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Social Recovery from Conflict

A feminist study of IFI policies
in post-peace agreement Colombia

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Abstract

In recent decades, international financial institutions (IFIs) have become loud advocates for gender equality in development and post-conflict recovery contexts. Several organisations have incorporated standalone objectives of women's empowerment and gender equality in their work. However, feminist scholars have aimed critique towards IFIs for perpetuating already existing inequalities in post-conflict societies with neoliberal reforms that favour recovery of the economic system rather than social aspects of recovery. This thesis explores this topic further through the case of Colombia. To add to the understanding of social recovery from conflict, the thesis uses a combination of theoretical frameworks, feminist post-conflict recovery and gender centrality, to analyse country-specific policy documents from three IFIs: the World Bank Group, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the OECD. The material was coded in NVivo and analysed using qualitative content analysis. The thesis concludes that IFIs, despite claiming to work towards the inclusion of women in their policies, largely fail to meaningfully address the structural impediments to women's empowerment and instead tend to emphasise and support the country's overall growth.

Keywords: international financial institutions, post-conflict recovery, social recovery, feminist international political economy, gender centrality, Colombia, qualitative content analysis

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Abbreviations

CPF – Country Partnership Framework

FARC-EP – Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army

Final Agreement – The peace-agreement between the Colombian Government and FARC-EP, signed on November 24, 2016.

IBL – Institutionalisation Before Liberalisation

IDB – Inter-American Development Bank

IFI – International Financial Institution

IMF – International Monetary Fund

IPE – International Political Economy

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SRHR – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

SSJ – Social Services Justice

UN – United Nations

1. Introduction

1.1. International financial institutions and post-conflict recovery

In recent decades, international financial institutions (IFIs) and other multilateral organisations have incorporated aspects and objectives of gender equality in their policies in conflict-affected countries (International Monetary Fund, 2022; Runyan & Peterson, 2013, pp. 108-110; World Bank, 2012). IFIs as well as national development agencies like the United States Agency for International Development have adopted the idea that economic growth and poverty reduction in the global South are better achieved through the investment in women's skills and labour opportunities (Hickel, 2014). Despite such promises, however, feminist scholars have forwarded criticism towards how women's rights and opportunities tend to be undermined by such policies (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020; Degi Mount, 2014; True & Svedberg, 2019). IFIs like the World Bank have received critique from scholars who argue that liberal forms of peacebuilding have been allowed to take place, rendering democracy, liberalisation of markets and free trade the given answer to reducing poverty, resentment, and repression, albeit undermining women's rights and opportunities (Pugh et al., 2008, p. 2).

Despite claims to empower women, the language used by international actors is generally gender-neutral and unwary of how structural problems require structural changes to achieve meaningful results (Hickel, 2014). Yet, war-torn countries are often dependent on both the technical and financial support from multilateral actors during the reconstruction and recovery of their societies (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011, p. 15). Feminist international political economy (IPE) scholars, therefore, suggest that policies for post-conflict economic recovery should pay more attention to the *social* recovery of a country's population, rather than just the recovery of the *economic system* (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020). As it is now, there is generally little room for social recovery in such policies.

An example of the need for social recovery initiatives is that of Colombia, which has experienced several long-lasting conflicts between the government and armed rebel groups, the most prominent one being the FARC-EP (Fuerzas Armadas

Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo; Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army). The conflict between the government and the FARC-EP lasted for over fifty years, with more than 8 million forcibly displaced people, exacerbated social and economic inequalities, and a distrust in government institutions as a result (Human Rights Watch, 2020b).

Certain groups face greater social vulnerability than others. For instance, there is a significant deficiency in terms of regional inequalities, with rural areas being more prone to social vulnerability than urban areas; components for measuring vulnerability include infrastructure, and access to health services and education, *inter alia* (Global Earthquake Model - GEM, 2016). Indigenous and Afro-descendent women also face marginalisation in the shape of structural racism; for instance, Afro-Colombians have been made socially and politically invisible through discourses that have reproduced colonial social relations. Moreover, regions with predominantly Afro-Colombian populations have been rich in natural resources and subject to the economic interest of both legal and illegal actors. As a result, those regions have also become the centre of armed conflict and violence (Gruner & Rojas, 2019).

Despite having had a liberalised market economy and having been involved in international trade for several decades, Colombia has not managed to achieve a stable peace (Selby, 2008, p. 18). IFIs have been present in the country both prior to and after the FARC-EP and the government signed the most recent peace agreement in 2016, and strategies to improve the country’s economy are currently in force. Given the dependency on the international community that most countries face to some extent in the aftermath of conflict, and the presence of IFIs in contexts like Colombia, it is of relevance to examine these institutions’ aims and objectives. International institutions, whether they contribute with technical, financial, or both kinds of support to post-conflict countries, cannot be assumed to do this without interests or motives (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011, pp. 92-94).

Hence, it becomes important to look closer at what is included in IFI policies for countries that are trying to recover from conflict, such as Colombia. Although top-level policy decisions are bound to be formulated on a more general level,

overarching objectives and aims will have an impact on decision making closer to those affected. For instance, steering documents that do not account for the role of women in the economy will not likely generate much of a gender-focused outcome at the level of implementation. Therefore, such policies should be further explored in relation to their inclusion of social recovery from conflict.

1.1.1. Research aims and question

The aim of this thesis is to explore and contribute to the understanding of social recovery in post-conflict policies formulated by international financial institutions. I intend to shed light on the ways that women are included (or excluded) in these policies, using the case of Colombia as the contextual setting.¹ I draw on feminist notions of post-conflict recovery and gender centrality to make a theoretical contribution to these fields. The combination of frameworks will elucidate the needs of the most marginalised and simultaneously put gender at the centre when analysing the policy outcomes.

Given the many and large inequalities in Colombia, I hope to show whether the IFIs manage to incorporate aspects of inclusive social recovery in their policies. To do so, I look at how three country-specific policy documents address the needs of the most marginalised women in their support for Colombia's economic development in the post-peace agreement period. The research question that this thesis addresses is: *How are women included in approaches to post-conflict social recovery promoted by international financial institutions in Colombia?*

To analyse the inclusion of social recovery that might have a positive effect on women's empowerment, I used NVivo to code the policy documents. Based on the theoretical framework, the material was coded into categories concerning, inter alia, economic activity, labour, education, and healthcare. Additional sub-codes were abductively created from the exchange between theory and empirics. Through the

¹ Despite the signing of the Final Agreement between the Colombian government and FARC-EP, Colombia remains in conflict with other armed groups as well as dissidents of FARC and should thus not be considered a *post-conflict* context. Nonetheless, it provides for an interesting case of post-conflict recovery in terms of how IFIs attempt to empower women in conflict-affected countries. In this thesis, I use the term *post-agreement* to refer to the period 2016-forward.

combination of theoretical frameworks, post-conflict social recovery, especially in relation to gendered inequalities, can be better understood.

1.2. The Colombian conflict and gender inequalities

To better understand the social aspects of post-conflict recovery, we need to briefly discuss the conflict dynamics and the gender roles that such dynamics shaped during and after the conflict. Since the 1960s, Colombia has suffered from intra-state conflicts between the government and several armed groups, the most prominent being the peasant-based guerrilla movement FARC-EP, and the ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional; National Liberation Army), which was originally formed by urban middle-class members and students. During the 1980s and late '90s through the early 2000s, several Colombian governments attempted peace negotiations with FARC, but without success, as both sides seemed to negotiate for tactical reasons rather than to reach a compromise and an end to the conflict (Nasi, 2018, pp. 33-34). In 2012, peace talks were formally initiated between the government and FARC-EP (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 22/02/10). On the agenda were six key areas: rural development, political participation, the illicit drug industry, the end of the conflict, and implementation and verification (Final Agreement, 2016).

On November 24, 2016, the *Final Peace Agreement to End the Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace* (hereafter: the Final Agreement) was signed between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 22/02/10). After the disarmament of the FARC-EP, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) voted to establish a verification mission in Colombia, monitoring the political, social, and economic reintegration of former FARC-EP combatants into society (United Nations, 2022). However, many challenges remain, with millions of internally displaced persons and most of the country's population having never experienced peace (Harrison, 2017).

Inequality between women and men continues to be a challenge to Colombian social and economic development. The inequalities have implications for a range

of sectors and social aspects, such as land ownership, opportunities in the labour market, and access to social services (Human Rights Watch, 2020b). Regarding land rights, one of the main concerns listed in the Final Agreement, a restitution law of 2011 puts emphasis on women's right to land. Despite such laws, however, the country has been unable to overcome historical gender inequalities that affect much of society (Cramer & Wood, 2017). In 2017, about 27% of Colombians were living in poor households. Gendered differences in poverty are difficult to determine because poverty is measured at the household level (Buitrago et al., 2018).

The dynamics of gender during the conflict had multiple effects on women's role in society. For instance, the FARC-EP put significant emphasis on the recruitment of women. Although female members were initially occupying traditional roles in the household, this shifted over time and women were increasingly used as combatants (Cramer & Wood, 2017). These newer dynamics that allow women out of the domestic sphere, however, have been proven difficult to maintain after the peace accord was signed (Cramer & Wood, 2017; Wood, 2008). The conflict also contributed to increased risks of vulnerability and gender-based violence, with already marginalised women like indigenous and Afro-Colombians at particular risk (Gruner & Rojas, 2019).

