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Without women there cannot be real peace

A study on Colombia's feminist activism for peace

Alicia Rijlaarsdam

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Supervisor: Karin Lindsjö

Abstract

The 2016 peace agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) is said to be the most inclusive peace deal in history. This study explores how feminist organisations for peace view and acted on the peace accord, the changed gender discourse, and its current implementation. By drawing on literature on women's participation in peace processes, it is essential to examine the views of feminist activists in building a sustainable peace. Amid resumed violence, especially targeted towards human rights defenders, feminist activists describe the difficulties they face due to underlying patriarchal structures in society. The study argues for a focus on women's agency and its incredible potential for building sustainable peace when successfully included.

Keywords: Colombia, feminism, gender, implementation, peace negotiations

Word count: 19.600

Resumen

Se dice que el acuerdo de paz de 2016 entre el gobierno colombiano y las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias del Ejército Popular de Colombia (FARC-EP) es el acuerdo de paz más inclusivo de la historia. Este estudio explora cómo las organizaciones feministas para la paz ven y actúan sobre el acuerdo de paz, el discurso de género cambiado y su implementación actual. Al recurrir a la literatura sobre la participación de las mujeres en los procesos de paz, es esencial examinar las opiniones de los activismos feministas en la construcción de una paz sostenible. En medio de la reanudación de la violencia, especialmente dirigida contra defensores de los derechos humanos, las activistas feministas describen las dificultades que enfrentan debido a las estructuras patriarcales subyacentes en la sociedad. El estudio aboga por un enfoque en la agencia de las mujeres y su increíble potencial para construir una paz sostenible cuando se incluye con éxito.

Palabras claves: Colombia, feminismo, género, implementación, negociaciones de paz

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List of abbreviations

AUC	United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia <i>Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia</i>
CEV	Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence Commission <i>Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No Repetición</i>
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
ELN	National Liberation Army <i>Ejército de Liberación Nacional</i>
EPL	Popular Liberation Army <i>Ejército Popular de Liberación</i>
FARC-EP	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army <i>Fuerzas Armada Revolucionarias Colombiana - Ejército del Pueblo</i>
FIP	Ideas for Peace Foundation <i>Fundación Ideas para la Paz</i>
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HDI	Human Development Index
JEP	Special Jurisdiction for Peace <i>Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz</i>
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
M-19	19th of April Movement <i>Movimiento 19 de Abril</i>
NOREF	Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OHNCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SIVJRNR	Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Recurrence <i>Sistema Integral de Verdad, Justicia, Reparación y No Repetición</i>

UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WHO	World Health Organization
WPS	Women, Peace and Security Agenda of the United Nations

1. Introduction

1.1 Problem definition

The 27th of October 2019 marked a historic day for Colombia as Claudia López, the first woman and openly gay candidate, was elected mayor of Bogotá, nationally considered to be the second most important post after the president (BBC, 2019a). These were the first local elections after the signing of the 2016 peace agreement between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP), internationally recognized as history's most inclusive peace deal (Salvesen & Nylander, 2017). For the first time in history, a gender sub-commission was established by negotiators from both sides. The novel process led to the Final Agreement calling for institutional actions to strengthen political participation of women and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) community as well as guarantees for economic, social, and cultural rights for women (O'Neill, 2016). Surprisingly, the inclusion of the concept of gender became a point of controversy and led, by a small margin (50,2%), to the negative vote on the Final Agreement by the Colombian people (Céspedes-Báez and Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 87; Idler, 2016). The church and other conservative parties argued that the agreement and its inclusion of gender threatened the notion of family. This resulted in largely replacing the concept of 'gender' for the more traditional concepts of 'women' and 'men' (Ruiz-Navarro, 2019).

Cynthia Cockburn (2007) stated that women and women's organisations are among the few surviving bearers of democratic demands in Colombia. Male leaders of human rights and peace organisations had been assassinated or disappeared. Class-based workers' and peasants' movements have been repressed or deemed corrupt (Cockburn, 2007, p. 18). Since the 2000s, feminist organisations for peace have won ground in Colombia. During the 2012 to 2016 peace negotiations, around forty organisations, under the common name *Mujeres por la Paz* (Women for Peace), increasingly claimed their roles in the still highly masculine environment of peace negotiations (Céspedes-Báez and Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 93). Since the signing of the peace agreement, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for

Human Rights (OHNCHR) has pointed to the staggeringly high number of human rights defenders killed in Colombia. Last year, 107 people were killed with the country still verifying 13 additional cases. In 2018, attacks on human rights defenders had already intensified with 115 killings (UN News, 2020). The killing of female human rights defenders increased by almost fifty percent in 2019 compared to 2018 (The Guardian, 2020; UN News, 2020).

Amid resumed violence, it seems difficult to successfully implement the peace accord. First results show that the implementation levels are significantly lower for gender stipulations than for the stipulations that do not mention gender (Gindele et al., 2018; Kroc Institute 2018). The United Nations (UN) Special Representative for Colombia, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, told the Security Council: *'Peace will not be fully achieved if the brave voices of social leaders continue to be silenced through violence and if former combatants who laid down their weapons and are committed to their reintegration continue to be killed'* (Ruiz Massieu, 2019, as cited in UN, 2020, para. 4). The highly conservative government of President Duque is often seen as an obstacle to the successful implementation of the gender equality goals (O'Neill, 2016; Paarlberg-Kvam, 2019; Restrepo Sanin, 2019; UN, 2020).

1.2 Purpose of study

In recent history, scholarly work on war and conflict rarely addressed women and gender, and if they were, they were often framed in limited roles, those of civilians or victims (Sjoberg, 2014, p. 11). While recognition of, for example, gender-based violence (GBV) is incredibly important, the sole victimization of women does not necessarily benefit their position in society. The conception of war as an act of men reinforces the marginalization of women and has long been criticized by feminist scholars (Céspedes-Báez and Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 88). Both scholarly work and international organisations increasingly recognize the links between gender equality and international peace and security (Bouvier, 2016, p. 6).

In light of Colombia's recent developments, the interesting and highly relevant case led me to focus this thesis on the engagement of the country's feminist activisms in relation to the peace negotiations, the role of the gender sub-commission, and the

implementation of the agreement in relation to gender. With the signing of the Final Agreement in 2016 the Colombian government and the FARC-EP had made many developmental promises. Of the accord's 578 stipulations, one-third have not been implemented at all, the implementation of another third have barely begun. The stipulation on gender show an even slower implementation (Kroc Institute, 2019).

The aim of this thesis is to research how feminist organisations for peace exercised their activism during the negotiations and how they view the peace accord and its current implementation. The overall purpose is to contribute to knowledge on feminist peace activists and conflict resolution.

1.3 Research question and sub-questions

In order to successfully reach the aim a research question is designed to narrow down the scope of the study. The main research question and sub-questions are:

How do Colombia's feminist activism view and act on the peace agreement between the FARC-EP and the Colombian government, the changed gender discourse, and its current implementation?

(1) How did the demands of the Colombian feminist activists translate into the peace negotiations and the final agreement?

(2) How do different feminist activists view the peace agreement and the changed gender discourse?

(3) How do different feminist activists view the current implementation of the peace agreement?

1.4 Relevance to field of development studies

As mentioned earlier, Cockburn (2007) stated that feminist peace activist groups were among the few bearing survivors of democratic demands in Colombia. Globally, efforts by women peace activists have often been ignored by the international community, policymakers, media, and scholars. This is partly due to difficulty in measuring and documenting and due to them being considered unimportant (Tripp, 2018, p. 5). This tendency is slowly changing with the help of

efforts by the UN and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (UNSCR, 2000). Reardon (1993, p. 3) argued that it was women who formulated and propelled the feminist peace agenda, it is women whose resistance to war and struggle for social justice provided many concepts of positive peace and humane alternatives. Similarly, Moser (1993) argued that rather than state intervention, it was the powerful social and political women's movements that developed the concept of gender planning. She stated: *'if gender planning depends on the participation of women, then it is the organisation of women within civil society that needs examination'* (Moser, 1993, p. 191). The lack of research in this field is more telling of the gaps in literature than of an absence of women's engagement in informal peace activities (Tripp, 2018, p. 5).

The main gender difference in post-conflict societies is that women tend to be more active in informal peace processes. Bouta et al. (2005, p. 65) argued: *'the key development challenge is to support women and women's Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), not only during, but also after conflict, as they can form the foundation for a strong and more inclusive society'*. A multiyear forty-case study found that the strength of women's influence is positively correlated with agreements being reached and implemented as well as peace being more sustainable (Paffenholz, 2016, p. 21). The increasing involvement of women and women's organisations in informal peace processes or relief work during conflict may form an important foundation and bridge into formal peace and political processes and thus contribute to a more vibrant and more inclusive post-conflict society. Additional studies are needed to assess gender roles in informal peace processes (Bouta et al., 2005, p. 67, 70).

Development is inseparably related to peace (Reardon, 1993, p. 6). Equality cannot be achieved without just development and women's equality can be best assured by international peace and security. As Reardon argued: *'there can be little development without peace'* (Reardon, 1993, p. 7).

The development apparatus has changed its gaze over the years. Initially focussing on peasants as clients of development, in the 1970s, women were 'discovered' and

became a major focus in the developmental sector (Escobar, 2011, p. 214). Still, in many of today's development programmes emphasis is put on educating women and girls and their participation in society (Chant, 2016; Parpart, 2014a). Escobar (2011, pp. 171-172) argues that modern discourses have often refused to recognize the productive role of women as they focused on a limited view of women's lives. Scholars argued that development managed to modernize patriarchy, having grave consequences for what was long defined as Third World Women (Escobar, 2011, p. 173; Mohanty, 2003). Both Escobar (2011) and Mohanty (2003) point to the effects of colonial and patriarchal practices by speaking for the experiences of women. By seeing women as clients of development, the women in the Global South are silenced from speaking about their own experiences. To avoid the common discourse of women as clients of development, this thesis focusses on women's agencies, their visions, and their influences.

1.5 Disposition of thesis

The thesis is structured around nine main sections. In the next chapter, the literature review provides an insight into previous scholarly work on women in conflict, victimization, women's empowerment, and feminist organisations. Thereafter, the historical background gives a brief overview of Colombia's armed conflict. In the fourth chapter, the concepts and theories used are described in the theoretical framework. In the fifth chapter, the methodology is addressed. Chapter six to eight follows the sub-questions for the analysis. Chapter six focusses on feminist activism during the peace negotiations. Chapter seven focusses on the view of feminist activism on the peace accord and the changed gender discourse. Chapter eight is centred on the current implementation of the accord and how this is perceived by feminist activism. The final chapter discusses the findings and provides a conclusion. Thereafter, the references can be found as well as the appendixes, the interview guide, those interviewed, and the coding tree.

2. Literature review

The way women and gender are viewed within literature on war and conflict has changed over the past decades. This chapter will describe scholarly work addressing the exclusion of gender in discourses on war and conflict, as well as the changed focus on women's agency in development thinking.

2.1 Marginalization of women in warfare

Much of scholarly work on war and conflict does not address women, much less gender. When it does, it often frames women in limited roles, of for example helpless civilians, or as logistical problems. Women are not absent from historical and contemporary accounts of war, their portrayal is, however, partial, and often inaccurate in its representation. Women are often understood differently and therefore also treated differently in the discourse on war and peace (Sjoberg, 2014, p. 11, 36). Similarly, the legal framework on armed conflict has been little concerned with women over the centuries. If women are viewed at all, it was primarily as victims of conflict rather than as autonomous rights-bearing subjects (Cahn, 2018, p. 3).

A male dominated hierarchy has prevented a serious examination and understanding of the role of women in armed conflict, peacebuilding, and transition. For decades, feminist scholars have criticized the silence given to women in warfare while arguing that the conception of war as an act of men reinforces the marginalization of women (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018).

2.2 Growing visibility of gender-based violence

In recent years, the different and common experiences of men and women in situations of armed conflict have gathered international attention. Naomi Cahn (2018) argues that this is the result of multiple factors, among which an opportunistic focus on gendered violations by some states, greater exposure of a more holistic vision on the experiences of women during armed conflict and deepening awareness of the vulnerability of men engaging in war. There is increasing recognition that gendered harms are insufficiently captured by the

narrow rubric of sexual harm and encompass a range of economic, social, and political dimensions (Cahn, 2018, p. 1, 5).

Generally, feminist scholars have focused on revealing the differential impact of warfare on women. Addressing sexual violence has been the main means in this discussion, as its victims are predominantly female (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 88). In the 1990s, a transnational women's rights movement helped human rights groups become more aware of the gendered aspects of war (Cahn, 2018, p. 3; Moser, 1993, p. 191). By doing so, feminists have succeeded in making female suffering more visible in times of war (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 88).

Media capture also gave rise to sustained transnational feminist advocacy on the inclusion of gender-based harms (Cahn, 2018, p. 4). This led international legal frameworks to prioritize attention towards the recognition of sexual violence in armed conflicts. For much of modern history, Gender Based Violence (GBV) during armed conflict and in post-conflict settings was simply thought of as unfortunate and unavoidable. Recently, two streams of thought have arisen. The first stream sees GBV as a tool of war, to intentionally destabilize, humiliate and degrade a population in times of war. Under this explanation, GBV is seen as part of a 'campaign of terror'. The second stream explains the prevalence of GBV by the heightened occurrence of violence in society. GBV is then a sole continuation of a violent conflict in a country (Manjoo & McRaith, 2011).

The growing visibility of women in conflict, enhanced by increased media attention, is also reflected in institutional and policy reorientation. Both the political and legal movement have placed pressure on those involved in conflict-resolution processes to pay greater attention to the experience of women and their inclusion in peace negotiations and agreements (Cahn, 2018, p. 1). International regulations have increasingly adopted a gender perspective to tackle the problems underscored by feminist movements (Bouvier, 2016; Engle, 2014; Sjoberg, 2014). Examples being the UN, the World Bank, and the World Health Organization (WHO) (ECOSOC, 2010, 7; UNSCR, 2000; World Bank, 2019, WHO, 2002). The

international advances have, in turn, inspired many local and global feminist movements for change (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 90).

