development, they redirected the attention to the differentiated impact armed conflict has had on rural women's bodies and social and economic opportunities. They underscored the current concentration of land in men's and political and economic elites' hands. They deemed necessary that the negotiating parties tackle the issue of women's access, control, and recovery of land and promote their inclusion in political discussions (Mujeres por la Paz 2012b).

Coalition 1325, a group of women's organizations established in 2001 to monitor Colombia's compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, complemented the initiatives organized by Mujeres por la Paz. This coalition began publishing yearly reports assessing the compliance with the parameters set in Resolution 1325. As a NGO alliance producing information regarding the implementation of this Security Council resolution in Colombia, its role became more germane after the Colombian government and the FARC commenced their peace talks. In its 2012 report, the Coalition called attention to the absence of women in past peace negotiations in Colombia and the secondary role that they were playing in the current ones (Coalición 1325, 2012). In 2013, the Coalition's report reiterated its 2012 conclusion and criticized the lack of a gender perspective in the government's and FARC's mutual agenda (Coalición 1325, 2013).

In May of 2013, more than two thousand women from different organizations met in Florencia, Caquetá, Colombia.[10] The outcome of this meeting was documented in a joint statement titled "Colombian women's manifest for dignity and peace". Despite women's organizations continual support for the peace process,

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9 "La paz sin las mujeres ¡no va!" The interventions of the speakers can be found at: http://www.humanas.org.co/pagina.php?p_a=51

10 Florencia is the capital city of the department of Caquetá. It is located in Colombia's southwest, in the Amazonas region. The FARC had a significant presence in this area. San Vicente del Caguán, a Caquetá's municipality, was the epicenter of the failed 1999 peace dialogues with this guerrilla group (Ramírez Montenegro 2004; Soberón Garrido 2004).

the joint statement expressed the exasperation generated by the indifference of the government and the FARC towards their demands for inclusion. The joint statement expressly cited the Security Council's Resolution 1325 and formulated specific recommendations to the negotiating team. Among these, it demanded the parties to abandon simplistic visions of peace that only conceive it as the end of the armed confrontation. It reminded them that women have been not only victims of war but also of the economic model. In this vein, it advocated for structural changes in the economic and political systems, guaranteeing women's adequate engagement and recognition of their contribution to the GDP through domestic labor and economics of care. The manifest ended by restating its original point: "Our word and our presence in the final accord must be irreplaceable" (Manifiesto de las Mujeres Colombianas por la Dignidad y la Paz 2013).[11]

Throughout 2013, women's organizations continued to hold frequent meetings and events. In November 22, Mujeres por la Paz organized a public demonstration supporting the peace process but also requiring their inclusion in the dialogues in Havana. More than 8.000 women marched in Bogota towards the presidential palace. With signs reading "I am a woman and peace is mine" and "I am a woman and I believe in peace with social justice," women's movements pressured the government to listen to their demands ("Las mujeres marcharon" 2013).

This public act led President Juan Manuel Santos to declare that he would include one woman in the negotiating team. Through Resolution 321 of November 26 of 2013, the government designated two women lawyers as plenipotentiary members: Nigeria Rentería Lozano and María Paulina Riveros Dueñas. Both women had an ample trajectory in the defense of human rights.

President Juan Manuel Santos referred to the appointment of two women plenipotentiaries as an advance in the struggle for gender equality.[12] The way this incorporation was made risked tokenizing Nigeria Rentería Lozano's and María Paulina Riveros Dueñas's voices and experiences. By equating their demands to those of all women, they were turned into *spokeswomen*. Within a male dominated process, they became symbols of the inclusion of a gender perspective. This "essentializing" tendency generated a misconception of women as a homogeneous group. It neglected the multi-layered and diverse experiences of women within conflict.