1.3. IFIs as advocates for gender equality

International financial institutions have, in recent decades, become loud advocates for gender equality in development. The World Bank has described increased gender equality as "smart economics" as it can enhance economic efficiency and improve other development outcomes (World Bank, 2012), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently issued a concept note proposing its first-ever strategy for mainstreaming gender in its work (International Monetary Fund, 2022). Even though gender is often considered a development goal by itself and IFIs tend to be one of the (if not *the*) primary funders of post-conflict recovery, they continuously fail to include gender analysis in a way that has structural implications

for women's economic and social rights (True & Svedberg, 2019). Examples include land transfer programs that favour men but leave out women and demobilisation programs that favour male combatants over females (Wood, 2008).

IFIs face great challenges in improving gender equality in post-conflict societies. Research has shown that gender roles often change in a more progressive direction during wartime, as women take on the role of the breadwinner. Having said that, social norms and gender roles may reverse once the war is over, and the men return to civilian life. Although some women, particularly those in female-headed households, are more likely to stay in their new roles, many leave or are pushed from their jobs when conflicts come to an end (Wood, 2008). In the case of the FARC-EP, the armed group recruited both women and men from the late 1970s forward. Over time, women's roles in the guerrilla changed; at first, women were part of the organisation in traditional gender roles but were later recruited as combatants. Although research has shown that the ground rules in the organisation were the same for men and women, gender-based violence was not uncommon (Gutiérrez Sanín & Carranza Franco, 2017).

2. Previous Research

2.1. International financial institutions for post-conflict recovery

Research on post-conflict recovery policies by international financial institutions has taken a range of approaches, some more liberal (see e.g., Collier & Hoeffler, 2002; Paris, 2004) and others more critical (see e.g., Cohn & Duncanson, 2020; Degi Mount, 2014). A World Bank report concluded that financial aid is efficient for economic recovery in terms of increasing growth in post-conflict societies, more so than in contexts that were not affected by conflict. The report further states that aid should be complemented with improvements in social policies, such as education and healthcare (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002). It has been argued, however, that social investment by IFIs is mostly rendered peripheral in the quest for long-term objectives of poverty reduction and distributional equality. Instead of being inclusive of those who have been marginalised, the main path forward, as promoted by the IFIs, is that of sustained economic growth (Paris, 2004, p. 203).

The key aspect to take note of here is the focus, of the IFIs and even some researchers, on the overall objective of *economic* recovery after conflict. With growth being the overarching aim of IFIs' approaches to post-conflict recovery, other aspects are rendered secondary, and maybe thoroughly excluded in the process. I will return to this critique in a moment.

Roland Paris (2004, pp. 199-200) has noted that economic reforms carried out by IFIs such as the World Bank and the IMF often contribute to increased inequalities in the overall distribution of wealth. He does not, however, go into what groups of society are particularly at risk. Other scholars have pointed out that the kind of financing of development that exacerbates inequalities and fails to reduce poverty, so-called narrow development, might in fact perpetuate and even pave the way toward violent conflict (Addison et al., 2001).

According to an Institutionalisation Before Liberalisation (IBL) approach to post-conflict recovery, political stability needs to be attended to for economic and political adjustment to be successful, especially in contexts where distributional inequalities have fuelled violent conflict (Callaghy, 1993 cited in Paris, 2004, p.

200), like the Colombian case. While the IBL approach addresses some of the structural issues faced by IFIs, it agrees with the goal of liberalisation and marketisation as the sufficient path toward recovery, albeit managed by domestic and locally-owned institutions (Paris, 2004, pp. 210-211). It is flawed, however, in the sense that it fails to address structural inequalities that are embedded in the global economy, which critical and feminist scholars point to (Bedford & Rai, 2010; Griffin, 2010; Pankhurst, 2008).

2.2. Women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming

In post-conflict contexts, neoliberal forms of peacebuilding and development are applied and promoted by international organisations and institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank. Among these, there seems to be a consensus that social, political and economic empowerment of women is essential to ending violence against women (True, 2012, p. 187). This is applicable not only in peacebuilding contexts; for instance, UN Women and the UN Global Compact promote the Women's Empowerment Principles, which address the issue of gender inequalities in the political economy and aim to improve corporate social responsibility globally (True, 2012, pp. 92-93; Women's Empowerment Principles, 2020). Gender equality and the empowerment of women are, by corporations and IFIs, increasingly seen as development goals in themselves and a means for countries to increase growth (Gregoratti, 2016; Hickel, 2014).

By several aid providers and financial institutions, gender mainstreaming has been adopted as the main method for incorporating women and girls in development (see e.g., International Monetary Fund, 2022; Sida, 2020; World Bank, 2010). The act of mainstreaming gender, though, is by some considered to be too vaguely defined for progress to be assessed properly. Its critics also claim that mainstreaming lacks a feminist social critique and reform agenda and that it is a framework which is merely added on to already existing policies and decisions, making it a rather convenient tool for policymakers (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011, pp. 13-14).

Going back to the question of empowering women. Despite a shared view among international actors that women's empowerment is needed to reduce violence against women (True, 2012, p. 187) and contribute to long-term social and economic development, the meaning of empowerment and measures to achieve it is not given to feminist researchers. Some suggest that international organisations should pay closer attention to how women and girls in different contexts define empowerment to understand how political structures and institutions affect marginalisation and how to support feminist communities (Walters, 2021). Research shows that the social entrepreneurship of female victims in Colombia has contributed to the feeling of empowerment among women. Through their entrepreneurship, they were able to contribute to the economic and social development of society while simultaneously being recognised as valid agents in the larger economy. The research, however, also notes that entrepreneurship is complicated in areas where state presence and support are weak (Ciruela-Lorenzo et al., 2020). There is a range of ways to conceptualise empowerment and views on how to go about achieving it. In chapter 3, before outlining the theoretical framework for the analysis, I go into more detail regarding how I choose to define it.

2.3. A feminist IPE perspective on post-conflict recovery

Feminist International Political Economy has emerged as a critique towards positivist as well as earlier critical approaches to IPE for ignoring constructed social relations that are inherently gendered (see e.g., Elias, 2011; Waylen, 2006). Feminist scholars such as Georgina Waylen (2006) have argued that many critical approaches to IPE fail to take gender into account in a convincing way; often, critical IPE scholars that have mentioned gender or women have only added it to existing frameworks that, for instance, favour class as the primary analytical category. In a Feminist IPE approach, gender is to be seen as an analytical category and as constitutive of political-economic processes. Onward, some critical approaches have included women as a homogenous category, thus not

acknowledging how gender discrimination intersect with other systems of oppression. Without this insight, we might assume that all women experience the processes of the global political economy in the same way (Elias, 2011).

Jacqui True (2010) argues that the current political-economic order is often neglected in analyses of violence against women. For instance, UNSC resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) acknowledge the role of gender-based violence in conflict-affected areas but fail to contextualise this type of violence within gendered structures of economic impoverishment and lack of opportunity. Consequently, these grievances are usually not addressed by political settlements or peacekeeping missions. Moreover, Bedford and Rai (2010) address the gendered regimes of capitalist production and consumption, and the ways in which the global economy has changed in relation to nation-states among other actors. They argue that we need to consider how the economy of the global North, fuelled by accumulating debt, has affected the economy of developing countries in the global South, including for instance a consolidation of gendered divisions of labour and deepening class divisions.

Cohn and Duncanson (2020) use feminist IPE theory to uncover the effects of International Financial Institutions' investments in post-war economies. Taking off from the perspective of the most marginalised and the day-to-day life of war survivors, they ask critical questions about what economic needs are most salient in a post-conflict context, and who needs to recover from war. They argue that IFI policies built on neoclassical economics are not only profoundly gendered but serve to exacerbate pre-existing inequalities and violence in war-economy contexts rather than improve them.

2.4. Research Contribution

Criticism has been aimed at IFIs for their neoliberal and neoclassical approaches to recovery from conflict and long-term development. Yet, scholars like True and Hozic (2020) argue that despite a tradition of feminist takes on IPE and development, there is a lack of feminist IPE scholarship on the role of IFIs and

gender inequalities in conflict-affected settings. Additionally, criticism regarding IFIs' methods to include women in policies for recovery from conflict (today, this is primarily done by adopting a gender mainstreaming approach) calls for new ways to explore how gender can be incorporated and embraced in a meaningful way. Therefore, I present a combination of critical frameworks in the next chapter, that builds on the work of other feminist researchers. The use of a feminist IPE-inspired take on post-conflict recovery which emphasises the social recovery of the most marginalised, and a gender-central approach that centres gender at the outcome of policies, will contribute to the understanding of the empirics as well as theory development.

3. Post-conflict social recovery for female empowerment

This chapter lays out the theoretical framework that guides the analysis. I apply a combination of Cohn and Duncanson's post-war recovery theory which has influences from feminist IPE, and a gender centrality approach as presented by Ní Aoláin, Haynes, and Cahn. The combination of theories will be used to unpack what is prioritised and potentially left out by the IFIs in their policies for post-conflict recovery in Colombia. I choose to use the term *post-conflict* recovery instead of Cohn and Duncanson's *post-war* recovery, primarily because I find the conceptualisation of conflict more inclusive than that of war. This is based on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's understanding of armed conflict as an incompatibility "where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state", results in at least 25 battle-related deaths per calendar year" (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 22/04/04). Equivalently, war is understood as resulting in 1000 deaths per year (ibid.).