The passage of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000 has often been named as the start of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda (WPS). Over the past decades this landmark has become the dominant discourse in framing women's engagement on the international field. The resolution did not appear in a vacuum, it was the result of years of debate and lobbying. In 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action, for example, devoted an entire chapter to women and armed conflict (Rajagopalan, 2016). The UN's engagement has delivered a visible presence for women in the field of war and peace. Criticism was voiced as the WPS has focused much of their efforts on sexual harms. UNSCR 1325 specified that women should be 'mainstreamed' into all peacekeeping and peace-building processes (Cahn, 2018, p. 4; Rajagopalan, 2016; UNSCR, 2000). Feminist scholars have argued that claims of gender mainstreaming are often more propagandistic than genuine (Sjoberg, 2014, p. 11).

2.3 Critical perspective on victimization

From a critical perspective, feminist scholars have addressed the dangers of reducing the role of women in warfare to victims of sexual violence as it is only one of the features of armed conflict that affects women. Its focus conceals other types of victimhood (Engle, 2014). Scholars pay attention to the fact that women make up the majority of internally displaced people and explore how armed violence sharpens structures of male domination (Bennoune, 2003, p. 173).

While the recognition of gender-based harms is incredibly important, the sole victimization of women does not necessarily benefit their position in society. Consequently, the study of gender in armed conflict should not be reduced to the study of women as victims (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 89; Salvesen & Nylander, 2017, p. 2). There is an increasing amount of research highlighting that women are victims in multiple ways as well as actors in conflict and post-conflict reconstruction (Cahn, 2018, p. 5). As a result, women are increasingly seen as active agents of change (Sen, 1999, p. 191). Gender orders are considered a

relevant characteristic of warfare and post-conflict settings (Haynes, Ni Aolain & Cahn, 2011). In the past decade, the UN has released several resolutions and initiatives in which women's inclusion in post-conflict processes is deemed crucial (UNSCR 1889, 2009; UNSCR 2122, 2013; UNSCR 2467, 2019; UNSCR 2493, 2019). Cahn (2018, p. 4) argues, however, that the potential capacity of these efforts to bridge implementation gaps remains largely theoretical.

As with warfare, peace processes are typically deeply gendered. While women will often be at the forefront of peace initiatives throughout a conflict, peace agreements are usually negotiated predominantly by men (Cockburn, 2007, p. 1; Ní Aoláin & Turner, 2007, p. 239). Often, it is assumed that if women have a role in war, it is making and preserving peace to end conflict. This association of women and peace has a long history, built on assumptions about women's nonviolence as mothers, their physical weakness, and emotional empathy as well suited for brokering peace (Sjoberg, 2014, pp. 47-48). Although women contribute in many informal ways, e.g. participation in civil society, to conflict-ending and post-conflict processes, women are poorly represented in formal peace processes (Cahn, 2018, p. 5). The conduct of war is predominantly male which leads to a male bias in negotiations and mediators are usually men (Ní Aoláin & Turner, 2007, p. 240). This masculine preference has influenced transitional justice away from women's societal narratives. Feminist writers call for concrete mechanisms of inclusion in peace negotiations as a solution to the marginalization of women from transitional justice and peacebuilding processes (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz 2018, p. 88).

2.4 Women's empowerment and agency

Relief and development agencies have encouraged the establishment of women's organisations to channel international assistance in post-conflict settings (Bouta et al., 2005, p. 69). This trend can be explained by the widely popularised 'feminisation of poverty' of the past twenty years (Chant, 2016). Reaching gender equality by focussing on women's empowerment is an important strategy in today's development field (Chant, 2016; Kabeer, 1994). Female agency has been growingly viewed as the solution to the hardship of the Global South (Chant, 2016; Sen, 1999).

Women's empowerment first arose in the development discourse in the 1980s (Cornwall et al., 2011; Parpart, 2014b). The writings of Moser (1993) and Sen (1999) reflected a growing concern within development studies that gender equality would only be achieved if women could challenge patriarchy and global inequalities (Cornwall et al., 2011). The post-1980 neoliberal policies meant that women worked for development rather than development served to further women's interests (Chant, 2016). Thus, women needed to gain independence and internal strength to determine choices in life. While some scholars argued that the term would lose its transformative edge, other scholars argued for a collective vision (Cornwall et al., 2011). Naila Kabeer played a major role in operationalizing empowerment, placing it at the centre of efforts to achieve gender equality (Cornwall et al., 2011). She emphasises the power within, a self-understanding that can inspire women (and some men) to recognize and challenge gender inequality (Kabeer, 1994). She is especially concerned with enhancing women's ability to exercise choice (Cornwall et al., 2011; Kabeer, 1994; Kabeer, 2015).

The positive notions of empowerment and gender equality rapidly entered the discourse of mainstream development agencies. They sought to alleviate the harsher effects of neo-liberal policies while often ignoring the difficulties of measuring and implementing the concepts of empowerment and gender equality (Parpart, 2014b). This active role of women presents them as agents of change who do not need to cooperate with men or reformulate established gender relations (Chant, 2016; Parpart, 2014b). The feminisation of poverty has resulted in a growing reliance on women and, more recently, on girls to solve world poverty (Chant, 2016).

A similar trend can be identified in peace and conflict studies as they have long bypassed the topics of women and gender. The inclusion of women in times of war and peace negotiations remains a challenge. The UNSCR 1325 (2000) affirms that the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. Through the passage of this resolution, international and regional

support have helped local and national initiatives of women peace activists (Bouvier, 2016).

In scholarly work, civil society is often seen as adding legitimacy to peace processes. Furthermore, when women are brought into peace processes, the likelihood of their success is enhanced as it has a positive impact on the sustainability of peace (Paffenholz, 2016; Tripp, 2018, p. 3). Support for women's organisations during and after conflict can strengthen the foundations of post-conflict civil society, which can make a critical contribution to the implementation of peace accords and a wide range of rehabilitation and development activities (Bouta et al., 2005, p. 66). The extent to which the wider political context is a constraint that determines NGO capacity to empower and emancipate women is highly complex (Moser, 1993, p. 208).

Tripp (2018) argues that women's peace movements in the post-Cold War era frequently share three common characteristics. First, a grassroots and local focus due to exclusion from formal peace negotiations. Second, an early and sustained commitment to bridging differences between factions instead of seeing peace as a goal to be reached at the end of the talks. Third, the use of international and regional pressures to create success on the local level. The practical nature of women's peace building has meant that activists have tended to pursue peace as a process during conflict. While an accord can be generally seen as an endpoint, women's organisations often see peace as an ongoing process that involves working together to solve common problems (Tripp, 2018, p. 11). Unfortunately, many Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), especially women's organisations, have difficulty surviving after a conflict ends which suggest the need for continued external support (Bouta et al., 2005, p. 69).

Despite remarkable activist engagement by women's movements, journalists and policy-decision makers often dismiss feminist ideas. While feminist movements do not always agree with each other, whether it is on causes, goals, or focusses, they generally share being led by women, fostering autonomy among grass root activists, building alliances, depending on donors, using their own gender-conscious

investigations and practices to challenge the oppression of women's experiences. Feminist movements are not regularly addressed (Enloe, 2014; Tripp, 2018). Common rationales are that feminist networks only represent a 'special interest', they are deemed unimportant due to unrealistically narrow understandings of concepts like security, stability, crisis, and development, or because their campaigns are supposedly lost and therefore not worth addressing (Enloe, 2014).

2.5 Feminist organisations in Colombia

Women's limited access to formal peace talks and negotiation tends to encourage their participation in informal processes, as was the case in Colombia. Women civil society activism evolved in the 1990s from mainly humanitarian relief work to active peace making (Bouta et al., 2005, p. 66). Overall, feminist advances brought gender into the peacebuilding and transitional justice agenda (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 90). In Colombia itself, another example is the Law 975 of 2005. It was passed to facilitate the demobilization and prosecution of paramilitaries, especially in relation to sexual violence. Overall, the national and international legal setting provided a front for advancing women's involvement in the peace negotiations with the FARC-EP (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 90).

Paarlberg-Kvam (2019) builds forth on the notion that despite the existence of an extensive body of scholarship focusing on women's experiences of war, there is fewer scholarly work on women's visions of peace. In '*What's to come is more complicated: feminist visions of peace in Colombia*' she describes three Colombian feminist movements and their visions of peace. The peace envisioned by the feminist activists is more comprehensive, transformative, and stable than that contained in the 2016 accord, it is antimilitarist, anti-neoliberal and antipatriarchal.

While Paarlberg-Kvam (2019) focusses more on the vision of the different social movements, Céspedes-Báez and Jaramillo Ruiz (2018) analysed the tactics used by the Colombia's women's rights NGOs, movements and advocacy groups in the peace negotiations between the Colombian government and former FARC-EP. Their time frame extends from August 2012, when the negotiations began, until

September 2016, when the final agreement was signed in Cartagena (Céspedes-Báez and Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 85). It was through a combination of tactics that the authors argue the women's peace movements were able to have a seat at the negotiation table (Céspedes-Báez and Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 105). The article therefore provides valuable lessons for understanding the gendered dynamics of peace processes.

Moser and Clark (2001) propose a holistic approach that came forth out of a workshop held in Bogotá in 2000. They begin their article by stating that Latin American experiences of conflict and the construction of a sustainable peace have tended to neglect a clear gender analysis. They emphasize the importance of a gender analysis in conflicts and humanitarian emergencies. By doing so, they break down the simplified understandings that portray men as actors and women as victims. The authors advocate a holistic approach to conflict and peace (Moser & Clark, 2001).

2.6 Summary

In summary, there is an increasing amount of literature on the topic of women as victims of war. Gradually, scholarly work has focused on a more holistic vision of conflict and peace negotiation in relation to gender. Feminist scholars have been successful in turning gender-related issues into important matters of analysis when discussing armed conflict, transitional justice, and peacebuilding (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 89). However, in practice, women are still often excluded from the discourse on war and peace negotiations. This makes Colombian feminist activism especially interesting. Their activism successfully influenced the inclusion of gender in the peace accord. Little scholarly work has been released on the implementation of the agreement and the inclusion of gender. The first results show that the implementation levels are significantly lower for gender stipulations than for the stipulations that do not mention gender (Gindele et al., 2018, p. 2). Many scholars point to the role of CSOs and activism as incredibly important in reaching sustainable peace and creating an inclusive society (Bouta et al., 2005; Bouvier, 2016; Paffenholz, 2016; Tripp, 2018).

3. Historical background

Colombia has had a long history with conflict and peace negotiations. In this chapter, I will briefly discuss the country's historical background.

After the Spanish independence in 1810, the Colombian political climate changed to an exclusive and radical one with two main parties of significance, Conservatives and Liberals. The two parties manifested themselves in the tendency of expressing politics by war which resulted in two odd traditions: civil confrontation as a political method and constitutionalism as a guerrilla ideology (Cockburn, 2007, p. 14; Vargas Velasquez, 2011, p. 1). In 1948, 'La Violencia' began with the assassination of popular left-wing leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. These two decades of violence were resolved with the founding of the National Front, an agreement that gave both parties a shared monopoly on political power. This formation led to a high rise in criticism in society as well as the insurgence of guerrilla movements (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018).

In 1964, both the FARC-EP and National Liberation Army (ELN) were founded. The armed guerrilla groups build support for their social and economic programmes in regions where exploitation of workers and peasants gave rise to great resentment. The armed groups funded their activities by means of extortion, kidnapping, taxes on production, and the processing and sale of cocaine. By doing so, they lost their political credibility (Cockburn, 2007, p. 14). Due to a lack of state presence in some regions, local communities looked at guerrilla groups for support.

The government's armed forces failed at eradicating the guerrilla movements. This led wealthy landowners, the business class and drug traffickers to fund their own armies, known as paramilitaries, the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC). The paramilitary groups were active in both rural and urban areas, battling guerrillas for control of their territories. Their strategies involved criminal elements as they too were deeply involved in narcotics (Cockburn, 2007, p. 15). By the 1990s, five of Colombia's insurgent groups, the 19th of April Movement (M-19), the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), Revolutionary Workers Party, Quintín Lame Armed

Movement, and a section of the ELN, had signed peace agreements with the Colombian government (Bouvier, 2016, p. 4).

After the signing of the peace agreement with the FARC-EP in 2016, a number of dissidents remain, as well as dissidents of the EPL. The liberation-theology inspired ELN has often negotiated with the Colombian government but as for now, has yet to continue to the table (Echandía Castilla, 2013). Under President Alvaro Uribe, between 2003 and 2006, the AUC demobilized some 32,000 members. The paramilitary demobilization has given rise to new regionally based criminal bands known generically as bacrim (bandas criminales) who deploy paramilitary tactics of intimidation, terror, social cleansing, and sexual violence (Bouvier, 2016, p. 5).

The armed conflict in Colombia is the longest and one of the most complex in the region which has led to the construction of a culture of hatred, distrust, resentment, exclusion, and non-acceptance of difference (Pizarro, 2017). Many scholars point to the stratified character of Colombian history (Bouvier, 2016; Cockburn, 2007; Garzón, 2014; Vargas Velasquez, 2011). The Colombian conflict has diverse, complex, and differentiated roots according to territorial, cultural, ethnic and gender factors (Garzón, 2014). The fight against the different guerrilla, especially after the establishment of paramilitary groups, only led to more violence (Cockburn, 2007, p. 14). Different presidents have tried implementing either a maximalist concept of peace with social and economic changes under discussion, or a minimalist agenda of agreement to disarm groups in exchange for electoral representation (Cockburn, 2007, p. 17). One could argue there has not been a proper public peace policy in Colombia, which has been disadvantageous to the negotiation processes and the construction of peace (Gutiérrez, 2012, p. 5).

The normalization of violence has managed to enter the daily life of the Colombian people for centuries. Since women are generally assigned to be caregivers, the prevalence of violence has had a great impact (Garzón, 2014, p. 8). The armed conflict has displaced more than six million people (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 86). As of December 2019, a staggering 8.9 million people have been registered by the government as armed conflict-related victims (Registro Único de

Victimas, 2019). Coincidentally, last year's UN Human Development Report was presented in Bogotá in December 2019. Colombia's Human Development Index (HDI) increased by 26.9% over the past thirty years classifying it as a high human development country (UNDP, 2019b, p. 5). However, when looking at the inequality adjusted HDI the number falls dramatically with a loss of 23.1% due to inequality in distribution. When looking at the gender aspect, Colombia ranks 94 out of 162 countries included in the index. Only 19,0% of parliamentary seats are held by women. Female participation in the labour market is 58.6% in comparison to 82.0% for men (UNDP, 2019b, p. 6). Colombia is among the developing countries with high female informal work rates, more than 50,0% of women are protected by minimal regulations: no benefits, lack of voice, or decent working conditions (UNDP, 2019a, p. 150).