The inclusion of two women in the negotiation table did not signify the end of women's efforts to participate in the peace process. In February 2014, women's movements signed the "Ethical pact for a nation in peace". In it, they

11 "Nuestra palabra y nuestras presencia en la firma del acuerdo final, deberá ser insustituible."
12 See President Juan Manuel Santos' speech of appointment of Nigeria Renteria Lozano and María Paula Riveros Dueñas: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahINGSdF5js

listed fifteen steps for the transformation away from violence. Though the issue of gender-based violence did appear on the document, its main points focused on the advancement of pluralistic and tolerant societies that accept cultural and ethnical diversity. It conceived a transformative peace process as one that foments political debates and modifies authoritative cultural practices that obstruct gender equality (Colectivo de Pensamiento y Acción Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad 2014).

In the National Summit of Women and Peace, which took place on May 21 2014, more than four hundred women highlighted the importance of continuing the conversations until the parties reach a final peace agreement. They also demanded the incorporation of women in every stage of the negotiations ("Women do not want to be agreed on but they want to be covenanters"), rejecting the negotiating parties' neglect of women's needs, interests, and armed conflict-related impacts (Cumbre Nacional de Mujeres y Paz 2013, 10).

It was not until June 7 2014 that the Colombian government announced the creation of a sub-commission on gender, an advisory body comprised of up to ten members, five coming from the FARC, and five from the government[13]. The installment of the sub-commission was the outcome of the sustained pressure that women's organizations and advocates exerted on the negotiating parties and of a series of visits they made to the negotiating team in Havana. In a response to an official writ for information, the High Commissioner for Peace stated, "the sub-commission on gender, integrated by both delegations, was created to revise and warrant, with the support of national and international experts, that the final agreement has a proper gender perspective" (Response to official writ for information submitted to the High Commissioner for Peace presented by the authors, Bogotá, October 9, 2015, translation by authors).

As a way of complementing the efforts of the sub-commission on gender, since March 2014 until March 2016, eighteen representatives of women's organizations participated in the peace process deliberations. These members worked with the Director of UN Women, Belén Sanz, with the purpose of systematizing their recommendations to the negotiating parts (Response to official writ for information submitted to the High Commissioner for Peace presented by the authors, Bogota, March 16, 2016).

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13 The announcement of the establishment of the sub-commission on gender did not specify who were going to be its members. During its existence, it was difficult to determine who participated in this body. Only two women stood out in the news, María Paulina Riveros and Judith Simanca Herrera, also known as "Victoria Sandino". The former, a lawyer with ample experience in human rights, represented the government. The latter, in representation of the FARC, was a commandant of the Front 21 of this guerrilla group ("Guerrilleras por la paz" 2013; "Negociación con aroma de mujer" 2015; "Se instaló la subcomisión de género en La Habana" 2014).

Between August 16 and December 16 2014, five delegations of victims were invited to participate in hearings with the negotiating team. A total of 60 victims joined in this initiative: 36 of them were women and 24 were men. Forced displacement, homicide, torture, kidnapping, sexual violence, child recruitment, and forced disappearance were the main issues raised by the victims (Response to official writ for information submitted to the High Commissioner for Peace presented by the authors, Bogota, March 16, 2016).

In 2014, the Coalition 1325's report acknowledged the negotiators' efforts to include topics related to women in the peace talks, the creation of the sub-commission on gender, and the participation of women in the negotiating team. It underscored the government's compromise to consider the proposals made by the women's movements. However, it highlighted the importance of including meaningful provisions on women's issues and interests in the negotiation points that had already been settled before the sub-commission on gender was established. Particularly, the document referred to the first point of the negotiation (agrarian policy), in which women were only integrated as mothers and caregivers, leaving aside proposals to facilitate their access, control, and recovery of their rights over land and measures to empower them as decision-makers (Coalición 1325, 2014). Latter, the negotiators allowed the gender sub-commission to review the points that they had already drafted (Mesa de Conversaciones 2016).