To determine whether the IFI policies have an empowering impact on women by promoting social recovery, the word empowerment must first be defined. To do this, I take inspiration from Jacqui True (2012), who presents a feminist political economy approach to women's empowerment. I then move on to outlining the theoretical frameworks.

3.1. Women's empowerment

To answer the question of whether the IFIs' policies contribute to the empowerment of women, it is crucial to settle on a conceptualisation of the word empowerment. From a feminist political economy stance, Jacqui True (2012, pp. 187-189) suggests that the empowerment of women requires governments to enable employment opportunities along with good working conditions for women as well as men. Further, she argues, that governments should, at all stages of development, prioritise women's access to employment. While True's arguments seem to be aimed mainly at government levels, I argue that they apply to IFIs as well, particularly as international and multilateral organisations provide consultation

support and financial resources in different forms for governments to improve development in their countries.

Onward, secondary and tertiary quality education should be accessible. However empowering employment opportunities and improved quality of education might sound, though, the consequences of such changes should also be taken into consideration during policy planning (ibid., pp. 188-189). Even though employment might be economically empowering for women, it can also lead to an increase in domestic violence or workplace abuse. According to True, this can happen when men become disempowered by the same processes that empower women and consequently express the disempowerment by reinforcing masculinised control over partners or other women (ibid.). I, therefore, find it relevant to look for IFI initiatives that acknowledge the existence of and try to counteract patriarchal norms and attitudes that impede women's safe participation in the workplace.

To narrow the scope of this thesis and make a meaningful contribution to the field of gender inclusion in social recovery from conflict, I have chosen three aspects of empowerment to focus on: economic opportunity, access to healthcare including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and the provision of good quality education. In an ideal world, both freedom from fear and freedom from want would be ensured for each person, which would require a broader conceptualisation of empowerment. However, in this thesis, I do not intend to cover every aspect of female empowerment but choose to attend to some of the obstacles that tend to hinder women from enjoying their human rights. The selected aspects of women's empowerment will be reflected in the theoretical framework, particularly as part of gender centrality. I return to this in the subsequent sections.

3.2. Feminist post-conflict recovery

As seen in the chapter dedicated to previous research, conceptualisations of recovery from conflict vary depending on who you ask. As do the methods to achieve recovery, ranging from IBL strategies (Paris, 2004) to more critical and feminist standpoints (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020; Ní Aoláin et al., 2011; True &

Hojić, 2020). The post-conflict recovery theory in this thesis refers to an emphasis on social recovery from conflict, which accounts for the perspective of the most marginalised groups in society (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020).

This approach to post-conflict recovery stems from a feminist IPE stance that recognises the flaws of most IFIs' work in conflict-affected areas as they tend to focus on recovering the economic system rather than centralising the needs of the individuals and groups affected by conflict in the first place (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020). A feminist IPE lens applied to post-conflict recovery policies contributes to the understanding of recovery by recognising the neoclassical foundations that IFIs have heavily relied on and continue to advocate for (ibid.). Here, the understanding of economic activity is altered to incorporate the perspective of marginalised population groups, something which I will return to in section 3.2.1.

The utilisation of this framework is motivated by the fact that IFIs, despite having endorsed rhetoric of gender equality and inclusivity in their overall objectives in recent decades, have received criticism for failing to make meaningful considerations of gender in their approaches to economic recovery from conflict and long-term development (True & Hozić, 2020). The criticism concerns the not only neoliberal but neoclassical foundation on which such policies are based, which favours the IFIs' primary objective of creating market-led growth. According to a neoclassical order, this should be achieved with the help of the state, which job would be to facilitate private sector initiatives and uphold an efficiently operating market (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020). Similar critique has been aimed toward discourses on liberal peace which are promoted by organisations like the UN and the European Union, according to which a just and sustainable peace presupposes free markets and free trade. Too often, however, assistance from international actors (including IFIs) in the liberalisation of economies has meant a presumption of a liberal and capitalist economic order at the expense of knowledge at the local level (Pugh et al., 2008, p. 2). As the case of Colombia has shown, being an open and liberalised economy and part of a globalised economic system does not guarantee successful peace processes or sustainable peace (Selby, 2008, p. 18).

In the next section, I explicate the relationship between gender equality and different forms of unpaid labour, including the role of care work and subsistence labour, in a post-conflict recovery context. The conceptualisation of what is considered an economic activity will be my main takeaway from Cohn and Duncanson's theoretical framework of post-conflict recovery.

3.2.1. What counts as economic activity?

Cohn and Duncanson (2020) argue that IFIs' post-conflict recovery formulas tend to neglect the parts of the economy that they heavily rely on, such as subsistence labour, care labour, and unpaid labour. Because these are not, from a neoclassical perspective, considered to be given economic activities, they are seldom subject to investments in economic recovery from conflict. What is then ignored are the gendered aspects of such actions. The IFIs tend to invest in sectors that contribute directly to economic growth and an increase in GDP – investments that are often associated with large-scale extraction of natural resources. The left-out forms of labour (unpaid, subsistence, and care) are nevertheless assumed to always be there in order to keep more productive parts of the economy going. Additionally, a majority of these types of work is traditionally performed by women (ibid.). In this thesis, I use these insights in an attempt to understand how women in Colombia, particularly in poor and rural areas, are impacted by the IFIs' policy proposals. As the neoclassical assumptions of IFI policies are inherently gendered, insights from feminist IPE will be used to shed light on how those policies might affect different parts of the Colombian population.

So, this thesis utilises a, by feminist political economists, altered version of post-conflict recovery, as proposed by Cohn and Duncanson (2020). They argue that the post-conflict recovery policies promoted by IFIs often undermine social recovery as it favours a recovery of the economic system. Moreover, they claim that feminist political economy approaches can help to extend the understanding of recovery and economic health by asking questions about who and what the recovery refers to, and on whose experience it is based (ibid.). By starting from the

perspective of the most marginalised, they suggest that investments could include care infrastructure, education, health, and justice systems, as well as renewable energy programs and structural transformation of food production which moves away from large-scale extraction of natural resources towards restoration and regeneration. Efforts to achieve social recovery from conflict through the provision of care services, education, etc., will also create job opportunities that allow, for instance, the traditionally unpaid role of the caretaker to be combined with paid labour (ibid.).

Since Colombia faces great challenges of gendered, ethnic, and spatial inequalities, those are the aspects I will focus on to answer my research question. As explained in the introductory chapter, gender, ethnicity, and geography often intersect in terms of marginalisation and social vulnerability, rendering them relevant for the analysis. Given that the IFIs' overarching goals are concerned with economic development, my main takeaway from this theory is the question of how the organisations take subsistence labour, unpaid labour, and care labour into consideration in their policies.

3.3. Gender centrality

The feminist post-conflict recovery theory is joined by a gender centrality framework, presented by Ní Aoláin et al. (2011). From this framework, I apply the Social Services Justice (SSJ) model described in section 3.3.1 to deepen the understanding of IFI policies in Colombia. Gender centrality has emerged as a critique of other supposedly gender-inclusive strategies like gender mainstreaming. Unlike gender mainstreaming, a gender-central approach aims to address gender inequality at the structural level rather than just adding a women's perspective to existing analytical frameworks. It recognises the importance of not only equal opportunities for women and men but also the equality of outcome. It does so by centralising the needs, equality, and autonomy of women in post-conflict initiatives for recovery. Whether the objectives are achieved with the help of internal or external actors, the authors claim that the support from international and

multilateral organisations is critical in order to exert pressure on the government and institutions in the country (ibid., pp. 14-15).

Similar to the feminist post-conflict recovery approach, a gender-central approach to development recognises that commitments to economic development only through the liberalisation of the market is a form of action which has often undermined rather than improved women's situations (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011, p. 261). Therefore, it advocates for a recognition of the commonly occurring exclusion of women in economic development and suggests that post-conflict economic development can take several forms. Suggestions include infrastructure investments that improve rural women's ability to engage in markets or to travel to and from healthcare facilities, the changing of norms and attitudes toward working women, and the training of both men and women to develop their own livelihood (ibid., p. 271). For them to be fully effective, gender-central policies for economic recovery should be implemented in parallel with other aspects of long-term development that recognise women's political, social, and reproductive rights and capacities (ibid.). This is further elaborated on in the next section concerning SSJ.

3.3.1. Social Services Justice

One of the key concepts in a gender-central strategy for post-conflict recovery is the Social Services Justice model, which links together post-conflict recovery and long-term development (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011, p. 255). It refers to the notion of security as the accessibility to basic services for everyone, including women, and looks beyond the sole punishment and accountability of perpetrators. Basic services may be social, economic, medical, etc., and respond to the immediate needs of victims of conflict. Those services are also strongly related to long-term development goals that help people live a safe everyday life (ibid., p. 265).