Until the early 2000s, civil society had been largely excluded from Colombia's official peace processes (Cockburn, 2007, p. 17). In the early 1990s social mobilization for peace took off with gradually more sectors and regions becoming involved. An important initiative was the forming of Redepaz in 1993 (Redepaz, 2020). The NGO organized a national mandate in 1997 which generated over 10 million votes for peace. In 1998, a permanent Civil Society Assembly for Peace was formed. These civil society initiatives have involved both women and men (Cockburn, 2007, p. 18). In many parts of the country, leaders of human rights and peace organisations have been assassinated or have disappeared. Class-based workers' and peasants' movements have been repressed or deemed corrupt (Cockburn, 2007, p. 19).

The first women's activism in Colombia date back to the 1920s when María Cano or La Flor del Trabajo fought for worker's rights. In the following decades, a few decrees were released that allowed women to go to university. Only in 1957, when almost two million women took to the streets, were women granted the right to vote (Dávila, 2018). Founded in 1982, one of the oldest feminist organisations is Casa de la Mujer which has become an emblematic organization of feminism in Colombia (Casa de la Mujer, 2017; Dávila, 2018). Despite underrepresentation,

women played a critical role in consolidating the 1991 constitution, a breakthrough in proclaiming gender equality, opportunity, and rights (Dávila, 2018).

In the years that followed, other major feminist organisations were founded such as Red Nacional de las Mujeres and La Ruta Pacífica (Dávila, 2018). Today, Ruta Pacífica is the biggest women's organization for peace in Colombia with more than 300 organization and groups of women in eight regions (Cockburn, 2007, p. 18). The NGO represent a multitude of women and identities. What most characterizes Ruta Pacífica is their strategy of mass mobilizations, in which women travel in large numbers from all over the country to bring solidarity to women in a particular region (Cockburn, 2007, p. 21). Women civil society activism evolved in the 1990s from mainly humanitarian relief work to active peace making. Women's feminist organisations developed a complex network of national and local organisations that worked to gain influence in peace negotiations (Bouta et al., 2005, p. 66).

4. Theoretical framework

'A gender analysis is an indispensable addition to the miserably inadequate toolkit with which we currently strive to dismantle militarism and interrupt the cycle of war' (Cockburn, 2007, p. 12).

As mentioned before, the masculine character of war has long excluded women at the negotiation table. This has called for a more gendered approach to conflict and peace negotiations (Cockburn, 2007, Truño Salvadó, 2007, Moser & Clark, 2001). In line with Cockburn (2007), Sjoberg (2014) argues that the concept of gender and that of war and conflict are inseparable. To understand either fully, one should study both aspects of gender and conflict (Sjoberg, 2014, p. 11). First, the dangers of homogeneity are addressed, the use of the term feminisms is explained as well as Mohanty's (2003) concept of solidarity. Second, Reardon's (2007) holistic gender approach to peace studies is connected to the capabilities approach as it addresses the root causes of gender unfreedom, patriarchy. Third, a peace process is defined and Pizarro's (2017) syndrome of fracasomanía is explained.

4.1 The danger of homogeneity, solidarity, and feminisms

With the discovery of women as clients of development, female agency was growingly viewed as the solution to hardship in the Global South (Escobar, 2011; Chant, 2016; Sen, 1999). Feminist scholars argued that development managed to modernize patriarchy, having grave consequences for what they defined as Third World Women (Escobar, 2011, p. 173, Mohanty, 2003). Third World Women were framed as a homogenous group with similar problems and in need of similar solutions. This was not solely done by big development agencies but also by what Mohanty calls First World Feminism (Mohanty, 2003, pp. 21-22). Women, in other words, had become a problem, a subject of preoccupation, but according to interests defined by others (Escobar, 2011, p.190). Women were seen as a homogenous group and the starting point was the gender division of labour (Elmhirst, 2011, p. 130). As mentioned earlier, both Escobar (2011) and Mohanty (2003) point to the effects of colonial and patriarchal practices by speaking for the experiences of women. By drawing conclusions about poor women needing development,

patriarchy is modernized, which has been exactly the answer given by the international development establishment (Escobar, 2011, p. 231). Using women as a homogenous group is problematic as it assumes an ahistorical, universal unity between women based on a generalized notion of their subordination (Cockburn, 2007; Mohanty, 2003, p. 31; Moser, 1993, p. 198). The sole thing that categorizes women is based on sexual difference and power is automatically defined in binary terms which is historically reductive (Mohanty, 2003, p. 31). By problematizing women and considering the power of the development apparatus, colonialist effects are probable. In seeing women as clients of development, Third World Women are silenced from speaking about their own experiences (Escobar, 2011, p. 179, 180; Mohanty, 2003, p. 11, 31).

When looking at feminist writers, Mohanty (2003) has paved the way for building bridges between First World feminism and Third World Women. She argues for solidarity over sisterhood, feminist practice depends on finding similarities to building feminist connections. Reasons for alliance are political rather than biological or cultural. Solely being female does not assume oppression or a similar position in society globally. Having a common enemy can be a similarity and starting point for solidarity (Holland and Ramazanoglu, 2011; Mohanty, 2003). This trend can be strongly seen in feminist movements for peace, women have come together based on their common enemy war and conflict.

Instead of referring to feminism in a singular, this thesis refers to feminisms as a plural group. In doing so, *'difference, disagreement and dissonance among feminisms'* is acknowledged while understanding them as *'important contributors to dialogues on gender emancipation'* (Sjoberg, 2014, p. 5). A contextualised approach brings multiple feminist voices together on the questions of theorizing war. Feminisms are brought together by their shared interest in challenging gender subordination and war (Sjoberg, 2014). The importance of context is increasingly visible in the wider work on development theory (Escobar, 2011; Mohanty, 2003; Rist, 2014).

In summary, it is highly important to underline how Colombian feminist movements differ. The feminist and post-development scholars illustrate how reducing women to a homogenous group reduces their experiences to those given to them by others, in doing so patriarchal and colonial practices may be modernized (Escobar, 2011; Mohanty, 2003; Sjoberg, 2014). Mohanty's concept of solidarity is used to review the many alliances between the women's peace movements in Colombia. The inclusion of gender in the discourse on peace and conflict studies remains challenging due to patriarchal and power imbalanced structures. A holistic approach addressing the root causes is needed to include all aspects of the Colombian context. In the upcoming section Reardon's holistic approach to gender and conflict studies is introduced as well as the capabilities approach.

4.2 A holistic capabilities approach

Due to imbalanced power in social structures, gender inequality is specifically manifested in relation to armed conflict and political violence (Truño Salvadó, 2007, p. 129). Defining gender presents a challenge, the social construction of gender is complex and intersubjective (Sjoberg, 2013, p. 5) and does not adhere to the scope of this thesis. Gender constitutes the cultural construction of the differences of the sexes, the differences between men and women are culturally constructed, more than biologically determined. In this sense, the adaptation of gender as a category of analysis has meant one important epistemological rupture within the social sciences which has led to the acknowledgment of social inequality in the economic dimension (Truño Salvadó, 2007, p. 130).

As a prominent Nobel-prize nominated peace educator, Betty Reardon's writings are of great importance as her work is one of the earliest articulations of peace as holistically connected to justice. Her writings articulate a coherent conception of justice. From Reardon's perspective, justice compromises a holistic peace which conveys a capabilities approach (Paarlberg-Kvam, 2019, p. 197; Ragland, 2015, p. 37). The capabilities approach was popularised by Sen and Nussbaum in the 1980s. Capabilities are substantive opportunities and freedoms that allow individuals to do and be as they choose. Development is seen as a process of expanding people's real

freedoms. It requires the removal of major sources of unfreedoms: e.g. poverty, social exclusion, intolerance, or repressive states (Sen, 1999, p. 3). Instrumental freedoms - economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, protective security, and political freedoms - are connected and their enhancement will lead to the enhancement of overall human freedoms (Sen, 1999, p. 10).

When specifically looking at women's agency, in the past, social movements mainly concentrated on improving women's well-being. In recent decades, feminist movements have increasingly focused on the active role of women's agencies. Women are increasingly seen as active agents of change (Sen, 1999, p. 189). There is a major overlap between the two approaches as the active agency of women cannot ignore the absence of freedoms in women's well-being. Inevitably, both aspects of feminist movements have a substantial intersection. The changing focus of feminist movements is a crucial addition since the role as an agent is fundamentally distinct from the role as a patient (Sen, 1999, p. 190). Women's agency can have far-reaching impacts on the forces and organizing principles that govern society as a whole. Through independence and empowerment, women's agencies and voices are increased. A crucial aspect of seeing development as freedom is the recognition of political, economic, and political participation as well as leadership of women (Sen, 1999, p. 203). Using the capabilities approach, this thesis focuses on the agency of feminist movements and how their activism challenge unfreedoms limiting participation in the patriarchal arena of peace negotiations. The field of gender and peace is grounded in the problematic of patriarchy.

In line with Jenkins and Reardon's definition, patriarchy is defined as the '*social organization of men's control of power*' (2007, p. 210). The struggle for gender justice has developed throughout history. Drawing from the international women's movement and peace actions, the authors suggest a more inclusive dimension into the conditions of peace as a means to fully illuminate the problematic of patriarchy. In line with their work, gender can serve as the conceptual core of a comprehensive study exploring the problems, possibilities, institutions, values, concepts, and

human experiences that compromise the complexities of the peace problematic. A holistic approach to gender, therefore, means looking into patriarchy itself and its manifestation in institutions, cultural practices, and in social behaviour and relationships. Gender roles and relations are formed in parallel social and cultural contexts. To understand the contexts toward changing them, it is essential to understand gender as it is conditioned by patriarchy. Moving towards an inclusive gender perspective requires institutionalizing democratic practices and relations that promote tolerance of a range of sexual and gender identities (Jenkins & Reardon, 2007).

Women's peace movements tend to have an expansive vision of a holistic peace in common (Paarlberg-Kvam, 2019, p. 197; Reardon, 1993). Believing that civil society is the most effective realm for global change required for the achievement of women's equality, Reardon has encouraged educators to take part in the global civil order (Reardon, 1993; Reardon, 2012). Enloe (2014) also argues for the importance of women's collective resistance as it can rearrange both local and international systems of power. Gaining a reliable sense of (inter)national politics, one should look at all sorts of women's resistance (Enloe, 2014).

Thus, a holistic approach to peace is used. For this study this means looking at patriarchy itself and its manifestation in peace negotiations and implementation processes. As feminist movements for peace challenge patriarchy by their activisms, this approach is suitable. The capabilities approach clarifies the differences between women as agents and women as patients. In line with Reardon's (1993; 2012) and Enloe's (2014) writing, civil society is seen as an effective, if not most effective, realm in generating positive change for women's equality. A peace process is not seen as a punctual moment but as a continuous effort in reaching a sustainable peace. The inclusion of women and gender is highly important in all steps of a peace process, especially in the implementation phase.

4.3 Theory on peace negotiations

This section addresses theory on peace processes and specifically on negotiations. Fisas (2010, p. 5) defines a peace process as ‘*an effort to reach an agreement that ends violence, as well as to implement it, through negotiations that may require the mediation of third parties*’. This means a peace process is not a punctual moment, but a collective effort to initiate a new stage of progress and development that allows overcoming structural violence of a conflict. Negotiations are only a partial solution, the implementation phase is as, if not most, important to a peace process (Paarlberg-Kvam, 2019, p. 208).

There is a tendency of not learning from the efforts of previous governments and having unrealistic expectations. Pizarro (2017, pp. 28-29) refers to this phenomenon as ‘*fracasomanía syndrome*’. This term is not only used to refer to the Colombian context, but to the entire political culture of Latin America as it refers to ignoring past experiences, seeing only their negative parts and not deriving lessons or rescuing the positive they surely had. In relation to the Colombian peace negotiations, this meant that each government designed its own model. This concept will be used as it adequately describes the dynamics of Latin America’s ever-changing political climate.

Only a small part of conflicts ends in victory and defeat of one of the parties, while a much higher number, three times more, ends through some kind of agreement. The longer an armed conflict lasts, the harder it becomes to reach an agreement. In addition to length, there are at least three more reasons that complicate reaching an agreement, which are the injuries caused between the opposing actors and in society as a whole. In addition, due to lack of trust, it is difficult to find a place of understanding between the actors and finally, after years of continuous violence, violence can be seen as normalized and legitimized as a means to obtain results (Pizarro, 2017). These four factors will be considered when looking into the reasons of why reaching a peace agreement in Colombia has been so complex.

Additionally, Fisas (2010) describes different models for peace processes. He initially makes a distinction between an elitist and a participatory model. An elitist model is characterized by the regulation of primary actors, the State and the armed group. In the participatory model, society is given a voice, examples from Guatemala or South-Africa show how civil society had a protagonist role. Generally, the hierarchy of actors involved in a peace process is divided into three layers. The translated images can be found below. In Colombia, Cuba and Norway were official facilitators. The third and final layer of the pyramid is made up of civil society: social movements, popular organisations, and NGO's (Fisas, 2010, p. 21).

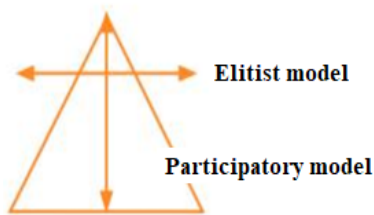


Figure 1, difference between elitist and participatory model of peace processes (Fisas, 2010, p. 21).