Conclusively, women's movements managed to challenge and transform the initial male control of the peace process. Through public manifestations and protests, they made their voices heard, impelling the inclusion of women as main negotiators and pushing forward the creation of the sub-commission on gender. After more than three years of struggle, women organizations reshaped the male dominated composition of the peace negotiation process. How these measures impacted the final agreement will be discussed in the next section.

The experiences, demands, and challenges faced by Colombian women encapsulate some of the main lessons and concerns made by feminist scholars. They expose the difficulties of breaking through the male bias of peace processes and reveal how the male-oriented understanding of war bolsters discrimination against women (Gardam 1993; Otto, 2010; Gardam 1997; Ní Aoláin and Turner 2007; McGuiness 2007). However, they also provide a glance of feminism's advances and strengths. First, it shows the importance of international regulations for supporting women's inclusion in peace processes (Otto 2010; Engle 2014; Halley 2008). Second, it evidences how the victories made by Colombian women served as a foothold for advancing the inclusion of gender in the peace process (Céspedes-Báez 2014; Céspedes-Báez 2017; Jaramillo and Erazo 2016). Lastly and most importantly, women's demands for a transformative peace process,

understood as one that foments political debates and modifies authoritative cultural practices, brings to light the potential of feminism as a movement that articulates gender demands beyond women (Ackerly *et al.* 2006).

b. From marginality to co-optation/translation of gender perspectives

Since the incorporation of women in forefront negotiating positions and the establishment of the sub-commission on gender, meaningful issues related to women's experiences of conflict in the peace process were raised. Colombian women's rights NGOs, movements, and advocates made this transformation possible given the expertise on women and armed conflict they had developed during the 2000s and the growing recognition that this knowledge had elicited from the Colombian Constitutional Court and the Colombian society in general (Céspedes-Báez 2017).

The sub-commission on gender became a critical outlet to channel to the negotiating table the insights that women organizations had structured and honed in the last twenty years regarding women in the context of the Colombian conflict. Between February and March 2015, the sub-commission held a series of meetings with women's organizations' representatives to hear first-hand their contributions to the items that were being discussed between the government and the FARC. According to the information provided by the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, eighteen women representatives flew to Havana to present their recommendations to the negotiating parties. Among them were organizations such as Asociación Amanecer de Mujeres por Arauca, Red Nacional de Mujeres, Iniciativa de Mujeres por la Paz, Ruta Pacífica de Mujeres, Coordinación Nacional de Despazados–Departamento de Mujeres, and Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas, Negras e Indígenas (Response to official writ for information submitted to the High Commissioner for Peace presented by the authors, Bogota, October 9, 2015). They came from different regions and various ethnic, racial, and social communities.

The significance of the sub-commission and the importance it had for women's NGOs, movements, and advocates can be grasped through the comparison between the first three points of the agenda that were agreed before it was established and the point regarding victims that was negotiated after the sub-commission began to operate. Firstly, the draft on rural reform, as the Coalition 1325 indicated, evidenced an out-of-date understanding of women and their situation in the agrarian world (Mesa de Conversaciones 2014b). The backbone of the so-called gender perspective integrated in this point replicated a conception of women as mothers and caregivers, awarding differential protection

to them when they were pregnant, lactating or heads of the household. Nowhere in this draft was it possible to find measures that benefited rural women as agents, producers, breadwinners or entrepreneurs or that incorporated some of the proposals women made in the 2013 National Summit of Women and Peace to guarantee their access, control, and recovery of land.[14] The invisibility of women's demands in relation to land and to the urgency of reviewing the rules for proving property rights exposes the masculine biases with which the process initiated.

The second point of the negotiation (political participation), which was also settled before the creation of the gender sub-commission, reproduced many of the problems of the item on agrarian policy (Mesa de Conversaciones 2013). The gender approach remained vague and continued to portray women as a group in need of special protection. For example, the inclusion of women did not go beyond enunciating that the gender perspective would be incorporated or asserting the importance of taking women into account for the implementation of certain measures. As it happened on the point on agrarian policy, most of the document equated women with vulnerability. It did not acknowledge and elaborate, until the end, on the key role women play as decision-makers. Even though the last part of the agreement recognized women as important in the prevention of conflict and peacebuilding, it stood in stark contrast with all the rhetoric that precedes this declaration.