SSJ may be provided and supported by local communities, the government, multilateral institutions or IFIs like the World Bank Group, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), but is ideally a responsibility of local actors (Ní Aoláin et

al., 2011, pp. 264-265). For this to happen, capacity-building processes with the support from multilateral actors, are typically needed in conflict-affected settings (ibid., pp. 15, 265). Here, the multilateral support for institutional capacity links immediate efforts to improve the situation of victims of conflict with the long-term development objectives of creating societies that are safe for each person. In my analysis of IFI policies, I will be looking for initiatives that would have immediate implications for the Colombian female population as well as suggestions for long-term capacity-building that can create a sustainable recovery for women in the country. As Ní Aoláin et al. (2011) point out, post-conflict processes and development are integrally linked and both provide an excellent window of opportunity to integrate and centre gender (pp. 271-272). Therefore, I reject the notion of development and post-conflict recovery as separate processes. Rather, I consider social and economic recovery essential to accomplish a form of long-term development that is inclusive of both women and men.

Just like the conceptualisation of post-conflict recovery outlined above, the indicators for gender-centrality will be motivated by their links to economic development (see Ní Aoláin et al., 2011, ch. 11). Thus, the content I will be looking for in the policy documents will concern women's economic empowerment (linked to questions of economic activity), education, and health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), i.e., areas that have been shown to have a direct or indirect effect on a women's recovery from war, and in extent, countries' economic development (ibid.).

3.4. A gender-central approach to social recovery from conflict

To summarise, the theories of feminist post-conflict recovery and gender centrality will be combined to explore and deepen the understanding of IFI policies in post-peace agreement Colombia. Feminist post-conflict recovery contributes to the analysis through the perspective of the most marginalised. Based on background research on Colombia's equity challenges, I have concluded that people who reside in rural areas tend to be more socially vulnerable than those in urban areas. The

rural-urban divide, in turn, tends to intersect with disparities in ethnicity (Nasi, 2018, p. 35). The presumption of these population groups as particularly marginalised is based on previous research, which has shown that afro-Colombian and indigenous women suffer from discrimination based on their ethnicity (Ciruela-Lorenzo et al., 2020).

My other takeaway from the feminist post-conflict recovery theory is that of economic activity. When analysing the policy documents, one of the main focuses will be on how (or whether) unpaid labour, subsistence labour, and care labour are accounted for as essential parts of the economy. This will be combined with the gender-central approach which regards the IFI policies' outcomes for women as one of the primary conditions for gender equality to be achieved. The gender centrality aspect, thus, puts a particular emphasis on how women and men may be affected differently by the suggested policies.

The SSJ model that was outlined above is not unrelated to feminist views on post-conflict recovery. Policies that support the establishment of accessible and high-quality social services are related to the economic empowerment of women through new labour opportunities. The provision of social services also supports the everyday security of women and the younger generation of girls and boys, thus linking together social and economic recovery with long-term development goals at the country level. The combination of frameworks provides for theory development and a deeper understanding of how women that are particularly marginalised and affected by conflict tend to be affected by IFI policies. I return to the theory-developing contribution in the next chapter. There, I also provide a list of categories that were used to code the material. The codes were based on the theories outlined in this chapter.

4. Research design and methods

The following chapter outlines the research design and methods used in the thesis. The research design constitutes a case study of social recovery from conflict in Colombia with a particular focus on the inclusion of women. The case is explored through a qualitative content analysis of policy documents from three IFIs: the World Bank Group, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. NVivo software was used to code the material into pre-determined categories and abductively created sub-codes.

4.1. A case study of post-conflict recovery in Colombia

The research design of this thesis is a case study of post-conflict recovery in Colombia. Colombia was chosen with the theoretical framework in mind, and being the only case of the study, it allows for an in-depth and rich-in-detail analysis that distinguishes it from large-N research (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, p. 19). The single case research design also means that strong validity is more achievable than in large-N studies, as conceptual stretching is avoided (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 28; Sundberg & Harbom, 2011, p. 95). The method is thus particularly suiting for theory development (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 28).

As one of the intentions of this thesis is to make a theoretical contribution (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 27-28) to the field of feminist IPE and post-conflict recovery, an abductive approach becomes sufficient. Although I start the analysis with an established theoretical framework, similar to a deductive approach (Bengtsson, 2016, p. 12), the combination of theoretical approaches (feminist post-conflict recovery and gender centrality) can make visible additional aspects of the empirics that would not be acknowledged by just one or the other. This type of reasoning between theory and empirics makes for an abductive analytical approach (Mason, 2018, p. 228). With a theoretically guided sampling process, the analysis will comprise interpretations that reflect the relationship between the abstract theory and the concrete empirical observations. As this is a single-case study, I do

not plan to achieve generalisable results from the empirics (ibid.). Nonetheless, the same methods could be applied to other cases in the future for comparison.

4.1.1. Case selection: post-peace agreement Colombia

Several reasons make Colombia an interesting case of social recovery from conflict. The long-lasting conflict between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP resulted in millions of victims, many of whom are women. The signing of the Final Agreement led to a fragile peace, in which the perspective of the most marginalised is an essential building block in the social and economic recovery of the country; previous research has shown that there is a need for social recovery, for instance, accessible good-quality education and poverty reduction, to prevent further recruitment of marginalised population groups, including children, to illegal armed groups (Downing, 2014). This is particularly true in Colombia, where inequalities are exacerbated by geographic, ethnic, and gendered factors.

International organisations, including IFIs, have been present in Colombia since before the Final Agreement was signed. Despite the country's liberalised economy and involvement in international trade, severe inequalities in terms of access to social services and economic opportunity remain. Peace cannot be said to have prevailed until marginalised population groups enjoy their human rights and have recovered socially and economically from conflict. The IFIs that are explored in this thesis all provide technical and/or financial support for development and recovery in Colombia, making it a relevant case in which to explore the social aspects of recovery from conflict.

4.2. Qualitative content analysis of IFI policies

The thesis also makes use of qualitative content analysis, a common method for analysing textual data such as documents, to generate data and answer the research question (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Content analysis can take qualitative as well as quantitative forms depending on one's research objectives and questions (Bengtsson, 2016; Bryman, 2012; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Although it was

previously used primarily for quantitative purposes, qualitative approaches to content analysis have been developed over the decades to include latent perspectives of textual data (Bengtsson, 2016; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), making it an adequate method of analysis for this thesis. I draw on the definition of qualitative content analysis as "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). The method is thus more than just a matter of counting words. Searching the data for latent content, meaning what lies beneath the surface by looking for themes and patterns within the text, rather than emphasising the text itself (Bryman, 2012), will hopefully counteract the critique for lacking in depth that is sometimes aimed at qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2018).

Hsieh and Shannon have defined three different approaches to qualitative content analysis; first, a conventional approach is appropriate for when previous research is limited and codes are generated directly from the data; second, a summative approach for quantification of content; and third, a directed approach in which theory helps determine codes and themes. Because a theoretical framework of feminist post-conflict recovery and gender centrality has already been established, this thesis comes closest to the directed approach, as it is described as suitable in cases where "theory or prior research exists about a phenomenon that is incomplete or would benefit from further description" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). However, as the combination of theoretical frameworks allows for theory development, abductive aspects also apply (Gustafsson & Hagström, 2018).

Qualitative content analysis is further motivated because merely counting words in the case of this thesis would be insufficient considering the research aims and theoretical framework. E.g., establishing how many times "gender" or "women" are mentioned in the material would tell us little about what measures are taken to increase social inclusion in areas plagued by gendered inequalities. However, by exploring themes and patterns of whether and how proposals for increasing social inclusion and decreasing inequality are addressed in the data, inferences can be drawn that go beyond the manifest content, i.e., what is explicitly

said in the text. Having said that, I do not argue for a complete disregard of the frequency of certain words; should the documents not mention gender (in)equality or women at all, that could also constitute a finding that would be worth discussing, since that would presumably mean that other priorities have been made by the policymakers.

To be able to explore themes and patterns in the material efficiently, a codebook was created before an in-depth reading of the documents. The codebook, which is presented in Table 1, consists of categories that respond to the theories outlined in chapter 3 and potential content to be coded in the respective categories. The material was then put into codes and sorted under suiting categories. With theory as the starting point, the analytical task is the interpretation of data using the concepts laid out in the theory section (Mason, 2018, p. 227). This also allows for modification and expansion of the initial codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2018) and the researcher can make inferences by showing how the theoretical principles work with the data and situating the empirics within the existing theoretical debate (Mason, 2018, p. 224).

4.2.1. NVivo coding and codebook

To code the data, I used NVivo. The software is useful in terms of organising the data and accessing conceptual and theoretical knowledge that is generated from it (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 3; Mason, 2018, p. 195). Moreover, its functions serve to visualise patterns that can be found across the dataset, and thanks to the attentiveness of managing the data with a computer rather than manually, more rigorous results can be achieved (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 3). This is not to say that the analysis is, in any way, distanced from me as a researcher. The epistemological standpoint of the thesis is that knowledge is generated through the interpretation of the material being used. The human factor is, thus, present throughout the analytical process. The use of software, in this case, is primarily a tool for managing a predominantly text-based dataset in the most efficient way (Mason, 2018, pp. 195-197). To provide for a reflexive and attentive analytical

process (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, pp. 68-69), memos were written after each coding session.

As briefly mentioned in the previous section, Table 1 presents the categories that were used to manage the material. The categories were based on the theories of feminist post-conflict recovery and gender centrality and served as a starting point for the coding. While the categories could be used in future studies, codes and sub-codes are subject to change based on what is to be found in the material; patterns in the data are thus open to interpretation.