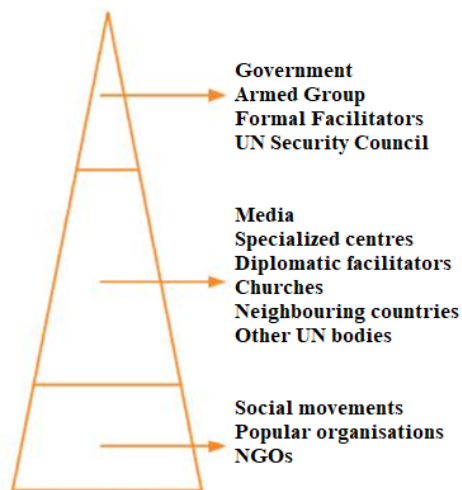


Figure 2, hierarchy pyramid of actors in peace processes (Fisas, 2010, p. 21).

5. Research methodology

In this chapter, the research methodology will be addressed. Describing the epistemological and ontological stance helps identify the possible underlying assumptions to a research (King et al., 2019, p. 8). First, the ontology, epistemology and chosen methodology are described. Second, the research design will be explained in detail.

5.1 Epistemology, ontology, and a feminist methodology

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, a holistic approach is used. This implies context is highly important in understanding the activism of feminist peace movements. A contextualised approach is closely related to both subjectivity and interpretivism. The latter, interpretivism, generally focusses on the description of aspects of the social world by offering a detailed account of specific social settings, processes, and relationships. People participate in different contexts and attach different interpretations and meanings to similar facts or events (Della Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 25, King et al., 2019, p. 11).

This research focusses on feminist activism and their interpretations of the peace accord and its implementation. Since this is such a specific occurrence in history, as an ontological stance, a contextualised approach is chosen. The basic assumption of contextualism is that everyday life is set in a particular time and is constantly changing. The historical, social, and cultural contexts are integral to understanding people's lives and experiences (King et al., 2019, p. 22). A contextualised approach is closely related to the notion of subjectivity. All knowledge produced is dependent upon context, including the standpoint taken by the researcher. Contextualism does not seek to reveal causal mechanisms but rather phenomena of interest (King et al., 2019, p. 23).

Suitable for this type of analysis are qualitative methods as they deal with contextualization, interpretation, understanding and perspectives of respondents. Qualitative methods are aimed at collecting information on people's views and perceptions which are subjective (Faryadi, 2019, p. 769; King et al., 2019, p. 7). Decisions about methodology are particularly powerful in the politics and practices

of knowledge production (Holland & Ramazanoğlu, 2011, p. 2). As Sandra Harding already pointed out in 1987, the best feminist analysis places the researcher within the frame of the picture he or she is attempting to paint (1987, p. 9). This tradition within feminist research, described by Donna Haraway (1988), understands the production of knowledge as located or situated. According to this approach, there is no outside position for the researcher (Lykke, 2010, p. 5). Subjectivity is, thus, highly important.

The notion of feminist methodologies is contradictory. The sole positioning of feminist scholars as using this type of method does not necessarily clarify their position. Feminist methodology is not universal as it is not distinguished by female researchers studying women, or the absence of an ontological, epistemological position and research technique that is distinctively feminist. Feminist methodology is distinctive to the extent that it is shaped by feminist theory, politics and ethics grounded in women's experiences. Feminists defy patriarchal truths and male dominance (Holland and Ramazanoglu, 2011, p. 16). What distinguishes feminist researchers is a shared political and ethical commitment that makes them accountable to a community of women with similar moral and political interests (Holland and Ramazanoglu, 2011, p. 16). This is in line with Mohanty's (2003) concept of solidarity. Feminism is closely related to the sciences and politics of interpretation and translation. Translation is always interpretive, critical, and partial (Haraway, 1988, p. 589). Choosing to research feminist activism for peace and the role of gender in peace processes can be seen as a form of activism in itself.

Based on the epistemological and ontological stance, I adopted a qualitative research strategy. Qualitative methods are generally based upon theoretical perspectives rooted in interpretivism (Faryadi, 2019). In this thesis I will focus on feminist activism in Colombia and their interpretations of the peace agreement and its implementation. The insights on activism obtained through interviews with research participants describe the impact on structures in relation to the ability to carry out such activism. I have, partly, chosen a feminist qualitative methodology as it is similar to that of previous researchers in the field of feminist activism and

gender issues in post-conflict societies (Bennoune, 2003; Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018; Cockburn, 2007; Engle, 2014; Moser & Clark, 2001; Sjoberg, 2014; Tripp, 2018; Truñó Salvadó, 2007). Mainly, a feminist qualitative contextualised approach is chosen in order to successfully and fittingly answer the research question. Since the research focusses on the acts and views of feminist activists for peace a contextualised approach is used as it addresses phenomena of interest while taking the extraordinary historic context into account.

5.2 Research design

Data collection in research is often a long process of gathering, measuring, and establishing meaning in order to answer the research question successfully (Faryadi, 2019, p. 773). Triangulation, the use of different research methods, helps diversify and verify ones data to see whether different datasets use the same discourse (Della Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 34). This thesis is based on two types of methods, semi-structured interviews and textual analysis. First, expert and remote interviewing is addressed while describing the sampling method. Second, the textual analysis is described.

5.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

One of the main advantages of conducting interviews is the freedom of asking any question (Faryadi, 2019, p. 775). As the thesis looks at people's opinions on the peace accord, the changed gender discourse, and its implementation, I conducted semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are built around themes, this leaves space for interviewees to bring up matters they deem important. A structured interview would leave less space for people's ideas and an unstructured interview would possibly leave too much space. As the topic and the Colombian context is complex and multifaceted, one can easily stray away from the topic. I therefore made an interview guide with themes, for which see appendix one. One guide was specifically made for feminist organisations whereas the other was more suitable for those involved in research and other peace institutions. During the interviews, I would first ask generic questions regarding the position of the interviewee and their involvement in Colombia. Thereafter, delving more in detail about the specifics of the Colombian context and their opinions on the peace accord, the changed gender

discourse, and the current implementation. Often, the questions in the interview guide served more as generic themes which I addressed with the interviewees. Sometimes, when participants were scarcer with the information shared, I would keep to a more rigid style of interviewing.

Remote interviewing was done due to physical distance from participants (King et al, 2019, p. 115). Interviews generally took one hour but ranged between thirty minutes and two hours. All interviews were recorded using either Skype or a mobile phone. The interviews were transcribed using online tools, Happy Scribe and Otter, which slightly sped up the process. As internet connections were flawed at times, the quality of recordings was similarly flawed which made transcribing, despite the online tools, time consuming and not entirely accurate. All transcribed interviews were coded with the help of computer programme NVivo. Two coding cycles were done in order to successfully discover possible patterns or contradictions in discourses (Saldana, 2013). The coding of interviews helped classify the data and organise it according to the sub-questions. The position of the interviewee was classified and the general themes mentioned in the interview. Thereafter, a second cycle of coding was done with more specific codes. This second cycle was especially beneficial as it provided structure to the empirical data. The coding tree can be found in appendix three. I conducted nine interviews in total of which three in English and six in Spanish. Quotes used in the analysis from the interviews conducted in Spanish were translated by the author, the quotes from English interviews were logically left in their original state.

When choosing research participants, one can use a high variety of sampling methods. Since I collected data on Colombia from abroad, I chose to do expert sampling. Participants were selected on the expectation they would provide the information required (Faryadi, 2019, p. 772). With the help of key informants, other interviewees were found as well. Experts with more general knowledge were able to help refer more specialized colleagues. In this sense, a snowball method was used. Interviewees were approached by e-mail or WhatsApp and were asked to partake in a video call.

A couple of scholars were approached in helping provide a clearer contextual idea of the Colombian climate. I ended up interviewing Kate Paarlberg-Kvam, who had been actively researching feminist visions of peace in Colombia about which she published an article last year, and Daniel Lozano, professor of rural education and development who helped provide contextual information on Colombia. The majority of people approached were either working for a feminist peace movement or work in close relation to Colombia's peace process. Both Monica Rafael and Hilde Salvesen were, on behalf of Norway, closely associated with the peace negotiations in Havana. Juliana Rodriguez works for both Ruta Pacífica and the Truth Commission. Her colleague, Mabel Andrade, is coordinator of Casa de la Verdad which is part of the Truth Commission. Rossy Albani is coordinator of the table for victims in the Cauca region. Yanet Mosquera is founder of Mujer con Valor, a foundation in the same region. The ninth interviewee worked for an international organisation based in Colombia but expressed wanting to remain anonymous, I have changed her name to Anna López. Some of the interviews expressed they wished not to be quoted directly. The limitations that arose during and after data-collection will be addressed later in the chapter. A complete list of the respondents can be found in appendix two.

5.2.2 Textual analysis

Secondary data refers to existing information in the form of specific subject that provide second-hand data (Faryadi, 2019, p. 776). This thesis specifically looks at the experiences of feminist activist groups and their views on the peace agreement and implementation. Therefore, almost twenty reports and documents released by different Colombian feminist movements were reviewed. Many of the mainstream organisations, like Ruta Pacífica or Humanas Colombia, release either monthly or yearly reports on their work and objectives. International feminist organisations, such as the Heinrich Böll foundation, have offices in Colombia and provide a platform for the release of documents. I conducted a textual analysis in addition to the interviews, different documents released by feminist activist groups were used.

Initially, the documents were sampled by focussing on the Final Agreement as well as those relating to the organisations objectives and strategies. Since Ruta Pacífica is the biggest feminist organisations in Colombia, four of their reports were used. In relation to the peace negotiations, I focused on Coalition 1325 as they monitored the peace process closely at the time, using four of their reports. Furthermore, I drew on documents from Casa de la Mujer, the Truth Commission, Humanas Colombia, Mujeres por la Paz, and Redepaz. I specifically focused on the mention of gender and the organisations main objectives. The reports released by the Kroc Institute in 2018 and 2019 were used to illustrate the progress of the implementation of the peace agreement. Additionally, international reports, newspapers and scholarly work were analysed to contextualize the data and its content.

5.3 Positionality

Furthermore, the implications of my position as a foreign female researcher should be discussed. In four of the interviews conducted, the interviewees referred to notions as ‘us feminists’ or ‘us women’, implying an assumed common interest. The choice of thesis topic was naturally influenced by my attraction to the cause justifying these assumptions. However, I attempted to remove myself as much as I could from my personal views when conducting interviews.

In a way, being a foreigner can help gaining information as participants explain a context which to a local might be left unmentioned. For example, all interviewees mentioned the historical background to the armed conflict and the stratified character. However, due to language barriers and cultural differences, participants might withhold or be selective in providing information. When contacting possible interviewees, I mentioned my exchange to the national university in Bogotá. With Spanish not being my native language and internet connections lacking at times, interview transcriptions were not always flawless.

5.4 Limitations

In this section, the limitations of the research process, including Colombia's stratified character, and the sensitivity of the discussed themes are considered.

The interview approach can be seen as an easy way of exchanging ideas and opinions. However, the approach depends heavily upon the interviewee's willingness to share information (King et al., 2019, p. 17). As illustrated in both the historical background and theoretical framework, Colombian society is said to be highly stratified and polarized. This can influence what respondents are willing to share and the way in which opinions are formed. Some interviewees mentioned their distrust and frustration with the current Colombian government, afterwards stating I should not quote them. The reliability of data is, therefore, impacted by the polarized character of Colombian society.

Due to a limited timeframe, I was unable to reach a large number of feminist activists. I had contacted almost forty people, possibly influenced by COVID-19 pandemic's quarantine measurements, while I was solely able to conduct nine interviews. Especially the mainstream feminist organisations proved difficult to reach. Since the interviews conducted were with experts, the collected data was valuable. In addition to the reports by both international organisations and the mainstream feminist organisations, this established enough data for analysis.

Limiting the scope of this research was challenging. Not only feminist activists for peace exercised influence on the gender aspect of the agreement. Farianas, or FARC women, played a major role in the peace negotiations as they are similarly constrained by norms and structural violence (Paarlberg-Kvam, 2019, p. 212). One could argue that Farianas are also feminist activists. However, this thesis looks specifically at feminist activists for peace which means women previously part of armed groups are not part of the scope of this research.

An interpretative form of analysis is inevitably tied to both the researchers and the interviewee's subjective understandings. As I focused on the acting and views of feminist peace organisations, their opinions were of importance. Any study with this type of analysis will naturally lack generalizability.

6. Peace negotiations and the inclusion of gender

'There cannot be real peace while there is oppression and half of humanity is still excluded from full development – women' (Mujeres por la Paz, 2012).

It was under this slogan that Mujeres por la Paz came together in October of 2012. The alliance was formed between women's organisations for peace when the official negotiations had not included women in the negotiation team. This first chapter of the analysis addresses the sub-question: *How did the demands of the Colombian feminist activists translate into the peace negotiations and the final agreement?* The acts of the feminist organisations for peace during the negotiations are chronologically described. First, a brief history of the women's movement for peace in Colombia provides a contextual understanding. Second, the founding of Mujeres por la Paz, the National Summit for Women and Peace and the inclusion of the first two female plenipotentiary members is described. Third, the role of feminist activism is depicted in the founding of the gender-sub commission. The chapter closes with a brief conclusion.

6.1 Historic Colombian feminist activism

In many countries women show a particular concern about the issues of war and peace. In opinion polls a gender difference is commonly revealed, with women less inclined than men to support a war (Cockburn, 2007). Women who actively engage in opposition to militarism and war often choose to organize separately as women (Ibid, p. 1). The diversity of conflicts generates a diversity of responses. The syndrome of fracasomanía has led each Colombian government to take a new approach to negotiations. Illustrated by Colombia's long history of peace negotiations this has not necessarily been beneficial (Pizarro, 2017).

In recent decades, Colombian feminist activism managed to pass several laws regarding women's rights: *'all the laws on sexual violence were achieved by women activists and organisations'*¹. In 2008, Law 1257 was passed which guarantees women a life free of violence. The femicide of Rosa Elvira Cely in 2012 led to a

¹ Interview Anna López, my translation, March 6, 2020

law passing in her name three years later, law 1761 recognizes femicide as an autonomous crime (Dávila, 2018). The 2011 Victims and Land Restitution Law established preferential treatment for women seeking to reclaim land after forced displacement and specific reparations for survivors of sexual violence (Bouvier, 2016, p. 12).