Something similar happened with the document on the solution to illegal drugs (Mesa de Conversaciones 2014a). The inclusion of women's issues in this point appears to be limited to the invocation of the incorporation of the gender perspective without further details or to the protection of old-fashion conceptions of women, such as in the case of women heads of the household. There was no examination of how women participate in drug trafficking or the way in which they use illegal drugs. This lack of analysis impeded any accurate comprehension of how this agreement was going to impact them in issues such as crop substitution or sentencing guidelines. As the 2013 National Summit of Women and Peace pointed out, women are usually the weakest link in the drug trafficking cycle. In this vein, the drafts of the agreement failed to consider women's agency and capacity to negotiate with the government.

The draft on armed conflict-related victims demonstrated a different reality from the one that was displayed in the first three negotiated points. When this point was discussed, women were active participants as negotiators and the sub-commission on gender had been established. The document on victims incorporated from the beginning an operative perspective of women. It

14 See: Cumbre Nacional de Mujeres y Paz 2013.

was not limited to invoking their inclusion but it also encompassed the specific knowledge women's rights NGOs, movements, and advocates have produced in the last two decades and practical clauses that translated that knowledge into precise lines of action. Concerning the former, the incorporation of women in it was rooted in the recognition of the differential and disproportionate impact armed conflict has imposed on them and on the silent and ominous incidence of sexual violence in this context. Regarding the latter, these general premises were turned into the explicit prohibition of guaranteeing amnesties or indults to sexual violence crimes and the creation of a special team on sexual violence within the Investigation and Accusation Unit that is part of the Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition planned in the agreement. This was in line with the demands of Five Keys (Cinco Claves), a coalition of women's rights NGOs and activist established in April 2015 to pressure the negotiation table to recognize the pervasive nature of sexual violence against women in conflict and introduce an explicit amnesty ban for this crime. Corporación Humanas, Corporación Sisma Mujer, Red Nacional de Mujeres, and Campaña No es Hora de Callar used this platform to strategically place this crime as a top priority in the question of women in conflict in Havana and to legitimate before the negotiators and the public a decade of advocacy and litigation.[15]

Even though the draft on victims could be read as a victory for women and a demonstration of their increasing leverage in the peace negotiations through their direct presence and advocacy and their dialogue with the sub-commission on gender, there was a caveat that it is important to have in mind: their incorporation of women's issues in this part of the agreement was almost totally restricted to make women visible as victims and to outline special measures in relation to sexual violence, something that was going to happen as well when the sub-commission had the opportunity to revise the point on the Solution to Illegal Drugs. In this sense, women's NGOs, movements, and advocates succeeded in including their voices in these points, but they ended up reinforcing an idea of women tied to victimhood and of sexual violence as the paradigmatic crime against women.

Although this situation mirrors the trajectory and knowledge most Colombian women NGOs and activists have built around women and conflict, it leaves aside their multifaceted experiences in this setting (Céspedes-Báez 2014; Céspedes-Báez 2017). Without diminishing the significance of sexual crimes in conflict and the need to make them visible and prosecute them, the combined effect of the discourse of women's activists and the agreement on victims was one

15 See: Corporación Humanas, Corporación Sisma Mujer, Red Nacional de Mujeres, and Campaña No es Hora de Callar 2015.

in which a one-dimensional image of woman as tied to her sexuality emerged. Women have not only been subjected to sexual crimes, but they have also experience economic ones that need to be redressed and which did not find any significant elaboration in this document. Perhaps this achievement reflected what Colombian society is willing to recognize as women's issues and the resistance to picture women as landowners, business owners, and entrepreneurs.