Category	Potential content
Economic recovery	Notions of economic activity; acknowledgement of the role that unpaid labour, subsistence labour, and care labour plays for the larger economy to function the larger economy. Economic policies may also include investments in road infrastructure that improve the connectivity between rural and urban areas.
Labour policy	Acknowledgement of potential differences in women's and men's labour opportunities. What sectors are brought up in terms of employment opportunities and entrepreneurial activity? Is female entrepreneurship particularly promoted?
Access to education	Acknowledgement of women's and girls' access to quality education as an important part of social recovery from conflict. Support for access to quality education (primary, secondary, and tertiary), particularly for rural, indigenous, and Afro-Colombian women.

Access to healthcare and SRHR	Acknowledgement of equal access to health services, including women's access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Examples of support could include the provision of a government-funded (at least in the long-term) healthcare system that responds to the medical needs of the population, including care for the elderly and children, and victims of armed conflict and sexual violence.
Norms and attitudes	Acknowledgement of how norms and attitudes affect women's opportunities to participate equally in, for instance, the labour market and social life. Policies that will target the norms and attitudes that prevent women from equal participation in, for instance, the labour market.

Table 1. Initial coding categories were generated from the thesis' theoretical framework. The column on the left presents the categories, and the column on the right some potential content that could be coded into those categories. The potential content should not be viewed as limitations but as examples of what could be included in the coding. It is also worth noting that parts of the material may be coded into more than one category simultaneously.

4.3. Material – Country-specific policy documents

The data used for analysis is comprised of policy documents from three different IFIs: the World Bank Group, not to be confused with the World Bank² (World Bank Group, 2022a), the IDB, and the OECD. The document from the World Bank Group is a Country Partnership Framework (CPF) that guides the organisation's support for Colombia in its pursuit of ending extreme poverty and increasing sustainable

² The World Bank Group is comprised of five international organisations: the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Association (IDA), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). The IBRD and the IDA make up the World Bank.

shared prosperity (World Bank Group, 2022b). The document constitutes the most recent CPF available for Colombia and covers the years 2016-2021. It provides an analysis of the country's development opportunities but limits its policy suggestions to what has been requested by the Colombian government. For instance, advice on how to reduce inequalities in employment opportunities is not provided because it was not requested. It is, nonetheless, included in the analysis and identified as an obstacle to inclusive development in Colombia (World Bank Group, 2016).

The second document is the IDB's country strategy for Colombia, valid from 2019 through August 2022. The IDB provides loans, grants, and technical assistance in pursuit of reducing poverty and inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean (Inter-American Development Bank, 2021). The IDB country strategy for Colombia is structured around three strategic pillars: (i) increasing the productivity of the economy, (ii) improving the effectiveness of public management, and (iii) promoting social mobility and consolidating the middle class. In addition, the strategy is said to address a number of cross-cutting topics, gender being one of them. Diversity and disability, immigration, climate change, digital economy, and economic integration are also labelled cross-cutting challenges (Inter-American Development Bank, 2022). This range of topics is of varying relevance for my research question; gender is the most given one, although questions of diversity are reasonable to take into consideration given the post-conflict recovery framework that illuminates the perspective of the most marginalised. The cross-cutting areas and the strategic pillars will be further addressed in relation to gender-central social recovery in the analysis.

The final document is a report from the OECD called *Colombia: Policy Priorities for Inclusive Development*. The OECD, unlike the other two IFIs, does not provide country-specific strategies or frameworks. The report is nevertheless similar to the other documents in the sense that it presents both analyses of and policy proposals for development in Colombia. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, n.d.). The report from the OECD also differs from the other documents as it was published in 2015, the year before the Final Agreement was signed between Colombia and FARC-EP and is not explicitly stating a specific

period of time to cover. Yet, I chose to include it in the sample because i) the content is highly relevant for answering my research questions, and ii) peace processes do not start at the signing of a peace agreement but are often preceded by long informal and formal talks and efforts to reach the agreement. In the case of Colombia, peace talks between the government and FARC-EP started already in 2012. Colombia is an official OECD member as of April 2020 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, n.d.).

4.3.1. Analysing documents

Document analysis can be used as a stand-alone method or as part of a mixed-methods research design (Gross, 2018). In this thesis, the former applies. Documents can constitute primary or secondary types of data; primary meaning material that exists without prior analysis or interpretation (for instance, policies), and secondary being information that was developed from the analysis of primary data for the purpose of sharing it with a wider audience (ibid.). This thesis uses policy documents that contain analyses of already existing material, e.g., statistics, as well as independently determined policy suggestions and recommendations.

Sampling in document analysis needs to be systematically approached. Gross (2018) lists criteria such as time period, geographical representation, and types of documents as examples that can be of relevance, depending on the research objectives. Because Colombia in the post-peace agreement period serves as the context that is subject to analysis, the sampling required consideration of all three of Gross' suggestions. In terms of time, the three documents were published either after or slightly before the Final Agreement was signed in 2016 and they all constitute the most recent country framework or strategy for Colombia from the respective organisation or institution. The implementation period for each strategy or framework stretches from approximately three to six years.

The selection of documents was also determined based on the research aim and question (Höglund, 2011, p. 116), as well as access. The policy documents go well in hand with the research question because they not only analyse the current

situation but also make policy suggestions in several thematic areas. Onward, the thesis only uses documents from organisations that, at the time of the document release, had pronounced that they would endorse the topic of gender equality either in their general work or in the selected documents. The selection criteria meant that some IFIs simply could not be sampled adequately. One example of this is the IMF, which publishes annual staff reports but not overarching country-specific plans or strategies and was therefore not selected.

5. Analysing social recovery in Colombia

The IFI policy documents that are analysed in this thesis, although differing on certain details, have much in common in terms of their approach to economic development in Colombia. To start with, much of the focus is aimed at increasing the country's economic growth, in both the analyses and policy proposals. This finding is, considering previous research done on IFI policies, not surprising but poses questions about the extent to which intentions of creating social recovery from conflict are being compromised with. Growth is generally presented as the main measurement of economic improvement, with the Gini coefficient being occasionally utilised to add the perspective of (in)equality (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015; World Bank Group, 2016).

To maintain some level of coherence, the analysis is structured according to the coding list; I provide an analysis of the IFIs' policies on economic development in Colombia, focusing first on the way that economic activity, including different types of labour and employment, is treated in relation to social recovery. I then move on to the SSJ model in which I have included education and access to healthcare and SRHR. Only a brief analysis is conducted that concerns patriarchal norms and attitudes; this is due to a lack of material covering this topic. Before making some concluding remarks in the final chapter, I summarise what the IFI policies mean to the empowerment of women.

5.1. Economic activity according to the IFIs

This section analyses the ways that the IFIs treat economic activity. As Cohn and Duncanson (2020) suggest when speaking of post-conflict recovery, I look for what is considered an economic activity, and how economic activity is seen in relation to social and economic recovery. Below, I go on to discuss the related topic of labour opportunities, including what sectors are the subject of IFI analyses and who is included in policies that concern employment.

Similar to the findings of other feminist IPE researchers, this study shows that IFIs primarily discuss economic development in terms of growth (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015; World Bank Group, 2016). Since the IFIs' overarching aim is to assist in Colombia's economic development, this is hardly surprising but opens for questions regarding the social aspect of recovery from long-term civil conflict. A general observation concerns what counts as valuable economic activity. As Cohn and Duncanson (2020) illustrate in their study of IFIs' extractive economic policies, an analysis of the policy recommendations for Colombia shows that economic activities are rendered particularly valuable if they generate economic growth. Much attention is given to growth (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015; World Bank Group, 2016), which appears to be the main indicator of economic development according to all three IFIs. The OECD draws a parallel between Colombia's strong economic growth in recent decades and a reduction in absolute poverty levels (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015). However, it is recognised by all IFIs that income inequality is high and that poverty levels are unevenly distributed geographically, as well as by gender and ethnicity (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015; World Bank Group, 2016).

Policy suggestions often include initiatives to increase productivity. Examples include the need to boost productivity in the agricultural sector, which would include the strengthening of land rights and improving access to land (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015), in line with the Final Agreement. The need for land reform as a part of the Colombian post-conflict recovery strategy is significant. From a gender-central perspective, however, such initiatives should be accompanied by an analysis of how the outcomes affect women and men respectively (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011, p. 15). For instance, land transfer programmes should make sure that women are provided opportunities to own land to the same extent as men, to avoid the continuity of patriarchal structures that favour men over women in contexts of economic rights and agency (see Wood,

2008). Moreover, from a feminist IPE perspective on post-conflict recovery, reforms regarding e.g., land rights should not be constructed by the international actors at the expense of local agency (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020). The excessive emphasis on productivity and growth by the IFIs renders other uses of land, such as the provision of community livelihood through subsistence labour (which tends to be performed by women) less valuable, as it does not contribute to the GDP the way that formalised work does (ibid.). It is, nonetheless, a part of post-conflict recovery that sometimes responds better to social needs than potential privatised or formalised types of work where the wages might be pushed down by global political economy mechanisms and IFI prescriptions for economic development.