When looking at the impact of armed conflict on women in Colombia, it is not surprising women have been pushing for these actions. Sexual violence was used as a widespread, systematic, and invisible practice of war by men of all sides of the conflict (Fernandez-Matos & González-Martinez, 2019, p. 118). Especially for indigenous and peasant women, the impact on everyday life has been enormous (Cockburn, 2007, p. 18). While the passing of these laws was a major advancement, an interviewee mentioned: *'We are experts at making laws, we can all write them but nothing is accomplished. Normatively, [Colombia] seems like the most advanced country, it is impressive...but the figures of impunity exceed 95%²'*. The achievement of social justice depends not only on institutional forms like democratic regulation, but also on effective practice (Sen, 1999, p. 159). While Colombian laws are said to be highly progressive, it is effective practice that seems to be lacking.

In recent history, Colombian feminist organisations have developed a complex network of national and local organisations based on a common struggle for peace. Solidarity has been of great importance, through alliances, different organisations worked together to gain influence in peace negotiations (Bouta et al., 2005, p. 66). In an interview Claudía Mejía, head of Sisma Mujer, had explained: *'the Colombian women's movement is united in the goal of peace [and] was one [of the] most prepared for the arrival of peace. Our greatest demand was that peace had to be achieved through negotiations'* (As cited in Ruiz-Navarro, 2019, p. 2). The quote illustrates how feminist activism had prepared and united under the common goal for peace which is in line with Mohanty's (2003) concept of solidarity.

² Ibid.

6.2 *A seat at the negotiation table*

The peace negotiation with the FARC-EP were announced by the Santos administration in August 2012. As described in the theoretical framework, the longevity of a conflict, the injuries caused to society as a whole, a lack of trust and violence being normalised can be factors complicating reaching an agreement (Fisas, 2010). To avoid immediate failing, the agenda presented by the two actors was based on a preliminary agreement which was the result of a year and a half of secret negotiations. The preliminary agreement was made up of six points which attempted to cover both the causes and effects of the conflict: rural reform, political participation, illicit drugs, victims, end of the conflict and implementation (Colombia Reports, 2016). The negotiation followed the principle: *'nothing is agreed until everything is agreed'*³ which meant a comprehensive deal was to be based on consensus on all six points of the agreement (IFIT, 2018, p. 7).

The exclusion of women in formal peace processes tends to encourage participation in informal peace processes, this is clearly visible in Colombia's peace negotiations (Bouta et al., 2005, p. 67). The absence of women at the beginning of the peace table mirrored the belief that war is a men's activity and that negotiations are a sole extension of this. This patriarchal conception of war and peace negotiations was illustrated by Timochenko, FARC-EP's main leader, officially known as Rodrigo Londoño Echeverri when he stated in an interview: *'the debate between men who know war makes things easier'* (As cited in Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 93). It illustrates the thorough belief in a masculine negotiation table. In August 2012, two women were presented as collaborators but no women were part of the official negotiation table. As with warfare, peace processes are typically deeply gendered (Cahn, 2018; Cockburn, 2007; Ní Aoláin & Turner, 2007). The masculine bias of peace negotiations in Colombia posed concern for feminists in relation to transitional justice and peace practices (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 93).

³ This principle was inspired by the Northern Ireland negotiation of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

This led more than forty organisations to unite and demand women's inclusion in the peace process. The result was the establishment of Mujeres por la Paz in October of 2012 (Ruta Pacífica, 2012). Feminist organisations protests rapidly articulated their disapproval with the Colombian government. After the official start of the negotiations in November, Mujeres por la Paz organised the 'National Meeting of Women for Peace'⁴ in December. Feminist organisations, such as Casa de la Mujer, La Ruta Pacífica and many others expressed their support for a negotiated solution to the armed conflict while demanding women's participation in the peace talks (Ruta Pacífica, 2012). They asserted the right to take part at the negotiation table in Havana. By doing so, they continued criticizing the patriarchal structures that marginalized them. Rather than women being another topic to be solved during the peace process, women demanded being part of the negotiation table. By drawing on their own agency and voice, they were able to claim recognition as agents themselves instead of the long positioning as victims or patients (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 94, 95, Sen, 1999).

During the discussion around the first topic of the agenda, rural reform, women highlighted the current concentration of land in men's hands. The issue of women's access to land, control, recovery as well as the inclusion in political discussions were mentioned (Bouvier, 2016, p. 20; Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 95). Gendered hierarchies in peasant society and male bias in rural policies configure a particular set of obstacles that prevent women from fully enjoying citizenship rights after conflict. Particularly in Colombia uneven land distribution is considered a contributing factor to the long-standing conflict. Post-conflict transitional measures have the opportunity to transform structural gender hierarchies. Given the initial invisibility of gender issues during the peace negotiations linking women's participation in land restitution to their effective

⁴ Originally called *el Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres por la Paz*, for a Spanish overview of the agenda see <https://www.rutaPacifica.org.co/agenda-de-paz/178-la-paz-sin-las-mujeres-no-va-manifiesto-de-mujeres-por-la-paz>

participation in agrarian reform measures was an enormous task (Meertens, 2018, p. 1, 9).

As mentioned before, since its establishment in 2000, the UNSCR 1325 has helped underline the importance of active participation of women, in an equal manner as men, in all decision-making processes about armed conflict (Bouvier, 2016; Cahn, 2018; Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018; Fernandez-Matos & González-Martínez, 2019; Ronderos & Stenung, 2014, p. 4) In 2011 a group of feminist organisations established a coalition to monitor Colombia's compliance with the resolution, it began publishing yearly reports (Coalición 1325, 2011). Their 2012 report called attention to the absence of women in past peace negotiations in Colombia and the secondary role they played in the current one (Coalición 1325, 2012). The following year's report came to the same conclusions and pointed to the lack of a gender perspective in the government's and FARC-EP's mutual agendas (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 95; Coalición 1325, 2013).

In addition to publishing reports, feminist organisations exercised other forms of activism. Throughout 2013, alliances met often, and in a joint statement feminist organisations expressed their frustration generated by the indifference of the government and the FARC-EP towards their claims. They explicitly cited the UNSCR 1325 and formulated specific recommendations (Manifiesto de las Mujeres Colombianas por la Dignidad y la Paz, 2013).

Additionally, international support was said to help include a gender perspective, especially Norway's role as a guarantee state was of great importance⁵: '*Gender in modern day peace making is a legitimator*'⁶. Both guarantee states, Cuba and Norway, provided capacity building, logistics, moral support, and expertise at the negotiation table (Nylander et al., 2018).

⁵ Interview Daniel Lozano, scholar, March 26, 2020

⁶ Interview Kate-Paarlberg-Kvam, scholar, February 26, 2020

In October 2013, the first National Summit of Women and Peace⁷ was held in Bogotá where more than 400 women highlighted the importance of continuing conversations until a peace agreement was reached. With the help of the UN and the Norwegian, Swedish, and Swiss embassies the women and nine feminist organisations⁸ came together and managed to become another advocacy mechanism in the peace process (Cumbre Nacional de Mujeres y Paz, 2014). On the 22nd of November 2013, Mujeres por la Paz organized a public demonstration which on the one hand, supported the peace process but, on the other, demanded more inclusion. More than 8000 women marched in Bogotá to the presidential palace (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 96).

Subsequently, President Juan Manuel Santos declared he would include one woman in the negotiation team. The Santos administration assigned two female lawyers as plenipotentiary members on November 26. Both Nigieria Rentería Lozano and María Paulina Riveros Dueñas had a long career in defending human rights (Fernandez-Matos & González-Martinez, 2019, p. 125). President Santos had declared this development as a great leap forward in the struggle for gender equality. While the inclusion of women's negotiators was welcomed by feminist organisations and seen as a win and result of their activisms, criticism was voiced as the demands of the first women to be included at the negotiation table were equated to those of all women. The two female lawyers were seen as spokeswomen. Women have been long made into a homogenous group and this is what happened once again. With the inclusion of Rentería Lozano and Riveros Dueñas the diverse experiences of women within the armed conflict were neglected and homogenised (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 96). As pointed out by Mohanty (2003,

⁷ Originally called *Cumbre Nacional Mujeres y Paz*, for more information see <https://colombia.unwomen.org/es/biblioteca/publicaciones/2014/01/sistematizacion-cumbre>

⁸ The nine organisations: 1. Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas, Negras e Indígenas de Colombia 2. Casa de la Mujer 3. Coalición 1325 4. Colectivo de Acción y Pensamiento - Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad 5. Conferencia Nacional de Organizaciones Afrocolombianas 6. Iniciativa de Mujeres Colombianas por la Paz 7. Mujeres por la Paz 8. Red Nacional de Mujeres 9. La Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres.

p. 31), the homogenisation of women assumes an ahistorical, universal unity between women based on a generalized notion of their subordination.

6.3 The gender sub-commission

It was not until June 7, 2014 that the sub-commission on gender was established. The sub-commission on gender was an advisory body comprised of ten members, five from the FARC-EP and five from the government. The sustained pressure of feminist organisations and advocacy led to its establishment in order to successfully integrate a gender perspective (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 97; Fernandez-Matos & González-Martinez, 2019, p. 125; Wistanley, 2018, p. 2). Additionally, as a way of complementing the efforts of the gender sub-commission, eighteen representatives of feminist organisations participated in the peace process deliberations over the course of 2014 to 2016 (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 97).

The 2014 report of Coalition 1325 acknowledged the negotiators efforts to include topics related to women in the peace talks, the creation of the gender sub-commission and the participation of the women in the negotiation team. Despite these positive developments, the report also highlighted the importance of including meaningful provisions on women's issues and interests in the negotiation points that had already been settled (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 98; Coalición 1325, 2014). When the two female lawyers were appointed in 2013, two of the six points at the negotiation table had already been decided, rural reform and political participation. When the sub-commission was put in place, the third point had also been settled, a solution to illegal crops.

Especially the first point of the agenda, rural reform, solely stated women as mothers and caregivers, leaving aside proposals to facilitate their access, control, and recovery of rights over land and measures to empower them as decision-makers. Later, the negotiators allowed the gender sub-commission to review the points they had already drafted (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 98). This allowance helped the sub-commission change the points that had already been decided. In relation to rural reform, the agreement came to explicitly refer to

ensuring women's right to ownership. It also states women should have preference in the distribution of land through land funds (Salvesen & Nylander, 2017, p. 4).

The sub-commission on gender included several delegations of women and the LGBTI community at the negotiation in Havana. The commission aimed at inviting a broad range of organisations and victims from all Colombian regions. The participation of both women and victims had an important impact. Both the harsh realities of experiences, concrete proposals and voices were heard at the negotiation table (Salvesen & Nylander, 2017, p. 8).

A special UN report points to the teams of advisors in which women dominated. Although these roles are not at the forefront, they were influential posts that provided women to engage in meaningful ways (Bouvier, 2016, p. 21). Colombian women accompanied and advanced the peace process as they shaped public opinion, supported a negotiated solution to the conflict, generated analysis, and built capacity for engagement. Women took advantage of every opportunity and mechanism available to participate in civil society conferences, working groups and research initiatives (Bouvier, 2016, p. 19).

The Colombian feminist movements gradually managed to be included in the negotiations by using a number of tactics. First, with the help of international mechanisms supporting their efforts, they engaged with the government from a normative and legal angle. Second, they insisted that without women the peace process risked reproducing male subjectivity and interests. Third, the argument invoked justice and equality to demand women's right to participate in decisions affecting them (Céspedes-Báez and Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, pp. 103-104). Seeking not to fall into the mistakes of previous and foreign peace processes, the accord signed between the FARC-EP and the government illustrated the inclusion of a gender perspective as a guarantee for women's rights and the struggle for equity. This approach was new to peace processes internationally, as women's absence in negotiations is commonplace (Bouta et al., 2005; Villellas Ariño, 2010). The guarantee of women's rights can therefore be seen as a major advancement (Ruiz Herrera, 2018, p. 109).

6.4 Conclusion

Women's limited access to formal peace processes tends to encourage their participation in informal processes, as was the case in Colombia. Initially, no women were part of the negotiation table in Havana. Many feminist organisations demanded the inclusion of women and a gender approach with the help of mass demonstrations, manifests, summits, reports and the formation of alliances. By doing so, the feminist activists challenged the underlying patriarchal structures of peace negotiations (Jenkins & Reardon, 2007). Generally, the practical nature of feminist activism means peace is pursued as a process. While an accord can be generally seen as an endpoint, women's organisations often see peace as an ongoing process that involves working together to solve common problems (Tripp, 2018, p. 11). This is clearly visible in Colombia where feminist activism has long formed alliances and demanded inclusion in peace processes.

With the help of the UN and guarantee state Norway, mainstream Colombian activism was able to put pressure on the Santos administration. Their multitude of activism led to the appointment of two women plenipotentiary negotiators in November 2013. When in June of 2014 the gender sub-commission was established, the formal integration of a gender discourse was finally conceivable. The sub-commission was able to include female stances on the earlier decided topics. Especially the protection of women's rights to ownership in the point on rural reform made a difference. Through successful leadership of women, solidarity in the form of building alliances and the overall changed focus of feminist movements on active agency, their role shifted from being seen as a patient to that of an agent (Sen, 1999). Their achievements illustrate the effectiveness and importance of women's collective resistance and the change it can generate (Enloe, 2014; Reardon, 1993). Due to the many efforts of feminist activism in Colombia, the concept of gender was successfully included in the peace agreement. This is in line with the capabilities approach as feminist organisations were able to challenge their unfreedoms (Sen, 1999). The result being that the 2016 accord has been regarded as the most inclusive peace deal internationally.

7. Feminist activisms and the peace agreement

On the 26th of September 2016, the historical peace accord between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP was signed in Cartagena. Internationally, the peace agreement was considered by far the most inclusive peace agreement in history (Céspedes-Báez & Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018; O'Neill, 2016; Salvesen & Nylander, 2017). It mentioned the rights of women and the LGBTI community (Salvesen & Nylander, 2017, p. 4). The previous chapter illustrated how the mainstream Colombian feminist activisms acted on the peace negotiations. This chapter focuses on the sub-question: *How do different feminist activists view the peace accord and the changed gender discourse?* First, the view of feminist activisms on the peace accord is discussed. Second, the perceptions of the changed gender discourse are addressed. The chapter closes with a brief conclusion.