In February 2016, a group of grassroots women made a series of proposals for the end of the armed conflict and the implementation and verification of agreements. This time, however, women's demands did not center on issues of victimhood. They insisted on the need to end the militarization of society, and claimed for the implementation of clear measures to undo the structures that oppress women in the political, economic, and social arenas (Propuestas de las mujeres populares para el Fin del conflicto y la Implementación, verificación y refrendación de los acuerdos 2016). Their proposals challenged the traditional understandings of women in conflict that dominated the negotiation parties' narratives and the interaction between them and women's NGOs, movements, and advocates. They also embodied the multifarious nature of feminism and Colombian women's diversity.

Later on, the sub-commission had the opportunity to revise the first three points of the agenda that were negotiated before its establishment and was able to convey a more complex version of women in conflict. The fact that the sub-commission had the ability to go through the agreed points to review the inclusion of gender demonstrated the importance of this instance. During this revision, the sub-commission on gender transformed the depiction of rural women, recognizing and conveying their agency, their citizenship, and the urgency of protecting their rights primarily as individuals and not as mothers, caregivers or wives. Something similar occurred with the point on political participation, in which the sub-commission manage to include the acknowledgment the barriers women faced to engage in politics and introduced specific orders such as the mandatory inclusion of measures to protect women who participate in politics in the Integral Security System for Political Participation (Sistema Integral para el Ejercicio de la Política), and the obligation of gathering and tracking information regarding threats and dangers women face in this context, among others. Regarding the point about the Solution to Illegal Drugs, the sub-commission left its imprint through the inclusion of measures to tackle gender-based violence related to drug trafficking and drug use, and the establishment of a strong correlation between violence against women, particularly sexual violence, and these activities.

The resistance to the influence of the sub-commission was evident when the peace agreement was rejected by a small margin in October 2016's plebiscite.

Its opponents argued, among other things, that the "gender ideology" included in the accords was not acceptable since it was against Colombian traditional values. Although they were mostly referring to the introduction of measures to benefit lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and intersex groups (LGBTI), the backlash indirectly impacted the women-sensitive approach of the negotiating table forcing the negotiators to reduce gender to women and embrace a more conservative view of womanhood to defend the revised version of the agreement. At the time of writing it was still unclear how this situation would unfold in the implementation of the agreement and in the design of public policy and regulation in the future (Céspedes-Báez 2016). For sure, this will be a matter of further and in-depth analysis in order to understand how the peace negotiations with FARC shaped the understanding of gender in the country.

Conclusions

Colombian women struggled to rebuff the masculinist hegemony in the peace process between the government and the FARC in Havana. In the initial stages of the peace talks, men held the baton of the discussion tightly. It was only with the addition of women plenipotentiary negotiators that masculinity's grip on the agenda began to weaken. Gradually, women's movements managed to be included in the negotiations, breaking the silence on issues of gender and challenging the gender biases of the initial transitional justice and peacebuilding strategies.

Women's movements used a variety of tactics to challenge their exclusion from the peace process and their demands mirrored some of the key concerns raised by feminist scholars. The first tactic was to engage with the government from a normative and legal angle. Women's movement pressured the government by arguing that the presence of women was an international and national obligation of the state. From this perspective, if women were not part of the peace negotiations, the government would be dismissing the gender standards set out by the international community. Thus, international mechanisms supported local women's movements' efforts towards change. Rather than a top-down imposition, the advances on issues of gender were made possible by the organization of local women's movements.

As a second tactic, women's movements defended that the inclusion of women was necessary for the protection of women's rights, arguing that relative numbers can affect the strategies and design of transitional justice and peacebuilding processes. In this sense, they insisted that without women the peace process risked reproducing male subjectivity and interests. This echoed the feminist scholars' claim that peace processes tend to place "greater emphasis on violations experienced by men

and to leave out those violations experienced by women" (Ní Aoláin and Turner 2007, 242). Accordingly, women's movements demanded their participation in the peace process as a necessary measure to integrate their perception of particular problems and make the discussion more sensitive to the difficulties faced by female survivors (Gardam and Charlesworth 2000). Hence, women's participation became an integral part of the gender approach. The women's movements was crucial to bring gender into the debate, as they refused to accept agreements and designs of transitional justice that did not garner sufficient support for feminist ideals.