Onward, a simple word search in the three IFI documents displays that neither "unpaid" nor "subsistence" is mentioned even once. Instead, the emphasis is on formality and informality in the economy, and the obstacle it constitutes to economic development (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015; World Bank Group, 2016). The type of analysis that relies on counting words only tells us about the data on a superficial level. I believe, however, that the neglect of the supporting roles that subsistence and unpaid labour play in the economic system is telling of how economic activity is conceptualised and valued by the IFIs. As these forms of labour are often performed by women, the indifference towards them may perpetuate already existing structures that hamper women's opportunities to enjoy their economic rights. This finding, thus, illustrates the gendered practices of a neoclassical approach to recovery from war, confirming what scholars like Cohn and Duncanson (2020) have previously found in their research on IFIs in post-conflict contexts.

Below, I further discuss labour and employment, including the IFIs' focus on formality and informality in the work sphere.

5.1.1. Labour and employment in the policy documents

As mentioned above, the focus of the IFIs' analyses of and suggestions for employment opportunities is the formality and informality of the labour market, and how informality presents challenges to economic development. One such example is the OECD's policy suggestion to improve productivity in the agricultural sector, as it is identified as a key sector for employment. Such efforts would supposedly help restore equity between regions as well as support inclusive growth (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015). To achieve inclusive growth through agricultural development, land ownership needs to be formalised and land rights need to be strengthened (ibid.), a topic that was briefly touched upon in the previous section. Whose land rights should be improved, for instance, whether it includes women, indigenous peoples, or other ethnic minorities, is not specified in the policy document. Such aspects would need to be included should the policymakers use a gender-central or feminist post-conflict recovery approach to their policies (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020; Ní Aoláin et al., 2011).

Onward, advocates for social recovery from conflict (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020) would critique the IFIs for their view on economic activity and their frequent emphasis on growth as the main driver of development. The formalisation of land use, I argue, could take several paths. On the one hand, Colombia is in need of a sustainable fiscal system, in which tax revenues are 1) available and collected, and 2) used to reinvest in social services such as healthcare and education. From this point of view, which is in line with a post-conflict recovery prescription of state-based welfare and human security (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020), formalisation of land use is key, as it has the potential to strengthen labour rights, create job opportunities, contribute to the welfare revenues, and reduce incentives to grow illegal crops. The last one still poses a problem in many of the conflict-affected areas of Colombia. With several parallel processes to increase the presence of and trust in state institutions, social recovery after the conflict with the FARC-EP can be achieved.

On the other hand, formalisation of the labour market, including land use, could lead to an exploitation of the labour market, with wages being pushed down and precarious employment conditions as potential results. It is these kinds of outcomes that could be prevented if policymaking was based on a gender-centred, outcome-oriented analysis. As Ní Aoláin et al. (2011, pp. 245-246) point out, when international actors' primary aim has been to liberalise the market while reducing taxes and government services, the outcomes have been highly gendered. For instance, when jobs (especially in the public sector) are downsized, women and minorities are at particular risk of becoming unemployed. Within the broad category of women, individuals of higher socioeconomic status are more likely to find employment than those of lower socioeconomic status (ibid.). To counteract these issues, Cohn and Duncanson (2020) suggest that a society where care is being valued as a necessary part of the economy, accompanied by transparent and accountable government institutions, would enhance social recovery for the most marginalised by creating job opportunities and provide social services where it is most needed. For instance, such an approach would allow the caretaking roles to be combined with paid labour (ibid.).

On a different but related topic, I would argue in the case of Colombia (and presumably many other conflict-affected countries), that an emphasis on accountability and transparency along with anti-corruption work in public institutions is of particular importance. According to Ní Aoláin et al. (2011, pp. 246, 248-249), transparency and anticorruption are of significant importance in countries where economic incentives may spur or escalate the conflict. This is especially the case in areas plagued by poverty, such as remote areas in Colombia where the cultivation of illegal drugs is prominent. Corruption is not only problematic for women, but the financial resources that could have been invested in public services become scarcer. This, in turn, affects social recovery and has a disproportional effect on women, who usually take more responsibility for the provision of unpaid social aspects of recovery like care work (ibid.). As corruption is usually hidden from the public eye, it is difficult to measure. However,

Transparency International (2022) gave Colombia a score of 39 out of 100 on the Corruption Perception Index in 2021, where 100 equals no perceived corruption.

Relating the issue of corruption to the land use, the issue from a feminist post-conflict recovery perspective as well as the gender centrality approach is not that not all agricultural land adds directly to the country's growth, but that the services that create social recovery are not able to satisfy the needs of the population due to resources being used for individual gain (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020; Ní Aoláin et al., 2011, pp. 248-249). What is also a concern of the feminist post-conflict recovery scholars, is that the labour that is done for subsistence purposes is not considered to be a valid part of the economy by the IFIs, nor is it acknowledged for its cultural adding in communities that have traditionally been marginalised. Indigenous communities are one example of this (see Cohn & Duncanson, 2020).

Colombia's rural areas present challenges regarding the provision of public institutions and services, as such institutions tend to be absent or lack sufficient funding. From the perspective of feminist post-conflict recovery (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020), however, investments in the social aspects of recovery, for instance via the SSJ model (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011, pp. 262-267), would contribute to the labour market through an increase in labour opportunities. The provision of such services should not depend on whether all land use in the area contributes to the idea of never-ending growth. On the contrary, services that simultaneously bring employment opportunities and are available to all, regardless of socioeconomic class, would be an investment in the social recovery from conflict. Additionally, employment opportunities in marginalised areas, accompanied by state-funded basic services that provide everyday security to women and men could have a positive effect on the people who currently have no option but to cultivate illegal crops and obey illegal armed groups that have claimed power in certain regions after the signing of the Final Agreement.

According to these inferences, IFIs that aspire to contribute to the social recovery from conflict should seek to ensure access to basic services which can create employment opportunities in marginalised areas, rather than aiming for the full liberalisation of markets – an action that may perpetuate existing inequalities.

5.2. Social Services Justice

In the following sections, I analyse the policies for two social services – access to good-quality education and healthcare – as put forward by the IFIs. Following the theoretical frameworks laid out in chapter 3, I approach the social service policies with gender-oriented outcomes in mind, as well as the perspective of the most marginalised. As noted in previous parts of the thesis, I include women in rural areas, particularly those of indigenous or Afro-Colombian descent in this category.

5.2.1. The role of education in post-conflict recovery

All policy documents declare that increasing the quality and accessibility of education should be an essential part of Colombia's path to a more equitable and prosperous country. There is a consensus that the access to education is unequal, particularly related to a rural-urban divide. The same applies to the quality of education on both primary and secondary levels (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015; World Bank Group, 2016).

The documents rarely speak about women or girls in their analyses of Colombia's educational situation, but sometimes mention marginalised student populations (World Bank Group, 2016) or disadvantaged students (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015). Although it is not specified who is categorised as marginalised or vulnerable, one could assume that at least parts of the female population qualify, as do rural population groups, and ethnic minorities such as afro-Colombians and indigenous peoples, many of whom reside in poorer areas of the country. The policy documents that are included in the analysis are naturally supposed to provide an *overarching* picture of Colombia's challenges to economic development. However, referring to certain population groups as marginalised, vulnerable, or disadvantaged without specifying who is included might make invisible the diverse set of characteristics that make up this broad category of people. There is, I argue, a risk of overlooking the specific needs of different groups in society. In future studies, the use of intersectionality could help

illuminate the needs of the separate groups as well as the ways different parts of the population are negatively affected by a matrix of oppressional systems, issues that might otherwise be missed.

The need to expand access to quality education is primarily motivated by its impact on productivity and economic growth (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015; World Bank Group, 2016), but occasionally also by a human rights perspective (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019) or as a means to decrease the wage gap between men and women (World Bank Group, 2016). The latter might suggest that women's and girls' right to education is of special priority in the policy suggestions even though this is not explicitly stated. The lack of explicit mentioning of women and girls in the documents can be somewhat compensated by looking at the potential outcomes of some IFI policies. One example can be found in the document from the OECD, where pre-primary education is recognised as a factor that significantly affects student performance later in life. Access to pre-primary education is shown to reduce performance gaps between students from different social backgrounds. At the time of publishing the document in 2015, pre-primary enrolment in Colombia was around 50%, as opposed to the OECD average of about 90% (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015).

Expanded access to pre-primary education, particularly targeting rural populations, including ethnic minorities, could contribute to the empowerment of women in two ways, both of which are in line with the feminist post-conflict recovery and gender-central approach. First, sending children to pre-primary education would reduce the amount of time that parents spend on childcare, a form of unpaid labour that is often gendered and affect women disproportionately (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020). Investing in pre-primary education for young children assumes that the state takes on a strong role to reinforce recovery from conflict (*ibid.*). One of the outcomes, then, could be the opening for women's economic empowerment as more women can enter the formal labour force. Moreover, investments in quality education, including pre-primary education opens additional

employment opportunities, especially in rural areas where the need for improvement stands out.

Second, a plausible implication of improved student performance would be a decrease in drop-out rates, which are particularly high among marginalised population groups (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015). There is no recognition in the documents of any gender disparities in drop-out rates, but whether boys or girls are overrepresented, there are implications for the parents and perhaps for women in particular, as has been indicated above. The overall education coverage during the first six years of schooling is at around 97%, although the quality of education is unequal. Low-quality education is prominent primarily in rural areas (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019). The OECD reports that among 15-19 year-olds, enrolment rates were at about 43% in 2014 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015). Using a gender-central strategy, which centres women not only in the analysis but in the outcome of policies (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011), renders drop-out rates highly relevant because of their consequences for mothers and their economic opportunities. Additionally, there are long-term consequences for the girls and boys that do drop out of school at a young age, as their chances of gaining formal employment are reduced. This might have certain effects on the young girls who are more likely to end up in unpaid care and household work, and this in turn is potentially affecting the opportunities for future generations.