7.1 Feminist views on the peace agreement

Throughout history women have been minimalized and reduced to the role of mothers, wives, and victims. While the recognition of women as victims during peace negotiations is highly important, the recognition and the inclusion of their position as peacemakers and peacebuilders is equally necessary (Salvesen & Nylander, 2017, p. 2). As mentioned before, feminist activisms in Colombia are of a diverse nature: *'There are a lot of people amiss and subcurrents. Some are more mobilized and politicized than others. Some are disarticulated. And some of them have been slaughtered'*⁹. After decades of activisms women were finally granted a seat at the negotiation table. Those who were included at the negotiation table were, generally, part of the mainstream feminist organisations: e.g. Ruta Pacífica and Casa de la Mujer. These organisations often have many offices and a great national and international network¹⁰.

An example of their influence were the advancements made on point five of the negotiation agenda, victims. The signing of the peace agreement led to the founding of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and No Repetitions

⁹ Interview Kate-Paarlberg-Kvam, scholar, February 26, 2020

¹⁰ Ibid.

(SIVJRNR)¹¹ of which the Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence Commission, or more commonly, Truth Commission (CEV) was part (Comisión de la Verdad, 2020; Laing, 2018). The Truth Commission has made major advances in gathering stories of victims throughout Colombia. As an extension of point five of the agenda, the commission has a clear gender approach¹². Possibly as one interviewee mentioned, the founding of the Truth Commission was a direct result of Ruta Pacífica's activism¹³. Nonetheless, the gender approach of the Truth Commission has a clear focus on the populations most affected by the conflict, indigenous women, and afro-Colombian women¹⁴. In this regard, the overlap described by Sen (1999, p. 190) is clearly visible. There is a substantial intersection between focussing on women's well-being – their role as patients – and the focus on the active agency of women. It can be considered a difficult task, finding the balance in addressing both roles of women.

Reaching a peace agreement after a fifty-year conflict is complicated and many were relieved when peace seemed reachable¹⁵. As described earlier, due to a lack of trust, it is generally difficult to reach a place of understanding between actors. (Fisas, 2010, Pizarro, 2017). Logically, Santos wanted the negotiations to reach a mutually agreeable peace. When looking at the political climate during the negotiations, the Santos administration tried preventing an elite backlash. This resulted in a very measured and non-transformative accord where neoliberalism driving the economy was not addressed at all. *'One, is that this is the most groundbreaking peace accord there has ever been. Two, that's not really saying that much'*¹⁶. Considering Fisas (2010, p. 21) distinction between an elitist and

¹¹ The Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and No Repetitions (SIVJRNR) is made up of (1) the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), (2) the Commission for the Clarification of the Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence (CEV) and (3) the Unit to Search for Missing Persons.

¹² Interview Juliana Rodriguez, Truth Commission, April 3, 2020;

Interview Mabel Andrade, Truth Commission, April 7, 2020

¹³ Interview Juliana Rodriguez, Truth Commission, April 3, 2020

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Interview Daniel Lozano, scholar, March 26, 2020

¹⁶ Interview Kate-Paarlberg-Kvam, scholar, February 26, 2020

participatory model, the negotiations can be classified, especially at first, as an elitist model with little participation of CSOs.

The agreement was initially considered to be positive development in Colombian society but current trends seem to oppose that¹⁷, examples being the staggeringly high number of human rights defenders killed last year and the mass protests late 2019 and early 2020. The mass protests began on November 21st when hundreds of thousands of Colombians took to the streets. Its initial spark was said to be current President Duque's 'paquetazo', a series of social and economic reforms that would have a major impact on workers. The reasons for protesting were multi fold: anti-corruption, improved education, police violence, discrimination, and the slow implementation of the peace agreement (BBC, 2019b; Human Rights Watch, 2020). Criticism is voiced as the accord is seen as elitist and of the rich urban capital. What did not help the impression on a more regional level was that the accord was made in Cuba and not in Colombia, where the conflict took place.

*'An accord that was made by a few wealthy politicians on duty, but who did not include the local communities who are living and experiencing the conflict day by day. An agreement that included a few women who have not lived through the conflict day by day and only brought what we have told but they have not lived it. An agreement made between few'*¹⁸.

The quote illustrates the criticism voiced as it assumes a few women speaking at the negotiation table were to speak for a whole nation of affected women. Throughout history, women have often spoken for other women, homogenising women's experiences (Mohanty, 2003). However, the gender sub-commission and the victims delegation were credited with ensuring diversity among its participants (Salvesen & Nylander, 2017). The contradiction between the information given by, on the one hand, regionally based feminists, and, on the other hand, mainstream or international feminist organisations can be interpreted as an illustration of the

¹⁷ Ibid.;
Interview Yanet Mosquera, Mujer con Valor, March 24, 2020

¹⁸ Interview Yanet Mosquera, Mujer con Valor, my translation, March 24, 2020

stratified character of Colombian society but also of feminisms in general: *'One of the main problems that feminism in Latin America faces is that it is strongly divided by class, race, education, regionality etc.'* (Catalina Ruiz-Navarro as cited by Lunz, 2018).

7.2 Perceptions on the changed gender discourse

While the peace agreement was signed in late September, Santos had promised the Colombian people they would have a say in the agreement. In a plebiscite held on October 2nd, a narrow majority rejected the peace deal due to its progressive language (Céspedes-Báez and Jaramillo Ruiz, 2018, p. 87; Ruiz-Navarro, 2019).

Former president Álvaro Uribe¹⁹ had launched a sustained 'No' campaign of opposition once negotiations were announced. The opposition's main criticism was the idea that the former guerrillas would be rewarded for their actions with the Santos administration aiming at reintegrating them in society. The conservative campaigns helped pertain the image of successful misinterpretation (Salvesen & Nylander, 2017, p. 4). The notion 'gender ideology' was numerously used by spokesmen of the 'No' campaign and was criticized by both evangelistic and catholic churches (Ruiz Herrera, 2018, p. 118). While the agreement was in line with existing Colombian legislation, the campaign against the peace agreement was said to threaten traditional family values. It was not necessarily the concept of gender but what it represented: *'It was the sexuality aspect that was of concern. It was the notion that women and gender aren't the same thing. It was the notion that gender is malleable'*²⁰.

This led the gender ideology in the peace agreement to become a point of controversy. The disinformation and fear caused were used to discredit the agreement: *'So that the agreement did not have enough support. It is a loss, it [the gender discourse] is very much used to generate polarization, I think it is a way of expressing fear and ratifying this patriarchal, macho culture'*²¹. The 'No' campaign

¹⁹ Uribe had been criticized in the past for his affiliation with the paramilitary groups who he had provided with an amnesty deal in 2005 (Lee Anderson, 2016).

²⁰ Interview Kate-Paarlberg-Kvam, scholar, February 26, 2020

²¹ Interview Mabel Andrade, Truth Commission, my translation, April 7, 2020

related to the already existing polarization in society whilst using a patriarchal discourse on gender. This illustrates the manifestation of patriarchal practices not only in institutions per se but also in societal and cultural practices (Jenkins & Reardon, 2007).

After the referendum, President Santos called for a national dialogue, especially with those political leaders that campaigned against the agreement. After these dialogues, the government and FARC-EP met to renegotiate. Of the proposals presented by critics of the gender approach, 90% made it into the final agreement (Mazzoldi & Cuesta, 2017). The term ‘gender perspective’ was changed for ‘gender approach’ while emphasising the impact of armed conflict on women. The number of references to gender were reduced and replaced for equitable participation of men and women. By doing so, the concept of gender was once again reduced to a dichotomy between men and women, the LGBTI community was excluded. When these changes were first presented controversy arose. Feminist and LGBTI organisations advocated through the concept of non-discrimination for sustaining the established gender discourse: *‘[The changed gender discourse] ended up being a challenge for women’s and LGBTI organisations, for those in this country who have dedicated a life to work for the transformation of these gender relations’*²².

Despite its changes, the gender approach remains a key aspect of the Final Agreement (Mazzoldi & Cuesta, 2017). The inclusion of women throughout the agreement is deemed positive and often celebrated. Six of the interviewees, mainly those from mainstream feminist organisations or working closely with victims of the armed conflict, did mention the contradictory attitude toward the concept of gender. Intersectionality or the lack thereof are recurrent themes²³: *‘I think it is still inclusive, unless you’re asking someone who is transgender, in which case, no it is*

²² Ibid.

²³ Interview Anna López, March 6, 2020;
Interview Rossy Albani, Table for Victims, March 24, 2020;
Interview Juliana Rodríguez, La Ruta Pacífica, April 3, 2020;
Interview Kate-Paarlberg-Kvam, scholar, February 26, 2020;
Interview Mabel Andrade, Truth Commission, April 7, 2020

*not inclusive. They binarize everything*²⁴. It would have been an opportunity for the LGBTI community to be included and seen, there was a pretence, however, of erasing them because of their diverse sexual orientations and identities surpassing heteronormativity. The Colombian LGBTI community faces a lot of threats, rape, torture, and discrimination. Moving towards an inclusive gender perspective requires institutionalizing democratic practices and relations that promote tolerance of a range of sexual and gender identities (Jenkins & Reardon, 2007), this has not happened in Colombia, as illustrated by the following quote:

*'We are still a country that does not want to recognize all these sexual identities and diversities. There was a pretence of erasing the impacts of the war on the LGBTI population. I think they are the ones who lose most, not so much the women with this change*²⁵.

7.3 Conclusion

Views expressed by interviewees on the peace agreement are generally positive. Despite the difficult circumstances that a fifty-year conflict had caused, the Santos administration was able to reach an accord with the FARC-EP. The Colombian mainstream feminist organisations were able to have a say at the negotiation table which led to the inclusion of a clear gender approach. As feminist activism is multi fold, there is no singular view about the accord. Mainstream feminist organisations are generally positive about the accord while the regional feminists point to a more elitist character which is not necessarily inclusive to all in society. In this sense, the stratified character within Colombian society is demonstrated.

Due to former president Uribe's 'No' campaign, the 'gender ideology' was perceived to threaten the concept of family. This led to changes in the gender discourse of the accord. While the view on the inclusion of women is often seen as positive, it is mainly the LGBTI community that is viewed as losing out most. Since the agreement replaced gender to the binary categories of men and women, the sexual identities and diversities in society are excluded. This development

²⁴ Interview Kate-Paarlberg-Kvam, scholar, February 26, 2020

²⁵ Interview Juliana Rodriguez, La Ruta Pacifica, my translation, April 3, 2020

illustrates the underlying patriarchal structures in Colombian society (Jenkins & Reardon, 2007). Feminist peace movements tend to have a more expansive vision of a holistic peace (Paarlberg-Kvam, 2018; Reardon, 1993), while patriarchal structures uphold binary views of gender which has implications for the implementation of the gender stipulations of the agreement, as illustrated in the upcoming chapter.

8. The implementation of the peace accord and its obstacles

'The peace agreement is about to fail. Because many of them are the rich who do not have the need, who do not have to live in the country and be in the midst of the crossfire. They do not know what hunger is. They do not know what it is to be afraid. They do not know what it's like to be cold. They do not know and therefore they will never understand the peace agreement, because they have not lived it. So, if they lived it, they would understand what we victims are feeling and what we are living²⁶'.

The quote above describes the failed implementation of the peace agreement and the stratified character of Colombian society. While the accord guarantees the participation of women, the real challenge remains the actual participation in the implementation process (Martinez Salcedo, 2018, p. 16; Farjardo Farfán, 2017; Salvesen & Nylander, 2017, p. 5). This chapter focuses on the last sub-question: *How do different feminist activists view the current implementation of the peace agreement?* First, Colombia's current political climate is mentioned as it is seen as the main obstacle to implementation. Second, underlying patriarchal structures are described as they persist forming obstacles to overall inclusion for women. The chapter closes with a brief conclusion.

8.1 The political climate as an obstacle to implementation

Recent reports show that the stipulation on gender in the agreement are falling behind (Kroc Institute 2018, Kroc Institute, 2019). The Kroc Institute²⁷ identified 578 stipulations of which 130 have a gender perspective. At the end of June 2018, 51% if these stipulations had not been initiated, 7% had reached an intermediate level of implementation and, only 4% had been fully implemented. This in contrast to the general stipulations of the Final Agreement which was 37% (Kroc Institute, 2018). As of August 2019, 42% of gender has not been initiated compared to 27%

²⁶ Interview Yanet Mosquera, *Mujer con Valor*, my translation, March 24, 2020

²⁷ The Kroc Institute of the University of Notre Dame in collaboration with UN Women, the Swedish Embassy, and the International Democratic Federation of Women (FDIM). Various women's organisations and platforms participated in the creation of the report. For more information see <https://kroc.nd.edu/news-events/news/report-reveals-colombian-peace-agreements-gender-perspective-is-innovative-but-seeing-delays/>

of the general stipulations, a 15% difference. Point five of the agreement, victims, has seen most progress while the delays are centred on rural reform, citizen participation and illegal crops (Kroc Institute, 2019). The special UN report mentions the importance of ensuring gender is not de-linked from the implementation process and pushed aside as a separate issue. As illustrated by the negative vote, gender discrimination and prejudicial attitudes towards LGBTI persons, especially transwomen, remain deep-seated in Colombian society (Bouvier, 2016, p. 13).

Opinions on the implementation of the Final Agreement differ. What every interviewee mentioned at least once was Colombia's current political climate²⁸. Iván Duque came into power in August 2018 on the promise of making substantial changes to the peace agreement. As the conservative ideology of his administration is in strong contrast to that of the gender approach of the Final Agreement, he has made little progress in implementing the accord (Ruiz-Herrera, 2018, p. 92). *'The implementation has failed because? Because the government of the current President Duque is a government that from the beginning to the end of the presidential campaign positioned itself against this agreement'*²⁹. The absence of clear measures for both women and the LGBTI community show how Duque's ideology is one of the biggest challenges for the implementation of the gender approach in the peace accord (Ibid, p. 121). Consequently, the role of mainstream feminist activism has not been influential with the Duque administration: *'they are basically obstructed from any participation'*³⁰.