The third tactic was voiced with the slogan created by Mujeres por la Paz with which this article began: "There cannot be peace while there is oppression and half of humanity is still excluded from full development, women" (Mujeres por la Paz 2012b). This argument invoked justice and equality to demand women's right to participate in the decisions that affect them. It perceived the marginalization of women from peace processes as an attack on democracy. As framed by Corporación Humanas and Fokus, "without women there cannot be real peace" (2010). The arguments based on justice were a transversal feature of women's movements efforts. The call for peace with social justice exemplified how the advancement of feminist ideals was profoundly linked to more holistic ideas of peace. These demands went beyond legal recognition or international obligations. They were a moral vindication made by women's movements. Explicitly, the calls for the removal of obstacles that deny women the same rights and opportunities as men, the efforts to promote women's participation in the peace process, and the demands to develop a gender approach, stemmed from the belief that all social barriers that frustrate women's rights materialize as an antithesis to justice.

The fact that certain issues never managed to find a space in the final drafts of the peace agreement also serves an indicator of the male bias of the peace talks. The slow gains made by women's movements reflected the difficulty of breaking through masculinity's hegemony. The recalcitrant and reticent attitude of the government to incorporate women plenipotentiary negotiators, the delays in the creation of the sub-commission on gender, and certain gender-related silences that appear throughout the agreed drafts are a blunt verification of the male biases of the process. These hurdles prove how the way in which war is understood – mainly as a men's affair, plays against taking seriously their insights and participation in peacebuilding efforts (Gardam 1993; Otto 2010). Women's involvement was necessary for overcoming these.

One of the major challenges was to break away from narrow visions that infantilize and sexualize women's experiences of warfare. Despite the Colombian women's movement's efforts, sexual violence recurrently gained center stage, not as a paladin of women's agenda-setting but as a threshold to the adoption of a

gender approach. This approach to the understanding of what is to be a woman in conflict helped to put aside proposals coming from women from grassroots sectors who have been more concerned about the economic model and for whom sexual violence is just another and not *the* expression of patriarchy's oppressive nature. As in other forums, "the absence of any reference to addressing the structural causes of women's inequality, like women's economic marginalization" (Otto 2010, 106) has materialized as a loud silence in the Colombian peace process. Despite women's efforts, the spectrum of contestation to masculinity's hegemony was reduced to women's participation and victimhood, leaving out the possibility of greater alterations in the social, economic and political arenas. The selective engagement of the negotiating team with certain gender issues unveils the pervasive character in which silence played a role in the replication of male privilege and power. The overarching attention given to sexual violence exposes how masculinism co-opts certain type of victims and truths; and it reaffirms the importance of creating concrete mechanisms to foster women's effective inclusion in transitional justice processes (Gardam and Charlesworth 2000; Gallagher 1997; McGuiness 2007).

The creation of the sub-commission on gender influenced how gender was incorporated into the peace process. At the crux of the matter, it challenged the neglect given to women in warfare. It brought certain women's issues to the table and confronted the masculine gendered hierarchy that impeded a serious examination and understanding of women's role in armed conflict, peacebuilding and transitional justice.

In the end, the conjunction of tactics was what made the integration of women's issues in the Colombian peace process possible. It was through the opening of various fronts that women and gender found a seat at the negotiating table. Though many obstacles to women's full inclusion and to a more comprehensive incorporation of a gender approach remain, local women's movements managed to contest masculinity's hegemony in the peace process between the government and the FARC in Havana. Despite the challenges, the victories won by women's movements reveal feminism's potential transformative force.

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