Similar inferences can be drawn from the OECD document, which emphasises the need to increase the hours of instruction, mostly in marginalised areas, where multiple-shift schools³ are more prevalent (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015). Such schools have been argued to be more cost-effective than regular schools since they create less of a need to build more schools and teachers can be paid only a little more for working a double shift. Another pro

³ Multiple-shift schools represent a model in which the students attend school either in the morning or in the afternoon/evening. They tend to attract poorer families as they enable the children to attend school for only half of the day, while the other half can be dedicated to paid labour or unpaid labour at home (Linden, 2001).

argument is that they enable less advantaged children to balance school with work (paid or unpaid) (Linden, 2001).

Viewing these arguments from the perspectives of feminist post-conflict recovery (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020) and gender centrality (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011), an ideal situation would mean that underaged children would not need to balance their education with labour but rather enjoy their right to an education. Nonetheless, the hours of instruction might not be an isolated issue but should be seen as part of a larger deficit in the funding of educational institutions in marginalised areas. Based on that note, the focus on increasing instruction hours needs to be accompanied by efforts to improve the quality of education to reduce regional inequalities. To achieve such objectives, public finances need to be more efficiently spent and investments in the public services that can contribute to social recovery should target marginalised population groups, as suggested by Cohn and Duncanson (2020). Furthermore, centring gender in these policies once again allows for a recognition of women's, especially mothers', abilities to join formal employment as children can be sent to school and pre-primary education.

One of the more feminist post-conflict recovery-oriented initiatives from the IFIs comes from the World Bank Group's CPF:

The [World Bank Group] will also support education access with financial, knowledge, and convening services, with a focus on quality (...). Such projects include the Rural Education Project, which supported access to and models for quality improvements in rural schools, with a special focus on indigenous communities; (...) and the ICETEX II Project, which supports student loans to increase access to tertiary education while strengthening the focus on quality education institutions and marginalized student populations (World Bank Group, 2016, p. 25).

It captures several parts of social recovery as advocated for by Cohn and Duncanson (2020), with emphasis on marginalised groups. In Colombia, those include indigenous peoples and other ethnic minorities, who often reside in rural areas. Moreover, access to tertiary education for indigenous communities is supported, which in turn means that they become employable to a wider extent. Raising the

quality of educational institutions in rural areas might also have a positive effect on women, as the imposed caretaker role might become lessened. Onward, increasing the quality of education should preferably require job opportunities in areas that have previously been neglected or disregarded in terms of social services justice. Considering how women generally benefit from access to education and other social services, this specific support from the World Bank Group constitutes an example where women's recovery is, at least, partly accounted for in the analysis of outcomes. Therefore, one could consider it somewhat gender-centred. However, gender would have been even more centralised had the analysis included explicit mention of whether women and men, girls and boys were equally targeted by the support or otherwise how women are predicted to benefit from it, given that female minorities tend to be more marginalised than male minorities (see Ciruela-Lorenzo et al., 2020).

5.2.2. Access to healthcare and sexual and reproductive health and rights

The Colombian health system is based on an insurance model, with mandatory enrolment for Colombian citizens and legal residents. For those that are unemployed, a state-subsidised model is available whereas employees co-finance their insurance with their employer (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019). This model of financing has received mixed responses from the IFIs. On the one hand, it is praised for having created an almost universal coverage (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015). Taking off in the prescription from feminist post-conflict recovery, in which the state should bear the main responsibility of ensuring access to social services like healthcare (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020), the state-subsidised health insurance model is more commendable than the second option, in which employees and self-employed citizens pay for their insurance. Rather, a sustainable fiscal system should be established and contribute to universal coverage of health services.

On the other hand, the IFIs all recognise the challenges that Colombia faces in terms of increasing tax revenues for welfare investments as large parts of the population still work in the informal sector (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015; World Bank Group, 2016). With state presence lacking or being scarce in the most remote areas, the country also faces challenges regarding bringing people into formal employment, a necessary action to increase tax revenues that can be reinvested in basic social services.

The OECD has suggested that incentives to increase formal employment could include access to healthcare (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015). This policy proposal, however, goes against the feminist IPE perspective that Cohn and Duncanson (2020) advocate for. Instead of prescribing the state as the main duty-bearer, individuals are made responsible for securing their access to free or subsidised health services, seeming like one must earn this human right. Moreover, the proposal overlooks the structure of the labour market and the different impacts that its structure has on women and men (see Ramoni-Perazzi & Orlandoni-Merli, 2021) as well as other vulnerable parts of the population. For instance, according to the IDB, about 46% of employed immigrants work in the informal sector, and only about 27% of Venezuelan immigrants in Colombia report having access to health services (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019). Because the policy proposal overlooks these structural conditions, it cannot be viewed as gender-central (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011).

Access to healthcare is frequently brought up in tandem with the pension system, a form of social service that I have not focused specifically on in this thesis, but which would nevertheless be a relevant topic for future studies. The challenge to expand the healthcare coverage in Colombia is acknowledged by all the IFIs, although a prominent gender analysis on this note is missing. There is a general agreement across the documents that the coverage of health services is affected by geographical disparities, much like the case of education (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015; World Bank Group, 2016).

Regarding the coverage of healthcare services, all policy documents commend the Colombian health insurance system for expanding its coverage over the recent years (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015; World Bank Group, 2016), with around 97-98% of the population now being enrolled in health insurance (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019; World Bank Group, 2016). Apart from the remaining challenges related to geographic disparities, indigenous, and Afro-Colombian population groups, Venezuelan immigrants are pointed out as particularly socially vulnerable, with only about 27% reporting having access to health services (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019).

A prominent analysis of access to SRHR is missing in all three policy documents. In a gender-central approach to post-conflict recovery, sexual and reproductive violence is understood as a form of structural violence that has economic and social effects on recovery and undermines integrity rights (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011). Since the IFIs are concerned with the long-term economic development of their partner countries, the integration of an SRHR aspect in their policies could be considered relevant, if not necessary. On one occasion, the IDB has identified the need to secure the coverage of health services for vulnerable immigrants, a category which includes children and pregnant women (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019).

Since pregnant women are recognised as being particularly vulnerable and in need of accessible healthcare, one can assume that reproductive health services are included in the analysis, though it is not explicitly stated. Furthermore, the IDB recognises how, even though both women and men in poor areas are negatively affected by the inadequate coverage of health services, women and men are affected in different ways; for instance, 60% of maternal mortality is concentrated in the poorest 50% of the population (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019).

The infrastructure deficit is identified as one of the main challenges to efficient healthcare services in rural areas (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019). Therefore, investments in healthcare access, provided they were gender-centred and accounting for the perspective of the most marginalised, could, for instance, aim to

ensure sufficient road infrastructure that connects remote and metropolitan areas to enable health services to reach more of the population (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020). Moreover, the uneven distribution of maternal mortality across the population speaks of the necessity to incorporate a gender-central focus when determining and promoting policies for social recovery, particularly in remote areas where the Colombian state is not as visible. A focus on improving road infrastructure might improve access to health services on a general level, but in the long-run, additional consideration of the needs of women's reproductive and maternal rights and health is critical not to undermine social, political, and economic equality (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011, pp. 219-220). The general lack of SRHR investments from the IFIs speaks in favour of adding a gender centrality perspective to the documents.

5.3. Changing patriarchal norms and attitudes for social recovery

Despite not having found much in the data that concerns changes in norms and attitudes, I will dedicate a few words to this topic. There is research showing how women in Colombia face obstacles to participation in social, economic and political contexts, for instance in terms of finding a job outside the domestic sphere (Ciruela-Lorenzo et al., 2020). Given the IFIs' desires to improve economic development in the country in an inclusive manner, it would be reasonable for them to include efforts to counteract norms that prevent women from joining the workforce or becoming empowered in other ways.

However, the IFIs do not take much consideration of these aspects in their policy documents. The IDB, at one point, addresses their support for the empowerment of several groups, with a specific focus on people with disabilities:

In response, the IDB Group proposes to support actions in both urban and rural areas that adopt an integrated approach to boosting the social, economic, and productive empowerment of women, indigenous populations, Afrodescendant populations, and young people. It will also help to strengthen policies for the social and productive inclusion of [people with disabilities], reducing the barriers that impede the interaction of people with physical and/or intellectual

disabilities, preventing them from participating fully and effectively in society on an equal footing (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019, p. 28).

The barriers faced by people with disabilities, in this case, are explained in a footnote and referred to as "physical, attitudinal, economic, regulatory, and environmental" (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019, p. 28). The formulation seems to primarily consider people with disabilities but based on previous research and what is known about intersecting oppression and discrimination, one can deduce that women face similar obstacles. Viewing this through a gender centrality lens (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011, pp. 14-15), the inclusion of a women's perspective on patriarchal norms and attitudes would benefit from being centralised at all times. The gender-central approach advocates for processes of recovery to happen in parallel but not in silos. Had the IDB managed to make the question of changing norms and attitudes an integral part of the other policy areas, such as education and healthcare initiatives, it could have been labelled gender-central in some ways. In this case, though, the issue becomes one out of many cross-cutting challenges that necessarily need to be prioritised next to other cross-cutting topics.