However, the visible feminist organisations are said to be highly influential on the international stage as the UN and the European guarantee states are thought to exercise a passive form of activism in ensuring the successful implementation:

²⁸ Interview Anna López, March 6, 2020;
Interview Daniel Lozano, scholar, March 26, 2020;
Interview Juliana Rodríguez, La Ruta Pacífica, April 3, 2020;
Interview Kate-Paarlberg-Kvam, scholar, February 26, 2020;
Interview Mabel Andrade, Truth Commission, April 7, 2020
Interview Yanet Mosquera, Mujer con Valor, March 24, 2020;
²⁹ Interview Daniel Lozano, scholar, my translation, March 26, 2020
³⁰ Interview Kate-Paarlberg-Kvam, scholar, February 26, 2020

*'Boomerang politics, you throw it out into the world and then it comes back and hits your government from outside. So that is the agenda right now, more than working with the government directly'*³¹. An example is the Kroc Institute's activities in Colombia highlighting the opportunities for monitoring mechanisms in facilitating the implementation of the peace accord (Carl, 2019).

One of the mainstream feminist organisations, Ruta Pacífica expresses their ongoing commitment and belief in a peaceful Colombia³². They oppose the slow implementation of the accord and the lack of protection of their social leaders. The slow promotion of legislative reforms is deemed detrimental to reach full citizenship for women. The organisation demands the full implementation of the peace agreement and the guarantee of the human rights of the Colombian people (Ruta Pacífica, 2019). They stress the importance of inclusion of women and the recognition of women as victims (Ruta Pacífica, 2016a). They do not, however, mention the replacement of the word gender for the more traditional notion of men and women. As described in the previous chapter, those working with either Ruta Pacífica or the Truth Commission do express their disappointment with the changed gender discourse in relation to the LGBTI community³³. Apart from providing a stance in Colombian society, Ruta Pacífica closely collaborates with the Truth Commission.

An illustration of a backlash in the current political climate is the budget cut of the Truth Commission. The organization was created after the signing of the accord and was confronted with a 40% budget cut exercised by the Duque administration, making their work increasingly more difficult. Criticisms is voiced as they are not progressing fast enough³⁴, the budget cut is a major cause (Colombia en Transición, 2019). Generally, *'social leaders had better support from the previous government than the one we have now'*³⁵. Despite the financial setbacks, the Kroc Institute

³¹ Interview Kate-Paarlberg-Kvam, scholar, February 26, 2020

³² Interview Juliana Rodríguez, La Ruta Pacífica, April 3, 2020

³³ Ibid.;

Interview Mabel Andrade, Truth Commission, April 7, 2020

³⁴ Interview Anna López, March 6, 2020

³⁵ Interview Rossy Albani, Table for Victims, my translation, March 24, 2020

points to the highest level of implementation of gender stipulations for the institutions that make up the SIVJRNR. Women have been assigned to leadership positions and mechanisms have been designed and implemented to promote participation of women, LGBTI populations, and ethnic communities (Kroc Institute, 2019). Additionally, by collecting testimonies the Truth Commission is able to give a voice to discriminated communities and therefore able to address underlying patriarchal and racist structures³⁶.

While the recognition of victims of armed conflict is incredibly important and should be done appropriately, an interviewee from the Truth Commission mentioned how this very recognition can also be an example of underlying patriarchal structures³⁷. Point five of the agreement is most successful in the implementation of the gender stipulations. Throughout history, women have been victimized in relation to armed conflict (Cahn, 2018). From a critical perspective, the tolerance of the Duque administration in allowing the recognition of female victims, can be interpreted as a sole continuation of their subordinate position in society.

'This government is not interested in female leaders like me. They are not interested; they are interested in erasing us from the map. We are women who have no problem telling the truth. Whatever that may be because we do not depend on any politician'³⁸.

The acknowledgement of gender in peace and conflict studies started with the acknowledgement of women as victims (Bennoune, 2003; Cahn, 2018). Thereafter, their role as agents was increasingly recognised (Haynes, Ni Aolain & Cahn, 2011; Sen, 1999). One could argue that a similar trend is visible in present day Colombia. Especially as the participation of women in post-conflict organisations is increasing rapidly (Martinez Salcedo, 2018; Farjardo Farfán, 2017). Those working with the Truth Commission mentioned how the great majority of their teams was, indeed,

³⁶ Interview Juliana Rodríguez, La Ruta Pacífica, April 3, 2020

³⁷ Interview Mabel Andrade, Truth Commission, April 7, 2020

³⁸ Interview Yanet Mosquera, Mujer con Valor, my translation, March 24, 2020

female³⁹. A large gap remains visible between the position of women as victims and active agents.

8.2 *Underlying patriarchal obstacles*

Despite the current political climate, six years remain to complete the implementation of the agreement⁴⁰. The recent protests can be seen as a trend in which the political climate is increasingly questioned openly. Despite the signing of the accord, and the progress made at the negotiation table with the ELN, the conflict persists and has even worsened in several regions of the country (Colombia Diversa, 2017, p. 8): *'While the discourse after the signing of the peace accord was very positive, recent developments show that Colombia is not necessarily a country in post-conflict. The conflict has shifted'*⁴¹.

Terms like patriarchy, heteronormativity, racism, and classism do not necessarily paint a bright picture about Colombian society⁴². There is a lack of willingness politically to successfully implement the peace agreement⁴³. The ignorance or disinformation of the Colombian people leads to many prejudices about for example racial minorities and ex-combatants⁴⁴. Polarization in society complicates building a national consensus⁴⁵. As a result of the multiyear conflict, society seems to have lost its ability to have a say, it remains difficult to have a dialogue where everyone is successfully heard⁴⁶. In relation to instrumental freedoms (Sen, 1999), transparency is not guaranteed nor is political freedom or protective security. Corruption is often named as one of the main obstacles to reaching an equal society⁴⁷. Due to corruption, trust in government institutions is often limited.

³⁹ Interview Juliana Rodríguez, La Ruta Pacífica, April 3, 2020;

Interview Mabel Andrade, Truth Commission, April 7, 2020

⁴⁰ Interview Anna López, March 6, 2020

⁴¹ Interview Kate-Paarlberg-Kvam, scholar, February 26, 2020

⁴² Interview Juliana Rodríguez, La Ruta Pacífica, April 3, 2020

⁴³ Interview Rossy Albani, Table for Victims, March 24, 2020

⁴⁴ Ibid.;

Interview Juliana Rodríguez, La Ruta Pacífica, April 3, 2020

⁴⁵ Interview Daniel Lozano, scholar, March 26, 2020

⁴⁶ Interview Anna López, March 6, 2020

⁴⁷ Ibid.;

Interview Rossy Albani, Table for Victims, March 24, 2020;

Interview Mabel Andrade, Truth Commission, April 7, 2020;

Interview Kate-Paarlberg-Kvam, scholar, February 26, 2020

Especially in rural regions, *institucionalidad*, the strength of institutions, is very low which led local communities to look at guerrilla movements for protection and support⁴⁸.

In addition to not being able to implement the agreement successfully and continued violence, the hostility to community organisations forms another obstacle⁴⁹:

*'When it comes to women's issues, they are always minimized. That they kill us is not so important in public policy nor is it important that they had used us as a territory of war or that they had used us for sexual violence, this is a very hypocritical country'*⁵⁰.

Human rights defenders have been subjected to death threats, particularly leaders of feminist and LGBTI organisations, Afro-Colombian and indigenous leaders (Bouvier, 2016, p. 7; Martínez Salcedo, 2018, p. 7). One of the interviewees, Yanet Mosquera⁵¹, described having been threatened: *'It is difficult in Colombia because no one knows what will happen to me tomorrow. I go to bed a victim and get up a survivor to continue. But I am always thinking about when they will kill me'*⁵². The constant tension between being a patient and an agent is clearly visible. Despite the many setbacks, the regional activist continues her work in the Cauca region, whilst not having financial support from either international, national, or governmental institutions. Violence remains a deep-seated issue in Colombian society⁵³:

⁴⁸ Interview Kate Paarlberg-Kvam, scholar, February 26, 2020

⁴⁹ Interview Juliana Rodríguez, La Ruta Pacífica, April 3, 2020

⁵⁰ Interview Anna López, my translation, March 6, 2020

⁵¹ For her work with *Mujer con Valor* (women with courage) she had won the Cafam Women of the Year Award in 2009. Interview Yanet Mosquera, *Mujer con Valor*, March 24, 2020.

⁵² Interview Yanet Mosquera, *Mujer con Valor*, my translation, March 24, 2020

⁵³ Interview Anna López, March 6, 2020;

Interview Rossy Albani, *Table for Victims*, March 24, 2020;
Interview Juliana Rodríguez, *La Ruta Pacífica*, April 3, 2020;
Interview Mabel Andrade, *Truth Commission*, April 7, 2020;
Interview Yanet Mosquera, *Mujer con Valor*, March 24, 2020

*'I am head of the family. I have three children, two women, one boy. I have two women who are victims, it was in the conflict. I was a victim of sexual violence and my daughters are the products of sexual violence'*⁵⁴.

The masking of victimized facts in the framework of the armed conflict is a major obstacle in understanding the true scope of sexual violence. Forced displacement has led to many instances of sexual violence, whereas sexual violence is sometimes also the cause of forced displacement. However, since the numbers solely note the displacement in itself, victims are still often left invisible⁵⁵: *'the system does not allow this type of violence to be denounced, to be treated, so in the end, what ends up denounced is the displacement'*⁵⁶. Sexual violence from guerrillas is often not addressed with equal seriousness. The criminal acts from the paramilitary groups have been made invisible in the public process: *'It depends who is accused of a crime, not of the seriousness of the crime. If the crime is against women, it is even less important'*⁵⁷.

As described earlier, an important aspect of seeing development as freedom is the recognition of female leadership and political participation (Sen, 1999). The lack of recognition can be seen as a manifestation of patriarchal practices standing in the way of reaching complete freedom for women. It is clear that the required institutionalization of democratic practices promoting tolerance (Jenkins & Reardon, 2007), is lacking, illustrated by the following quote:

*'I believe that today my organization should not be requesting and begging for a place to have an office to continue exercising social work. It is the obligation of the government that has the resources to do this work and we without money, without resources, and with nothing, we are doing it'*⁵⁸.

⁵⁴ Interview Yanet Mosquera, *Mujer con Valor*, my translation, March 24, 2020,

⁵⁵ Interview Juliana Rodríguez, *La Ruta Pacífica*, April 3, 2020;

Interview Mabel Andrade, Truth Commission, April 7, 2020

⁵⁶ Interview Mabel Andrade, Truth Commission, my translation, April 7, 2020

⁵⁷ Interview Anna López, my translation, March 6, 2020

⁵⁸ Interview Yanet Mosquera, *Mujer con Valor*, my translation, March 24, 2020

These different obstacles are in stark contrast to the seemingly progressive election of the first female and openly gay mayor of Bogotá. These concurrent contradictory dynamics are described:

*'Identity and recognition of identity is on the rise. While redistribution of resources may not be. So, you have these two currents happening at the same time. We are happy to have a woman in office, but we are still not giving land to peasants that might be a mine'*⁵⁹.

Many local communities face discrimination, racism, and exclusion as extractivism is still an important source of income for the country and its Western investors:

*'There have been many deaths in the black communities, they are trying to remove us from our territory with illegal mining. They have contaminated our rivers. We were misled and we continue to be enslaved. Today for exploiting our minerals in our territories and for defending that, they want to kill us'*⁶⁰.

Women in black and indigenous communities are often the focus of resistance as they play a pivotal role in local communities⁶¹. Obstacles for peasant women are generally centred on economic means. They lack access to means of production on equal terms, education and they face difficulties in access to political inclusion. Those who have been displaced lack clear means for the titling of land restitution⁶².

In 2017, a collaboration between Sisma Mujer, Red Nacional de Mujeres, and Humanas Colombia, led to a published report analysing the final agreement. The document states that the implementation of the agreement respects equality in its different dimensions and equal opportunities. The gender approach found throughout the agreement is to recognise equal rights between men and women (Mejía Duque, 2017, p. 10). Throughout the document not only women are mentioned but LGBTI community is consistently addressed as well, which illustrates the solidarity of the feminist organisations with the LGBTI community.

⁵⁹ Interview Kate-Paarlberg-Kvam, scholar, February 26, 2020

⁶⁰ Interview Yanet Mosquera, Mujer con Valor, my translation, March 24, 2020

⁶¹ Interview Juliana Rodríguez, La Ruta Pacífica, April 3, 2020

⁶² Interview Mabel Andrade, Truth Commission, April 7, 2020

In June 2019, the National Network of Human Rights Defenders held a meeting in Medellín to analyse the progress of the gender approach in the implementation of the Peace Agreement. Through the use of workshops, it became clear that women still face uncertainty and fear because the gender measures proposed are not being enforced (Melo Cortés, 2019).

Enhancing women's ability to exercise choice has been seen as a means of improving their position in society (Cornwall et al., 2011; Kabeer, 1994; Kabeer, 2015). Unfortunately, many women's organisations have difficulty surviving after a conflict ends as they are deemed obsolete (Bouta et al., 2005, p. 69). There is a great invisibility to the role of women in Colombian society⁶³. At times, the struggle for equality is minimized against other problems. An example is the cultivation of illegal crops and Colombia's long struggle with its eradication. Increased violence and increased health risks among the population limit their abilities to exercise choice.

8.3 Conclusion

Many of the sources reviewed describe and warn for the slow implementation of the gendered approach of the Final Agreement. The implementation is seen as the most crucial and difficult aspect of the peace process (Martinez Salcedo, 2018, p. 16; Farjardo Farfán, 2017; Salvesen & Nylander, 2017, p. 5). Especially the implementation on the gender stipulations seems to fall behind (Kroc Institute, 2018; Kroc Institute, 2019). Duque's conservative government has presented itself in opposition and has formed a major obstacle for successful implementation. Feminist activists oppose the slow implementation and voice their ongoing commitment to the gender approach. The threats and homicides of human-rights defenders are increasingly mentioned as a major concern for all CSOs. Interviewees pointed to underlying problems in Colombian society such as heteronormativity, corruption, sustained violence, racism, and classicism. These problems are examples of unfreedoms which limit the agency and capabilities of women (Sen, 1999).

⁶³ Interview Anna López, March 6, 2020

The underlying patriarchal structures in society constrain the possibility of reaching social justice and sustainable peace (Jenkins & Reardon, 2007). Without active participation of women in decision-making processes, the accord will not fulfil its promises. The implementation of the gender approach could serve as a catalyst for peacebuilding and development processes as it increases the likelihood of reaching a sustainable peace and providing opportunities for female leaders and their incredibly valued work ⁶⁴ (Kroc Institute, 2019; Paffenholz, 2016; Tripp, 2018, p. 3).