Like the IDB, the World Bank Group addresses the issue of normative obstacles to gender equality on one occasion, namely in the analysis of a Development Policy Loan that aimed to support the reduction of gender inequality by improving Colombia's fiscal capacity. The project was expected to increase the government's budget for protecting victims of gender-based violence, but "the funds were never disbursed, due to operational and normative issues" (World Bank Group, 2016, p. 68). The example illustrates the inherent gendered structures that affect women and men differently and have particularly negative implications for the empowerment of women. The issue is elucidated by the combination of gender-centrality through its emphasis on outcomes for women and men respectively as well as pointing to how gender-based violence hampers women's economic empowerment (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011, pp. 14-15, 45-46), and feminist post-conflict recovery, as it lifts the needs of the most marginalised (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020). It also reflects the importance of centralising gender at the institutional, national

and international levels, for outcomes to be considerate of both women and men and have an actual impact (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011, pp. 92-93).

Finally, the OECD does not address norms and issues at all but also does not mention women more than once. The complete absence of normative work in the pursuit of long-term, inclusive economic development tells us whose needs are being prioritised and whose are being left out.

5.4. What do IFIs do for women's empowerment?

Before moving on to some concluding remarks in the final chapter, I will summarise the IFIs' implications for the empowerment of women as defined in section 3.1. It is worth mentioning that there are more aspects to women's empowerment than labour opportunities, access to education, and access to healthcare and SRHR. Those are accounted for in this thesis because they can be considered important building blocks in a post-conflict context (or post-peace agreement like the case of Colombia) where long-term, inclusive development should be preceded by social recovery from conflict. The criteria are not supposed to constitute an exhaustive list. They are, nevertheless, supposed to make up some of the critical components of women's empowerment.

Regarding economic empowerment in terms of employment, there are only a few occasions in the documents where women are explicitly targeted. The formalisation of the job sphere is a priority to all IFIs but seems to be motivated by the objective of increasing productivity and growth, rather than the desire to include all population groups in the economy. The findings in this paper correlate with previous findings of feminist IPE scholars in the sense that IFIs tend to favour the recovery of a country's economic system rather than the social recovery. As women (and men) in vulnerable social positions may be forced to take potentially low-paid jobs in an exploited labour market to provide for family members, the social aspects of recovery from conflict are disregarded. These potential outcomes of IFI policies reflect the wider, gendered mechanisms of the global political economy that feminist IPE scholars address (Cohn & Duncanson, 2020). These are the same

mechanisms that tend to exacerbate the inequalities that disfavour those who are already the most marginalised in society.

Onward, processes for social recovery and long-term development, need to happen in parallel for synergies to emerge and produce meaningful results for women's empowerment (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011). For instance, initiatives to create employment opportunities for women outside the caretaker role require an adequate infrastructure for childcare to enable mothers to take the jobs that are offered. For women to be welcomed into the labour market in a post-conflict context where they may have been forced to resume their traditional roles in the domestic sphere, support from international actors should also aim to change the norms and attitudes that may impede women's equal access to the labour market (ibid.).

The objectives promoted by the IFIs, although they do not ignore the opportunities of women altogether, fail to acknowledge the extent to which social services justice and unpaid forms of labour are part of a structural issue, which impedes women's rights and opportunities to become economically empowered. Including these aspects in economic policies could provide a foundation of actual inclusive development, in which gendered outcomes are accounted for and not neglected for the sake of fostering economic growth.

To summarise, women's empowerment, as defined by economic opportunities (including access to decent, paid work and the recognition of subsistence and unpaid labour as part of the economy), as well as the provision of equitable and high-quality social services like healthcare and education, is in some ways addressed by the IFIs. However, there is a lack of critique against the global political-economic system and its gendered outcomes which the IFIs are very much a part of and reinforce with their policies in conflict-affected countries like Colombia. In that sense, the most marginalised population groups, including women living in Colombia's rural areas, and ethnic minorities like indigenous peoples or afro-Colombians, are at risk of having their social vulnerability sustained or even exacerbated. The aspect of empowering women through post-conflict recovery policies, both economically and socially, will continue to be conditional as long as the IFIs keep valuating economic growth as the primary objective.

6. Discussion and concluding remarks

This thesis has used a combination of feminist post-conflict recovery theory and a gender-central approach to deepen the understanding of women's situation in Colombia since the signing of the Final Agreement in 2016. Several international financial institutions, inter alia the World Bank Group, the OECD, and the IDB, have provided analyses and policy proposals for long-term economic development in Colombia. IFIs, however, have received criticism from several feminist IPE scholars, who suggest that policies that rely on neoliberal and neoclassical notions of economic activity, tend to exacerbate existing inequalities rather than reduce them. In post-conflict contexts like Colombia, the most marginalised, amongst whom I count women (rural, indigenous, and Afro-Colombian in particular), are those that are most at risk of having their social vulnerability sustained or worsened. In this thesis, I have addressed this issue with the following research question: *How are women included in approaches to post-conflict social recovery promoted by international financial institutions in Colombia?*

A combination of theories – feminist post-conflict recovery and gender centrality – was used to deepen the understanding of social aspects of recovery from the Colombian conflict. The use of an abductive method of analysis allowed me to explore how the theory and empirics worked together, contributing to theory development as well as an in-depth understanding of the material. Three country-specific policy documents from the World Bank Group, the IDB, and the OECD were included in the analysis. To manage the comprehensive textual data, I used NVivo to categorise and overview themes and patterns in the documents. From the theoretical framework, a codebook of categories representing social recovery from conflict was created, and sub-codes were added throughout the coding sessions.

This study's focus on women in post-peace agreement Colombia was motivated by the fact that women constitute such a large part of the population that has been subject to structural discrimination and violence for a long time. There to, reasons for putting the spotlight on rural, indigenous, and Afro-Colombian women were based on the feminist post-conflict recovery framework, which elucidates the

perspective of the most marginalised. In Colombia, indigenous and other ethnic minorities are particularly marginalised in terms of access to quality social services, and large shares of those population groups live in rural areas. The country is troubled by a significant rural-urban divide in equity levels, with rural areas not being reached by public institutions to the same extent as urban ones. They are also more exposed to implications of the conflict between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP as well as other armed groups that have gained traction since the demobilisation of the FARC-EP. In some of the more remote areas of the country, power vacuums have emerged after the signing of the Final Agreement which has opened for illegal armed groups to seize power (see e.g., Human Rights Watch, 2020a).

The post-peace agreement period in Colombia, thus, displays the importance of social services justice to be inclusive of the most marginalised in society to establish actual social recovery from war. An analysis of the IFI policies during this period shows that albeit many issues concerning inclusivity are addressed, the IFIs continue their advocacy for initiatives that sustain and sometimes reinforce already existing inequalities between men and women as they fail to recognise certain aspects of the economic system.

A pattern that can be found across the three policy documents is that growth is rendered the most obvious measurement of economic development. As I touched upon in the analysis, only counting words does not provide for an adequate analysis of the inclusion of women by IFIs. Nonetheless, a search for the word “women” throughout all three documents results in 47 hits. The equivalent for the word “growth” is 286. Even though word counts do not tell us much about the policies on a substantial level (and it is my opinion that the inclusion of women should be more than just numerical), it does indicate the overall guidance of the IFIs when they determine their policies in a conflict-affected country like Colombia. Therefore, this small finding is of at least some relevance when trying to capture the IFIs’ suggestions for improving the country’s economy.

Overall, a broader acknowledgement of gender in the policy documents would be needed for them to adequately assess the policy outcomes for both women and

men. Throughout roughly 60 pages dedicated to economic development analysis and policy suggestions, the OECD mentions women only once (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015). Meanwhile, the World Bank Group (2016) acknowledges a need to become more strategic and consistent in their gender focus, and that the share of gender-informed projects has varied significantly between different CPFs. Most projects that took on a gender component, the organisation admits, failed to do so in the three dimensions that are used for measurement: analysis, actions, and monitoring and evaluation. I argue that an organisation's contribution to women's empowerment needs to be reflected in top-level decisions and policies like those addressed in the thesis. Otherwise, little is to be expected of more specific policies concerning the implementation of concrete projects. The argument resonates with the importance of inclusivity in top-down approaches to recovery and development.

The female empowerment mechanisms that I have explored and analysed in this thesis are by no means exhaustive. Future research on the topic could aim to include aspects of age, disability, or sexuality to better understand how certain parts of the population are affected by IFI policies. The study of IFIs' economic policies in post-conflict contexts might also be applied to other countries where international actors are present and contribute to the restoration of society.

To conclude, critique aimed at IFIs by other feminist IPE scholars, is confirmed by this study of post-conflict recovery in Colombia. With a gender centrality perspective incorporated in the feminist post-conflict recovery framework, the IFIs could recognise how women and men are affected respectively by policy outcomes. At the current state, Colombia faces challenges to gender equality in terms of accessibility to social services like education and healthcare. Such obstacles have long-term implications for women's social and economic empowerment and particularly affect already marginalised groups. Moreover, patriarchal norms and attitudes impact women's opportunities in the labour market, leading to a lessened economic agency. Should the IFIs wish to work for actual social recovery, and consequently, women's empowerment, it would require an approach that recognises

the gendered implications of the neoclassical foundations on which current policies are built.

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