An interviewee mentioned that: *'It does not only imply feminist activism in social scenarios, but it implies serious, complete institutional transformations, in order to overcome this, to advance towards equality'*⁶⁵. Feminist activism alone are not enough, moving towards an inclusive gender perspective requires institutionalizing democratic practices and relations that promote tolerance of a range of sexual and gender identities (Jenkins & Reardon, 2007).

⁶⁴ Interview Anna López, March 6, 2020;
Interview Rossy Albani, Table for Victims, March 24, 2020;
Interview Juliana Rodríguez, La Ruta Pacífica, April 3, 2020;
Interview Mabel Andrade, Truth Commission, April 7, 2020;
Interview Yanet Mosquera, Mujer con Valor, March 24, 2020

⁶⁵ Interview Mabel Andrade, Truth Commission, my translation, April 7, 2020

9. Discussion, conclusion, and recommendations

This final chapter of the thesis answers the main research question: *How do Colombia's feminist activists view and act on the peace agreement between the FARC-EP and the Colombian government, the changed gender discourse, and its current implementation?* First, the key findings are discussed while reviewing implications. Second, a conclusion is given. Finally, brief recommendations are provided for future research.

9.1 Discussion of findings

As described in the introduction, Cynthia Cockburn (2007) had described the Colombian feminist movement for peace as the sole bearer of democratic demands in society. After a fifty-year conflict, the Colombian government was able to reach a peace accord with the FARC-EP. The exclusion of women at the official negotiation table was seen as a sole extension of patriarchal structures in both society and discourses on war. Women's limited access to formal peace negotiations tends to encourage their participation in informal processes, this was clearly visible in Colombia. Feminist activists demanded inclusion with the help of mass demonstrations, manifests, summits, reports and the formation of alliances. By doing so, their multitude of activists initially led to the appointment of two female plenipotentiary negotiators and later to the founding of the gender sub-commission. Especially the success of the sub-commission led to the inclusion of a clear gender approach which praised the accord as the most inclusive in history.

The stratified character of Colombian society is illustrated as mainstream feminist organisations generally have a positive notion of the peace accord, whereas, regional feminists point to the more elitist character which is not necessarily inclusive to all in society. Colombia's peace process can be characterized as an elitist one (Fisas, 2010), in which, especially at the beginning, civil society was largely excluded. The negative vote led to revisions in which the notion of gender was changed to men and women. With this change in discourse, many feminist activists pointed to the LGBTI community as losing out most. The implementation of the accord has proven to be slow, especially the gender stipulations are falling

behind. President Duque's opposition complicates successful implementation. Feminist peace activists generally criticize the slow implementation of the accord while others also point to the six years remaining. The unequal, stratified, and patriarchal character of Colombian society is mentioned as an underlying cause of the sustained armed conflict and discrimination of both women and the LGBTI community.

In released reports feminist activists actively criticise the slow implementation of the accord. In interviews, the exclusion of the LGBTI community is mentioned as well. Some organisations praise the non-discriminatory aspect of the peace accord. Generally, the inclusion of gender in the peace accord, changed or not, seems to be perceived as a positive and progressive development. Today, feminist activists seem to be focused increasingly on its successful implementation. As the current Duque administration does not provide space for inclusion, boomerang politics seems to be the answer for mainstream feminist activists. For regional activists and those living in regions where armed conflict persists, activists are complicated due to the continuation of violence and polarization.

The building of alliances among feminist activists illustrates the power of solidarity. As Mohanty (2003) had pointed out, feminist practice depends on finding similarities in building feminist connections. Reasons for alliance among feminists are political under the common banner of peace. By demanding inclusion in the peace process, feminisms became important contributors to dialogues on gender emancipation (Sjoberg, 2014).

The progressive inclusion of the gender approach in the accord stands in stark contrast to the backlash of the 'No' campaign and the negative vote. The interviewees described the many obstacles to full inclusion in Colombian society. Poverty, social exclusion, intolerance, and an uncollaborative state are examples of unfreedoms which limit their capabilities and agency (Sen, 1999). Women are continuously perceived as victims and are therefore perceived as patients, once again reinforcing their subordinate position in society. As was illustrated by the inclusion of the demands of the feminist activists in the peace negotiations, more

emphasis was placed on the active role of women's agency. In line with Sen (1999), women's agency can have far-reaching impacts on the forces and organizing principles that govern society. A crucial aspect, however, is the recognition of political, economic, and political participation, as well as leadership of women.

While the peace negotiations and accord did acknowledge women's agency eventually women's inclusion remained limited. As Jenkins and Reardon (2007) had pointed out, it is essential to understand gender as it is conditioned by patriarchy. Moving towards a more inclusive gender perspective requires institutionalizing democratic practices and relations that promote tolerance. It is exactly this that interviewees mention to be lacking in Colombia. Not only in society, but due to the syndrome of *fracasomanía* a stratified character can also be identified in politics. The long-standing armed conflict normalized violence and led to a lack of trust (Pizarro, 2017).

As with warfare, peace negotiations are generally typically gendered, the same goes for the Colombian peace process as the peace negotiations were initially predominated by men (Cockburn, 2007, Ní Aoláin & Turner, 2007). In line with Enloe (2014) and Reardon (2012), civil society and especially feminist organisations proved an effective realm for change. Their activisms illustrate the power of women's agency (Sen, 1999). The passage of UNSCR 1325 is often mentioned as an important landmark for the WPS agenda (Cahn, 2018). This was clear in feminist activisms as well; different organisations reviewed the accord whether it was in adherence to the resolution. The role of activism is discussed to be incredibly important in reaching sustainable peace and creating an inclusive society (Bouta et al., 2005; Bouvier, 2016; Paffenholz, 2016; Tripp, 2018). While the feminist peace activists managed to have a seat at the negotiation table, the implementation phase has proved, as expected, to be challenging (Paarlberg-Kvam, 2019).

Post-conflict settings require addressing gender in multiple ways, not solely as victims. The capabilities approach affirms that people themselves play an important role in their own empowerment (Comiling & Sanchez, 2014). In many of today's

development programmes emphasis is put on women and girls and their participation in society (Chant, 2016; Parpart, 2014a). By doing so, there is a danger of putting pressure on female agency. Women have been increasingly seen as active agents in development thinking. One should not speak for the experiences of women (Escobar, 2011; Mohanty, 2003). It is highly important to support feminist activism in a sustainable way whilst not creating dependency or reinforcing colonial practices.

While the capabilities approach helped illustrate the distinction between patient and agent, the approach is grounded in a neoliberal capitalist paradigm (Comiling & Sanchez, 2014). For the approach to be truly participatory, colonial practices need to be named and removed. For this study, the approach was connected to Reardon's (1993) conception of peace and justice, and solely used to illustrate obstacles to true development. The field of gender and peace is grounded in the problematic of patriarchy which was illustrated using the work of Jenkins and Reardon (1993; 2007). In addition to the literature on peace negotiations (Fisas, 2010; Pizarro, 2017), these theories helped exemplify different dynamics and contexts within Colombian society. Mohanty's (2003) concept of solidarity proved useful for illustrating different alliances among feminist organisations.

This thesis highlights how women's agency can promote the inclusion of a gender approach in the highly masculine field of peace negotiations whilst providing a (small) platform to express their views. Development depends on guaranteeing instrumental freedoms like transparency guarantees, protective security, economic facilities, social opportunities, and political freedoms (Sen, 1999). In relation to the implementation of the accord, it is obvious that these institutional freedoms are not granted in present-day Colombia as polarization, racism, classism, heteronormativity, and patriarchal practices persist.

9.2 Conclusion

Peace negotiations, like war, are typically deeply gendered and often exclude women in the formal peace process. This tends to encourage women's participation in informal peace processes. As was the case in Colombia where the many feminist organisations for peace exercised a multitude of activisms. By forming alliances, feminists engaged with solidarity. They published reports, held meetings, summits, and demonstrations. Their activism led to the inclusion of two female lawyers and later to the founding of the sub-commission for gender. The sub-commission would have a major influence in successfully including a gender approach in the peace accord. Feminist activisms generally expressed their content with the peace accord while some pointed to a more elitist character. The feminist activists for peace challenged their unfreedoms limiting participation in the patriarchal arena of peace negotiations.

The sustained 'No' campaign and the negative vote led to a change in language in the accord which was a setback for the feminist organisations as the concept of gender was reduced to the dichotomy of men and women. While the reports of mainstream feminist organisations do not necessarily mention the setback, in interviews many feminist activists point to the loss for the LGBTI community. The implementation of the accord is falling behind under President Duque conservative government. Especially the slow implementation of the gender stipulations is criticized by the feminist activisms. Through sustained activisms and continuously building alliances, the Colombian feminist organisations for peace continue their struggle for equality. Concurrent contradictory dynamics such as the election of the first female and openly gay mayor of Bogotá on the one hand, and the high increase of assassinations of human-right defenders on the other hand, illustrate the stratified and polarized character of Colombian society.

While the implementation of the gender approach could serve as a catalyst for peacebuilding and development processes, without successful implementation, the accord will not fulfil its promises. Sustained lack of capabilities for women illustrate how underlying patriarchal structures remain deep seated in Colombian

society making their work incredibly challenging. The exclusion of women in peace negotiations reinforces the patriarchal and male dominated structures underlying war. While the agency of women has been increasingly acknowledged within the international development arena, the practical inclusion of women's agency leaves much to be desired. Feminist activists, with their many initiatives, have illustrated the great influence feminist organisations, and civil society in general, can have on peace negotiations. The recent demonstrations have illustrated a plea for change. While an equal society may still be a sole utopia, the efforts of the Colombian feminist activists are admirable and should be acknowledged as they have had a positive impact on both the peace negotiations and society in general. Feminist activism alone are not enough, moving towards an inclusive gender perspective requires institutionalizing democratic practices and relations that promote tolerance of a range of sexual and gender identities.

9.3 Recommendations

The study argues for the focus on women's agency and its incredible potential for building sustainable peace when successfully included. This section briefly describes recommendations for future studies. This study has argued for focusing on women's voices, it would be interesting to focus on the LGBTI community and their vision of the peace accord and its implementation. Especially as many feminist activists mentioned the LGBTI community as losing out most with the changed gender discourse. Feminist movements for peace have long been deemed unimportant or difficult to document. There can be little development without peace and a more sustainable peace is more likely to be reached when women are actively included in the peace process. Therefore, as large gaps remain, future research on peace and gender should extend on these notions and focus on women's activism for peace.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide

Feminist activist groups

1. Feminist Activism

How would you describe your role in the organisation?

How would you describe your organisation?

Why feminist organisations?

Why women for peace?

Their importance and role in society?

2. Peace Agreement and Implementation

How do you view the 2016 Peace Agreement?

How do you view the sub-commission of gender?

How do you view the changes made on the gender discourse after the plebiscite?

How do you view the implementation of the agreement?

Do you feel supported by the government in your activism?

What do you consider to be the main obstacles to an equal society in Colombia?

Research institutes, scholars, or international organisations

1. Feminist Activism

What do you do?

How would you describe your engagement in Colombia?

Why women for peace?

2. Peace Agreement and Implementation

How do you view the 2016 Peace Agreement?

How do you view the sub-commission of gender?

How do you view the changes made on the gender discourse after the plebiscite?

How do you view the implementation of the agreement?

What do you consider to be the main obstacles to an equal society in Colombia?

How do you view Colombia's feminist activism and their role in society?

How do you view the current political climate?

Appendix 2: List of respondents

Name	Position	Date of interview
Kate Paarlberg-Kvam	Scholar on feminist mobilizations in Latin America, won the 2018 Cynthia Enloe price, Bennington College, United States	26-02-2020
Anna López	NGO, Bogotá, Colombia (Anonymous)	06-03-2020
Rossy Albani	Coordinator of the Departmental Table for Victims in the Cauca, Colombia	24-03-2020
Yanet Mosquera	Mujer CAFAM 2009, founder of Fundación Mujer con Valor, Popayan, Colombia	24-03-2020
Daniel Lozano	Professor Rural Education and Development, University La Salle, Bogotá, Colombia	26-03-2020
Juliana Rodriguez	La Ruta Pacífica, Comisión de la Verdad, Cauca, Colombia	03-04-2020
Mabel Andrade	Casa de la Verdad, Comisión de la Verdad, Popayán, Colombia	07-04-2020
Monica Rafael	Senior Advisor NOREF	29-04-2020
Hilde Salvesen	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs delegation in Havana, with a special responsibility for Women, Peace and Gender. Currently Director of the International Department at the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo.	04-05-2020

Appendix 3: Coding tree

Name	Files	References
Civil Society	3	6
Feminist activisms	6	22
Actions	2	3
Collaboration	3	4
Community	4	6
Empowerment	4	6
Shared Experiences	2	4
Solidarity	4	18
Feminist principles		
Feminist ideology	5	13
Historical feminist activism	3	4
Involvement	1	1
International feminist activism	1	2
Mainstream women's movements	3	15
Regional feminist activisms	6	23
Other activisms	2	2
LGBTI	5	7
Influence women's organisations	5	11
Obstacles	4	7
Problematisation	7	75
Corruption	3	3
Economic interest	1	7
Elites	3	7
Extractivism	3	5
Forced Displacement	2	2
Illicit crops	3	4
Inequality	3	6
<i>Institucionalidad</i>	1	1
Minorities	2	8
Patriarchy	3	5
Polarization	2	3
Poverty	3	6
Racism	2	8
Victimization	4	7
Violence	1	3

Assassinations	4	4
Gender-Based Violence	3	4
Sexual violence	2	2
Peace Accord	8	61
Gender Discourse	4	11
Negative	5	5
Positive	3	5
Implementation	6	13
Negative	5	8
Positive	2	2
International involvement	5	11
Peace agreement	1	1
Negative	2	3
Positive	3	5
Political climate	6	22
Legislation	3	6
President Duque's administration	4	4
President Santos administration	1	1
President Uribe's administration	1	1
Position interviewee	8	14
Solutions	4	5